

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 5, 2024

Ms. Tammy Hull
Inspector General
United States Postal Service
1735 North Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209

Dear Inspector General Hull:

We write following your office's recent announcement that it is expanding the ongoing audit and evaluation of United States Postal Service (USPS) delivery operations across the Minnesota-North Dakota district to include the Bismarck, Mandan, and Minot Post Offices in North Dakota. We appreciate your decision to include these facilities in the scope of the audit as a result of the concerns we raised on behalf of our constituents. Due to the wide range of issues facing the postal service across our state, we request that you further expand the ongoing district-wide audit to include additional postal facilities in North Dakota, as well as a full examination of the potential mail delivery impacts resulting from implementation of the USPS' Mail Processing Facility Review (MPFR) proposals for Grand Forks and Bismarck.

Over the past several months, our offices have heard concerns from constituents about delayed delivery times in several parts of the state. From constituents who reside in downtown Dickinson to those who live in rural communities outside of Bismarck, we have heard from North Dakotans who have received newspapers late or not at all. In Minot and Horace, it was necessary to press the postal service to address a lengthy and avoidable backlog of cluster box units (CBUs) in need of repair. In some cases, months will have gone by before the necessary locks can be installed on these CBUs so that constituents do not need to go to the local post office to pick up their mail. Thus, we urge you to expand the scope of your audit to include additional facilities in North Dakota, including the Dickinson, Grand Forks, and Fargo facilities.

Further, the communities of Grand Forks and Bismarck remain concerned with the USPS's ongoing MPFRs of their current facilities and the potential relocation of some sortation and processing operations to Fargo. While the USPS held public meetings in Grand Forks and Bismarck in December of 2023, we believe stakeholders were not properly notified and the holiday season prevented robust community engagement. Additionally, our constituents were disappointed that during the meetings, USPS officials would not answer any questions regarding the proposals. It is imperative that any changes to postal operations not negatively impact delivery times in these communities and surrounding areas, which is why we ask you review the MPFR process and the associated impacts on timely mail delivery should USPS decide to move forward with its proposals.

USPS delivery standards must not only be maintained but improved, particularly in rural areas. From receiving the local newspaper, refilling prescriptions, and paying bills, our constituents rely on the essential services provided by the USPS. We appreciate the hard work of USPS employees, and while we understand that the postal service has had difficulty filling open mail carrier positions, solutions to address and overcome these challenges must be found.

Due to these ongoing and persistent concerns, we ask that you expand your audit to other facilities in North Dakota as well as include an examination of the MPFR process. We appreciate your consideration of our request and look forward to your findings, including any recommendations to ensure more reliable postal services across North Dakota.

Sincerely,



JOHN HOEVEN
U.S. Senator



KEVIN CRAMER
U.S. Senator



KELLY ARMSTRONG
U.S. Congressman