

Congress of the United States  
Washington, DC 20515

September 1, 2020

The Honorable Bill Blair  
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Canada K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Blair,

Canada is our neighbor and a trusted ally. We must continue to work together to address the ongoing pandemic.

We wish to share with you some of the unique challenges faced by our constituents living in Point Roberts, Washington, and the NW Angle, Minnesota which are geographically isolated from the mainland United States. Our constituents must briefly travel through Canada to enter the rest of the U.S. Despite guidance published on the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) website that states, "*if you are a foreign national arriving from the United States, to enter Canada, you must prove to the CBSA that you are travelling for a non-discretionary (essential) purpose or are only transiting or are an immediate family member,*" some Americans transiting from Point Roberts to the mainland U.S. have been prevented entry into Canada. Inconsistent interpretation of the guidance has prevented Americans from transiting between Point Roberts and the mainland U.S. for many reasons including getting groceries, attending doctor's appointments with loved ones, visiting extended family members, or recreating.

Recently, one Point Roberts resident on orders from the U.S. military to relocate to Virginia and her sister were planning to travel from Whatcom County to Point Roberts and back to facilitate the move. The sister was not permitted to cross. Another Point Roberts resident was turned away at the border when his spouse was traveling to Bellingham for a doctor's appointment. We ask your assistance in ensuring Americans are permitted to travel according to the guidance and are not turned away at the border while transiting.

Similarly, business owners have been devastated in the NW Angle by the border closure. Without the ability to travel by land through Canada, Americans are forced to travel by open water in long and often dangerous conditions to access the NW Angle. This is a logistical and safety hazard that has hurt businesses and prevented Americans from visiting family or homes they own.

Americans in transit to or from Point Roberts and the NW Angle can enter Canada by car and re-enter the U.S. without stopping or getting out of their vehicle. Individuals who live in or are traveling to Point Roberts and the NW Angle could be identified with drivers' licenses, leases, or

ownership documents, for example. There are many options that would allow Americans to access these isolated geographic points without any risk of exposure to Canadian ~~citizens~~ residents.

A key component to an effective recovery is providing greater certainty in uncertain times. Greater transparency and more advanced notifications on any changes to border policy would be helpful to our community. The restriction on all discretionary travel at the Canada-U.S. border was extended until September 21, 2020 and was announced only five days before the restrictions were set to expire. Should border restrictions continue, more advanced notification of restriction extensions and an explanation of the metrics that contribute to future decisions would be much appreciated by our constituents. We would also greatly appreciate exemptions to allow Americans to briefly and safely transit through Canada without exiting vehicles to allow access to Point Roberts and the NW Angle.

Thank you for your friendship, partnership, and commitment to reducing the threat posed by COVID-19. We are grateful for the opportunity to share the perspectives of our constituents on the current border restrictions. Thank you for your timely attention to these matters.

Sincerely,



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Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



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Collin Peterson  
Member of Congress