



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Joseph A. Griffo

Griffo Urges Consensus to Re-Open Seaway Bridge

JOSEPH A. GRIFFO June 19, 2009

| ISSUE: **TRANSPORTATION**



Utica - Senator Joseph A. Griffo (R,C,I-Rome) today said he has written to federal officials on both sides of the New York / Canadian border to encourage all parties to come back to talks to negotiate a settlement that would re-open the Seaway International Bridge to allow the flow of people and materials at this border crossing.

"I'm not going to pretend that I'm familiar with all the issues that Canadian Customs officials have with the Akwesasne Mohawks leadership," said Senator Griffo. "But what I do know about is the negative economic and social effects that the closed border has caused."

Griffo said that the people of the Greater Massena area and North Country rely on this crossing. "I've asked our congressional delegation to encourage work toward a peaceful and respectful solution that doesn't adversely affect Canadian, American and Akwesasne security." Griffo continued. "The local community has such a reliance on the seasonal traffic that the current economic climate only stresses that a resolution comes soon."

"Now, more than ever, people living on both sides of the border need their representatives to step up and help find an agreement that will allow this important crossing to resume operation." Griffo finished.

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[Text of letter follows sent to U.S. Sens. Schumer, Gillibrand, Congressman McHugh, St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Chiefs Lazore, Ransom & Jacobs, Canadian Border Services President Rigby]
June 17, 2009

Senator Charles E. Schumer
313 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Schumer:

Knowing that the power of compromise is the greatest bridge to connect people, and knowing the damage being done to New York State's North Country communities and Canadian border communities by the closing of the Seaway International Bridge, I am urging that all of the governments involved sit down to resolve all of the issues at stake so that the bridge can be reopened.

Reopening the bridge is vital to the commercial health of the North Country communities I represent. Closure has broken patterns of commerce, patterns of entertainment and threatens to disrupt travel as the summer tourist season reaches its peak. Regardless of the reasons that sparked any steps along the chain of events that led to the closure of the bridge, and regardless of whether any of us agree or disagree with actions taken by others, we are now at a point where closure is laying a burden on people who deserve to have all governments involved working on their behalf and not at cross-purposes.

I strongly urge you to join with all of the other officials and governments involved to resolve this issue for the sake of the people that all of us in public service should have uppermost in mind as we act – those whose lives are affected by the impact of this closure.

Sincerely,
Joseph A. Griffo
Senator