



February 4, 2011

Ms. Susan Gretkowski
Municipal Office Building
108 Shed Road
Berlin, VT 05602-9049

Dear Ms. Gretkowski:

This responds to your January 12 letter to former Postmaster General John E. Potter, requesting the re-establishment of a postal facility in the Town of Berlin.

I appreciate your interest in ensuring that the residents and businesses of Berlin have access to essential postal services. Please know that we understand the extent to which local communities rely upon and appreciate our organization. However, the financial challenges faced by the U.S. Postal Service when we previously responded to your similar request on October 27, 2008, (a copy of which is enclosed) have only increased since then.

As you are aware, the Postal Service is a self-supporting agency that funds its operations from the revenue generated by the sales of our products and services—not taxpayer subsidies received through the Congressional appropriations process. The continuing effects of the economic slowdown and the rate at which mail is migrating from traditional postal hard copy services to electronic media continue to negatively impact mail volume and the related revenue. Mail volume declined by 6.2 billion pieces in 2010, after a 26 billion piece decline in 2009. Despite increases in productivity and \$11 billion in cost savings over the past three years, the Postal Service experienced net losses of \$8.5 billion, \$3.8 billion, and \$2.8 billion for the years ended 2010, 2009, and 2008, respectively. Forecasts for 2011 appear equally as dim.

In the face of such difficulties, the Postal Service is pursuing solutions and strategies to reduce costs and adjust its operations and resources to achieve long-term financial success. No new Post Office projects have been approved, and approvals for certain projects from prior years have been rescinded. We agree that it would be ideal if we could provide every community across the country with the most modern, up-to-date Post Office. Unfortunately, that is not possible. Please be assured that Northern New England District postal officials will continue to monitor service to our Berlin customers and take appropriate action should changes become necessary for more efficient postal operations.

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Thank you for writing. Please let me know if I can be of assistance in other postal matters.

Sincerely,


William J. Weagley
Manager, Government Relations Response