



May 5, 2020

Senator Lisa Murkowski
522 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Dan Sullivan
302 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20510

Congressman Don Young
2314 Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Congressman Young,

The Petersburg Borough Assembly is writing to express our support for financial relief to the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic's harmful impact on USPS operations pose a major threat to the Service's long-term financial viability and by extension its ability to deliver mail and packages in rural Alaska. As you know, the USPS and its bypass mail services are lifelines to many rural residents in Alaska, providing access to medicines, food products, and other necessities of daily life that those in the lower 48 States have ready access to and at a cheaper cost.

The CARES Act provides up to \$10 billion in borrowing authority for the USPS to obtain a loan from the U.S. Treasury to buttress funding for its operating expenses as well as pay down existing debt. We understand, however, from media reports that the Treasury Department is seeking to attach unrelated conditions to the loan having to do with Postal Service package rates, third-party service agreements and its hiring of senior managers. Discussion of higher package rates is troubling for us to hear in Petersburg when Alaska package delivery rates are among the highest in the nation to begin with. Added to these issues are the unresolved long-term financial issues the USPS faces which have not gone away with the COVID-19 crisis and likely have gotten worse. Congress has on and off considered postal reform legislation for the last decade. From an Alaskan perspective, postal reform often appears in the form of threats to the bypass mail program and closure of rural Post Offices. When we hear of conditions and reforms being attached to the loan, these thoughts come to mind.

We would urge you to encourage the Treasury Department to approve the \$10 billion loan with minimal restrictions or intrusions into postal operations that would have negative outcomes for rural postal delivery. The Postal Board of Governors has indicated that additional funding of \$75 billion split equally among emergency funding, more borrowing authority, and investment in a modernized fleet and other infrastructure is necessary for the Postal Service to maintain financial viability through this decade. We would further urge you to give serious consideration to this request as Congress considers the next round of COVID-19 relief legislation.

Thank you for consideration of this request and your support for Petersburg and its residents.

Respectfully,

Mark Jensen
Mayor