

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 27, 2021

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr Ave. SE
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

As you know, President Biden has decided to extend the closure of land borders until, at the earliest, October 21, a decision that we do not support. In the hope that a reopening will occur promptly on or immediately after this date, we request an immediate report from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to Congress with a plan for operationalizing new border procedures.

As Representatives from northern border states, we are especially concerned about the situation along the United States-Canada border. Currently, Customs and Border Protection does not appear to have a plan in place to execute a safe reopening without causing tremendous delays at land ports of entry (LPOE). This is a major problem for members of the commercial trade sector, who need to know whether DHS will assign appropriate resources to maintain adequate levels of security and efficiency so that all LPOEs can operate successfully.

However, this issue impacts *all* Americans, not just those directly engaged in the cross-border trade in goods, which totaled nearly \$720 billion in 2019.¹ The movement of people, for tourism or other forms of discretionary travel, is also a major economic driver. Ninety percent of the Canadian population lives within one hundred miles of the border, making our country Canada's largest inbound travel market. In 2018 alone, there were 21.5 million overnight arrivals from Canada, roughly half of which crossed a land border, and each Canadian visitor spent an average of \$980 while in the United States.²

The economic and social costs of the land border restrictions grow every day they remain in place, delaying the usual \$1.7 billion in products that cross the U.S-Canada border daily and preventing nearly all non-essential travel.³ Any further delays at LPOE checkpoints upon

¹ "U.S.-Canada Trade Facts." *United States Trade Representative*, Office of the United States Trade Representative: Executive Office of the President, <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/americas/canada>. Accessed 20 August 2021.

² "International Visitations to the U.S. from Canada: International Inbound Travel Market Profile." *U.S. Travel Association*, U.S. Travel Association, 5 November 2019, https://www.ustravel.org/system/files/media_root/document/Research_Country_Profile_Canada.pdf. Accessed 20 August 2021.

³ "U.S. Relations with Canada - United States Department of State." *U.S. Department of State*, U.S. Department of State, 8 July 2021, www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-canada/. Accessed 20 August 2021.

reopening will only continue to further harm those who have already suffered over the past 16 months – including not just the business community, but also those who have been unable to visit friends, family, and loved ones for far too long.

We urge your office to move quickly on this important matter and stand ready to assist your efforts in any way possible.

Sincerely,



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Michelle Fischbach
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Chris Jacobs
Member of Congress



Kelly Armstrong
Member of Congress



Elise Stefanik
Member of Congress