

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

January 06, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

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

Dear President Biden and Secretary Mayorkas:

Thank you for your commitment to a safe and efficient northern border even as the pandemic has forced restricted travel and sometimes closure. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continually been advocating for safe, healthy travel between the United States and Canada at our shared northern border because of how vital it is to New York communities. Maintaining an open border to vaccinated travelers has been essential to the functioning economy of New York State and to the wellbeing of New York families.

We write to urge you to work with Canada to keep the northern border open to vaccinated individuals, even as the new Omicron variant of COVID-19 raises new challenges. This is necessary to protect the economic livelihood of New York businesses and to ensure we are not placing additional burdens on our supply chains. It is also important for our constituents who are reliant on travel across the northern border to connect with friends and family members.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the United States-Canada border was closed for more than a year and a half. This extended closure caused significant disruptions in border towns, where people routinely cross to shop, visit family and participate in local events. I heard from so many New Yorkers about the harm their families suffered as a result. The closure and loss of Canadian business cost the U.S. economy an estimated \$1.5 billion each month and \$665-855 million annually in Erie County alone.

Vaccines work and provide the best opportunity to end this pandemic. Canada has a high rate of vaccination with over 76% of its general population fully vaccinated with both doses. We must recognize vaccine efficacy and follow the public health data. There should not be additional restrictions placed on non-essential travel for fully vaccinated Americans and Canadians and all ports of entry on the northern border must remain open.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to continuing to work with you on this issue.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Brian Higgins
U.S. Representative



Chris Jacobs
U.S. Representative