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**CARMEN A. TRUTANICH**  
City Attorney

April 3, 2012

**VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND U.S. MAIL**

Office of the Inspector General  
United States Postal Service  
1735 N. Lynn St.  
Arlington, VA 22209-2020

Re: Relocation of Retail Postal Services from Venice Post Office to Venice Carrier Annex

Gentlepersons:

We write with great urgency. We ask that your office direct the Postmaster General to immediately cease all Postal Service building and construction activities in Venice, California, which is a neighborhood located within the City of Los Angeles.

In addition to ceasing all such building and construction work, the City Attorney of the City of Los Angeles and City Councilmember Bill Rosendahl respectfully request that the Office of Inspector General ("OIG") immediately commence an investigation into the Postal Service's apparent ongoing violation of 39 C.F.R. 241.4(f) in connection with the relocation of retail postal services from the historic Venice Post Office to the Venice Carrier Annex.

Finally, we request that the Office immediately commence an audit of the Postal Service departments of Facilities and Network Operations to determine corrective measures to ensure that the subject regulation is scrupulously adhered to in the future.

Title 39, Section 241.4(f) of the Code of Federal Regulations states:

(f) **Planning, zoning, building codes.** In carrying out customer service facilities projects, it is the policy of the Postal Service to comply with local planning and zoning

requirements and building codes consistent with prudent business practices and unique postal requirements. In order to promote a partnership with local officials and assure conformance with local building codes, plans and drawings will be sent to the appropriate building department or other officials for review. Where payment of fees is normally required of private entities, the Postal Service will pay a reasonable fee for the review. The Postal Service will give local public officials written notice of any timely, written objections or recommendations that it does not plan to adopt or implement.

The Postal Service has not followed section 241.4(f) despite pleas from the community and pointed letters to postal officials from counsel for the Venice Stakeholders Association (dated October 14, 2011) and from Councilmember Bill Rosendahl (dated November 23, 2011), both of which are attached hereto.

In the spring of 2011, the Postal Service decided to undertake the relocation of retail operations from the historic Venice Post Office to the nearby Venice Carrier Annex, which is presently a carrier-only facility. In response to various appeals of the decision, David E. Williams, Vice President, Network Operations, on September 23<sup>rd</sup> drafted a statement upholding the decision, which was transmitted to the counsel for the Venice Stakeholders Association. (A copy of this statement and the cover letter is also attached hereto.)

The proposed relocation, if it were a private project, would undoubtedly implicate the City's zoning, planning and building codes as well as separate requirements of the California Coastal Commission, a state agency. Yet the Postal Service presented no plans to either public agency for their review, and did not notify officials of either agency of any objections or requirements that it did not plan to adopt or implement, as section 241.4(f) requires.

Instead, in the spring of 2012, in open defiance of the requests by Councilmember Rosendahl and the VSA, the applicable local and state codes, and section 241.4(f), the Postal Service simply began construction on the Venice Carrier Annex to incorporate the relocated retail operations, while at the same time seeking to sell the historic Venice Post Office, where these operations are presently housed.

The Postal Service's violation of section 241.4(f) – not just in this case but possibly in similar circumstances elsewhere in the nation – qualifies as a “violation[] of postal laws” (which include regulations), and may also qualify as “abuse in the programs and operations of the Postal Service.” (See 39 C.F.R. 230.1(d).)

In light of the foregoing, we request that the OIG immediately commence an investigation and audit and, while these are pending, we demand that the Postmaster General cease any activities to relocate retail services to the Venice Carrier Annex.

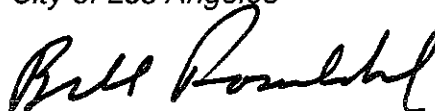
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We are available to you at your earliest convenience should you seek more information on the underlying circumstances. Thank you for your prompt consideration of this urgent request.

Regards,



**CARMEN A. TRUTANICH**  
*City Attorney*  
*City of Los Angeles*



**BILL ROSENDAHL**  
*Councilmember, 11<sup>th</sup> District*  
*City of Los Angeles*