



HCA Clerk <hyderhca@gmail.com>

Hyder AK and Stewart BC Bubble Petition

1 message

Hyder Stewart Action Committee <hyderstewartac@gmail.com>

Wed, Sep 9, 2020 at 3:40 PM

To: Bill.Blair@parl.gc.ca

Cc: "Bachrach, Taylor - M.P." <taylor.bachrach@parl.gc.ca>, Don Young <Azabel.Ordaz@mail.house.gov>, "Gina McKay (Council)" <gmckay@districtofstewart.com>, HCA Clerk <hyderhca@gmail.com>, "Hammond, James (Bachrach, Taylor - MP)" <james.hammond.828@parl.gc.ca>, "Holdijk, Eric (Bachrach, Taylor - MP)" <eric.holdijk.828@parl.gc.ca>, "Jack.Harris@parl.gc.ca" <Jack.Harris@parl.gc.ca>, Mike Dunleavy <governor@gov.state.ak.us>, "Patricia A. Hajdu, P.C., M.P." <Hcminister.ministresc@canada.ca>, Representative.Dan.Ortiz@akleg.gov, Senator_Sullivan@sullivan.senate.gov, Services@murkowski.senate.gov, doug.donaldson.mla@leg.bc.ca, sen.berst.edman@akleg.gov, DOS Council <admin@districtofstewart.com>

Dear Minister Blair,

We filed our original petition with your office on July 28. We are now over 6 weeks into our campaign and at nearly 25 weeks of extreme isolation – with no answer from you. The current border restrictions interrupt daily living, access to the limited social connections available to us, access to survival practices, and access to recreation activities that keep us healthy. The very good reasons that those travel restrictions work to protect residents in highly populated regions surrounding heavy traffic border crossings do not exist in our remote community and instead are creating hardships and misery here where there is no virus.

We have 63 residents of approximately 40 families in Hyder who depend on the community of Stewart. At a time when the government is encouraging small groups of neighbours to form bubbles, we are divided from ours. Meanwhile, essential workers who live in Hyder and work in Stewart travel to Stewart daily, intermingle with Stewart community members, and return home to interact with family members in Hyder who are not permitted to cross. CBSA border agents stand 1 foot away from Hyderites, allowing them to interact without masks or gloves, and then those border agents go into the Stewart community and interact closely with the residents of Stewart. Our interaction between towns is deeply saturated, and the currently implemented travel allowances already cross-contaminate this community. We have maintained since the beginning of our campaign that Hyder residents do not pose a risk to the public health of Canadians. Our assertion has been tested numerous times given these permitted interactions.

As you are aware, Hyder enacted travel restrictions in May to locals and essential workers only, and a 14-day self-isolation period is imposed by the community of Hyder when residents return from other parts of Alaska or the lower 48. We have effectively closed the "Alaska Loophole" as it pertains to this border crossing. If COVID-19 comes to Hyder, it will likely be through Canada.

Of Hyder's 63 residents, there are 5 children (ages 13, 11, 10, 7 and 6) in the community who regularly engage in social and recreational activities in Stewart. We are seeing the effects of isolation on their mental health. The children were looking forward to the start of school in Stewart-

the only school for both communities - to be able to see their friends again, and return to some semblance of normalcy. The children are becoming withdrawn, lethargic, and speaking of hopelessness. Parents in Hyder have received a personal phone call from the local CBSA office, letting them know that children will not be permitted to cross the border for school. The CBSA border agent told Hyder parents that she had hoped for a different outcome and would advocate on behalf of the students to be able to attend school in Stewart.

In addition to support from MP Taylor Bachrach and MP Jack Harris, you have now received official letters of support for the community of Hyder and Stewart to be able to cross at the Stewart POE without mandatory 14-day isolation when crossing for everyday activities from Alaska's Representative Ortiz, Governor Dunleavy, and Senator Murkowski. Attached today are 3 pages of signatures from our local petition, and a letter of support from Seaport Transportation in Stewart, which joins multiple other letters of support from local businesses, individuals and organizations.

Minister Blair we are begging you for an answer. We are begging you for relief. Please hear our plea and reach out to us today with an answer that relieves the misery in our Two-Nations-One Community, and poses nearly no risk to Canadians.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Bunn
Carly Ackerman
Jane Beaumont
Hyder AK & Stewart BC COVID-19 Action Committee

4 attachments




IMG_2998.jpg
2479K



IMG_2996.jpg
3122K



IMG_2997.jpg
3129K

 **seaport support.pdf**
66K