

**SUBMISSION TO THE
CANADA POST CORPORATION STRATEGIC REVIEW PANEL**

I want to thank the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review Panel for taking the time to consider my submission. As an employee of Canada Post since March 1985, as a workers' representative, but more importantly, as a Canadian living in rural Canada, the importance of preserving and enhancing our public post office is something I am very passionate about.

As one who travels extensively throughout Atlantic Canada, it is all too obvious that Canada Post is often the only federal presence left in rural communities. Rather than making recommendations that will further alienate and penalize rural Canadians, I believe this Panel must take into consideration how the most trusted service in Canada can be enhanced in these communities. Canada Post's actions to eliminate roadside home delivery and providing second class service through sub post offices must be reversed. In short, the views expressed within this submission are meant to give panel members a sense of just how important this last remaining coast-to-coast-to-coast federal service actually is and why it must be saved.

Although I, like many Canadians, anticipated a mandate review of Canada Post (given that the last one was in 1996), the April announcement the government was proceeding with this kind of review was alarming to say the least.

The short time frame which the panel would be accepting submissions, and over the summer months ; that panel members would only be working part time and most alarming of all, that the general public, the real "stakeholders" of Canada Post, would not be widely consulted were all issues of great concern.

As a Crown Corporation whose activities touch virtually every Canadian on a daily basis, it is crucial that all Canadians have an equal opportunity to present their views on any number of issues under the mandate given the CPCSRP by the federal government. For those Canadians who have no access to the internet, they are all but excluded from this process. For all those Canadians who are unaware this process is currently underway because the government has not seen fit to widely publicize it, they are excluded from this process. In my mind, this is totally unacceptable.

This short sighted and exclusionary decision to effectively block thousands of “stakeholders” from the review process by not holding open public consultations, or from not publically advertising the activities of and submissions made to Panel, is one the government of the day will have to answer to the Canadian electorate at some point in the near future.

As far back as 1981 when the Canada Post Department became a Crown Corporation, parliamentarians realized that to have a postal service that would serve all Canadians, it would cost considerably more to service this country’s rural population, six to ten times as much. They also realized that in order to provide an equal service to all of Canada, the Post Office in its new body would require a mechanism that would permit it to offset this higher cost with that of the cost of servicing the more densely populated regions of the country. To truly provide a “universal service”, the government mandated Canada Post Corporation with the “exclusive privilege” to deliver Lettermail.

This “exclusive privilege” has meant that regardless of where in this vast country you chose to live, you could expect not to be treated as somehow a lesser

citizen; paying the same postage to mail a letter as someone who chose to live in a much larger centre such as Toronto, Montreal, Calgary or Vancouver.

As I am sure Panel members are fully aware, without the mechanism of an “exclusive privilege”, postal service in many, many communities would be virtually non-existent. Without the proceeds earned from the “exclusive privilege”, Canada Post would find it increasingly impossible to provide a universal service.

This “deregulation” experiment has been played out already as other postal administrations and governments have bowed to the pressure to deregulate their services. This “experiment” has meant higher costs and fewer services for those who reside outside large urban centres while large mail volume users and corporations have seen their services become more specialized and cheaper. One only needs to look at what has transpired in Sweden, Norway, Germany and the United Kingdom to see that the former owners of their postal services are left “holding the bag”.

The list of companies that have long since abandoned their physical presence in and commitment to rural Canada is endless. While banks, rail and bus services, and other essentials have left, the spirit of survival and perseverance is alive and well in rural Canada. This situation should be open-door to Canada Post to use its presence in thousands of small rural communities to offer an expanded array of products and services such as banking, internet access, and products and services directed at the growing needs of small and home businesses.

During the late 1980's to mid 1990's, rural Canadians and small businesses fought back against the government's plans to close hundreds of post offices. They came together to tell those who would deprive them of their right to be treated with respect and fairness, simply because of where they chose to live, work and raise their families, they would not stand for such treatment. The government conceded and a moratorium of post office closures was announced. The situation remains the same today. They will fight to preserve their way of life.

The CPCSRP has the mandate to ensure this fight does not have to happen by recommending that Canada Post retain the “exclusive privilege” to deliver Lettermail and by directing Canada Post to invest, not divest, in services and jobs for rural communities.

Respectfully submitted by

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