

file a notice of intervention. See 39 CFR 3001.111(b). Notices of intervention in this case are to be filed on or before February 28, 2012. A notice of intervention shall be filed using the Internet (Filing Online) at the Commission's Web site unless a waiver is obtained for hardcopy filing. See 39 CFR 3001.9(a) and 3001.10(a).

*Further procedures.* By statute, the Commission is required to issue its decision within 120 days from the date it receives the appeal. See 39 U.S.C. 404(d)(5). A procedural schedule has

been developed to accommodate this statutory deadline. In the interest of expedition, in light of the 120-day decision schedule, the Commission may request the Postal Service or other participants to submit information or memoranda of law on any appropriate issue. As required by the Commission rules, if any motions are filed, responses are due 7 days after any such motion is filed. See 39 CFR 3001.21.

*It is ordered:*

1. Any responsive pleading by the Postal Service to this notice is due no later than February 13, 2012.

2. The procedural schedule listed below is hereby adopted.

3. Pursuant to 39 U.S.C. 505, Manon Boudreault is designated officer of the Commission (Public Representative) to represent the interests of the general public.

4. The Secretary shall arrange for publication of this notice and order in the **Federal Register**.

By the Commission.

**Ruth Ann Abrams,**

*Acting Secretary.*

**PROCEDURAL SCHEDULE**

January 18, 2012 .....	Filing of Appeal.
February 2, 2012 .....	Deadline for the Postal Service to file the applicable administrative record in this appeal.
February 13, 2012 .....	Deadline for the Postal Service to file any responsive pleading.
February 28, 2012 .....	Deadline for notices to intervene (see 39 CFR 3001.111(b)).
February 22, 2012 .....	Deadline for Petitioners' Form 61 or initial brief in support of petition (see 39 CFR 3001.115(a) and (b)).
March 13, 2012 .....	Deadline for answering brief in support of the Postal Service (see 39 CFR 3001.115(c)).
March 28, 2012 .....	Deadline for reply briefs in response to answering briefs (see 39 CFR 3001.115(d)).
April 4, 2012 .....	Deadline for motions by any party requesting oral argument; the Commission will schedule oral argument only when it is a necessary addition to the written filings (see 39 CFR 3001.116).
May 4, 2012 .....	Expiration of the Commission's 120-day decisional schedule (see 39 U.S.C. 404(d)(5)).

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**POSTAL SERVICE**

**Notice of Availability: Programmatic Environmental Assessment for Mail Processing Network Rationalization Initiative (Formerly Known as the "Network Optimization" Initiative), Nationwide**

**AGENCY:** Postal Service.

**ACTION:** Notice of availability of a Programmatic Environmental Assessment.

**SUMMARY:** To comply with the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Postal Service has prepared and is making available a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the Mail Processing Network Rationalization Initiative (the "Proposed Action"), which is national in scope. This PEA evaluated the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action versus taking No Action. Based on the results of the PEA, the Postal Service has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) indicating that the Proposed Action will not have a significant impact on the environment.

**DATES:** The PEA and FONSI are available as of February 6, 2012.

**ADDRESSES:** Interested parties may direct questions or requests for additional information, including

requests for copies of the PEA and FONSI documents, to: Mr. Thomas G. Day, Chief Sustainability Officer, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW., Room 2737, Washington, DC 20260; (202) 268-7488.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:** The Postal Service is undertaking a Mail Processing Network Rationalization Initiative to create a more streamlined processing and distribution network using fewer facilities to handle an existing and projected decline in mail volumes. The proposal under consideration includes possible closure or consolidation of mail processing for approximately 250 processing facilities, reducing mail processing equipment by as much as 50 percent, dramatically decreasing the nationwide transportation network, adjusting the mail processing workforce size by as many as 35,000 positions, and revising service standards for mail services, including the elimination of the expectation of overnight service for significant portions of First-Class Mail and Periodicals.

Pursuant to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the Postal Service's implementing procedures at 39 CFR part 775, and the President's Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), the Postal Service has prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to evaluate the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action versus the No Action Alternative. Based on the results

of the PEA, the Postal Service has issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) indicating that the Proposed Action will not have a significant impact on the environment.

The No Action Alternative was analyzed as an alternative to the Proposed Action. Based upon the No Action Alternative, the Postal Service would not implement the Mail Processing Network Rationalization Initiative. Postal Service mail processing operations would continue essentially as is, at current capacity. No consolidation or closure of mail processing facilities, modification of current service standards for First-Class Mail and Periodicals, scaling back of the nationwide transportation network, or workforce adjustments would occur. Under the No Action Alternative the Postal Service would maintain current operating methods and protocols and would continue to operate at a budget deficit due to insufficient income to maintain current operating expenses.

**Stanley F. Mires,**

*Attorney, Legal Policy & Legislative Advice.*

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