

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 13, 2011

Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General and Chief Executive Officer
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, D.C. 20260

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe:

We write to you today to express our concerns that the closure of the Tulsa, Oklahoma Processing & Distribution Center (P&DC) may be short-sighted. According to the U.S. Postal Service's conclusion of the Area Mail Processing (AMP) study for the Tulsa P&DC, those results make your business case for closing our local facility. We fully understand that the Postal Service has tough choices to make in light of their financial situation, and we support them making the best business decisions to remain solvent and financially competitive in the 21st century, however, we are concerned that some of these choices may be in haste.

While we understand the USPS has agreed to delay the closing or consolidation of any Post Office or mail processing facility until May 15, 2012, we still have concerns with the decision to close Tulsa's facility. Of all the states facing P&DC consolidation, Oklahoma has the largest population at 3.7 million. The eastern part of the state is gaining recognition as a fast growing metropolitan area. Even *Business Week* recognized Tulsa as the 7th strongest metro economy in 2009, and it continues to grow and flourish while other municipal economies around the country struggle. When a state like Wyoming with a population of just about 563,000, less than the population of the Tulsa metropolitan area alone, has nine P&DCs to begin with and will have two at the end of the restructuring, we are skeptical of the reasons for shuttering a facility that has proven a vibrant business tool for a large metropolitan area.

There are realities about this facility and facts about the economic impact that may not have been taken into consideration for the study that concluded the facility should be closed. Many of our constituents in eastern Oklahoma are convinced that the closing of this facility would have dire economic consequences. We have seen the AMP data provided by the USPS, but it does not explain in enough detail the case for closure. If 573 jobs are to be moved out of Tulsa, our constituents, which includes postal employees, area businesses, and customers alike, want more details on how the USPS arrived at this conclusion.

Before any further action is taken in regard to the Tulsa P&DC, we ask for written responses to the following questions:

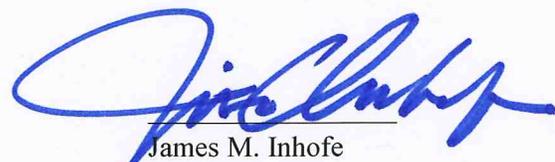
1. According to the USPS' own data, out of 487 P&DCs across the country, Tulsa's facility ranks at 12 in efficiency. In the Southwest region, Tulsa ranks at 6. How do your own efficiency rankings prove that one processing center in the state of Oklahoma would be a more cost-effective way of processing mail?

2. One of the most unclear aspects of the AMP study is the projected transportation costs. Many people in eastern Oklahoma are having a hard time understanding how it is more efficient to truck mail that originates in Tulsa to Oklahoma City, and back to Tulsa for its destination. Can you provide documentation as to how you determined the \$2,301,936 million in annual transportation costs stated in the Tulsa data? Can you provide the accompanying data that shows projected fuel costs, fleet maintenance schedules, and other materials that would better explain this total?
3. The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) issued a report in May 2011 that found the USPS fleet of 210,000 vehicles is aging, seeing higher maintenance costs as a result, and needs new vehicles. It is estimated that it will cost \$5.8 billion to replace the delivery vehicles alone. With this GAO report in mind, were the maintenance and replacement costs of the USPS fleet taken into account in the projected annual transportation cost of eliminating the Tulsa P&DC?
4. The 41,000 businesses in northeast Oklahoma rely upon the expedient delivery of their products and materials via USPS. The Tulsa Metro Chamber suggests that closing this facility could cost Tulsa more than \$60 million annually. Was an economic impact study done simultaneously to the AMP study or is one planned for the future?
5. Have you taken into account the projected economic growth of not only the northeastern part of the state, but the entire state of Oklahoma, and the potential costs that may bring in servicing a fast growing part of the state?
6. USPS data indicates that closing Tulsa's P&DC will save \$11 million annually. What other cost-saving options were explored before it was decided to study this facility for closure?
7. Taking into account that one of the issues USPS is facing as it makes these cost-savings decisions is limitation by Congress. What can Congress do to give the USPS more flexibility that would prevent the closure of this facility?

We understand that reforming and restructuring the Postal Service requires tough choices and painful change. If a lack of flexibility is standing in the way of becoming competitive again, we want to work with you. However, a hasty, short-sighted decision to close a facility that has a proven track record of efficiency and a key location in a burgeoning area of the state could potentially set up a bigger problem for the Postal Service in the future. Decisions made by USPS in May of 2012 may directly impact hundreds of jobs and the livelihoods of our constituents—they need a clear answer as to why this closure makes sense, and we respectfully request that you provide that answer to us.

Sincerely,


John Sullivan
Member of Congress


James M. Inhofe
U.S. Senator