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SCHAKOWSKY QUESTIONS POSTMASTER GENERAL ON HALT OF POSTAL EXPANSION PROJECTS IN SKOKIE AND EDGEBROOK

WASHINGTON, D.C. - During a hearing today of the House Government Reform Committee, U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) expressed concerns to the U.S. Postmaster General and representatives of the Government Accounting Office about the looming financial status of the U.S. Postal Service. Schakowsky specifically pointed to the freeze on capital projects, including 25 in Illinois and two in her district in the Skokie and Edgebrook.

Below is Schakowsky's opening statement.

"I want to welcome our distinguished witnesses here today to discuss the Postal Service's financial standing and I look forward to their testimony. The important work of the Postal Service cannot be understated and I am glad the Committee has taken time to address this important subject.

"Everyone depends on the Postal Service and, at times, we take it for granted. We should all appreciate the fact that in this country, for the most part, one can drop a letter or a package in the mail and be assured that it will arrive safely and in a timely fashion. Letter carriers work extremely hard through rain, sleet, and in my district in particular, the snow and cold weather. And we should all commend them for the great job they do.

"That being said, news of financial problems at the Postal Service concern me and my constituents. Postal issues rate among the highest of the concerns of my constituents in the Chicago area. While there are over 1200 postal employees working in the 9th Congressional District, I am repeatedly informed by constituents and some letter carriers that our postal workers are forced to work long, sometimes double and triple shifts. I hear that postal workers are forced to work routes with which they are not familiar-leading to a less timely and accurate delivery of the mail."

"Finally, I am aware that the Postal Service has put a halt to all capital commitments. This decision has put a stop to two projects in my district: one in Skokie and one in Edgebrook. In Illinois, there are a total of 25 projects scheduled for 2001 that are currently on hold. We all need to look very seriously at the reasons for halting these projects that could improve service to consumers, and the various proposals for improving this system so that postal workers and postal customers are fairly treated and served."