

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

February 12, 2021

Vice President Gregory Graves  
Area Retail and Delivery Operations, Western Pacific Area  
United States Postal Service

Dear Vice President Graves,

First, we would like to acknowledge the difficult situation that the United States Postal Service (“USPS”) is currently in due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. We are appreciative of the work of postal workers during these very difficult times, and it is of paramount importance that your agency has enough funding to continue operations.

Today we write to express concerns with the current operations of the USPS regarding the communities of Estes Park, Drake, and Glen Haven, Colorado, and to request a prompt response to the questions listed below. Over the past few months and even years, our offices have heard numerous complaints from dozens of constituents about problems with mail service to these communities. The complaints detailed chronic and ongoing issues with mail, including bills and medications, not being delivered. We have also heard that there is a lack of retail services, changes to the operating hours, and frequently limited hours at the Drake post office. Constituents stated that there is often no one available to sort the mail into the mailboxes, leading to mail and packages piling up while constituents wait. In these mountain communities, it is necessary that the USPS delivers important medication, bills, or other important documents accurately and in a timely manner, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. We understand that some of these problems stem from understaffing issues which are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, but many of them are not new.

The USPS congressional liaison offices in Washington, D.C., and Colorado have provided some information regarding these concerns, and we want to acknowledge their efforts. We would appreciate a more in-depth response with a plan to address these issues, including answers to the following:

Our constituents in Drake rely on picking up their mail from P.O. boxes at the post office, and the frequently changing and limited hours make it difficult for that service to be reliable.

- Can you confirm that this issue has been resolved?

After the Drake post office was removed due to damage from the 2013 floods, a permanent postal facility was not rebuilt. USPS has instituted a temporary facility in Drake in the lobby of the River Forks Inn.

- What are your plans to reinstate a permanent postal facility in Drake, instead of the current temporary facility?

As you know, constituents in Estes Park, Drake, and Glen Haven have been contacting us since at least 2018 with concerns about the Estes Park post office, including missing mail and packages, mail delivered to incorrect addresses or incorrectly returned to sender, poor customer service, and a perceived hostile work environment for employees. We continue to hear these concerns.

- What is USPS currently doing to address these issues? More generally, what criteria have to be met for just cause to replace management at post offices?

We understand that the Estes Park postmaster is currently borrowing staff from other offices to staff Drake and Glen Haven and are appreciative of their efforts to increase staffing. However, it seems critical that additional efforts are made to permanently increase and retain additional staff, as these inconsistencies have been ongoing and we are continuing to hear complaints from constituents about delays in their mail delivery.

- What steps have you taken to hire additional postal workers in these facilities, or to bring in additional workers from nearby post offices to help with the staff shortages? Are you supporting pay increases or other methods to attract additional postal workers to the Estes Park, Drake, and Glen Haven post offices? Do you have a long-term plan in place to address the chronic understaffing issues in mountain and rural post offices?

We have heard concerns from constituents that their mail is not being delivered because of minor differences between the way their mail is addressed and the USPS address standards.

- Have you clearly communicated with constituents what these guidelines are, and in what scenarios packages or mail would be returned to sender? Is there a way you can facilitate the delivery of packages that may not be addressed properly but that are addressed in such a way that the destination is evident?

Regarding P.O. boxes in Glen Haven, our current understanding from USPS is that the HOA at The Retreat in Glen Haven made a decision in the fall of 2020 to forego the USPS offer to place a cluster box in their community, and that USPS therefore would begin to formally require residents to pay for P.O. boxes. However, some residents dispute that the HOA reached this decision or were unaware of any such decision.

- Can you please explain the reasoning for the USPS decision to charge Glen Haven and Drake residents for P.O. boxes beginning in February 2020 when they had not been charged for P.O. boxes in the years prior to that?
- Can you please provide us with documentation of the HOA decision and other documentation regarding your outreach to the community prior to this decision? Given that the decision was made in the fall, what are you planning to do regarding Glen Haven residents who have already paid for their P.O. boxes, and notifying these residents of this plan?
- Our understanding is that the USPS is currently in similar negotiations with Drake residents in the Storm Mountain community. What is the status of these negotiations? Are residents being refunded what they have been required to pay for P.O. boxes, or have you suspended those charges until a formal decision is made?

As you know, there is a community petition to shift the management of the Drake post office from Estes Park to Loveland.

- Is there precedent for transferring the management of individual post offices to a nearby regional facility? If so, what criteria need to be in place for such a transfer?

We appreciate your attention to these matters and hope that we can resolve these issues as soon as possible. We look forward to hearing from you soon and working with you to improve mail delivery in these areas.

Sincerely,



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator

cc: Donna Walker, Area Manager, Consumer & Industry Contact, USPS