

December 2, 2002

The Honorable John E. Potter
Postmaster General
United States Postal Service
475 L'Enfant Plaza SW
Washington, DC 20260

Dear Mr. Potter:

I have been contacted by Michael Berghuis, President of the American Postal Workers Union, Hartford CT Local 147. Mr. Berghuis informed me that, on November 19, 2002 a suspicious letter was discovered in the Hartford Processing and Distribution facility by a postal worker, with the following message: "To anyone who wants anthrax have a nice day." Information provided by Mr. Berghuis, including the minutes of a United States Postal Service (USPS) "After-Action Review" meeting, dated November 20, 2002, indicates that USPS procedures for handling suspicious mail may not have been followed in handling this incident. In particular, it appears that the suspicious letter may have been transported by hand through the facility, which could have exposed postal employees to contamination.

It is troubling to me that postal workers and others might have been placed at risk as a result of this incident. Please provide by December 16, 2002 an accounting of what occurred, including your response to the following questions:

- What are the USPS protocols for handling suspicious mail?
- Are postal supervisors and employees trained in these protocols?
- Were these protocols followed on November 19 in the Hartford mail processing facility, and if not, why not?
- If these protocols were not followed, what action has the USPS taken regarding this breach? What steps will the USPS take in the future to ensure that such events are properly handled?

This matter is of serious concern, especially in the wake of the discovery of anthrax in the Wallingford facility and the ongoing GAO investigation regarding the handling of that incident by the USPS and others. I look forward to your response on this latest event.

Sincerely,

Joseph I. Lieberman
Chairman