

Delivering Americans Affordable Homes Act

Introduced by Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.) & John Curtis (R-Utah)

Around the country, our communities are facing a shortage of affordable housing. To help solve this crisis, state and local governments across the nation have begun building affordable housing on their own properties; the Federal government can and should consider doing the same. The Postal Service owns roughly 8,500 properties across the United States, many of which are located on sites suitable for housing construction and in areas with high housing demand. At the same time, the Postal Service experiences annual financial losses and its facilities suffer from a deferred maintenance backlog.

Directing the leasing of Postal Service property rights for housing construction could ease Postal Service financial constraints, support the rehabilitation and new construction of postal facilities, and drive new, affordable housing in the communities that need it most, while minimizing impacts to established neighborhoods. In fact, recent analysis from the Brookings Institution [\[link\]](#) estimates that housing construction on postal property could create over 200,000 new homes and bring hundreds of millions of dollars to the Postal Service each year.

To accomplish these goals, the Delivering Americans Affordable Homes Act will:

Create a Housing Liaison Office

- Require the Postal Service to designate a Housing Liaison Office within its organization to implement the provisions of the Act.

Establish a Method to Inventory Property and a Joint Development Process

- Require the Postal Service to publish an inventory of sites which are most likely to be feasible for housing development on existing sites.
- Require the Postal Service to establish a process by which joint locality-set developer partnerships may identify Postal Service parcels, propose a housing development at the site, and negotiate with the Postal Service for lease of the site.

Ensure Guardrails on Postal Service Property Disposition for Housing

- Allow the long-term *lease*, but prohibit the *sale*, of Postal Service property for housing construction.
- Require that local governments sign off on developments by entering into joint partnership agreements with housing developers.
- Prioritize real estate transactions which would fund maintenance, renovation, or new construction of Postal Service facilities.
- Require housing units constructed on Postal Service property to include tenant affordability restrictions on at least 20% of units. Developments must be primarily residential in nature, while allowing modest commercial use.
- Protect historically significant artwork in Post Office locations.
- Clarify that existing prevailing wage standards for Post Office construction extend to on-site housing construction.

Unlock New Sites for Housing Development

- Many Postal Service locations are located on main streets and in community centers that could accommodate an on-site residential use while preserving the underlying Postal Service facility. Creative development on these sites could be modeled on other examples of mixed-use housing on public land, including above public libraries and on sites owned by transit agencies. Utilizing public real estate assets for new housing is a critical tool to resolve severe housing scarcity.

Bring in Revenue for the Postal Service

- Allow the Postal Service to retain all housing development revenues.