

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 11, 2022

Tammy L. Whitcomb
Inspector General, United States Postal Service
1735 North Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209-2020

Dear Ms. Whitcomb,

Thank you for your recent investigation into electrifying the postal service's vehicle fleet. At a time when we are seeing high prices at the pump, increasing fossil energy security issues, and the tangible impacts of climate change, we need analyses and insights like those provided by your office. As you continue your investigation into USPS's NEPA compliance, we request that you also update your analyses to include the social cost of carbon.

USPS manages a fleet of 217,000 vehicles - almost the number of vehicles registered in Washington, D.C. Electrifying this fleet could reduce emissions three-fold, and your analysis highlights many other benefits; electric vehicles are cheaper to fuel and maintain, they insulate from volatile fossil fuel prices, and their range is suitable for 98.5% of postal routes. The outcome of this analysis is not surprising. Electric engines have 40% higher efficiency than gasoline engines, with fewer moving parts and no oil to change.

You also note uncertainty in the cost of charging infrastructure. This is a one-time investment which will still be useful when the fleet turns over again 20 years from now. Prior generations made similar investments in railroad tracks and airport runways to keep mail delivery evolving with the times – investments which we still benefit from daily. Scaling up charging infrastructure now will set the stage for additional technologies which we are only beginning to envision for the future.

What is not highlighted in your analysis is also notable: the cost of reliance on fossil fuels to our national security and our climate. In the past month, we have seen the vulnerabilities wrought by a dependence on fossil fuels and how that reliance can prop up petrostate dictators. Meanwhile, a 70 degree temperature spike in Antarctica caused an ice shelf larger than New York City to break off the continent for the first time on record. These costs are real, and we ask that you update your economic analysis to incorporate the social cost of carbon, to capture at least some of these impacts, when comparing the cost of electric and fossil fuel vehicles. Despite not accounting for these factors, you still found electric vehicles had a similar cost of ownership as fossil fuel vehicles for the average USPS route.

The establishment and oversight of the postal service are explicitly listed in the Constitution under the powers of Congress. Thank you for continuing to provide the full picture to us as we exercise this oversight, and we look forward to your additional analysis.

Sincerely,



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



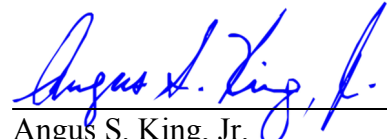
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



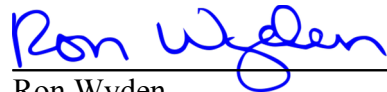
Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



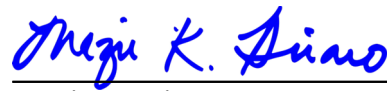
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



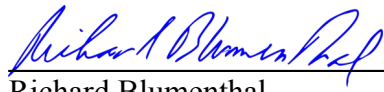
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



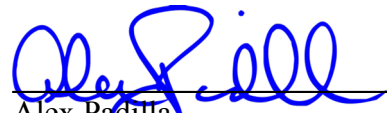
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



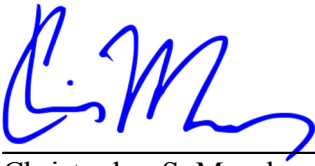
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



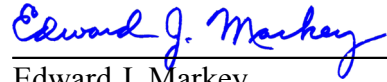
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator