



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Border Senators Oppose New 'Visitor Tax' on Canadians

PATTY RITCHIE October 27, 2011

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International Border Caucus Members Urge Federal Reps to Repeal New Fee

New York State Senators who represent districts along the 450-mile US-Canadian border joined together to urge Congress to repeal a new, \$5.50 visitor fee that they say will hurt small businesses who rely on Canadian tourists, cost New Yorkers their jobs, and further damage relations between the two nations. The 11 members of the State Senate's bipartisan International Border Caucus signed a letter to both US Senators from New York, Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, urging them to fight for a repeal of the new fee.

"New York State needs to show leadership in overturning this poor idea. The short-sighted need for new revenue should not be an excuse to further cripple 200 years of friendship and cooperation between our nations," the letter says. "We urge you to join us in working together to remove this tax on our Canadian friends that will hurt our economy and cost jobs across New York State."

Noting that New York represents one of the largest portals for Canadian commerce and visitors, the State Senators said the new tax "will cost New Yorkers their jobs, discourage trade between the US and its biggest trading partner, and add a new chill to our historic border relationship."

And they noted the irony that the new fee was included in legislation that is supposed to increase international trade, specifically, a new free trade agreement between the US and Columbia.

The bipartisan International Border Caucus was formed by State Sens. Patty Ritchie and Joseph Griffo, and aims to find ways to improve ties between the US and Canada, increase cross-border commerce and encourage economic growth on both sides of the border between New York and the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec. The Caucus' Canadian co-chair is Sen. Robert Runciman.

The letter to US Senators Schumer and Gillibrand can be found below.