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HJR 22

Sponsor Statement

This resolution urges the Canada Border Services Agency to restore 24-hour access to the border of Hyder, Alaska and Stewart, British Columbia in both directions. Hyder, Alaska is a geographically isolated community in southern Southeast Alaska. It's a community of approximately 87 residents and it sits on the border of Alaska and British Columbia, Canada. Hyder is just a little over a mile away from Stewart B.C., a community of approximately 500 residents. The residents of Hyder have only this road access to Stewart, B.C. and are dependent on Stewart for emergency medical services. The economies of each community are interlinked by tourism and mining interests which are the backbone of both Hyder and Stewart. Tourists and mine workers have historically crossed the border from Stewart B.C. into Hyder, Alaska each summer prior to 8:00 a.m.

On April 1, 2015 the border crossing between Hyder and Stewart, which is manned only by the Canadian Border, ceased to be a 24-hour crossing. The Canada Border Services Agency placed a gate along the border, which closes the border each day from midnight to 8am.

The road also serves as the established emergency evacuation route out of the community in case of a tsunami, levee break or other natural disaster. The Canada Border Services Agency's decision to limit the border crossing and the only road access to safety, has put the safety and economic wellbeing of the residents of Hyder in jeopardy.

There has been a long history of community cooperation and cultural exchange between the residents of Hyder, Alaska and Stewart, British Columbia. On Saturday March 28th, I hosted a town meeting for the residents of both Hyder and Stewart about the issue. There is unanimous consent within the two communities that the Canada Border Services Agency should reverse its decision and restore 24-hour access in both directions at the border.