

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

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GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

September 20, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) today announced it again will extend the border closure between the United States and Canada, which has been closed since March 2020. The continued closure is to the great detriment of Montanans who live and work along the Hi-Line and in the Golden Triangle.

While our nation's southern border remains porous and insecure, with drug cartels and human traffickers taking full advantage of the situation, the federal government continues to lock down our northern border, hurting Montana families and our small business owners who depend on trade and travel and who have suffered from the border's closure for more than 18 months.

The closure continues to harm and threaten the livelihood of Montanans. In August, I visited communities along the border and heard firsthand about the border closure's impact. A small business owner in Shelby, Montana, about 35 miles from the border, told me he has lost critical customers from Canada, costing him 20 percent of his business and preventing him from creating jobs and hiring more workers. He also reported hotels in the area have lost 20 percent of their business and a local retailer lost 30 percent.

In Rexford, Montana, just over 12 miles from the Canadian border, a marina owner told me his marina, restaurant, performance venue, and parking lot are generally full during the summer. As a result of the border closure, however, all have been well below capacity, and the loss of business forced him to avoid hiring more workers.

Beyond the business and jobs lost and the livelihoods threatened, there is a grave human cost to the continued closure of the border. I heard heartbreaking stories from families in Eureka, Montana, about eight miles from the border. Husbands and wives, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren have been separated for more than a year and a half. One attendee told me not being able to see her family is

"probably one of the hardest things, besides losing my father."

Those who have been able to see their family have been forced to visit with a fence separating them, preventing them from embracing their loved ones. A mother described how her four-year-old son could not hug his dad.

Given its impact on families, the continued closure of the U.S.-Canada border is unconscionable.

I respectfully request you reconsider the continued closure of the northern border and reverse DHS's decision. It is time to safely, fully, and immediately reopen the border for trade and travel.

Sincerely,



Greg Gianforte
Governor