

March 2, 2018

Commissioner Robert Taub, Chairman
Commissioner Tony Hammond, Vice Chairman
Commissioner Nanci Langley
Commissioner Mark Acton
Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268

RE: Docket No. RM2017-3

Submitted electronically

Dear Commissioners:

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) submits these comments in response to the request by the Postal Regulatory Commission for public input on Docket No. RM2017-3.

NRECA respectfully requests permission to intervene and submit these comments late. NRECA became aware of the docket only a few days ago, accepts the records as it stands, and prejudices no party by filing only one day after the deadline.

NRECA is the national service organization for America's electric cooperatives. NRECA represents the interests of the nation's more than 900 rural electric utilities responsible for keeping the lights on for more than 42 million people across 47 states. Electric cooperatives are member-owned, not-for-profit small businesses serving member-consumers facing significant economic challenges, especially in rural areas. They are driven by their purpose to power communities and empower their members to improve their quality of life. Affordable electricity is the lifeblood of the American economy, and for 75 years electric co-ops have been proud to keep the lights on. Given their critical role in providing affordable, reliable, and universally accessible electric service, electric cooperatives are vital to the economic health of the communities they serve.

NRECA joins the Alliance of Nonprofit Mailers in urging you to reconsider your proposal to increase postage rates by a total of up to 40 percent over the next five years. The proposal to increase postage costs will not reform the United States Postal Service and will have a severe impact on NRECA's members.

As not-for-profit, consumer-owned and consumer-governed organizations, electric cooperatives utilize mail for many reasons, including distributing cooperative magazines to member-consumers. Those mailings provide members with critical information about their cooperatives, including their cooperatives' financial condition, how they can participate in electing cooperative directors to represent them on the cooperatives' boards of directors, and how they can participate in cooperative meetings. Those mailings also include information that can help consumers use energy more wisely, participate in cooperative energy management programs, and otherwise save money on their electric service. And, because cooperatives are not-for-profit and

consumer-owned, cooperatives will be forced to pass on to those member-consumers the full cost of any postage rate increases. A 40% increase would have a drastic impact on their mission and their members.

Please do the right thing and reconsider your proposal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

/s/

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