

December 15, 2023

Kathy Hand
Senior Director of Processing, Midwest
United States Postal Service

Angela Bye
District Manager, MN-ND District
United States Postal Service

Dear Director Hand and District Manager Bye:

I write to follow-up on our recent conversations and further detail the concerns I am hearing from my constituents regarding a number of issues facing the postal service in North Dakota. As you are aware, my office has received complaints about delayed delivery times in several parts of the state, including in Dickinson, as well as concerns about ongoing Mail Processing Facility Reviews (MPFRs) in Grand Forks and Bismarck and damaged cluster box units in Minot. Thank you both for taking the time to speak with me earlier to learn more about these concerns and for making a commitment to address these issues so that North Dakotans can receive the quality of mail delivery service that they deserve.

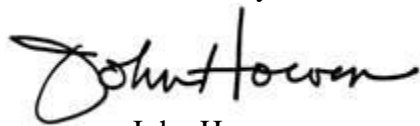
United States Postal Service (USPS) delivery standards must not only be maintained but improved, particularly in rural areas. From receiving the local newspaper to refilling prescriptions, paying bills, and sending packages to family and friends during the holiday season, my constituents rely on the essential services provided by USPS. While I understand USPS has had difficulty filling open mail carrier positions, solutions to address and overcome these challenges must be found.

Additionally, as USPS undertakes MPFRs in Grand Forks and Bismarck, it is imperative that any relocation of sortation and processing operations does not negatively impact delivery times in these communities. At this time, USPS has yet to provide assurances that these changes will not negatively impact North Dakota customers and businesses. The proposed changes would affect all postal customers, even those who do not live near Grand Forks or Bismarck, and USPS should not hastily proceed with any significant changes to its originating mail processing operations until due diligence and public involvement has occurred. That is why I am disappointed that USPS has chosen to set a deadline to receive comments on the changes which coincides with the busy holiday season, and am concerned that this date may hinder the ability of my constituents to provide their feedback to USPS on any proposed changes. There must be an open dialogue and USPS should take time to answer any questions or concerns North Dakotans may have about the proposed changes. To this end, I ask that you provide answers to the following questions related to the MPFRs in Grand Forks and Bismarck as well as others related to mail delivery service no later than Wednesday, December 20:

1. Will USPS provide assurances that it will listen to feedback provided by North Dakotans on the MPFRs in Grand Forks and Bismarck, communicate with the public, and be responsive to any questions or concerns raised by the community?
2. Should USPS move forward with relocating originating mail processing operations from Grand Forks and Bismarck to Fargo, will USPS ensure that local newspapers are not sent to Fargo for processing but rather remain within their respective communities for prompt delivery?
3. Has USPS examined whether it is more efficient to pre-sort local mail in Grand Forks and Bismarck and then deliver locally as opposed to sending this mail to Fargo for sorting and then back to these communities for delivery? If so, what studies have been conducted and what conclusions were found? If not, will USPS conduct such a study prior to making a decision on whether to move forward with its proposal?
4. We understand that there are delivery issues, particularly with local newspapers, that are concentrated in an area located in downtown Dickinson, and are told that the route did not have a mail carrier. Has USPS assigned a mail carrier to the route in downtown Dickinson that was experiencing no local newspaper delivery on Wednesdays?
5. Have all USPS-owned cluster box units (CBUs) in Minot, North Dakota that have pending service tickets been repaired or scheduled to be repaired in the near future?
6. Regarding non-USPS-owned CBUs, has USPS communicated the need for inoperable CBUs to be repaired with relevant developers or homeowner associations (HOAs)?

I appreciate your prompt attention to these important matters and look forward to working with you to ensure reliable postal services across North Dakota.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Hoeven". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

John Hoeven
U.S. Senator