

BRIAN HIGGINS

27TH DISTRICT, NEW YORK

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September 14, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister of Canada  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear President Obama and Prime Minister Harper,

I write you today with great excitement and optimism on the prospect of a renewed economic and political commitment between the United States and Canada with the upcoming release of the Beyond the Border Action Plan. As you complete the details of this agreement, I would strongly recommend that any ceremony announcing this landmark agreement be held at the Peace Bridge in Buffalo, New York, the busiest passenger crossing between the two countries.

The Peace Bridge is emblematic of the strong relationship between our two great nations. When the Bridge was completed in 1927, the official opening ceremony was attended by the Prince of Wales, Canadian Prime Minister, British Prime Minister, Vice President of the United States, U.S. Secretary of State, Governor of New York, and the Premier of Ontario. At that time, with the rise of the automobile age, our countries knew the tremendous opportunity this transportation connection represented to transform and improve our shared life quality.

This auspicious beginning has yielded significant results – Canada and the United States are each other's largest trading partner. The Peace Bridge is the busiest passenger border crossing between the two countries and more than \$30 billion in trade moves across the Bridge every year, linked to \$227.4 billion in economic generation at firms that do business in the United States alone, supporting 1 million jobs. A renewed commitment to cross border trade and ease of movement of people and goods across the border presents an excellent opportunity to continue that track record of economic growth.

As a Member of the House of Representatives for Buffalo and Western New York, a Member of both the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Homeland Security, and as the lead House Democrat on the U.S.-Canada Interparliamentary Exchange, I strongly understand the importance of continuing and growing the economic and political relationship between the two countries. I also know the serious challenges incumbent to making that happen, specifically the need of both countries to protect against the threat of groups that seek to invoke

harm on innocent citizens. So I applaud efforts to feasibly work more closely together so that we can jointly protect our homelands as well as preserve the longest peaceful border in the world that the countries share.

Even amidst the tremendous turmoil in the world economy, the potential for greater economic growth between the United States and Canada remains very strong. Western New York and Southern Ontario stand at the nexus of that potential. The Peace Bridge is illustrative of how that potential was predicted by the two countries before, and how it can be realized once again. I can think of no better location to announce the Beyond the Border Action Plan than at the Peace Bridge in Buffalo, New York.

Thank you again for your efforts. I would be deeply honored to be able to assist in any efforts to make such an event happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

BRIAN HIGGINS  
Member of Congress