

Contract Postal Unit on South Plank Road Was Slated to Close This Friday, But Congressman Urged Thorough Review to Address Community Concerns

□ *Washington, DC* -- In response to repeated calls and letters from Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) to reverse course on the planned June 29 closure of the South Plank Road Contract Postal Unit (CPU) in the Town of Newburgh, the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) today informed the congressman's office that it will keep the facility open an additional month in order to conduct a thorough review of the matter and allow for additional contract negotiations with the current operator. Hinchey has received an outpouring of concerns from his constituents about the planned closure, including approximately 3,000 petition signatures urging the USPS to reconsider the closure of this site and a resolution from the Newburgh Town Board. In response, Hinchey wrote to and pressured the USPS to revise its plans by either maintaining the current CPU or opening a USPS branch at a nearby location.

"I am very pleased that the U.S. Postal Service is finally listening to the concerns of residents in the Town of Newburgh and has issued a one month contract extension in order to more thoroughly examine the merits of those concerns," Hinchey said. "The South Plank Road CPU provides a convenient location for Newburgh residents and businesses, many of whom rent post office boxes at the site and regularly use the facility to send and receive letters and packages and use other USPS services. It would be an enormous inconvenience and disservice to this growing community to have this facility close, and I believe it would ultimately be financially detrimental to the Postal Service as well. I am hopeful that in the coming weeks, we can work with both the USPS and the current operator to find a mutually-acceptable long-term renewal of contract."

With just three days to go until the post office was supposed to close, Hinchey's office once

again pressured the USPS this morning to back off its plan in order to give more thorough consideration to the legitimate concerns being voiced by Newburgh residents. This latest round of pressure from Hinchey's office led the USPS to take a step back and inform the congressman's office that it would in fact conduct a review of the CPU, which has been open for approximately 25 years.

As part of the one month contract extension, the USPS's Westchester District will conduct a comprehensive review of the contract terms and closure plans. Additionally, Hinchey's office will work to arrange a meeting between the current operator of the CPU, Town of Newburgh officials, and senior level USPS management officials to discuss possible alternatives that keep services at or near this location. The congressman and his constituents have argued that closing the facility will result in a net loss of revenue from the postal service as patrons do not renew their post office box rental and take their business to private vendors because the surrounding Post Offices are not conveniently located for residents and businesses in many parts of the Town of Newburgh.

Hinchey has been steadily hearing from the Town of Newburgh Supervisor and Town Board as well as local residents who have expressed their frustration over the closure plans. Many have complained to the congressman that no other post offices are conveniently located. Most of the residents Hinchey has heard from have post office boxes at the South Plank Road facility and have indicated that they will not move their box rentals to other USPS locations, which will cost the postal service much-needed revenue.

The congressman had previously urged the USPS to formally reverse course in a letter sent on June 4 to Joseph Lubrano, District Manager for the USPS Westchester District. The congressman's office has remained in steady contact with USPS officials since that time.

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