

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 9, 2022

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

Dear Postmaster General DeJoy,

As the leadership of the House Sustainable Energy and Environment Coalition (SEEC), we write to express our strong opposition to the U.S. Postal Service's recent actions regarding its Next Generation Delivery Vehicles (NGDV) procurement. The Postal Service failed to abide properly by National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements. Instead, it moved forward with an almost-exclusively fossil fuel powered fleet procurement, which flies in the face of the commitments the United States has made to address the climate crisis and counters the long-term economic interests of your own agency. We urge you to reverse this procurement decision and accept immediately the recommendations made by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to address the issues with the Postal Service's vehicle procurement plan.

The NGDV procurement with Oshkosh for up to 165,000 trucks would be the Postal Service's first large-scale vehicle purchase in three decades and is likely the single largest federal fleet procurement for the foreseeable future. The average age of the current fleet is 30 years, which demonstrates how long vehicles purchased today may remain in active service. Any fossil fuel powered vehicle purchased today will lock in its emissions potentially past 2050, which is the date the United States has set to achieve a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions economy. This is why President Biden moved aggressively in his first year to establish clean federal procurement standards, particularly around the federal vehicular fleet, because he and his administration understand that the decisions we make today will have a long-lasting impact.

As members of Congress, we are well aware of the fiscal constraints of the Postal Service . We are sympathetic to those limitations. The House of Representatives responded by passing the Build Back Better Act (H.R. 5376), which includes \$6 billion to help the Postal Service pay for electric vehicles and its related infrastructure, including charging stations. Additionally, this week, the House is scheduled to consider the Postal Service Reform Act (H.R. 3076), which would help relieve the agency of long-standing financial troubles and provide a secure foundation from which the Postal Service can make forward-leaning investments in its vehicle fleet. But even without these investments and financial relief, we urge you to consider what is in the long-term economic best interests of the Postal Service. The Postal Service's competitors recognize the value in electrifying their fleets, as we have seen large electric vehicle orders from the likes of Amazon, Walmart, FedEx, UPS, and others. The Postal Service is putting itself in

economic risk and at a significant competitive disadvantage by spending its money on the technology of the past rather than investing in the technology of the future.

We are particularly alarmed to learn that the Postal Service pursued a \$480 million commitment to begin the engineering and construction of new fossil fuel powered trucks – even before the agency began an environmental review. The central premise of NEPA is that the environmental analysis required under the law should inform the agency decision. The law is not meant to provide an ex post facto justification of a predetermined outcome. We are, therefore, concerned that the Postal Service has chosen to treat NEPA as an inconvenience, as the deficiencies EPA found in the Postal Service’s final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) indicate it was drafted to promote a specific outcome regardless of the underlying facts.

In EPA’s February 2, 2022 letter to the Postal Service, EPA found that “critical features of the contract are not disclosed in the EIS, important data and economic assumptions are missing in the EIS, and the EIS failed to consider a single feasible alternative to the proposed action.” Through its review of the EIS, EPA found that important data and economic assumptions are missing, which prevents federal agencies and the public from properly understanding the Postal Service’s ability and flexibility to purchase additional zero emission vehicles.

The data cited in the EIS appears to be potentially flawed and out-of-date, particularly around the Total Cost of Ownership calculations. These calculations do not appear to account for the volatile nature of gas prices as compared to the longer-term near-zero fuel costs for electric vehicles. Further, the EIS improperly considers the cost of additional greenhouse gas emissions that would result from the fossil fuel powered fleet the Postal Service plans to procure. By EPA’s calculations, the present value of the climate damages of these emissions would be more than \$900 million. The EIS also does not contemplate the environmental justice component of these vehicle purchases, as required by President Biden’s Justice40 initiative.

In light of these deficiencies, we urge the Postal Service to follow EPA’s and CEQ’s requests to prepare a supplemental EIS that accounts for the deficiencies and utilize those findings in all NGDV procurements. The Postal Service must incorporate more up-to-date information on electric vehicle technology, cost, and deployment, as your competitors already do. Additionally, we agree with CEQ’s urging to work with the supplier of the already-made commitment to make adjustments that maximize feasible electric vehicle production. Failing to take these actions would put the Postal Service at serious legal risk.

This is the moment for the federal government to step up and use its purchasing power to invest in the clean technology that is poised to drive our economy’s future. The Postal Service must be part of the solution to the climate crisis and not disregard the NEPA process and our national and international climate commitments. Therefore, we strongly support EPA’s and CEQ’s requests for the Postal Service to prepare a supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and urge you to cease moving forward with this flawed procurement plan.

We request you respond to this letter by February 23, 2022 to show how the Postal Service intends to modify this procurement to accommodate the EPA's substantial concerns.

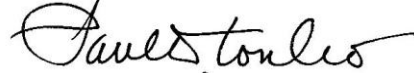
Sincerely,



Rep. Gerald E. Connolly
SEEC Co-Chair



Rep. Doris Matsui
SEEC Co-Chair



Rep. Paul Tonko
SEEC Co-Chair



Rep. Matt Cartwright
SEEC Vice Chair



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