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DELIVERED BY HAND IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

Honourable Peter Van Loan
Minister of Public Safety
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Van Loan,

We are writing today in response to several meetings that we had yesterday in Cornwall, Ontario, and at the Akwesasne Reserve.

Following these meetings with Grand Chief Thompson and other Native leaders, leadership from the Customs and Immigration Union (CIU), and with local business leaders, we gained additional perspective on the crisis they are facing, the traditions of the Native community and the concerns of the CBSA members who work at the International border crossing.

The problems that each of these groups face due to the current closure of this international border crossing are very different yet important. As you are aware, this is the only border crossing with customs facilities located on a reservation making it a unique challenge for all parties.

Today we are respectfully asking that you travel to Cornwall and the Akwesasne Reserve to meet with these same groups and individuals, or at least make yourself available. It is time for you and the Canadian Government to make this border closure a priority by finding resolutions and long-term solutions to their needs. All of these groups welcome the opportunity to demonstrate how their situation differs from the rest of the international crossings in Canada and are seeking leadership to find a solution for long standing, neglected problems.

We cannot stress how important it is for you to make these meetings a priority, meet with these groups in a timely manner and find the best solution to solve the on-going crisis in Cornwall and Akwesasne. The first step of any resolution is to reestablish trust and that can only start with a personal intervention and commitment from you.

Thank you in advance for your time and attention to this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact us for any further information that you might require in order to help facilitate these meetings in a timely manner. We look forward to your prompt response.

Yours truly,

(original signed by)

Jean Crowder MP
Nanaimo-Cowichan
NDP First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Critic

(original signed by)

Brian Masse MP
Windsor West
NDP Border Critic

CC: Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada
Scott Armstrong, President of Cornwall Chamber of Commerce
Bob Kilger, Mayor – City of Cornwall
Guy Lauzon MP (Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry, Ontario)
Ron Moran, National President – Customs and Immigration Union of Canada
Grand Chief Thompson, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
All City Councillors – City of Cornwall