



**DEBRA BOWEN** | SECRETARY OF STATE | STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
1500 11th Street, 6th Floor | Sacramento, CA 95814 | Tel (916) 653-7244 | Fax (916) 653-4620 | [www.sos.ca.gov](http://www.sos.ca.gov)

**Uncounted Vote-by-Mail Ballots:  
The Potential Effect of United States Postal Service Closures  
February 23, 2012**

**Postal Service Processing Center Closures Delay Ballots**

The United States Postal Service (USPS) is closing 14 mail processing facilities in California. These closures will have devastating effect on California's voters considering that nearly 5 million people – one out of every two people – cast their ballot by mail in the November 2010 election.

Under California law, a vote-by-mail ballot must be returned to the county elections office by 8:00 p.m. on Election Day to be counted. Processing facility closures will result in election-related mail and vote-by-mail ballots traveling hundreds of miles to alternate processing locations, adding days to the delivery time. Voters who mail their ballots the Friday before an election, as they done in previous years, will not have their votes counted if the USPS cannot deliver their ballot before the polls close on Election Day.

Processing facility closures in 2011 have already impacted elections. Ventura County's Oxnard facility was closed, sending mail 35 miles away to Goleta and 50 miles away to Santa Clarita. This change added 2-4 additional days to the 2-3 day delivery time promised by USPS, and resulted in uncounted ballots in a local election. Monterey County's Salinas facility closed, sending mail 72 miles away to Santa Clara County. This change delayed outbound and inbound mail up to 4 additional days beyond the 2-3 day delivery promised by the USPS.

**Closures will Affect 2012 Elections**

The USPS has announced they will be closing the following processing facilities in 2012:

Bakersfield	Los Angeles (Herb Peck CA Annex)	Redding
Burlingame	Modesto	San Diego (Midway)
City of Industry	Pasadena	Stockton
Eureka	Petaluma (2)	Van Nuys
Long Beach		

Making these changes in a presidential election year less than four months before California's June Primary Election is unacceptable.

**Solution: Moratorium on Closures until November 2012**

USPS closures during 2012 will be a disaster for democracy. There must be a nationwide moratorium on USPS closures until after the November 2012 General Election to give elections officials and the USPS time to develop solutions without risking disenfranchising voters across the country.

**Contact**

For more information, contact California Secretary of State Debra Bowen at (916) 653-6774 or [secretary.bowen@sos.ca.gov](mailto:secretary.bowen@sos.ca.gov).