



*House of Assembly  
Nova Scotia*

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**Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin**  
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April 15, 2020

Premier Stephen McNeil  
Office of the Premier  
1700 Granville Street  
Halifax, NS  
B3J 1X5

Hon. Mark Furey  
Department of Justice  
1690 Hollis Street  
P.O. Box 7  
Halifax, NS  
B3J 2L6

Dear Premier McNeil and Minister Furey:

Thank you for your leadership during this global pandemic due to Covid19 coronavirus.

My citizens and I in Cumberland North appreciate the public health measures the government has put in place to protect and save lives.

Since the State of Emergency was announced on March 22nd, I have received hundreds of messages regarding the NS/NB Border.

On March 22nd I did contact the Minister of Justice executive assistant to ask for clarity on border restrictions specifically for those individuals that

- Nova Scotian citizens that work in New Brunswick
- New Brunswick citizens that work in Nova Scotia
- Nova Scotians that have medical appointments in NB such as dialysis, chemo and radiation
- Nova Scotians that have shared custody arrangements with a parent that lives in NB

I appreciated the press release that came through that same day at 5:45pm which helped calm the panic here in our area.

However, since that day, we continue to receive hundreds of inquires each day with questions on border rules. Local law enforcement is also being inundated with calls.

I have attempted to communicate local border concerns to the government through the process that is currently in place through the Chiefs of Staff.



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I have been extremely frustrated that the concerns of my constituents have not been heard in relation to the border.

I believe wholeheartedly we must do everything possible to stop the spread of Covid19.

We must stop all unnecessary travel into Nova Scotia.

We must provide border officials at both entrances into Nova Scotia (TCH and Tidnish).

I am asking that you consider implementing similar rules as New Brunswick which prohibits non-residents from entering the province unless they meet one of the approved exemptions. I am requesting you consider these exemptions (keeping in mind these have come from requests from local law enforcement, community leaders and citizens):

- work in NS
- receive medical treatment
- family member of a palliative or terminally ill patient
- need to pick up a prescription from their pharmacist
- require vehicle maintenance or repairs
- facilitate children sharing time between parents
- commercial vehicle drivers carrying commercial goods
- farmer needing to purchase feed for their livestock
  
- farmer needing farm equipment and equipment repairs
- NS resident who is a student at a NB University or College

I was told last week that vehicle repairs and maintenance is not essential. I can assure you that in rural Nova Scotia and New Brunswick they are essential. Amherst is the regional centre for vehicle purchase and maintenance for Northern NS and Southern NB. This time of year, there is a need to get winter tires to get changed in time for the May 1st deadline. I have many citizens contacting me that need work done to their vehicles and their main service centre is in Amherst. Also, there are some NS citizens whose summer tires are at a garage in Moncton. Please consider this exemption as it is important to our local citizens and neighbours.

Another timely issue is students being able to cross from Cumberland to Sackville to obtain furniture from rented apartments. Although the distance is only 10 minutes apart, unlike students that attend universities in NS, these NS students that attend a university only 10 minutes away (but in NB) are being restricted.

NS Border officials continue to allow non-residents that do not fall into one of these exemptions into the province. People have come to Nova Scotia from



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Texas, Arizona, New York, Ontario, Quebec and several other places. They are telling us they have chosen Nova Scotia as the place they want to live to ride out the pandemic. They have rented apartment and cottages. This is being allowed to continue. People here are infuriated and everyone in the province should be. These non-residents are bringing an increase health risk to the people of Nova Scotia. I have tried to communicate the seriousness of this and am shocked that stricter border restrictions have not been put in place.

Meanwhile over the last week law enforcement is giving \$1000 fines to our nurses, correctional officers and many other local NB citizens who work and serve the people of NS. These workers are used to buying their essential needs in Amherst. Many have been using the Superstore on-line order service to pick up their family's groceries before or after work and are now being fined for doing so.

NB stores have also been restricting these same workers from their stores citing that they have been in another province and therefore they will not allow them to purchase gas or groceries in NB.

I have been working actively with my neighbouring NB MLA Megan Mitton to put a stop to this, but you can imagine how discouraged these workers are.

I am being contacted by doctors, law enforcement, chamber of commerce, business connector and others daily on this issue. It is extremely frustrating that I have not been able to clearly communicate these concerns.

There are many New Brunswick citizens that work here in Nova Scotia at businesses such as Maritime Pride Eggs, IMP, Emmerson Packaging, C-Vision, Waldale, Atlantic Windows, and Westin Bakeries to name a few. Many live 5-10 minutes away from their place of employment here in NS. We also have many that work in Corrections and Health care. They are essential workers keeping our food supply chains intact and keeping our communities safe.

The new measures of restricting NB citizens (that serve and work for the people of NS) here in Amherst is actually going to increase their overall risk as they do not have access to on-line grocery shopping in the own community and will need to travel 45 minutes to Moncton instead of obtaining their essential needs 7 minutes from their home.

The border communities of Sackville, Port Elgin and Dorchester NB are deeply interconnected with Cumberland through family, employment, health care and economic activities such as food supply and vehicle repairs. I would suggest comparing us with Dartmouth and Halifax. We may be smaller in size but the relationships of work and family are just the same.

I strongly support measures to stop the spread however common sense should be used.



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If you would like more information on the border issues, I recommend someone from government to contact me directly. Improving communication on this issue with local law enforcement and local municipal governments would be welcomed.

I also request all border decisions be made in collaboration with our neighbouring provinces. Maritime cooperation would be most helpful at this time. I would certainly make myself available for this important work if you needed me to do so.

Thank you for considering my recommendations,

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin