

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF SAULT STE. MARIE

November 12, 2020

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

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

I am writing to you further to the resolution unanimously passed at the City of Sault Ste. Marie's City Council meeting on November 9, 2020 (attached hereto) regarding a requested three-week pause on exemptions to international travel between the United States and Canada on the International Bridge between Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario and Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan.

Chippewa County, including Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, has been experiencing an extreme outbreak of COVID-19 cases. The Chippewa County Health Department reports that staff are "overwhelmed" by the recent influx of cases (168 active cases as of November 10), and the health department has identified three establishments in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan as potential exposure sites. Algoma Public Health is urging residents to avoid cross border travel, however, the exemptions afforded by the Government of Canada do make it possible for people to cross the border in certain instances.

In comparison to the above outlined situation in Michigan, there are currently 13 cases in the Algoma District (the catchment area that includes Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario), which is a more populous area than Chippewa County.

The situation in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan is extremely concerning to our community considering the close proximity we share with our neighbours in the United States. Daily cross border travel poses a very real and significant risk to the health and safety of the citizens in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario. The sacrifices made by all citizens of Sault Ste. Marie should not be put at risk by travel into and out of to the US that may be permitted by your government but that is not, actually, essential.

We appreciate and recognize that critical goods and services have to travel between our countries, and we do not object to that occurring. However, there is a strong feeling in the community that the current exceptions, such as an exemption for education, goes beyond the 'essential' threshold. We ask that your government revisit the exemptions and pause each one that is not critical to essential supply chains or services.

If the federal government insists on maintaining its current policy, I suggest that it would be appropriate for the government to afford Algoma Public Health additional resources to address the risks of daily border travel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian C. Provenzano". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping underline.

Christian C. Provenzano, B.A., LL.B., LL.M

CC The Honourable Bill Blair, Minister of Border Security and Organized Crime
Reduction of Canada
Terry Sheehan, Member of Parliament, Sault Ste. Marie
City Council

Attachment