

Possible reduction of hours of service at ports of entry: CBSA risks leaving border communities behind

Dear community member,

We are writing to share our concerns regarding a possible reduction of hours of service at ports of entry across the Prairies. While the Canada Border Services Agency has yet to make an official announcement, information circulating suggests that this reduction of hours is set to take place imminently, impacting more than twenty ports in the region, such as Winkler, South Junction, Gretna, Tolstoi, Windygates, Snowflake, Estevan, Oungre, Climax, Willow Creek, Del Bonita, etc. It appears that USCBP is also proceeding with a similar change on the U.S. side.

CBSA seems to be moving forward with this project with little to no consultation with surrounding communities or stakeholders. The absence of timely consultation isn't new at CBSA, with the Agency often notifying the public of important changes mere days before they are set to take place. In fact, [when a similar reduction of hours of service took place in Quebec](#) earlier this month, the Agency announced the change only two days before implementing it.

We fear that such a reduction of hours of service (or outright closure) may have drastic repercussions for families, local businesses, and community organizations, with cross-border personal and commercial traffic being severely curtailed. The proposed changes would likely see evening and weekend service significantly reduced or fully eliminated, leaving rural Prairie communities such as yours without a way to easily cross the border at those times.

Should both CBSA and USCBP proceed with this reduction in service, it will be difficult for ports to go back to previous schedules once the new hours are in place.

Ports of entry play an important role as a basic community service, especially for rural, more remote towns and municipalities. Ensuring ports of entry are open keeps communities safer and allows for local economic growth. By reducing hours of service, CBSA would not be fulfilling this important community mandate.

Evening and weekend closures also mean more traffic being funneled through the few 24-hour ports in the region, increasing the possibility of border delays. It will result in community members having to travel several hours out of the way to access essential things like groceries, postal services, hospitals, agricultural equipment, farms, factories, employment, schools, churches, leisure activities — the list goes on. In some places, the current hours of operation are necessary for surrounding communities to simply survive.

To proceed with such changes without consulting those who will be directly impacted highlights the disconnection between the Agency and the communities it serves. We feel that you have a right to know, and that you deserve to be heard — which is why we are contacting you.

Anyone concerned about these potentially devastating changes needs to **ACT NOW**.

Let CBSA know that Prairie communities cannot afford a reduction in service at the border. To voice your concerns, we invite you to contact CBSA Prairie Regional Director General Janalee Bell-Boychuk by email at janalee.bell-boychuk@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca, along with CBSA President Erin O'Gorman at erin.ogorman@cbsa-asfc.gc.ca. You may also want to contact the [US Customs and Border Protection](#).

Thank you,



Marianne Hladun

Regional Executive Vice-President, Prairies
Public Service Alliance of Canada
HladunM@psac-afpc.com



Brea Baresinkoff

2nd National Vice-President
Customs and Immigration Union
brea.baresinkoff@ciu-sdi.ca