

MEDIA RELEASE

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Postal Service's final environmental study still fails to address city's concerns with proposed massive mail-processing center

The U.S. Postal Service's (USPS) environmental study of its proposed massive mail-processing center still fails to completely address several significant issues repeatedly raised by the city and public. The final Environmental Impact Study (EIS), which was released on Jan. 2, lacks vital analysis and responsiveness to the city's land-use, air quality, noise and traffic safety concerns. Now that the USPS has released the final EIS, it must wait until at least Feb. 2 before making any final decision on the project. Any final comments on the document, which is available at <http://www.alisoviejoeis.com/>, must be submitted before that date.

The city in October – after basically analyzing the USPS' 600-page draft EIS under a microscope – submitted nearly 40 pages of comments along with hundreds of pages of public comments, expert opinions and technical studies, stating the draft study doesn't adequately address the numerous severe impacts identified by the public, city and others about the plan to build a 24/7 regional operation.

The city has long expressed its concerns regarding the USPS' plan to build a nearly 350,000-square-foot regional mail distribution center near homes, a religious facility, teen center, preschool, proposed affordable senior housing development and other vulnerable uses between 2A and 6 Liberty. Officials have been pushing for alternate, more suitable locations that are closer to the freeway and away from such sensitive uses.

In response to the city's significant comments, the Postal Service added some new mitigation measures. However, the USPS still did not consider any new alternative locations for the regional facility. It also did not address the city's concerns about land use impacts and disregarded requests by the city and City of Laguna Hills for additional intersection analysis. The South Coast Air Quality Management District submitted lengthy and substantive comments on the Postal Service's "health risk assessment" – yet in response, the Postal Service said little more

than “it didn’t agree.” Though the USPS received nearly 200 individual comment letters, and more than 50 oral comments, it responded to a mere fraction of those comments.

Officials and residents have repeatedly expressed concerns about public safety, traffic, noise, air quality and other significant issues associated with a 24/7 gigantic operation. During the September 2008 Postal Service-hosted meeting, which drew more than 200 people, countless community members “again” raised the negative impacts caused by the project specifically regarding public safety, big-rig truck traffic, noise, pollution and more.

City officials will continue to review the EIS and submit its final comments before the Feb. 2 deadline to convince the USPS to take seriously the concerns raised by the city, public, county, neighboring cities and the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

Residents are urged to review the final EIS to see whether their concerns have been addressed and to contact the USPS and local legislators with any remaining concerns and let them know how the project may impact them. Detailed contact information is available on the city’s Web site at www.cityofalisoviejo.com.

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