



November 18, 2016

Members of the OGGO Parliamentary Committee,
131 Queen Street, Sixth Floor
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear committee members,

When the Canadian Postmasters and Assistants Association (CPAA) was invited to speak to your committee in the House of Commons November 2, 2016, there were questions regarding corporate group post offices. Since the allotted time did not permit to fully expound on this issue, I take the liberty to explain herein greater detail our group office structure.

There are 1,485 group post offices operated by CPAA members. While a few of these offices are in premises provided by Canada Post, the vast majority of these premises are provided by Postmasters at their own expense. In exchange, they are paid a relatively small amount called a leasing allowance. Starting in 2011, these group Postmasters' hours were drastically reduced. Some offices have been reduced down to 2 or 3 operating hours a day. When Canada Post reduces the hours of service, the Postmasters' pay is in turn reduced, but their post office operating expenses remain the same, such as heat, hydro, snow clearing, space rental, janitorial, and upkeep of the premise. If they can no longer afford to provide the premises, they lose their job or are forced into early retirement. Others will stay open and the Postmaster or the community will subsidize Canada Post because the community wants and needs there public post office.

Our latest example of this is in Priddis Alberta. The Priddis Post Office, which has been housed in the village's old schoolhouse for decades, was in danger of being closed down or moving out of the hamlet when Canada Post deemed it insufficient for postal operations earlier this year.

The community took action and hosted a public meeting and the residents pledged more than \$12,000 to keep their post office open. Residents were very concerned because if the Priddis post office closed its doors, the nearest service outlet would be 25 kilometres away. The money raised will help the Community Association pay for rent and utilities in the strip mall for at least one year, with some extra funds for renovating the space to fit Canada Post's guidelines.

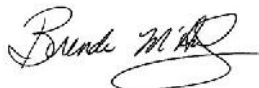
The Priddis Community Association has subsidized the post office for decades by paying its utilities and maintaining the building, but the cost of paying rent for a temporary location in the hamlet's strip mall was going to be significantly more.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I hope it helped you understand that Canadians in rural Canada are so desperate to keep their public post office open that they are willing to pay for it themselves.

One possible suggestion would be that since the government promised infrastructure money for rural Canada, perhaps post offices in prefabricated units that can be more easily set up in these communities could be provided, where the premises are deteriorating because the Postmaster hours have been cut so drastically that they cannot afford to renovate as required. Apparently there are some of these units already set up in southern Alberta.

We are hopeful after the review is completed that the need for additional services in our post offices will be implemented and the hours of operation to the communities will be extended, along with strengthening the Moratorium, thus honouring the Universal Service Obligation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brenda McAuley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Brenda McAuley
National President