

Cumberland Business Connector  
211 – 5 Ratchford Street,  
Amherst, NS, B4H 1X2

Amherst & Area Chamber of Commerce  
210 – 5 Ratchford Street,  
Amherst, NS, B4H 1X2

Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force  
enquiry.tctf@gmail.com  
New Brunswick

July 15, 2020

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

Premier Blaine Higgs  
Office of the Premier  
P. O. Box 6000  
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Dear Premier McNeil and Premier Higgs:

We want to express our appreciation for the decision to implement an Atlantic Bubble whereby residents can move between our provinces without having to quarantine for 14 days. With the low level of active cases of COVID-19 in Atlantic Canada, combined with the robust testing capability that has been developed in our region, we feel that this is a decision that keeps our population safe.

The decision to implement the Atlantic Bubble also facilitates increased tourism and other economic activity, permits family reunifications, and allows residents of border communities such as Cumberland and Westmorland Counties to resume their normal day to day activities. Approximately 1,500 workers from Westmorland County travel outside of New Brunswick for work and approximately 700 people from Cumberland County travel outside of Nova Scotia for work. Our two counties are a smaller example of our entire Maritime region which is very interconnected and co-dependent upon one another.

Another example of our connected region is that 27% of the student population of Mount Allison University in Sackville, NB is from Nova Scotia. NSCC Cumberland attracts approximately 20% of their students from New Brunswick who come to take courses not offered by NBCC. Many other students at Moncton Universities and Colleges commute from Amherst and Cumberland County. If the Atlantic Bubble was not implemented, these institutions would likely see a dramatic decline in student enrollment.

While we support the Atlantic Bubble, we are concerned that it has only been partially implemented. As you are both very much aware, the congestion, lineups, and inconsistencies in crossing the border at the provincial border have been incredibly frustrating for our general



population and the business community. Restaurants in Amherst have had chef's quit because they do not want to spend 1 -2 hours in traffic after completing 10 hour shifts. Other service businesses cross the border several times a day to their customers, and do not know how long they will be held up in traffic each time that they cross. They are getting inconsistent messaging including some being told that they cannot take the commercial lane if they are driving in a car, not a truck. It should be noted that the most difficulties and inconsistencies are experienced crossing from Nova Scotia into New Brunswick, not coming from New Brunswick into Nova Scotia.

After the September eleventh attacks in the United States, a great concern for the Canadian Government as well as the business community in both our countries was the ramifications of "Thickening the Border." It was generally understood that there would be significant economic costs to the North American Economy if there were inefficiencies added to our border. The Federal Government put a lot of resources into lobbying the United States to minimize impediments to trade.

The reality is that we have "Thickened our Inter-Provincial Border" immensely. It should not take longer to move between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, than to cross the Canadian – US border. We are decreasing productivity and increasing costs at the same time as many of our businesses are struggling to survive and reinvent themselves. This is a time when we need our governments to do all that they can to minimize barriers to economic growth, not create additional barriers.

This border issue does not only affect the Amherst and Sackville area. We are talking about major disruptions and inefficiencies across the entire Halifax-Moncton Growth Corridor.

We have two specific requests:

1. We would respectfully ask that Nova Scotia and New Brunswick completely implement the Atlantic Bubble and remove the border stops between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In this scenario, inspections and checks should be focused on our Airports, harbours, and the land border with Quebec and Maine. When someone is entering Atlantic Canada, a common questionnaire across Atlantic Canada should be used which could also include asking where else in Atlantic Canada (or the Magdalen Islands) the traveller is visiting. Copies of this information can then be shared with each Atlantic Canadian province.

If tracking the movements of people coming from outside Atlantic Canada across our provincial borders is still required, couldn't this be dealt with by installing photo radar? This technology is capable of handling the traffic levels of Highway # 407 in Toronto



without impeding the flow of traffic. It could certainly handle the volume of traffic crossing the Tantramar Marsh.

2. When we have localized outbreaks of COVID in the future, we would ask that they be dealt with in localized areas, similar to what was done in Campbellton. The rest of Atlantic Canada should be treated as if it were one province. We cannot afford to shut down interprovincial travel in this manner again.

We appreciate your consideration of these requests as we believe that you also do want what is best for our region.

Sincerely,

Jonathan McClelland	Ronald Furlong	Carolle de Ste-Croix David McKellar
Jonathan McClelland - CEO	Ronald Furlong - Executive Director	Carolle de Ste-Croix David McKellar - Co-Chairs
Cumberland Business Connector	Amherst & Area Chamber of Commerce	Tantramar COVID-19 Task Force

- CC – Geoff MacLellan, Minister of Business for Nova Scotia  
Carl Urquhart, Minister of Public Safety for New Brunswick  
Dominic LeBlanc – MP Beauséjour  
Lenore Zann - MP Cumberland-Colchester  
Megan Mitton – MLA Memramcook-Tantramar  
Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin – MLA Cumberland North  
Dr. David Kogan – Mayor, Amherst, NS  
John Higham - Mayor, Sackville, NB  
Al Gillis – Warden, Municipality of the County of Cumberland  
Trish Stewart – Mayor, Oxford, NS

