

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

June 6th, 2022

Honourable and Dear Sir,

On behalf of Niagara's business community and the Niagara tourism sector, I am writing today to ask that you re-evaluate the measures currently in place at Canada's borders.

The Chief Public Health Officer of Canada has reported that test positivity and wastewater signals are in decline across the country, and most jurisdictions have now relaxed or removed public safety measures in relation to COVID-19. Bearing this in mind, we ask that the current measures in place for Canada's border crossings be reassessed, with a particular mind to alignment with the policies of other countries. A border crossing is bilateral by its nature, and a measure implemented on only one side is of greatly diminished use.

The ArriveCAN app is particularly burdensome and causes significant delays at crossings. Unfamiliarity with the app and the technology lead to confusion among travellers and slowdowns at the border. We concur with the suggestion of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce that the international community should work to develop and implement a universal vaccine passport system (tracking all vaccinations needed for travel, not just those for COVID-19), but in the meantime, we suggest that the difficulties which ArriveCAN creates at border crossings are not worth the limited public health benefits it offers.

The Niagara region whose businesses we represent, not to mention Canada as a whole, have essentially missed two tourist seasons owing to the pandemic. Our members widely report exhaustion of cash reserves and an inability to take on more debt. This is borne out by available data. Statistics Canada's Q1 2022 Survey on Business Conditions reported that 40% of accommodation and food service businesses and 26% of arts, culture and recreational firms were experiencing significant problems with cash flow and debt. 28% of arts, entertainment and recreation firms, along with 26% of accommodation and food service businesses, reported that travel bans and restrictions were going to be a significant obstacle.

While provincial restrictions have ended, it is worth noting that businesses face new challenges such as inflation, labour shortages, and supply chain problems. We know that you are working hard to tackle these issues precisely because you recognize the impact that they are having.





The Ontario Chamber of Commerce reports that over \$36 billion of the province's economic activity stems from tourism, and Niagara is one of the most important tourist destinations in Ontario and in Canada. Tourism brings more than \$2 billion to Niagara's economy each year, and supports between 40,000 and 60,000 local jobs. A significant amount of that revenue is provided by Americans crossing the border, but also by tourists from further afield, who are less numerous but, on average, stay longer and spend more than domestic tourists.

Bearing this in mind, we hope that you will recognize that a re-evaluation of Canada's border crossing regime is due. We ask for a lifting of all the extraordinary border crossing measures currently in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic as soon as possible to align with other jurisdictions and to restore competitiveness to our tourism industry.

Sincerely,

Mishka Balsom
President & CEO, GNCC

CC:

The Honourable Marco Mendicino, Minister of Public Safety marco.mendicino@parl.gc.ca
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The Honourable Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transport (Canada) omar.alghabra@parl.gc.ca
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario premier@ontario.ca

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