



Washington State Senate

Senator Sharon Shewmake, PhD
42nd Legislative District

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CDC Washington Office

400 7th Street SW 5th Floor

Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Centers for Disease Control and Prevention,

I am writing this letter to urge the CDC to consider providing short-term travelers visiting Point Roberts, Washington, with reasonable accommodations or alternatives to upcoming rules on Canadians traveling to the United States with their dogs. Point Roberts is unique and is uniquely reliant on short-term Canadian tourism. Its economy, already in a precarious position, cannot bear further harm to its tourism industry. I firmly believe that the risk of an exceptional policy for Point Roberts is limited, while the cost of ignoring the town's extra-ordinary needs would be devastating.

Point Roberts does not share a land border with the United States. Driving to Point Roberts from the rest of Washington state requires traveling 25 miles through Canada and crossing two international border checkpoints. For that reason, Point Roberts has historically been reliant on tourism from the nearby Vancouver, BC, metro area. Tourist visits to the community tend to be shorter and more regular than visits to other communities heavily reliant on tourism, owing to the small size of Point Roberts and its relative accessibility.

COVID-19 travel restrictions crippled the Point Roberts economy, and the town has not yet recovered. Many businesses have closed; those that remain struggle to maintain regular hours of operation. Fewer businesses and attractions have meant fewer tourists, precipitating a dangerous cycle of economic contraction. While Whatcom County and Washington state work to address the community's needs, it is essential that no further harm be done to its tourism industry.

I am supportive of the CDC's intention, but these new rules, as applied to Point Roberts, risk damaging its already struggling economy. Canadian tourists planning short-term travel with their dogs are unlikely to consider visiting Point Roberts if they are required to pay for a costly veterinarian appointment every month, provide days of advanced notice, and refrain from traveling with puppies younger than six months old.



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Point Roberts cannot survive without interest from, and spending by, Canadian tourists. In the past, federal regulators in both the United States and Canada have accounted for the unique immigration needs of Point Roberts and adjusted policy accordingly. For that reason, I ask that the CDC consider developing reasonable allowances, exceptions, or alternatives to its upcoming canine border crossing rules for Canadians making short-term trips to Point Roberts.

Thank you for considering my concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or require any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sharon Shewmake".