

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 19, 2020

Jovita Carranza
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street, SW
Washington DC 20416

Dear Administrator Carranza:

I write to express my concerns regarding the impact of recent United States Postal Service (USPS) shipping delays on small businesses. At a time when the ongoing coronavirus pandemic is already presenting small businesses across the nation with unprecedented challenges in procuring needed supplies and delivering products to customers, a sudden—and wholly unnecessary—increase in the prevalence and length of USPS shipping delays presents one more crisis that many struggling small businesses may not be able to survive.¹

While it is a positive development that Postmaster General Louis DeJoy announced that USPS will suspend policies causing mail delays until after the election, we still need answers. It is not clear if mail processing equipment and collection boxes that have been removed will be returned, and the cumulative impact of past actions that have created significant mail delays for small businesses are unlikely to be eliminated overnight.

Our nation's small businesses depend on the USPS to reach their customers. Microbusinesses—businesses with fewer than 10 employees—are even more heavily dependent upon the reliable operation of the USPS. The majority of microbusinesses identify the USPS as their preferred shipping method and microbusiness owners spend an average of \$359 each month on shipping.² It is not uncommon for small business owners to structure their entire business around the dependability of the USPS.

Yet these business owners are experiencing sudden delays in package delivery times, with widespread reports of packages arriving up to three weeks late.³ These delays present a particular threat to sole proprietors without substantial savings or access to credit, such as Etsy store owners—83 percent of whom are female and who collectively sold \$5 billion worth of goods to customers around the world in 2019.⁴ One small business owner in St. Paul, who designs hats,

¹ <https://www.publicnewsservice.org/2020-08-12/budget-policy-and-priorities/are-postal-service-delays-hampering-small-business/a71110-1>, <https://nbcpalmsprings.com/2020/08/11/usps-shipping-delays-impact-local-small-businesses/>, and <https://provincetownindependent.org/news/2020/07/23/the-postal-service-is-a-lifeline-for-local-businesses/>

² <https://www.uspsoig.gov/sites/default/files/document-library-files/2019/RISC-WP-19-008.pdf>

³ https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/n7w9nd/usps-package-delays-mail-slowdown-hurts-small-businesses

⁴ <https://blog.etsy.com/news/2020/urging-congress-to-help-sustain-microbusinesses/>

faced an unprecedented delay in receiving a shipment of supplies and as a result nearly missed her own delivery deadline for her customers.⁵ These sole proprietors cannot reach their customers without the USPS, and their business model is directly threatened by needless delivery delays.

Under federal law, the SBA “aids, counsels, assists, and protects the interests of small business concerns, *and advocates on their behalf within the Government.*”⁶ I recognize that the problem at hand was created by USPS and not SBA. Yet I urge SBA to stand up for small businesses across the nation by imploring USPS and the Administration to eliminate these costly delays, which imperil the livelihood of small business owners and their employees at a time when small businesses’ relationships with their customers are already under unprecedented strain.

Given the seriousness of this matter, I ask that you provide answers to the following questions:

1. What actions are you currently taking to protect small businesses and small business owners from costly USPS delays and ensure that USPS abides by its commitment to suspend policies causing mail delays?
2. What actions are you taking to urge the USPS to ensure that small business owners can regain confidence that their packages will arrive on time?
3. What actions will the SBA take to help small businesses recoup losses wholly caused by USPS shipping delays?

I thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator

⁵ <https://www.startribune.com/in-battle-over-mail-in-voting-the-mail-in-minnesota-is-running-late/572128792/>

⁶ 13 CFR § 101.100 - *What is the purpose of SBA?*