

**Opening Statement of Tony Hammond
Nomination to the Postal Regulatory Commission
Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee
March 6, 2012**

Thank you, Senator Carper.

First, I do want to express my appreciation to you and all the members of the Committee for scheduling this hearing to consider my nomination to return to the Postal Regulatory Commission.

I appreciate the confidence President Obama has placed in me with his nomination, as well as the support I have received from Senate Minority Leader McConnell during this process.

And, I especially want to thank Senator Roy Blunt, who my family and I have been privileged to call a friend for many years, and especially for the decades of service that he has given to the citizens of Missouri. I am grateful for his willingness to be here today to introduce me to this Committee.

I also wish to acknowledge my recent colleagues, Vice Chairman Nanci Langley, Commissioner Mark Acton and Commissioner Robert Taub for the support they have given me in attending today. Their friendship in our working together has been invaluable.

When I first became a Commissioner in 2002, the PRC was an entirely different agency. As you know, the old Postal Rate Commission was mainly responsible for considering changes in postal rates and classifications.

With the passage of the Postal Accountability and Enhancement Act in 2006, the PRC acquired enhanced responsibilities which required a major revamping of the agency functions.

With the leadership of then-Chairman Dan Blair and genuine cooperation among all the Commissioners, and with a dedicated PRC staff, we were able to achieve the transformation in a responsible and effective manner in keeping with the mandates of the PAEA.

I was pleased to be actively involved in all the transition activities.

Among them, we were required to implement an entirely new ratemaking system, which we were actually able to complete several months in advance of the deadline.

The Commission was also timely in providing the mandated Report to the Congress on the Postal Service's Universal Service Obligation.

In addition, each year, we are responsible for producing the comprehensive Annual Compliance Determination (ACD), which is the important look-back regulatory model of the PAEA.

Along with the annual rate change cases and the other requested decisions, I've also worked with the other members of the Commission in the formal Advisory Opinion requests received from the Postal Service. And, of course, the Commission's unanimous ruling on the Postal Service's Exigent Rate Request.

With the Postal Service dealing with such severe financial difficulties, I know that the Postal Regulatory Commission has an extra responsibility to adjudicate fairly, in a professional and timely manner, all the Decisions on every case that comes before us.

I also know that we must be mindful that all our activities are carried out in a responsible and transparent manner that makes wise use of the ratepayer dollars that provide the PRC's annual budget.

For over nine years, I enjoyed the challenging work at the Commission. And I hope this Committee will look favorably on my experience and enthusiasm in considering my return to the PRC.

Mr. Chairman, thank you, again, for this opportunity. I will be happy to respond to any questions you and your colleagues have.