



CITY OF SPANISH FORT

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PRESS RELEASE FROM SPANISH FORT MAYOR MICHAEL M. MCMILLAN REGARDING THE CLOSING OF THE SPANISH FORT POST OFFICE

I am very disappointed in the actions of the United States Postal Service in the determination to close the Spanish Fort Post Office. The City of Spanish Fort is a growing community, and the Spanish Fort Post Office is financially viable. There is no justifiable reason to close the Spanish Fort Post Office and deprive the citizens of the City of Spanish Fort and the surrounding community of postal services that the United States government deems essential to the orderly development and operation of this country. The fact that the United States Postal Service, the agency charged with providing this service, refuses to reconsider its determination to close this Post Office and move the post office boxes to the Daphne Post Office is exactly why the Postal Service has a history of losing money. The post office boxes in Spanish Fort generate revenue that the customers in Spanish Fort are willing to pay. Instead, the Postal Service is closing the Post Office and offering mail carrier delivery as an alternative, which will cost the Postal Service money.

We have received some information that one of the reasons behind the decision to close the Spanish Fort Post Office and move the post office boxes to the Daphne Post Office may be based on the terms of a collective bargaining agreement between the Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union. If that is true, we assert that the Postal Service should hire union employees to operate the Spanish Fort Post Office. In any event, the decision to close or not to close a Post Office in a growing community that has been operating for 60 years should take into consideration the impact on the citizens served by the Post Office. The City of Spanish Fort has been working with Senator Richard Shelby, Senator Tommy Tuberville, and Representative Jerry Carl, and the City also worked previously with Senator Doug Jones and Representative Bradley Byrne. While we were informed that every effort was being made to keep the Spanish Fort Post Office open and keep the post office boxes in Spanish Fort, it appears, according to information provided by our elected officials, that we may have been misled. Based on the information we received, it appears that the Postal Service had no intention of keeping the post office boxes in Spanish Fort.

The City of Spanish Fort has filed an appeal with the Postal Regulatory Commission to review the determination made by the Postal Service to close the Spanish Fort Post Office. The Postal Regulatory Commission has ordered the Postal Service to file the administrative record for review, and the Postal Service did not file the administrative record claiming that the Postal Regulatory Commission does not have the authority to review the closing of a Contract Postal Unit like the Spanish Fort Post Office. The Postal Service claims that the Spanish Fort Post Office is not a "real" Post Office, as it is not run by Postal Service employees,

and therefore, the Post Office can be closed without any regulatory oversight. It appears that the Postal Service has been allowed to position itself, through rule making and actions which convert Post Offices to Contract Postal Units over time, so that there is very little regulatory oversight for the closing of contract post offices. This needs to be corrected, and we are asking the Postal Regulatory Commission to review the closing of the Spanish Fort Post Office and the regulatory scheme that allows the Postal Service to close a Contract Post Office without due consideration and review.

The City of Spanish Fort and our elected officials are committed to this matter and are working diligently. The operator of the Spanish Fort Post Office is committed to helping the community keep the Post Office, and the operator has made several offers to extend the contract on various terms in order to keep the Post Office open pending the appeal and to allow for additional discussions and negotiations. However, the Postal Service has rejected the offers. We have also informed the Postal Service that the City has available land and facilities that might be suitable for a Post Office. We have received no response to our offer for alternative locations or facilities.

The actions of the Postal Service will have a detrimental effect on the City of Spanish Fort and the surrounding community. We are going to keep pressing this issue, and I am hopeful that the Postal Regulatory Commission will take a serious look at the actions of the Postal Service. If this is how the Postal Service is allowed operate, it is time for some serious changes. We will continue to engage with our elected officials to address this matter. We, as United States citizens and customers of the United States Postal Service, deserve better than this.

Michael M. McMillan
Mayor