



August 25, 2008

Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review
330 Sparks Street (HCCR)
Ottawa ON K1A 0N5

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Saint John, New Brunswick chapter of the Council of Canadians welcomes this opportunity to make a submission to the Canada Post Corporation Strategic Review (CPCSR).

The Council of Canadians is Canada's largest citizens' organization. We work to protect Canada's independence by promoting progressive policies on fair trade, clean water, energy security, public health care, and other issues of social and economic concern to Canadians. The Saint John chapter includes thirty members, and has been active for eight years.

We are very concerned about the future of universal, public postal service in Canada. We believe that the current mandate of the Canada Post Corporation (CPC) ("To operate Canada's postal service on a self-sustaining basis with a standard of service that meets the needs of Canadians") does not fully describe the role of the CPC in this country, nor the expectations Canadians place upon it. Canadians expect Canada Post to be a publicly-owned service providing a reliable, low-cost, universal means of communicating via the written word.

Our organization, the Council of Canadians, depends on the mail to keep our national network of members and volunteers informed, to share campaign materials, and to distribute monthly newsletters and other publications. We are concerned that some of the changes being considered by the CPCSR would threaten our ability to function as a national organization. In particular, we fear that deregulation would negatively affect the affordability of the postal system for us and for many Canadians. We have read serious reports that postal deregulation in other countries has been very problematic, both for the national postal service, and for customers. The United Kingdom, which deregulated its postal service in 2006, has seen no benefits as a result of deregulation. The May 7, 2008 edition of the *The Times* of London quotes an independent review created for John Hutton, the country's Business Secretary, saying "competition in postal services has delivered no benefits for domestic consumers and small businesses."¹ Referring to the same review, the *Telegraph* of London reported on the same date, that, "individual Royal Mail customers now have to contend with higher stamp prices and a complicated sizing system as a result of liberalisation, which has provided them with 'no significant benefit.'"² We fear that at the very least, similar issues would arise if there were a move to deregulate Canada Post.

Related to our fears of changes that deregulation would bring, we believe that there is no good reason to change the important mechanism that funds universal postal service: the exclusive privilege. Even though Canada is geographically one of the largest countries in the world, we have been able to maintain one of the lowest standard postage rates in the industrial world. Changing the exclusive privilege would threaten this admirable feat. Why threaten the universality and affordability of our postal system by changing the exclusive privilege?

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The Saint John Chapter of the Council of Canadians believes that the post office is not broken. Some of Canada Post's services could be improved. But deregulation, including abandoning the exclusive privilege, is exactly the wrong step, and would lead to serious degradation of a service we, and the majority of Canadians, depend upon.

Members of our organization and citizens of Saint John are also individuals who have a stake in our public post office. We are concerned that individual members of the Canadian public are not aware of the Strategic Review, are not being consulted at public hearings in their home towns, and will not be able to submit their recommendations before the aggressive deadline. We ask that *the deadline for submissions be extended*, and that the Panel *hold hearings in communities across the country* and more openly and actively seek the opinions of Canadians on this important question.

Thank you for accepting and considering this submission.

Sincerely,

Joel Butler

Saint John, New Brunswick Chapter,
Council of Canadians

1. http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/transport/article3882983.ece
2. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1933338/Royal-Mail-privatisation-%27hurts-customers%27.html>