



Canadian Postal Service Charter Needs Work

On Saturday, September 12, 2009, the federal Conservatives quietly announced a *Canadian Postal Service Charter* that outlines the government's expectations for Canada Post in regard to service standards and other matters.

The Charter largely reiterates existing policy and includes an expectation that Canada Post will maintain "the moratorium on the closure of rural post offices."

The Charter also acknowledges that providing postal services to rural areas is an integral part of universal postal service.

While it's a good start, the Charter isn't altogether reasonable.

1) Moratorium on closures needs to be clarified

The government has confirmed that the Charter maintains the existing moratorium.

The moratorium that has been in effect since 1994 protects public post offices in rural and small one-post-office towns.

Unfortunately, it appears that

Canada Post does not believe the moratorium protects the public nature of post offices. The corporation says each situation will be "determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the affected community."

The government needs to tell people if there is an expectation that the post offices and outlets covered by the moratorium are to be public offices and not private outlets.

2) Consultation period needs to be extended

The Charter says that the government expects Canada Post to inform people at least one month prior to closing, moving or amalgamating their public post office or changing their method of delivery. The corporation is also expected to explore options that address people's concerns. One month is not enough time. The government should dramatically extend the consultation period.

3) Exceptions to moratorium need to go

There are too many exceptions to the moratorium. Communities may

face post office closures due to retirement, illness, death, fire or termination of lease, etc. The exceptions should be removed from the Charter.

4) List of post offices covered by the moratorium needs to be publicly posted

The list of post offices covered by the moratorium has not been made public by Canada Post or the government. This list should be posted in a prominent place on Canada Post's website.

5) Consultation process needs to be posted

The process that is to be followed when Canada Post closes, moves or amalgamates a public post office or changes the method of delivery has not been made public by Canada Post or the government. This process should be posted in a prominent place on Canada Post's website.

6) Canada Post shouldn't report on its own performance in meeting Charter expectations

This job should be given to an independent Canada Post ombudsperson.

7) The public and key stakeholders need to be consulted on the Charter

The people who own Canada Post – the public – were never asked what a *Canadian Postal Service Charter* should say. The government should consult with the public, their elected representatives, postal unions and other major stakeholders to dramatically improve the *Canadian Postal Service Charter*, including developing a reasonable, uniform and democratic process for making changes to the postal and delivery network.

Note : This information was compiled on February 17, 2010. All information contained herein is accurate as of this date.

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