

Opinion: Congress is failing to help Postal Service

By Patrick Donahoe

The 112th Congress adjourned without having passed postal legislation. Such legislation could quickly restore the Postal Service to profitability and put the organization on a stable, long-term financial footing. This lack of action is disappointing.

The Postal Service has worked closely with the Congress over the past two years to advance a framework for a viable business model that will allow us to quickly respond to the evolving needs of our customers. As a result of frequent communication with Congressional leaders, we have modified important parts of our five-year comprehensive business plan, including the pace of consolidation of mail processing facilities, to give Congress maximum flexibility to make needed legislative changes.

Unfortunately, Congress has not enacted these changes.

As we sought to provide solutions to enable legislative change, we pursued cost-reducing and revenue-generating activities.

Over the past two years we have reduced head count by approximately 60,000 career employees. We have consolidated 70 of our mail processing facilities. We moved to reduce hours at many of our post offices. We also have worked to substantially increase our package volume along with introducing a same-day delivery service.

As we look to the coming year, we are on an unsustainable financial path. We are currently losing \$25 million per day, we have defaulted on \$11.1 billion in Treasury payments and

exhausted our borrowing authority.

The Postal Service should not have to do business this way, which has undermined the confidence of our customer base and the \$800 billion mailing industry we serve.

We will be discussing with our Board of Governors a range of accelerated cost cutting and revenue generating measures designed to provide us some financial breathing room.

We encourage the new 113th Congress to make postal reform an urgent priority, and to work steadily toward the quick passage of reform legislation. We will continue to work with leaders of our House and Senate oversight committees and all members of Congress to help make this happen.

Patrick Donahoe is the postmaster general.