

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 14, 2026

The Honorable David Steiner
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Postmaster General Steiner:

The United States Postal Service (USPS) and its employees have played an essential role in Lahaina's recovery since the devastating August 2023 wildfires. Yet just as families finally return to homes they have spent three years rebuilding, USPS made the abrupt decision to stop direct mail delivery to their homes. This decision is deeply concerning to us. We urge you to change course by making a commitment to provide direct mail delivery for all returning families.

Our offices have been assisting several survivors who received home delivery prior to the wildfires, rebuilt on the same properties after losing their homes, and have now been informed that USPS considers their neighborhoods "new developments" subject to centralized Cluster Box Unit (CBU) delivery. These residents are being asked to accept significant changes to their mail service despite returning to properties that were previously served by home delivery.

While we understand that centralized delivery is USPS's preferred mode of service for new residential developments, let us be clear: Lahaina residents are not moving into new subdivisions. They are returning to a historic community and to homes rebuilt on the same properties and at the same delivery points that existed before the fire. USPS should therefore be working to restore the pre-disaster mode of service that was temporarily interrupted—not treating these returning residents as though they were establishing entirely new developments.

The transition to CBUs is particularly concerning given the lack of clear communication, adequate notice, and meaningful engagement with the residents and businesses directly affected. The communication surrounding this unilateral change has been deeply disappointing. Constituents have reported learning that home delivery would no longer be provided only after going weeks or even months without receiving their mail. USPS has also failed to provide clear information identifying all affected customers or the specific areas subject to the transition. Indeed, some neighboring homes continue to receive street delivery while others do not, leaving residents understandably confused about why they are being treated differently.

These communication failures are compounded by the fact that the proposed CBUs are not yet operational. Hawai'i USPS is still developing its formal communications to residents, while families continue to receive inconsistent information about where they should retrieve their mail and what options are available in the interim. In some cases, residents have simply been advised to purchase a Post Office Box at their own expense or "make other arrangements." Meanwhile, the Lahaina Main Post Office has informed our offices that the proposed CBUs may not be

installed and ready for delivery for another six months or more. Residents who have already endured years of displacement should not be left without reliable mail service while waiting for a new system to be put in place.

We are equally disturbed about the future of the Downtown Lahaina Post Office and strongly oppose USPS's callous decision to initiate a feasibility study that could result in its permanent closure. Since the 2023 wildfires, the Downtown Lahaina Post Office has remained under emergency suspension. USPS has asserted that this closure would not affect current services because operations have been consolidated at the Lahaina Main Post Office for the past three years. However, that facility is already experiencing significant strain, including lengthy wait times, staffing challenges, and ongoing unresolved issues with mail delivery.

Before considering any permanent changes to Lahaina's postal infrastructure, USPS should immediately pause any discontinuance process and prioritize restoring reliable, pre-disaster postal service and access for the Lahaina community. USPS must also meaningfully engage with the residents and businesses that depend on these services. A brief virtual meeting held during standard working hours and announced with only about one week's notice does not constitute meaningful community engagement.

Lahaina's survivors have already borne extraordinary burdens in the aftermath of the wildfires. They should not be expected to shoulder additional burdens, costs, and disruptions resulting from changes to postal services that USPS has failed to adequately communicate, plan for, or implement. Accordingly, we strongly advise USPS to take the following actions:

1. Reverse its classification of rebuilt homes in Lahaina as "new developments," and restore the pre-disaster method of mail delivery at addresses that existed prior to the August 2023 wildfires;
2. In the interim, ensure that affected residents maintain reasonable access to mail without incurring additional costs or experiencing unnecessary disruptions while permanent delivery arrangements are being established, including providing a complimentary E-box where appropriate;
3. Provide our offices with:
 - a. the legal and policy basis for treating rebuilt neighborhoods in Lahaina as "new developments," including whether this is standard USPS practice for rebuilt communities following a disaster;
 - b. an explanation of why existing mail delivery was discontinued before centralized delivery infrastructure was operational and before affected residents received clear notice of the change;
 - c. any guidance or directives issued by USPS regarding mail delivery to affected residents in Lahaina's burn zone since the August 2023 wildfires;
 - d. maps or descriptions identifying the areas and addresses affected by the transition to centralized delivery;

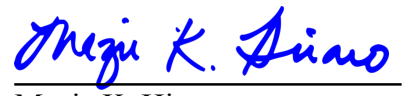
- e. details on how USPS is coordinating with the County of Maui to site any CBUs (where appropriate) and who is responsible for land, installation, accessibility, and ongoing maintenance; and
 - f. the timeline by which this change in delivery mode was decided and executed.
4. Regarding the Downtown Lahaina Post Office, explain:
- a. why the lease for the Downtown Lahaina Post Office was not renewed;
 - b. what the Post Office's property owners have communicated about their recovery of the building; and
 - c. USPS's efforts to secure alternative space now or in the future.

We recognize the challenges of restoring postal services amid Lahaina's broader recovery, as well as the operational and financial pressures facing USPS nationwide. However, these challenges do not justify prolonged interruptions, inadequate communication, or changes that fail to account for—or take advantage of—Lahaina's ongoing recovery and rebuilding. Before implementing any changes, particularly those that could become permanent, USPS must reconsider its approach, meaningfully engage affected residents and businesses, and provide clear, timely notice of proposed changes and their impacts. Lahaina has endured enough; postal service should not become another obstacle to its long-awaited recovery.

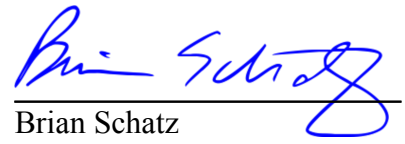
Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress


Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator


Ed Case
Member of Congress


Brian Schatz
United States Senator

Cc: Eileen Veach, USPS Hawai'i District Manager