



January 26, 2021

The Honorable Bob Gibbs
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3507

Dear Congressman Gibbs:

This responds to your January 6 letter to Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, regarding postal operations.

I understand your concerns about delivery delays in the state of Ohio. I want to assure you that the U.S. Postal Service is doing everything within its power to provide timely and efficient delivery of mail.

While the Postal Service carefully plans for peak delivery season each year, we experienced a historic and unprecedented surge in holiday mail this year. Moreover, many regions of the country, including Northern Ohio, have experienced temporary personnel shortages in delivery units and mail processing facilities related to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as capacity challenges with airlift and trucking to move the spike in mail volume, all of which has led to recent delays. Similar challenges were felt by shippers throughout the industry.

Please find our responses to your specific questions below:

1. How many seasonal workers have been hired and how long will they be employed?

In our Northern Ohio District, 776 seasonal workers were hired across mail processing operations and customer service. Approximately half of those employees will remain employed through March 26, 2021.

2. Has the opening of an additional distribution center in Twinsburg made an impact on mail delivery?

The Twinsburg Annex allowed for additional temporary capacity to process the unparalleled volume of packages mailed during peak season. It also allowed for direct dispatches to delivery with support from our customer service team.

3. Besides seasonal hiring, what is USPS doing in Northern Ohio to improve delivery performance?

The entire Postal Service team is working feverishly to address any issues and concerns as they arise. In response to these challenges in Northern Ohio, we are utilizing all resources and overtime to the maximum extent to manage the surge in volume and eliminate delays. Customer service employees are working overtime, some are working as many as 7 days a week. As necessary, we are shifting mail volumes to nearby facilities with available processing and network capacity. District leadership has been assisting on the loading docks and workroom floor to ensure the mail volume is processed as expeditiously as possible given the circumstances. Furthermore, we have augmented operational capacity with additional equipment, and have leased extra vehicles to expedite deliveries as needed. We have also added Sunday delivery to locations with high package volume and expanded package delivery windows where mail volume warrants.

4. What accounts for the 14.2 percent drop in on-time performance?

The primary driver of the decline in on-time performance across the state of Ohio, particularly in our mail processing facilities, was the heavy impact on employee availability due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Cleveland Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC) and Cleveland FSS Annex were particularly hit hard with availability issues as well as record-setting volume increases resulting from a change in consumer shipping behavior in light of the pandemic.

5. Would adding a permanent third sorting facility for the state of Ohio improve service? If so, would USPS consider bringing a new facility online in 2021?

There are currently eight mail processing facilities in Ohio—Columbus P&DC, Cincinnati P&DC, Cincinnati Network Distribution Center, Dayton P&DC, Akron P&DC, Cleveland P&DC, Cleveland FSS Annex, and Springdale Annex. Under normal circumstances, outside of peak season and the pandemic, these facilities have demonstrated the ability to reach operational targets necessary to achieve service performance standards. We continue to evaluate workloads and trends to make operational adjustments as necessary.

We are proud of the efforts of our dedicated employees and will continue to work around the clock to deliver all packages and mail entered into our system. We regret any negative service impacts that our customers have experienced due to factors outside our control, including the pandemic and resulting staffing shortages, and we appreciate their continued support and understanding as we work to rectify the issues.

Thank you for writing. If I can be of assistance in other postal matters, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Thomas Arsenault
Government Relations Representative