



Customs and Immigration Union
Syndicat des Douanes et de l'Immigration

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

CUSTOMS AND IMMIGRATION UNION EXPRESSES CONCERNS ON CBSA REDUCING HOURS OF OPERATION AT PORTS OF ENTRY

OTTAWA, August 4, 2017 – The National President of the Customs and Immigration Union which represents 10,000 members, most of whom are front line border services and inland immigration enforcement officers, has raised concerns regarding the recent announcement that the Canada Border Services Agency will be reducing hours of operation at six ports of entry in New Brunswick beginning this Sunday on August 6th.

CIU National President Jean-Pierre Fortin provided details of the looming closures:

“Hours of operation will be reduced in the future at all of the Bloomfield, Milltown, Centreville, Gillespie, Forest City and Forestville ports of entry. The only ‘explanation’ provided by CBSA is that this reduction in operational capabilities is being done to ‘harmonize’ hours of operation with US facilities.”

Fortin was critical of the decision and its potential impact on the country’s security.

“Canadians would be better served if instead of reducing our operations to match those of the U.S., our Government proactively worked with US authorities to revise practices and Agreements so that the current crisis of persons entering Canada illegally from the U.S. can be addressed. CIU is also specifically alarmed that this reduction of front line personnel and operations will expand from New Brunswick and also be imposed in Quebec which is currently undergoing a flood of persons entering our country illegally. Reducing front line officer capabilities contradicts the public interests of public safety and facilitated legitimate cross border trade and travel. It is also important to note that the U.S. has a dedicated border patrol that can maintain its country’s security despite a reduction in hours.”

Fortin also outlined the larger issue of CBSA’s continuing reduction of operational capabilities which the Trudeau Government needs to step up and repair.

“These latest actions by CBSA further reduce front line operational capabilities that began in 2012 with the former Government’s Deficit Reduction Action Plan. We lost over 1,250 front line operational positions through that initiative. The erosion of front line operations personnel continues with these latest cuts and with what I fear will be more on the horizon. On more than one occasion, CIU has asked the Liberal Government to reinstate the positions that were cut by the previous government. It has also asked for the creation of a dedicated border patrol that would allow it to maintain the integrity of the border. It’s not just asylum seekers who are crossing illegally, there

are also drugs and weapons. Today's circumstances clearly demonstrate that our Government is further weakening our country's first line of defence. We need to ensure that CBSA receives the necessary funding and that it properly deploys the operational personnel our country needs so that CBSA officers can perform their duties to protect and promote the safety, security and well-being of Canadians."

The **Customs and Immigration Union (CIU)** is a component of the **Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC)**, which represents Canada's Front-Line Customs and Immigration Officers. CIU also represents Investigation, Intelligence and Trade Customs Officers, Immigration Inland Enforcement and Hearings Officers, as well as all support staff – all of whom work at the **Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA)**.

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