

CONCURRING OPINION OF CHAIRMAN GOLDWAY

Complainant raises two concerns that do not rise to the level that would support a complaint but nevertheless indicate certain problems with the POSTPlan that should be reviewed and addressed by the Postal Service in future POSTPlan implementations.

First, Complainants wonder why an active, well-attended post office with a positive cash flow would be included in the POSTPlan. This question is understandable and the Postal Service may wish to review the list of 17,000 POSTPlan offices in order to find and preserve those post offices which are thriving and for which a reduction in hours would seem more likely to hurt revenue than to save costs.

Second, the Postal Service's use of the term discontinuance study is confusing. We have heard from other communities in the context of post office closing appeals that the Service seems to have made its mind up before engaging in a discontinuance study which, in the USPS Handbook, presumes an open mind and the chance that a decision to keep a post office open is possible. In the context of POSTPlan, a decision has indeed been made in advance of any discontinuance study but the discontinuance study is used as a balance to the option of keeping the post office open – albeit at fewer operating hours.

The letters to communities and the surveys and options offered to them should clarify this distinction and inform the community that there is no option to maintain the status quo hours of operation.

The Postal Service should work diligently to maintain the goodwill and support of mail users and community leaders. It should use the concerns expressed publicly in this docket to improve relationships and build a stronger postal service for the future.