



January 18, 2006

Mr. Ronald E. Maifeld
President
Plate Number Coil Collectors Club
Post Office Box 54622
Cincinnati, OH 45254-0622

Dear Mr. ^{RON}Maifeld:

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and concerns with me regarding our changes to plate numbers in the stamp manufacturing process. I understand the position of plate number collectors and appreciate the passion you have for this area of philately. One of the things I have learned in my position is that change is received by some collectors as good news and by others as bad news. I also know that collectors on both sides of the issue are quick to share their opinions with me.

This decision is no different.

As you might guess, I have heard from collectors who are completely opposed to the change because it disrupts the status quo and changes the way they have structured their collections. I have also received comments from collectors who view the change as a positive because it reduces the overall cost to them and simplifies their effort to achieve a complete collection. There's no doubt in my mind that both sides have valid arguments.

What drives our decision, however, is the need to simplify our processes so we can do as much as we can with the limited resources we have in Stamp Services. The reality is that we have no manufacturing need to continue using plate numbers as we have in the past. It's a requirement that serves little purpose, yet results in our group spending a great deal of time, energy and money to maintain. I have a responsibility to point our limited resources in the most productive direction.

It should be noted that plate numbers are not being eliminated; they are becoming more reflective of what is actually happening during the stamp printing process. Like anything else in the Postal Service, technology has dramatically changed the way we manufacture stamps. I view it as part of the natural evolution of the stamp program.

The Stamp Services team and I will continue to evaluate the feedback from collectors in order to make decisions that protect the interests of our Postal Service customers and the philatelic community. We greatly appreciate those who are passionate about the hobby and will always stop to listen to their concerns and comments.

Thanks for taking the time to express your opinion with me on this subject.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Failor".

David Failor
Executive Director, Stamp Services