



February 24, 2022

The Honorable Tammy L. Whitcomb  
Inspector General, U.S. Postal Service  
Office of the Inspector General  
1735 N. Lynn Street  
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Dear Inspector General Whitcomb:

I first want to commend the United States Postal Service (USPS) for the work it has done throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Postal service employees across the nation have performed admirably in the face of uncertain and ever-changing circumstances, and I am deeply grateful for the work they have done to provide critical goods and services to constituents of Maryland's Sixth Congressional District and across the state.

Today, I write to you regarding service delays and disruptions in the westernmost portions of my district, specifically in Allegany and Garrett Counties. I have consistently heard from constituents who complain of mail and other parcels being significantly delayed or, in many instances, lost entirely. In these communities, lack of broadband access means there is an increased reliance on USPS to pay bills, collect social security checks, or receive information from financial institutions. In small towns without pharmacies, the Postal Service is often the only way to get a prescription filled.

On February 14, 2022, I was given the opportunity to participate in a field hearing of the House Oversight Committee's Government Operations Subcommittee on postal delivery delays throughout the state of Maryland and, more specifically, operations at the Baltimore Processing and Distribution Center (P&DC). While the overall issues with the Baltimore P&DC are well documented,<sup>1</sup> my line of questioning focused specifically on service disruptions in Western Maryland.

---

1

<https://www.uspsoig.gov/document/efficiency-operations-baltimore-md-processing-and-distribution-center>

During the hearing, I raised the issue as to why Baltimore is the primary processing center for customers in Western Maryland, nearly 150 miles away, with Deputy Assistant Inspector General for Audit, Melinda Perez. While I greatly appreciated Ms. Perez's testimony, I am interested in a more thorough answer to my question, and thus would like to formally request the OIG examine whether or not the current processing arrangement is cost efficient and, equally if not more important, satisfactory to my constituents in Western Maryland.

For context, in February of 2012, it was announced that the Cumberland Customer Service Mail Processing Center would be consolidated, and that the facility's mail processing operations would be transferred to the Johnstown Processing and Distribution Facility, located in Johnstown, Pennsylvania.<sup>2</sup> The Johnstown Mail Processing Center is approximately 70 miles from Cumberland and, according to a USPS study done at the time, the transfer was expected to result in diminished mail service and increased transportation costs. The Cumberland Center was closed despite these findings.

However, in recent years, all mail for Western Maryland (zip codes beginning 215 and 267) has been processed in the Baltimore P&DC, which is nearly 80 miles farther away than the Johnstown facility. This means that for a resident of Cumberland, Maryland to send a letter across the city, it must travel nearly 300 miles round trip before it can be processed and delivered to its intended recipient. In fact, my caseworkers in our Cumberland District Office have resorted to asking their counterparts in Gaithersburg to mail privacy release forms and other important documents to constituents in Western Maryland. Because letters from Gaithersburg aren't sent to Baltimore to be processed, they will actually arrive in Cumberland faster than if they had been sent from Cumberland itself.

It is my understanding that the Cumberland Processing Center was closed in order to reduce costs associated with salaries, maintenance, and transportation – with the assurance that service would not be adversely impacted. However, sending letters and other packages across the entirety of Maryland just to be processed is surely incurring unnecessary transportation costs and, as I have mentioned, is producing suboptimal results for my constituents in Western Maryland.

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://about.usps.com/news/state-releases/md/2012/md\\_2012\\_0223.htm](https://about.usps.com/news/state-releases/md/2012/md_2012_0223.htm)

For these reasons, I strongly urge the OIG to examine the current postal processing arrangement in Western Maryland. Specifically, I would like to enquire as to whether:

1. Using the Baltimore service center is more cost effective than using a closer mail processing facility (e.g. Johnstown);
2. The excessive transportation costs incurred under the current arrangement are sustainable;
3. Closing the Cumberland Processing Center has actually resulted in tangible cost savings, given the new transportation arrangement to Baltimore; and
4. Service to those living in Western Maryland has been adversely affected by both the closure of the Cumberland facility and the decision to route all mail through the Baltimore P&DC.

I would appreciate your attention to this matter as soon as possible. My constituents in Western Maryland should not have to suffer persistent postal delays because of mail processing issues 150 miles away from their local post office. We owe it to them to get this right.

It is my hope that the recently House-passed Postal Service Reform Act (H.R. 3076), which I was proud to support, will give the USPS greater financial security and will allow you to reexamine past consolidation efforts, with an eye toward improving service to those living in the most rural areas.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to receiving your reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Trone".

David Trone  
Member of Congress