

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 17, 2024

The Honorable Louis DeJoy
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 10300
Washington, D.C. 20260-1000

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy:

We write with serious concerns regarding the lack of support to rural post offices in California, notably in Bridgeport, Planada, Niland, and Bolinas. As you know, these four California communities have experienced extensive periods without a permanent post office. While the Bridgeport Post Office and the Planada Post Office are now open, the residents had to wait more than a full year before their post offices were reopened, an unacceptably long delay. We ask that you urgently develop a plan to reopen the closed post offices in Niland and Bolinas without delay and create a plan to prioritize rural post office access in California and across the nation.

Bridgeport is a small community of less than 1,000 people that was left without a permanent post office from February 2023 to May of this year due to a burst water pipe. Planada is a small town of less than 5,000 people that was left without a permanent post office from January 2023 until April of this year due to a disastrous flood. Both of these extensive periods without permanent post office access forced the residents of these communities to travel unnecessarily long distances to obtain important medication, government documents, and access postal services.


Niland is a small community in the Imperial Valley near the Salton Sea with around 500 residents, many of whom are low-income, elderly, and disabled. In February of 2022, the only post office in Niland was destroyed in a fire, and to date, the residents there have gone more than two years and three months without a permanent post office. This has significantly impacted the daily lives of the residents, forcing some residents to travel upwards of 50 miles to utilize postal services, greatly reducing their quality of life and well-being.


Bolinas is a small community of around 1,500 residents in Marin County, many of whom are elderly and without access to reliable transportation, making it even more difficult to access postal services. In March 2023, the only post office in Bolinas closed due to a dispute between the United States Postal Service (USPS) and the former post office landlord, leaving the community without a permanent post office for the first time since 1863. This has resulted in residents experiencing delays in getting critical medication and traveling upwards of two hours to access important postal services.

In April, we sent a letter to your office urging you to find a prompt and permanent solution to the post office closure in Niland. While we appreciate your acknowledgment of the issue and the work to reopen the post offices in Bridgeport and Planada, the communities of Niland and Bolinas remain without permanent post offices and without a plan from USPS. Action to restore post office access for these communities is long overdue.

Rural post offices in rural towns like Bridgeport, Planada, Niland, and Bolinas are lifelines that play a crucial role in connecting their communities with the rest of the state of California and the nation as a whole. We urge you to find a way to quickly open these post offices and better address rural post office closures in the future. We look forward to your response outlining a plan for restoring postal access for Niland and Bolinas no later than July 12, 2024.

Sincerely,


Laphonza Butler
United States Senator


Alex Padilla
United States Senator