



September 6, 2017

Honourable Carla Qualtrough
Minister of Public Services and Procurement
11 Laurier Street, Phase III, Place du Portage
Gatineau, QC K1A 0S5

Dear Ms. Qualtrough,

We take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister of Public Services and Procurement and to introduce our Association. The Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association (CPAA) has been the voice of rural post office employees since 1902. It is the second largest bargaining unit under the Canada Post umbrella, representing members that staff the post offices in towns and villages of rural Canada. CPAA members, consisting of 95% women, operate 3,260 post offices.

As the federal government will soon release its decisions on the future of the Canada Post Corporation, I am writing to urge you to restore postal banking as a key feature of Canada's postal service going forward.

For rural Canada, especially, postal banking is part of the future. In a study, we conducted in 2014, over half of rural communities surveyed had no bank or credit union close by, while many more communities told us their bank or credit union either offered only limited access or were shutting up shop. In your own province of British Columbia, 61% of the communities who responded had no bank or credit union and over 1200 communities across Canada have no financial services.

Our post offices are everywhere and we know postal banking is successful in many other countries. Here, it could contribute to the economic development of rural Canada and keep Canada Post thriving: a win-win solution that benefits everybody.

The Liberal government's recent budget emphasized an infrastructure bank for large-scale projects. While we are cautiously optimistic, the banking sector itself is fraught with issues of inaccessibility, financial exclusion and exploitation. The biggest banks rake in billions of dollars in profits every year. Surely, we, as a society, could benefit from having some of those profits put back into our communities.

Bringing back our postal bank would be a welcome move for our government. To date, over 600 municipalities support postal banking while a significant number of Canadians and businesses say they would use the service. The current president and CEO continues to hide Canada Post's postal banking study from the public. You may already be aware that his predecessors were far more open to the idea of Canada Post offering financial and other services.

We also need to consider what a 21st century post office could do for us. Canada Post has the largest retail and distribution network in this country, linking Canadians, nationally and internationally. To this day, it remains the hub of rural communities as it has been for over 100 years.

A retailer has to look to the future otherwise they will die in the past. Electric cars are the future. What if we used Canada Post's vast network to deliver the kinds of environmentally friendly changes Canadians really want that support rural and Indigenous communities and local businesses? For example, electric charge stations could be installed at all suitable post office locations. While your car is charging, you could do your mailing, postal banking and various other shopping at the same time. Other services could be introduced as well. Our rural post offices can become the financial engine for social and economic development of rural Canada. It could also be the information reference centres for federal government departments. For example, information and or forms on the following services could be made available to improve commercial and customer traffic:

- Postal banking and financial services
- Social Insurance Number Kits
- Employment Insurance Applications
- Canada Pension Plan Applications
- Old Age Security Applications
- Passports
- Specialized Income Tax Forms (general tax forms now available)
- Student Loans

On the provincial level, the post office could sell various licenses:

- Motor Vehicle registration and renewals
- Driver's license issuance and renewals
- Fishing
- Hunting
- Marriage, etc.

Provincial government forms could also be available, e. g., application forms for vital statistics, social programs, sales tax, business registration and health services forms for change of name or new residents.

CPAA does not want to take jobs away from other employees working within urban centres or working in government departments. Rather, we openly support and promote the establishment of these services in communities where they presently do not exist.

Canada Post has recognized in its annual report that the most economical way to deliver mail is the post office. All Canadians must be able to expect affordable communication and mail delivery. This can only be achieved by a Corporation that is accountable to the people of Canada through their representatives in Parliament.

Research has demonstrated that corporate post offices staffed by CPAA members have a proven record of providing responsible, professional and consistent service.

The way forward is clear: what we need to see now is the will from our government to make it happen. We realize this must be a very busy time for you, CPAA would like to meet with you to discuss the future of our public postal service at your earliest convenience.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Brenda McAuley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Brenda McAuley
National President
Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association

c.c. Karine Trudel (MP)