

Media Statement

Land Border Duty Free Stores Can Start on Road to Recovery

OTTAWA – Oct. 13, 2021 -- The announcement that the US will be allowing (fully vaccinated) Canadians to drive over the border is very welcomed news. The land border duty free stores are independently-owned, Canadian business that are wholly dependent on the flow of traffic over the border to the US. A study released yesterday showed that despite Americans being allowed to travel over the Canada/US land border, our stores still have an over 80 per cent (80.17%) decline in sales compared to pre-pandemic. These export stores were shuttered for over a year and were down over 95% in sales during the full closure of the land border for over 18 months.

To this point, our stores are appreciative of the federal supports for business forced to close or nearly close during the entire pandemic. We also appreciate the Liberal promise during the federal campaign to extend the support for tourism-based businesses into next year. We are a tourism-based business that is the hardest hit of the hardest hit businesses in Canada.

With the ongoing general thickening of the border, FDFA is calling on the Canadian federal government to take two specific measures:

1. Eliminate the expensive PCR test for fully vaccinated Americans crossing the land border

Fully vaccinated is fully vaccinated. Forcing fully vaccinated Americans to get tested before crossing the border makes no scientific sense. Hockey stadiums will now be open at 100 percent capacity but a fully vaccinated family of four faces an \$800 testing bill just to drive over the border in their own car. This unscientific approach must end given that random testing over the past few months has demonstrated there is no risk to ending the pre-testing.

2. Fully implement the Liberal campaign promise to help the hardest hit businesses.

This promise must be quickly implemented this Fall by Parliament. Tourism-based businesses and border stores have been closed and deeply impacted to protect Canadians. We cannot allow them to fail on this last mile of support.

Finally, FDFA would like to thank Congressman Brian Higgins, U.S. Representative for New York's 26th congressional district, for his tireless effort to raise this issue with the White House.

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The FDFA is the national association representing Canada's the 33 land border duty free shops. Our mandate is to promote the development and success of the land border duty free sector by acting as a voice, advocate and business resource for members.

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