



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

Jenica Atwin

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
FREDERICTON

December 18, 2020

**The Honourable Bill Blair  
Minister of Public Safety**

**House of Commons Ottawa,  
Ontario Canada  
K1A 0A6**

**RE: Clarity at the Canada-USA border for powerline contractors**

It has come to my attention that powerline contractors who have been crossing the border consistently as essential workers throughout the pandemic have recently been deemed non-essential and subject to a two week quarantine period when entering New Brunswick from Maine. It is not clear to me if this is a directive or merely the decision of one or two border agents. Either way, it is impeding the work of these companies who play a critical role in our greater regional emergency response infrastructure.

Major winter storms in New Brunswick are not a surprise. When they occur, we need to know that essential emergency response powerline contractors will be able to enter the province and get to work. We need to know that New Brunswick-based line workers are not stuck in quarantine because they've recently come back from emergency response in the United States.

I note that the government of Canada website currently lists the following essential work category exempt from quarantine:

*Persons who must cross the border regularly to go to their normal place of employment, including critical infrastructure workers (Energy and Utilities, Information and Communication Technologies, Finance, Health, Food, Water, Transportation, Safety, Government and Manufacturing), provided they do not directly care for persons 65 years of age or older within the first 14 days after their entry to Canada;*

Despite the above exemption, line workers crossing from Maine into New Brunswick are being directed to quarantine. I am asking for clarity on this point so that we will not be scrambling in the aftermath of a storm this winter to activate line workers who are stuck in quarantine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "J. Atwin".

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