

North Dakota Stockmen's Association
HCR 3006
Senate Workforce Development Committee
March 13, 2025

Good morning, Chairman Wobbema and members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee. My name is Julie Ellingson, and I represent the North Dakota Stockmen's Association.

We rise in support of HCR 3006, which enumerates the many concerns our organization has articulated about the diminished service and reliability of the U.S. Postal Service.

Our members live and work in rural areas and don't have access to some of the private options that are available in larger urban centers. Late and lost mail negatively impacts our lives and severely disrupts our businesses, costing us far more than the ever-rising cost of postage. What's worse is that there are few resources available to answer questions or troubleshoot mailing problems, and postal customers are often left hanging with few answers or resolution opportunities.

From an organizational standpoint, we have incurred additional costs by having to pay credit card fees to process payments online, because we cannot count on the USPS to deliver many of our bills on time, even if they are paid on time. It has also decreased our ability to timely communicate with our members through our mailed communiques and even our association's monthly magazine, which now requires a ridiculously long lead time – lead time that is not always possible or available.

The postal issue hits our membership base across the spectrum and there are many examples, but this issue was highlighted as a particular concern by our Seedstock Council last month. Seedstock producers raise bulls and females to sell to other livestock producers, and this is the traditional production sale season in North Dakota. Producers routinely produce sales catalogs to market

those livestock, and they are mailed to customers and prospective customers. For many, these production sales represent a family's primary source of income for the entire year.

The mail has become a real challenge for these producers. One of our members had a particularly bad experience late last year. In preparation for his production sale, he mailed 848 sale catalogs presorted first class on Nov. 5. As of Nov. 21 – three days past his sale – 217 catalogs had not yet been delivered. Of the non-delivered, 72 percent had gone through one sorting facility here in the state. Two weeks later, 199 were still unaccounted for. The day before the House hearing, 84 days after the catalogs were mailed, there were 193 unaccounted for. I checked again today before this hearing, 128 days after the catalogs were mailed, and there are still 193 unaccounted for.

This was an incredible hardship for this family. Not only did their year's income rely upon this event and getting timely marketing information to their customer base, but they still had the cost of mailing them and they still have not received an explanation, apology, refund or even some tips or best practices to follow in the future, despite repeated attempts to get answers and resolution.

This is unacceptable and just one example of the service and communication issues we are routinely seeing. We need a timely, reliable postal service and appreciate your help in elevating this issue to federal decision-makers to make that happen.

Please give HCR 3006 a do-pass recommendation.