

NEW YORK
STATE
SENATE
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12247



October 27, 2011

Hon. Charles Schumer
United States Senator
SH-313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3202

Hon. Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator
532 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-3202

Dear Senators Schumer and Gillibrand:

We are writing to you as members of the State Senate's International Border Caucus to express our strong disapproval of the new \$5.50 surcharge on Canadian visitors to the US, and to urge you to take steps to immediately repeal this new tax on tourism, which will cost New Yorkers their jobs, discourage trade between the US and its biggest trading partner, and add a new chill to our historic border relationship.

It is beyond ironic that this new fee, which had been rejected last Spring, was included in legislation that aims to increase international trade, as it will certainly have the opposite effect on communities and regions we represent, and further contributes to what the Canadian media describe as the current "threadbare" relations between our two nations.

More than \$30 billion in goods and more people than any other state transit the border between New York and Canada each year. The "thickening" of our international border, a necessary consequence of stepped up security in consideration of the dangers our nation faces post-9/11, has already had a measurable impact on tourism in Upstate communities that are located adjacent to the border.

As you may already be aware, Boldt Castle, in Alexandria Bay in Jefferson County, has already seen a dramatic drop in Canadian tour boat visitors from 95,000 in 2001 to 25,000 in recent years. Nonetheless, Canadians who do come here are spending more of their money in our state than ever before. We need to take steps to encourage more cross-border traffic from our Canadian friends and neighbors.

That's why we joined together a few weeks ago to form the International Border Caucus, comprising 11 State Senators and, currently, five Canadian representatives. Together, we are looking for ways to increase commerce and friendship between New York and the Canadian provinces at our doorstep.

We have already identified tourism as an area that is rich in opportunity for future cooperation. This new fee, however, makes it more difficult to help expand tourism efforts along the border.

New York State needs to show leadership in overturning this poor idea. The short-sighted need for new revenue should not be an excuse to further cripple 200 years of friendship and cooperation between our nations.

We urge you to join us in working together to remove this tax on our Canadian friends that will hurt our economy and cost jobs across New York State.

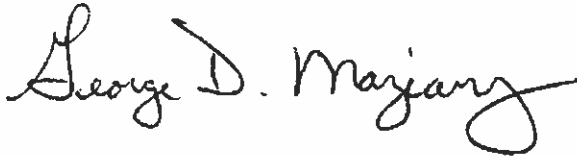
Sincerely Yours,



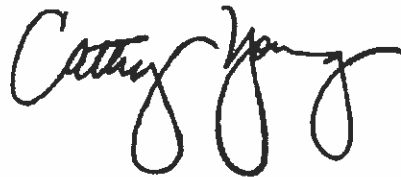
Sen. Patty Ritchie
Co-chair, International Border Caucus



Sen. Joseph A. Griffo
Co-chair, International Border Caucus



Sen. George D. Mazarz
62nd District




Sen. Catharine Young
57th District



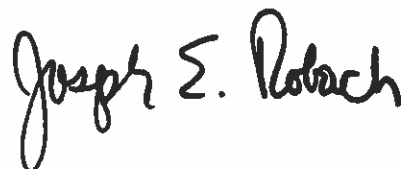
Sen. Michael F. Nozzolio
54th District



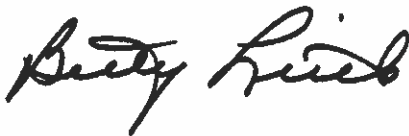
Sen. David J. Valesky
49th District



Sen. Mark Grisanti
60th District



Sen. Joseph E. Robach
56th District



Sen. Elizabeth Little
45th District



Sen. Patrick M. Gallivan
59th District



Sen. James S. Alesi
55th District

Cc: Senator Bob Runciman (Ontario), co-chair