

April 9, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
3801 Nebraska Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas:

I write to ask that the Department of State and the Department of Homeland Security work with the Canadian government to explore options to ease some border restrictions between the U.S. and Canada and to address the unique challenges facing the Northwest Angle of Minnesota, an area of our state, which due to a mapping issue, is an hour drive through Canada or a 22 mile drive by ice road over Lake of the Woods during the winter or a similar distance by boat in the summer.

The pandemic has affected people across borders, and both the United States and Canada took necessary and understandable actions to stem its spread, including limiting non-essential travel. While many measures to restrict cross-border travel were necessary to reduce the spread of the virus, these restrictions have posed challenges for employees who must travel across the border to reach their workplace and businesses that depend upon cross-border travel to reach customers and access supplies.

The Northwest Angle in particular has been effectively cut off from the rest of the state of Minnesota, inflicting hardship on those who have been separated from their homes, businesses, and loved ones. During the winter, businesses based in the Northwest Angle banded together to build a 22-mile ice road over the Lake of the Woods as a lifeline. With the arrival of spring, they need a new solution.

As the Biden Administration's rollout of vaccines continues to exceed its targets, and as rapid testing capabilities become more widely available, the need for drastic restrictions on travel should give way to common-sense solutions that will allow for residents, workers, and visitors to the Angle to access their homes, places of work, and U.S.-based cabins and rooms, while maintaining the necessary precautions during the pandemic.

Just as our countries have come together to find solutions to our common problems over our long history together, I ask that you work with your Canadian counterparts to identify and implement appropriate measures that will restore access to this part of our state.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,


Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator