

Honourable Peter van Loan
Minister of Public Safety
Government of Canada
269 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P8
Canada

April 27, 2009

Dear Minister van Loan,

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) for the recent decision to provide customs clearance services, at no cost, to a second Amtrak *Cascades* service to Vancouver, British Columbia before, during, and for a brief time after the Vancouver 2010 Olympic Games in February 2010. While we recognize that this is a step in the right direction, we urge you to expand the fee waiver period from June 1, 2009 to June 1, 2010 to allow commencement of service as proposed by Amtrak and Washington State Department of Transportation.

Earlier implementation of the second train service would allow Amtrak to test and market the service during the busy summer tourism and cruise ship season. Additionally, based on a study by the Border Policy Research Institute of Western Washington University in Bellingham, WA, implementation of the service over a year would allow the federal, provincial and municipal governments in Canada to collect \$1.87 million in GST, PST and room taxes combined as a result of increased rail passenger travel. The revenue collected by increased tourism activity in British Columbia more than offsets the proposed cost recovery fees proposed by CBSA. As you know, 35,000 passengers rode the train into Vancouver in 2008 and, as noted in the August 25, 2008 letter from Governor Gregoire, the single train service generated \$20 million per year in tourism spending for British Columbia and Canada. We expect the second train to Vancouver to nearly double ridership and spending.

The service provided by CBSA plays a vital role in the safety, security and economic partnership of both countries. We appreciate the excellent work of the CBSA in completing a review of passenger clearance service levels in the air mode. Passenger clearance services are provided cost free at major airports in Canada and we applaud the decision by the Government of Canada to make further investments to expand these publicly funded services as part of a larger Air Services Policy Framework.

We recognize that CBSA is continuing to work with industry stakeholders to extend the Core Services Review of passenger services to ferry and rail modes and we extend an offer to organize Northwest tourism and transportation leaders to work with CBSA in this review. Pending that review, which you indicate that you will begin in the near future, we urge you to expand the waiver period for passenger rail for at least a year to take advantage of the critical summer tourism season. We would note that Amtrak *Cascades* service to Canada was initiated in 1994 with no imposition of fee.

Please address your correspondence to PNWER Transportation Working Group, Attn: Bruce Agnew, Co-Chair, 2200 Alaskan Way, Suite 460, Seattle, WA 98121, or electronically to transportation@pnwer.org. We look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,



Bruce Agnew
Director
Cascadia Center



Matt Morrison
Executive Director
PNWER



Mayor
City of Vancouver



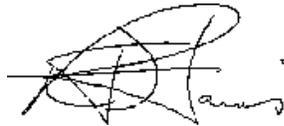
Mathew Coyne
Executive Director
Tourism Burnaby



Trevor Roald
Vice President
Vancouver AM Tourism
Association



James Chase
CEO
British Columbia Hotel
Association



Rod Harris
President and Chief
Executive Officer,
Tourism British
Columbia



Randy Williams
President and CEO
Tourism Industry Association of
Canada



Jim Storie
Chair, Council of Tourism
Associations
of British Columbia



David Jeanes
President
Transport 2000 Canada



Geoffrey Howes
Chair
Tourism Vancouver



Darrell Bryan
President & CEO
Victoria Clipper



Robert Gialloreto
Chief Executive Officer
Tourism Victoria



Rick Antonson
President and CEO
Tourism Vancouver



Thomas Prendergast
CEO
TransLink

Cc:

Stephen Rigby, President, Canada Border Service Agency
Colin Metcalf, Executive Director of the Minister's Regional Office
Hon. Stockwell Day, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway
Scott Brison, MP, Kings-Hants
Ed Fast, MP, Abbotsford
Bill Siksay, MP, Burnaby-Douglas
Peter Julian, MP, Burnaby-New Westminister
John Cummins, MP, Delta-Richmond East
Mark Warawa, MP, Langley
Dawn Black, MP, New Westminister-Coquitlam
Sukh Dhaliwal, MP, Newton-North Delta
Andrew Saxton, MP, North Vancouver
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