

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 26, 2012

The Honorable Patrick R. Donahoe
Postmaster General
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington D.C. 20260-3500

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe,

We write in strong opposition to the potential closing of the Buffalo Processing and Distribution Center (Buffalo P&DC) and respectfully urge you to remove this site from the United States Postal Service's list of Area Mail Processing facilities that could be subject to consolidation. Importantly, the Buffalo P&DC plays a vital economic, service, and community role in the Western New York region and its continued operation is essential to the economic vitality of the City of Buffalo and its surrounding areas, all of which depend on this facility as an invaluable source of employment, commercial stimulus, and exceptional delivery standards.

In examining the consolidation and closure of any mail processing or retail facility, we believe that USPS must consider all relevant factors prior to reaching a determination that a site will subject to such action. In particular, due diligence requires that the Postal Service afford maximum consideration to the overall impact of a decision on local residents, postal employees, businesses, and the affected community at-large. Included among the variety of factors that must be taken into account is the economic importance of the facility to the continued vitality of the region. In this regard, the Buffalo PD&C is essential to maintaining economic growth in the City of Buffalo and the greater Western New York area.

Specifically, in September of 2011, the United States Postal Service (USPS) recognized the Buffalo Niagara region as a gold medal award winner for its practices that "create business growth opportunities for the Postal Service." Given that the Buffalo P&DC currently employs over 700 postal employees and generates significant regional economic activity in terms of labor income and tax revenue, the presence of this facility has been a critical factor behind such economic growth. In addition, with the recent announcement by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, in his State of the State address, that \$1 billion will be invested in the Buffalo area for economic development, it is clear that the continued operation of the Buffalo P&DC will be essential as the Western New York region undertakes efforts to enhance economic, business, and employment opportunities in the area. Moreover, this important facility is located in the second-largest city in the State of New York and as such, is integral to USPS's commitment to providing exceptional delivery to a significant customer base that not only consists of the greater Buffalo residential and business population but also customers in surrounding areas.

Regrettably, a recent Area Mail Processing Feasibility Study for the Buffalo PD&C and an advisory opinion issued by the Postal Regulatory Commission N2001-1 on the USPS's Retail Access Optimization Initiative indicate that the USPS has not considered several relevant factors before placing the facility on its consolidation study list.

Ruth Goldway, the Chairman of the Postal Regulatory Commission stated in respect to the PRC opinion from December of 2011 that "The Commission was unanimous in expressing its concern that the Postal Service's plan did not and could not, because of a lack of data and analysis, determine the facilities most likely to serve the greatest number, reduce the greatest costs, or enhance the potential for growth or stability of the system." This advisory opinion in regards to retail locations illustrates a need for greater analysis and data collection by the USPS in their review processes.

In addition, the Area Mail Processing Feasibility Study that was released on December 20, 2011 contained one page of data on the savings to the USPS that closing the Buffalo PD&C would realize. That data was subsequently updated and proven to be contradictory to the original statements of the USPS in terms of total positions impacted, savings in management, transportation, and maintenance, all while providing no data on the economic impact on the community. International commerce and trade are never mentioned in the report though over 30 million pieces of mail from Canada are processed at the facility every week.

We applaud the decision by USPS to place a 5-month moratorium on the consolidation and closure of mail facilities through May 15, 2012. However, given the economic detriment, employee displacement, and disruption of service to the Buffalo Region that would result from the consolidation of the Buffalo P&DC, we again urge you to remove the facility from your list of potential consolidation sites. In the intervening time, we also ask that the consolidation study undertaken by USPS in relation to the Buffalo PD&C includes a review of all relevant data and analytical tools in order to ensure maximum input from postal stakeholders and residents in the Western New York community.

Sincerely,



BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress



STEPHEN F. LYNCH
Member of Congress