



Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations

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June 4, 2021

The Rt. Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister  
The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister  
The Honourable William Blair, Minister of Public Safety  
The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health

***By email***

**Re: Easing of border restrictions for US citizens who own property in Canada**

Dear Prime Minister, Minister Freeland and Minister Blair,

We write today to ascertain the timing and the criteria that the Federal Government will be using to eventually allow cross-border travel for fully vaccinated Americans who own residential property in Canada.

American citizens who are residential property owners and taxpayers in Canada have been unable to access their properties for over a year now, due to the border closure policies. Most are seasonal residents of Canada who come to summer homes, mainly in the months of June through September.

A great number of property owners in rural and northern Ontario are US citizens. These longstanding residents are vital to the local economies and to the character of our lake and river communities.

We note that politicians and others on both sides of the border are calling for a plan for a phased re-opening of the border. Exemptions for low-risk travelers should be part of such a phased re-opening.

We encourage the Government of Canada to put in place a path forward to more normalized border operations, in concert with public health and other officials in Canada and the US and begin to put in place the protocols to ensure such entrants to Canada do so safely.

On behalf of our many American members, we respectfully request your timely response as to what criteria you plan to use to eventually allow cross border access for these individuals, and what measures will be requisite for such access upon the initial reopening of the border. Our American members and their immediate families have only one objective and that is to get to their properties, check them for winter damage (two winters now), and carry out the repairs and maintenance that will be needed. They need not widely circulate in our communities, and accordingly, they pose significantly different risks than tourists or day shoppers.

FOCA understands and agrees that Canada's border policy should be guided primarily by health and safety concerns. While we appreciate that the intent of banning "non-essential" travel is to lessen the spread potential of COVID-19 and its variants, there will be a time when exempting fully vaccinated US owners of Canadian property will be reasonable and justified. These individuals will be travelling by car, can easily bring sufficient supplies to self isolate for 14 days, and their properties are remote.

We also note that our US seasonal residents are not just taxpayers, but (some, for generations) have been active contributors to the economic, cultural, historical and environmental life of rural and northern Ontario. These families have strong ties to Canada and in some cases have families with both US and Canadian members, some of whom can travel to their homes in Canada while others cannot.

FOCA has supported the provincial stay at home orders and other health measures but with vaccinations now covering a significant part of the American (and Canadian) population, some benefit should accrue to those who have done their part to address this virus head on. We are hopeful that, as dictated by a lowering of the public health threat, exceptions will begin to be granted as part of the reopening of this important border.

We appreciate all your efforts to keep us safe and hope that as we begin to emerge from this crisis, a measured and thoughtful plan of reopening will include provisions for lower risk travelers to Canada. This includes fully vaccinated US owners of Canadian property who have accommodations where they can isolate in remote locations.

Many thanks for your consideration, and we look forward to your response, and your plan, at your earliest convenience.


Georgian Bay Association endorses and supports this submission from FOCA

Sincerely,



Terry Rees, Executive Director  
On behalf of  
Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations, Inc.

FOCA is an Ontario association of over 500 community groups and represent the interests of the 250,000+ waterfront landowners who collectively contribute over \$800 million each year in property taxes, and who collectively own 15,000 kilometres of freshwater shorelines and 50,000 hectares of environmentally important lands.



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