

2163 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2605
DISTRICT OFFICES:
2930 WETMORE AVENUE, SUITE 9F
EVERETT, WA 98201
(425) 252-3188
119 N. COMMERCIAL STREET, SUITE 275
BELLINGHAM, WA 98225
(360) 733-4500
E-Mail: Rick.Larsen@mail.house.gov
<http://larsen.house.gov>

RICK LARSEN
2ND DISTRICT, WASHINGTON

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4702

RANKING MEMBER
COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

July 30, 2024

Mandy K. Cohen, MD, MPH
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Cohen:

I write to express concern about CDC's new rule regarding dogs being brought into the United States at border crossings with Canada. I share CDC's goal of preventing the spread of rabies in the U.S., but I respectfully request CDC consider delaying implementation of the rule, which is currently set to take effect August 1, 2024. It is clear your agency needs more time to coordinate with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to reconcile the purpose of this rule with the unique needs of border communities. I particularly want to emphasize the outsized burden this rule will impose on the exclave community of Point Roberts, Washington, in my district.

Many of my constituents have voiced apprehension about how this new rule will impact their cross-border travel. People in these communities frequently travel to Canada and back for activities like visiting family and friends, health care appointments, outdoor recreation, shopping, tourism, and emergency services.

I appreciate CDC's willingness to discuss these issues with me on July 17, 2024. Following that meeting, I was glad to see that CDC simplified the rule on July 22, 2024, by allowing Americans and their dogs to use a single CDC Dog Import Form for up to six months of U.S.-Canada border crossings.

The simplified rule does not, however, assuage all my concerns about the burden it will place on my constituents. For instance, residents of Point Roberts lack veterinary services of their own and must cross into Canada for this reason alone. Although a veterinarian signature will not be required on the CDC form until April 1, 2025, I anticipate confusion among the public, given the new rule's imminent implementation and the lack of public comment and education on the issue.

Therefore, I encourage you to consult with Whatcom County government, with border communities across Washington state, and with Americans in exclaves like Point Roberts.

I firmly believe CDC can craft a rule that both lessens the risk of dogs with rabies entering the U.S. and affords relief to Americans and their dogs who live in border communities.

Collaboration with relevant law enforcement agencies will also facilitate smooth implementation of any new rule. I encourage CDC to continue working closely with CBP as well as other federal and local agencies, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Rules that give proper discretion to enforcement agencies help them satisfy unique local needs while still achieving the rule's purpose.

For these reasons, I urge CDC to postpone implementation of the dog import rule. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Rick Larsen

U.S. Representative

Washington State, Second District