

REP. SUZAN K. DELBENE
1ST DISTRICT, WASHINGTON
2330 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6311
450 CENTRAL WAY, SUITE 3100
KIRKLAND, WA 98033
(425) 485-0085
204 W. MONTGOMERY ST.
MOUNT VERNON, WA 98273
(360) 416-7879
WWW.DELBENE.HOUSE.GOV

WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE, VICE CHAIR
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SELECT REVENUE MEASURES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TRADE

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

July 1, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

I write to respectfully request that the United States immediately allow vaccinated Canadians to enter U.S. ports of entry with a priority given to the Boundary Bay Border Crossing.

On March 18, 2020, the United States – Canada border was closed to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus, affecting many border communities. These restrictions have been extended by 30-day increments throughout the course of the pandemic, usually with just a few days' notice, with the most recent extension leaving the restrictions in place through July 21. However, we are not in the same place we were 15 months ago. Currently, over 65 percent of Canadians have received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and 19 percent of the population is fully vaccinated. As both countries continue distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, it is safe to allow vaccinated individuals to travel between our two countries.

On July 5, the Canadian government will begin exempting their vaccinated citizens from quarantining and testing requirements after returning from international travel. This announcement means vaccinated Canadians can freely travel across the border and return home without major disruption to their lives. While this is welcome news to border communities, the economic and humanitarian benefits will not be realized if the United States does not allow vaccinated Canadians to cross our border.

The continued border closures have caused severe social and economic harm to border communities. In 2018, nearly 7 million trips were made into Whatcom County, Washington by visitors from Canada. These visitors spent an estimated \$138 million in local stores and businesses. Crossings from Canada into Whatcom County were down to a mere 2% in 2020, severely restricting the economic activity and tax revenue of these border communities.

These severe hardships are illustrated by the example of Point Roberts, Washington, a small exclave community in my district. Point Roberts has no direct land crossing to the mainland United States. Throughout the pandemic, the community has been uniquely cut off and isolated due to the border closure. Point Roberts is a peninsula, but the pandemic has made it an economic island.

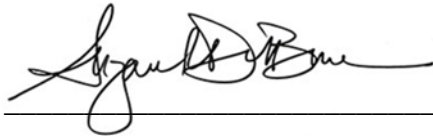
Like many border communities, many small businesses in Point Roberts have had to lay off workers, reduce hours of operations, or shut down entirely. Ali Hayton, the owner of the only grocery store in Point Roberts, announced she could no longer sustain her losses and would be forced to close her doors on July 15. Thankfully, Governor Inslee was able to provide Point Roberts with an emergency grant to help keep the grocery store open, but this form of assistance is not a sustainable solution for businesses devastated by the border closure.

In addition, over 85 percent of Point Roberts residents are fully vaccinated—one of the highest vaccination rates in either country. Residents of Point Roberts have repeatedly attempted to draw attention to this situation, and the Whatcom County Council has pledged to fund and facilitate PCR testing and vaccinations for Canadian Nationals who travel to Point Roberts.

For small businesses and communities on the border to build back better, we must immediately begin the process of reopening our border. I respectfully request that the United States immediately implement a process for vaccinated Canadians to enter U.S. ports of entry with a priority given to the Boundary Bay Border Crossing.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. Please let me know how I can be of any assistance moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzan K. DelBene", written over a horizontal line.

Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress