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May 19, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo  
Governor of New York State  
NYS State Capitol Building  
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo-

As of May 18<sup>th</sup>, New York State has reached an important milestone in the fight against COVID-19: more than 50 percent of all New Yorkers have now received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. More than 40 percent of all New Yorkers have completed a vaccine regimen and are now fully vaccinated. While many New Yorkers still need to get their shot, and targeted efforts to reach those who are not yet vaccinated must continue, New York State has made admirable progress in the fight to vaccinate its population and end this pandemic.

However, despite the progress we have made here, our Canadian neighbors need more help. Just over 3 percent of Canadians are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and although President Biden has shared doses of the vaccine with Canada, we have the opportunity to provide even more help.

Western New Yorkers are anxious to see their Canadian family, friends, and neighbors. Despite the border closure, Canadians can still cross into the United States to receive a vaccine if they have an appointment. Several states, including North Dakota, Alaska, Washington, and Montana, have recently allowed Canadian citizens to receive the vaccine.

Currently, all 30 vaccine sites run by NYS have vaccine doses and appointments available. According to vaccine.gov, there are 49 sites within a 50-mile radius of the Peace Bridge with vaccines in stock. If there is excess supply of the vaccine, we should do everything in our power to see that those doses do not go to waste. The stakes of this pandemic are too high to do anything less. I therefore urge you to drop the requirement that an individual be a resident of the United States in order to receive the COVID-19 vaccine in New York State, and allow Canadian citizens to benefit from the excess vaccine supply in the state.

Sharing surplus vaccines should not just be about shipping vaccines around the world, but should also be about helping our closest neighbors. The State of New York should make surplus vaccines available for residents of Canada's Niagara Region to come over and receive their shot, similar to other successful programs for Canadian citizens in other border states. It is not only the right thing to do, but it's also necessary to speed up the resumption of the cross-border commerce that is so important to border communities like Buffalo and Niagara Falls.

Only by working together will we defeat this deadly virus. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brian Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath it.

Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress