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March 26, 2013

Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Mr. Donahoe:

As you are no doubt aware, the non-partisan Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently issued a legal opinion that was unambiguous: the United States Postal Service (USPS) has no legal authority to end Saturday mail delivery without the approval of Congress.

Both the House and the Senate passed the Full Year Continuing Appropriations Act clearly stating that the USPS shall continue 6-day delivery and rural delivery of mail at not less than the 1983 level.

Unfortunately, while the law and the GAO's legal opinion are unequivocal, I am not aware of any public statement from the USPS that it will discontinue its plans to eliminate Saturday mail service beginning on August 1, 2013.

Therefore, I am urging you to make it clear to the American people that the USPS will continue Saturday mail delivery in adherence with the law as soon as possible.

Everyone understands that the USPS is facing significant financial problems. As you know, the major reason that the Postal Service is in bad financial shape today is because of a Congressional mandate to pre-fund 75 years of future retiree health benefits over a 10 year period. No other government agency, no other corporation in America is burdened with this mandate. This pre-funding mandate is responsible for about 80 percent of the Postal Service's financial losses since 2007.

Before this pre-funding mandate was signed into law by President George W. Bush, the Postal Service was making a profit. In fact, from 2003 through 2006, the Postal Service made a combined profit of more than \$9 billion. I look forward to working with you to end this onerous mandate once and for all which would keep the Postal Service healthy and thriving for years to come.

The other major reason that the USPS is financially strapped is because of a 2006 law banning the Postal Service from offering new and innovative products and services. It is clear to me and many others that there are significant opportunities for increased revenue for the USPS if given the opportunity to aggressively compete in the marketplace.

I and many other members of the Senate look forward to working with you to make certain the Postal Service continues to play an enormously important role in our economy and in rural America. I look forward to you meeting with us in the coming weeks to determine how we can best work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Bernard Sanders". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "B".

Bernard Sanders
United States Senator