

United States Senate

October 31, 2022

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

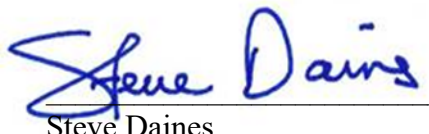
Dear Postmaster General DeJoy,

I am writing to express my serious concern with the United States Postal Service's (USPS) ability to ensure timely delivery of election mail in Gallatin County, Montana, as Election Day rapidly approaches. The USPS is a vital partner in connecting Montanans and helping them fulfill their civic duty by casting their vote. My office has fielded numerous complaints from outraged constituents who have not yet received their absentee ballot and have been facing inconsistent mail service for the last several months. While I was glad to engage in a productive conversation with you on this matter on October 29, I reiterate the need to resolve this matter as soon as possible.

Gallatin County is one of Montana's most populous counties and sent out 63,094 absentee ballots this year and as of October 28, only 13,589 - or 21.5% - of those ballots have been returned to the County Clerk. While I recognize that some of this may be due to voters waiting until Election Day or early November, Gallatin County currently has the second lowest percentage of returned ballots in Montana and is far below the statewide average of 34% of ballots returned. Comparatively, on October 28, Yellowstone County sent out 81,757 ballots and has 30,876, or 38%, of those returned. In the 2018 midterm elections, over 46,000 voters in Gallatin County voted absentee for a return rate of over 83%. Thousands of Montanans rely on the USPS to cast their ballot and many are at risk of being disenfranchised due to severe mail service disruptions.

I sincerely appreciate the efforts of local clerks and carriers who are working longer hours to mitigate interruptions, and the ongoing effort by the USPS to recruit new employees. The right to vote is a cornerstone of American democracy and every eligible Montanan and American should have access to the polls. I urge you to do everything in your power to ensure that service in Gallatin County and the Bozeman area is reliable and secure for the upcoming election. I reiterate my steadfast support of the USPS and its vital mission across Montana and hope to be a resource in any possible way to ensure your success.

Sincerely,



Steve Daines

United States Senator