



# Postal Regulatory Commission

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## Press Release

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### POSTAL REGULATORY COMMISSION TO CONSIDER CHANGES IN ITS ADVISORY OPINION PROCESS

**Washington, DC** – The Postal Regulatory Commission today issued an Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking asking the public for comments and suggestions on possible improvements to its rules for considering Postal Service requests for Advisory Opinions related to significant changes in service. The full text of the Advance Notice is available on the Commission website, [www.prc.gov](http://www.prc.gov). Comments are due within 60 days of the date of publication of this notice in the *Federal Register*.

The Commission is required by law to issue Advisory Opinions on Postal Service proposals for “a change in the nature of postal services which will generally affect service on a nationwide, or substantially nationwide basis...” [39 U.S.C. 3661(b)]. Since 2009, the Commission has received four proposals including the elimination of Saturday mail delivery, the closure of hundreds of stations and branches, the closure of thousands of rural post offices, and the elimination of overnight delivery service. From 1970 to 2008, the Postal Service filed only six such proposals.

“Considering the ongoing changes in communication technology and the serious financial challenges the Postal Service now faces, the frequency and complexity of its requests is likely to continue,” said Chairman Ruth Y. Goldway. “The Postal Service has expressed a desire for more expeditious responses from the Commission, and both the public and stakeholders have asked that our Advisory Opinions have greater relevance to the Postal Service’s planning process. The Commission welcomes input as to how best to expedite the process, while ensuring due process for participants and a meaningful outcome.”

The time required to issue an advisory opinion is largely dependent upon the complexity of the proposed change in service. Previous proceedings have ranged from a low of 5 months (Docket No. N2011-1) to a high of 12 months (Docket No. N2010-1). The advisory opinion process must include a “hearing on the record” as defined by the federal Administrative Procedure Act (APA). In a time when electronic communications are rapidly altering the way people communicate and conduct their business, the Commission will be reexamining its existing advisory opinion procedures and regulations and is seeking public input to determine if the process may be improved.

Comments and suggestions received will be available for review on the Commission’s website, [www.prc.gov](http://www.prc.gov).

*The Postal Regulatory Commission is an independent federal agency that provides regulatory oversight over the U.S. Postal Service to ensure the transparency and accountability of the Postal Service and foster a vital and efficient universal mail system. The Commission is comprised of five Presidentially-appointed and Senate-confirmed Commissioners, each serving terms of six years. The Chairman is designated by the President. In addition to Chairman Goldway, the other Commissioners are Vice Chairman Nanci Langley, Mark Acton and Robert Taub.*