



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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MCA & SRMT Respond to November 8th U.S. Border Reopening

AKWESASNE -- With the Massena Port-of-Entry (POE) scheduled to begin allowing non-essential border travel for fully vaccinated individuals beginning on Monday, *Kentenhkó:wa*/November 8, 2021; the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne and the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council have received assurance that Akwesasne residents will be exempted from showing proof of vaccination.

“We have continued to work collaboratively with the Tribal Council and both border agencies to recognize and facilitate border crossing for Akwesasne residents during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Through open and regular dialogue, there is an understanding of each other’s goals and the need for our community members to cross the border -- regardless of vaccination status or test result,” shared MCA Grand Chief Abram Benedict.

During the weekly update call between the border agencies and both councils, representatives from the Massena POE and the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) indicated that proof of vaccination or a negative test result will not be required for Akwesasne residents. US Customs will require proof of First Nations/Native American status such as a tribal card or Mohawk Nation membership card. Akwesasne residents reporting to CBSA will require the Canadian-issued status card in order to be exempt from the testing and vaccine requirements. The exemption applies only to residents of Akwesasne.

“As a border community, we’re pleased that there continues to be a cooperative relationship and understanding of the unique border travel needs of Akwesasne residents. We’re also pleased that lifting the travel restriction for fully vaccinated individuals will allow Canadian travelers to safely return and support Akwesasne businesses that have felt the economic pain of the border closure,” stated the SRMT Tribal Council.

For non-residents, starting November 8th border travelers arriving at the Massena POE will be required to provide proof of COVID-19 vaccination, as well as verbally attest to their reason for travel and COVID-19 vaccination status during a border inspection.

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