

## King, Grassley, Harkin Ask USPS to Delay Consolidation of Sioux City Mail Processing Facility

Written by Grassley Press

Monday, 29 August 2011 09:17

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Washington, D.C.- Congressman Steve King (R-IA), Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) announce that they have formally requested that the United States Postal Service delay the implementation of its plan to consolidate mail processing operations in Sioux City with a mail processing center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The request was made in a letter sent by the three members of Congress to Postmaster General Patrick Donahoe this afternoon. The letter notes that a delay in the final implementation of the consolidation proposal is warranted and necessary because the USPS has spent weeks stalling the release of information sought by Sioux City officials attempting to prepare a counter proposal in advance of the September 16 deadline.

"It is clear that the USPS is attempting to 'run out the clock' on Sioux City's efforts to develop a counter proposal to the USPS consolidation plan, and they should not be given a free pass to do so," said King. "The Postmaster General promised me, Senator Grassley and Senator Harkin that Sioux City would be given sufficient time to analyze the AMP data and to develop a counter proposal, but for three weeks the USPS undermined this commitment by stalling the data's release. The request for a delay is reasonable, and the USPS should grant it to honor the Postmaster General's promises to the community."

"Up to this point, the Postal Service's response to questions and concerns from the congressional delegation and Sioux City community leaders has been disappointing," said Grassley. "Yesterday's meeting, for the first time, provided some information to the community, but it's too little, too late, and puts Sioux City in a difficult situation. Sioux City deserves better treatment than what it's gotten from the Postal Service. The least the Postal Service can do is provide additional time for the community to adequately respond."

"After yesterday's meeting, it is abundantly clear that USPS is slow-walking this process," said Harkin. "The only reasonable option at this point is to try to delay any closure until sufficient information is available from all relevant groups."

The text of the letter sent by Congressman King, Senator Grassley and Senator Harkin follows:

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August 26, 2011

Mr. Patrick R. Donahoe  
Postmaster General &  
Chief Executive Officer  
United States Postal Service  
475 L'Enfant Plaza, SW Room 10022  
Washington, DC 20260-0010

Dear Postmaster General Donahoe,

We are writing to request a delay in the final implementation of the consolidation of Sioux City's mail processing operations into those of the mail processing facility located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

On August 1st, when we met with you in Senator Grassley's office, you committed to us that Sioux City's community and business leaders would have the opportunity to present the Postal Service with a counter proposal to avoid closure of Sioux City's processing plant, and you assured us that these leaders would be given the information needed to develop such a proposal. Yesterday, more than three weeks after our meeting, Postal Service officials traveled to Sioux City in an effort to fulfill your commitment. It was the first time that city and community leaders were given any additional information about the rationale for the proposed consolidation and the type of counter proposal that would be necessary to keep Sioux City's mail processing plant open. In light of this fact, we believe that it is reasonable to ask the Postal Service to delay the final implementation of this consolidation to allow sufficient time for city and community leaders to develop a competitive counter proposal.

We also understand that in the coming days the Postal Service will be announcing plans to further reduce its nationwide mail processing network through the closure of a significant number of other processing facilities across the country. We believe that a delay in the closure of Sioux City's mail processing center will allow the Postal Service the opportunity to better consider the value of a processing center in Sioux City in light of a nationwide mail processing network that will soon undergo profound changes.

While we appreciate the efforts on behalf of the Postal Service that went in to arranging yesterday's meeting, yesterday's meeting was more than three weeks overdue and specifically excluded Postal Service employees who were best able to assist the community in analyzing the data presented. This is of significant importance because we have been told that any counter proposal from the city must be submitted by September 16th. Given the delay caused by the Postal Service in convening yesterday's meeting, the importance of the information provided yesterday regarding what a successful counter proposal might look like, and the impact that the soon to be announced realignment of the Postal Service's processing network might have on processing operations in the tri-state area, we believe that a delay in the final implementation of this consolidation is both warranted and necessary.

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Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Congressman Steve King  
Senator Chuck Grassley  
Senator Tom Harkin

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