

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 3, 2020

The Honorable Chad Wolf
Acting Secretary
Department of Homeland Security
500 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20536

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

Dear Acting Secretary Wolf and Minister Blair,

We are writing in response to the announcement of extended travel restrictions along the U.S. – Canada land border.

On June 16th, Canada’s Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced the extension of non-essential travel restrictions along the Northern Border, which was followed by an official statement from the United States’ Department of Homeland Security reiterating that commitment. Citing the success of existing restrictions and evidence of the ongoing spread of coronavirus, the bi-national agreement to limit travel along land ports of entry will continue until July 21st. Both governments are being responsive to the risk to public health that unimpeded international travel presents.

As members representing congressional districts along the U.S. Northern Border, we understand the importance of prioritizing the safety of our communities as we all navigate the complex calculation of minimizing public health risks and resuming economic activity. However, the social and economic partnership between our two nations necessitates a clear pathway forward.

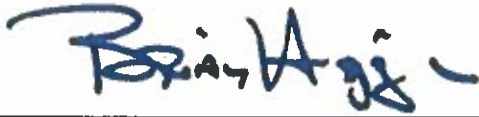
The continual 30-day extensions without a plan for how restrictions will be modified prolongs uncertainty for both communities and creates unnecessary tension as we approach each new expiration. States and Provinces have created frameworks for reopening that rely on monitoring public health data, the expertise of health officials, and other defined criteria to inform government decisions on how to proceed with each phase of a reopen. This process alleviates uncertainty and allows residents to understand the decision-making and anticipate next steps. Continuing to extend border restrictions at 30-day intervals is untenable for the communities that have been separated from family and unable to tend to their property for over three months.

We are asking that the United States and Canada immediately craft a comprehensive framework for phased reopening of the border based on objective metrics and accounting for the varied circumstances across border regions. Additionally, we request consideration of any interim measures that may be appropriate to bilaterally ease restrictions on family members and property owners – including those with property on U.S. soil accessible only through cross-border transit - in order to restore the social bond that unites our two nations.

We hope that our legacy of binational cooperation would lend to the development of a thorough plan to protect the health of our shared communities and reinvigorate them in this time of recovery.

Sincerely,

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BRIAN HIGGINS
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



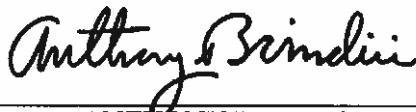
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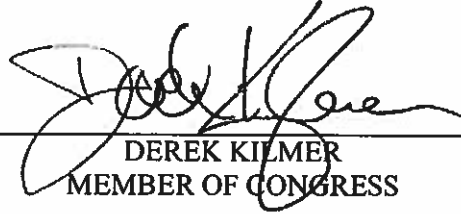


CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

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DAN NEWHOUSE
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



DEREK KILMER
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



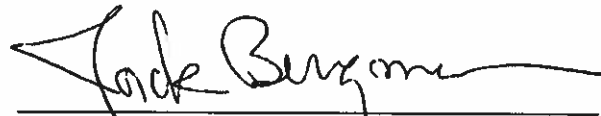
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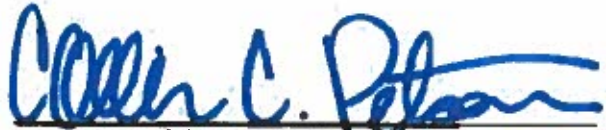
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ADDITIONAL SIGNATORIES
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