

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 12, 2021

The Right Honourable Prime Minister Justin Trudeau
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

We write to you in the same spirit of collaboration as our previous letter, dated October 21, 2020, to reiterate our strong interest in working with you on COVID-19 travel restrictions to limit negative impacts to all of our constituents. We were shocked by the decision announced by your government last week to extend the ban on cruise ships carrying over 100 passengers until February 28, 2022. We are particularly concerned that this decision was made without any forewarning to or consultation with Alaska, your neighbor and partner. Losing access to Canadian ports creates significant disruptions to the cruising season in Alaska, and will have a significant economic impact on our state, which is already suffering from the recession caused by this pandemic. The loss of revenue from tourism for another year will cause extensive economic damage and put at risk the more than 20,000 jobs across Alaska that are reliant on spending from cruise ship passengers. While we agree that safety must be a priority as we make decisions, we are disappointed by the decision to extend the cruise ship ban for at least another a year without working with us.

As neighbors and economic partners, we are discouraged by Canada's lack of outreach before announcing this long term closure. While we anticipated and understand continued safety precautions, the extensive duration and scope of this ban is disappointing given the long-term negative impacts it causes. For as long as this pandemic persists, Alaska and Canada should strive to maintain an open dialogue, cooperation, and consideration of the imperatives and unique challenges faced by sharing a northern border. Alaska and Canada can get through this pandemic, the economic hardship, and the turmoil if we work together, as mutual partners with a vested interest in a safe return to robust and shared economies.

Moving forward we urge you to consider Alaska as an essential stakeholder in your port and waterway closure considerations. Since the announcement of the extended ban, we have had constructive discussions with your Minister of Transport and his staff. We very much appreciate this dialogue, and ask that your government continue to communicate and partner with us on how to safely resume a safe cruise season for the 2021 season. We believe there are many ways to achieve a safe sailing season without the extreme measure of a one year total ban. We would appreciate your sincere consideration of a variety of options, including robust health protocols and the employment of technical stops, which may constitute a safe, yet reasonable, compromise to solving this dilemma.

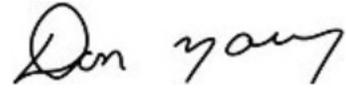
As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to restrict travel between Alaska and Canada, which has yielded additional negative economic impacts to both of us, we encourage you to explore less punitive solutions. We thank you for your attention to this matter of critical importance to Alaskans and our economy – in particular, the activities which jointly support economies on both sides of our shared border. Together, we believe we can find alternatives to address your health and safety concerns for Canada and Alaska alike.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator

Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Don Young
Congressman for All Alaska

cc: The Honorable Omar Alhabra, Minister of Transport
The Honorable Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety
The Honorable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health
The Honorable Sandy Silver, Premier of Yukon
The Honorable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia
Her Excellency Kirsten Hillman, Ambassador of Canada to the United States
Ms. Katherine Brucker, Chargé d'Affaires of the United States to Canada