



STATE OF WASHINGTON
— OFFICE OF GOVERNOR JAY INSLEE —

June 4, 2021

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken
Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C 20037

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

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas:

I am writing in hopes of securing relief for residents of U.S.-Canadian border communities who have experienced unique challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As a result of conversations I have had with businesses, community leaders, and local elected officials, it is clear that the US-Canadian border closure has placed, and is continuing to place, serious hardships on communities, impacting their economic and social well-being.

Washington State has taken a science-based approach to the pandemic and has enacted public health measures that prioritize safety and protect the lives of Washingtonians. Because of rising vaccination rates, Washington State has a plan to reopen our economy statewide by June 30. Therefore, I respectfully request that the United States and Canadian governments, and specifically your departments, work to find innovative ways to reopen the border consistent with public health guidance.

If a full border opening is not considered feasible, I would like to recommend that we prioritize the development of specific policies to partially open crossings. The hardships being experienced along the U.S.-Canadian border are significant, and measurable forward progress is needed. Groups we recommend prioritizing in this regard include:

- Residents of Point Roberts, Washington, who must transit through Canada to reach other portions of Washington State.
- Families separated by the border closure.
- Businesses that have been negatively impacted by closures.
- Homeowners who have not been able to access private property that is in need of maintenance and repairs.

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Some specific actions that would be responsive to the needs of these groups and promote border efficiency include:

- A binational approach that uses the NEXUS program as a way for travelers to voluntarily share vaccine records electronically with both the US and Canada.
- Using the ArriveCAN platform that is required for entry into Canada to share vaccine records and/or negative test results.

The state of Washington and our friends in British Columbia stand ready to assist the federal governments in the development of pilot programs to safely open the border. We share a sense of urgency in meeting the needs of our impacted communities, With more than 60 percent of BC residents having received a first dose of vaccination, and a similar percentage of Washingtonians vaccinated, we believe that we can significantly mitigate the health risks associated with reopening our border by continuing to follow a data-driven, science-based approach and the guidance of our public health experts.

Thank you for considering these requests. I am grateful for the leadership that the Biden administration has demonstrated to fight the COVID-19 pandemic at home and abroad since taking office this year. If you or your staff have any questions, please direct them to my Director of International Relations and Protocol, Schuyler Hoss, at (360) 239.1317 or Schuyler.Hoss@gov.wa.gov.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jay Inslee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "I".

Jay Inslee
Governor