

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

November 19, 2009

The Honorable John E. Potter  
Postmaster General  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW  
Washington, DC 20260-0010

Dear Mr. Postmaster General:

We are concerned about two decisions made by the Alaska District office of the United States Postal Service (USPS) affecting holiday mailings in North Pole, Alaska.

Since its inception, the City of North Pole, Alaska, has enjoyed the motto "Where the Spirit of Christmas Lives Year Round." There are several non-profit corporations and organizations helping Santa Claus answer letters exemplifying the spirit of Christmas. Many customers who send letters during the holiday season enjoy having their stamps cancelled with a 'North Pole' cancellation.

Now it has been confirmed by the Alaska District Manager the bulk machine cancellation for North Pole will now take place in Anchorage instead of at the main post office in Fairbanks. We understand the pressure the USPS is under because of the significant amount of revenue loss and appreciate the service it provides to Alaska. However, we would like to know what consideration was given to the impact this decision may have on businesses in the area, which rely on the North Pole cancellation given such letters will now be sent to Anchorage rather than Fairbanks. We are especially disappointed to learn that no one in the North Pole and Fairbanks communities were informed about these change before they were finalized.

We would also like to be assured when a customer drops off a piece of mail at a post office at any locale in Alaska and requests a North Pole cancellation, you have a reliable mechanism in place to ensure that takes place - and the letter doesn't end up with a local or Anchorage cancellation. In addition, we seek assurance for those customers who bring

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a reasonably small number of stamped letters to the North Pole Post Office branch that hand cancellation is still available.

Secondly, we request you review the decision made by the Alaska District to not give an opportunity to local non-profits (under the new privacy program rules) to assist in answering letters sent by children addressed to Santa. May we suggest you work with the local community to find a way to both protect children's privacy and ensure their letters to Santa will be answered? Would it be possible to work with the local nonprofits and require they certify there are no volunteers who have questionable past activity?

In addition, to avoid misinformation and to improve the decision-making process, we suggest local officials and community and business leaders be consulted during deliberations and be kept abreast of all current and future developments regarding this issue.

Thank you consideration and for the many ways you bring quality, affordable, efficient service to Alaskans.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich  
United States Senator



Don Young  
United States Congressman