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COMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT
REFORM

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4501

May 14, 2013

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
B-307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
Ranking Member
House Appropriations
Subcommittee on Homeland Security
B-307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Price:

I write to urge you to oppose an entry tax at our nation's borders.

As you know, the President's FY14 Department of Homeland Security (DHS) budget includes a provision to assess the feasibility and cost of collecting a border crossing fee. The prospect of imposing border fees is a flawed notion that would have detrimental economic and cultural impacts. As you prepare the DHS FY14 appropriations bill, I respectfully urge you to reject the President's request.

There are over 300,000 daily crossings into the United States by Canadian citizens. As is true for many border states, the economic well being of Vermont is in part dependent on the ability of Canadians to quickly and safely cross our border. Vermont hosted over 2.5 million Canadian visitors in 2011 who contributed more than \$200 million to our economy. The 15 border crossings in Vermont are responsible for over \$4.1 billion in bilateral trade, helping to create 19,300 trade-related jobs. In addition, Canadians own thousands of homes in communities across Vermont. Simply put, a border fee would stifle cross border trade, business, and tourism.

The detrimental economic impacts of a border fee are measurable, but the cultural impacts are incalculable. For many Vermont and Quebec families, our heritage is one and the same. Canadians are not simply our neighbors to the north; they are woven into the fabric of our communities. They cross into our country every day to visit family members, conduct business, participate in artistic and educational events, and enjoy our landscape. Our relationship has been celebrated for centuries.

The imposition of border crossing fees will harm our relationship with Canada and the economy of the State of Vermont. I urge the committee to reject any proposal that would establish or fund a land border crossing fee.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Peter Welch". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "P".

PETER WELCH
Member of Congress