



Senator Lillian Eva Dyck
Chair
Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples
The Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada, K1A 0A4

Dear Senator Dyck:

On June 22, 2016, the Standing Senate Committee on Aboriginal Peoples tabled its report, *Border Crossing Issues and the Jay Treaty*, in the Senate. Pursuant to rule 12-24 of the Rules of the Senate, the Committee requested that the Government of Canada table a response to the report.

The Government of Canada welcomes the opportunity to provide a written response to the recommendation proposed and wishes to thank the Committee for this important study and the issues that it raises.


The Government acknowledges that the border crossing challenges faced by a number of First Nation communities are both significant and, as the Committee noted, complex. Because they are complex, their resolution will require a horizontal approach, involving several departments and agencies. This will be necessary in order for the Government of Canada to arrive at workable and sustainable solutions that facilitate the ability of First Nation community members to cross the U.S.-Canada border and, at the same time, take into consideration issues such as status, international sovereignty and security.

As recommended by the Committee, the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada will appoint a Minister's Special Representative who will have the mandate to engage with First Nations and explore their views regarding the border crossing challenges they face as well as their perspectives on potential solutions. The results of this engagement will inform the work of an interdepartmental steering committee, comprised of senior officials from our respective organizations, who will be responsible for developing a plan to arrive at potential solutions.

The engagement with First Nations will be consistent with the commitment by the Government of Canada to a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous Peoples, based on recognition of rights, respect, co-operation and partnership.

We wish to thank the Committee for its important and ongoing work on behalf of Indigenous Peoples.

Yours sincerely,



The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs



The Honourable Ralph Goodale, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness



The Honourable John McCallum, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship