



## MEDIA RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**MR# 2020040**

**DATE: 16 June 2020**

**RE: Amherst, Sackville mayors meet, urge provinces to reopen the border**

**AMHERST, Nova Scotia** – The mayors of Amherst, N.S., and Sackville, N.B., took extraordinary steps on Tuesday, June 16, 2020, to talk about an important issue face to face.

Amherst Mayor David Kogon and Sackville Mayor John Higham met at the closed Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border on the Mount Whatley Road, where they discussed the best way to let their respective provincial governments know it is time to reopen the border.

Separated by a concrete barrier that bars traffic from entering either province and standing more than two metres apart, the two concluded it was time their respective municipalities added their voices to those who are urging the reopening of the border.



**Amherst Mayor David Kogon and Sackville Mayor John Higham met at the closed border on the Mount Whatley Road on June 16 to discuss ways to convince their respective provinces that it was time to reopen the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border. (Tom McCoag / Town of Amherst.)**



Both indicated they would be sending that message to their individual premiers.

“At the beginning, there was no question the pandemic was the greater threat to health,” Kogon said in an interview following the meeting. “From the beginning we in Amherst agreed the steps announced by Premier Stephen McNeil and Dr. Robert Strang, including the closure of the border, were absolutely necessary to fight the virus.

“But now, with the flattening of the curve in this region and in the two provinces, we believe it’s important for our economies and our citizens’ well-being that the Maritime, if not Atlantic, bubble be established.”

Noting how intertwined the economies of southern New Brunswick and the Cumberland region are, Kogon said the border’s continued closure is having a major negative impact on businesses on both sides of the border.

“In Amherst, as much as 40 per cent percent of the customers our businesses serve come from New Brunswick,” the mayor said. “It’s the same in Sackville, where many of their customers come from Amherst and the Cumberland region. So, it’s very important from an economic perspective that the border between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick be opened.”

Noting the closed border is also preventing people from getting together with family or accessing property like cottages, Kogon said the impact of the restrictions are “taxing our mental well-being as well.”

“After three months, the restrictions may be doing more harm than good,” he said. “We’re seeing more depression and the potential for poor mental health outcomes is increasing because of the limitations the restrictions are putting on people

“By creating an Atlantic or Maritime bubble, families will be able to get together and people’s well-being will improve.”

Kogon said it was understood that if the Atlantic or Maritime bubble was created, things wouldn’t go back to normal.

“We would still have to do social-distancing, ensure that we practised good hygiene,” he said. “We have supported what Premier McNeil and Dr. Strang have done and will continue to support them, but we do want to encourage them to move this Atlantic bubble along and open the border because we feel this is the right time to do so.”

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