

Ottawa

Room 518, Confederation Building
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A6
Tel.: 613-996-1119
Fax.: 613-996-0850



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Ottawa

Pièce 518, Édifice de la Confédération
Ottawa (Ontario) K1A 0A6
Tél. : 613-996-1119
Télééc. : 613-996-0850

Constituency

1 - 9711 Fourth Street
Sidney, British Columbia V8L 2Y8
Tel.: 250-657-2000
Fax.: 250-657-2004

Elizabeth May

Member of Parliament / Députée
Saanich—Gulf Islands / Saanich—Gulf Islands

Circonscription

1 - 9711, rue Fourth
Sidney (Colombie-Britannique) V8L 2Y8
Tél. : 250-657-2000
Télééc. : 250-657-2004

The Honourable Anita Anand
Minister of Public Services and Procurement
House of Commons
Ottawa, K1A 0A6

July 28, 2020

Re: Letter of Consideration for Postal Banking for the Gulf Islands

Dear Minister,

I am writing to urge you to consider the Gulf Islands as test locations for the announced pilot project by Canada Post to bring banking services to rural post offices. The banking services on the Gulf Islands require significant improvements and would greatly benefit from postal banking. The lack of access to essential services is not a novel issue for residents of the Gulf Islands. As these islands have low populations and are physically remote, these communities experience the same problems that most rural communities experience across Canada. Yet these islands are included in the Capital Regional District, a local government entity that includes Victoria and out-lying communities. This inclusion in the urban Capital Regional District disqualifies them from rural-specific funding

Post offices have long been a link between urban centers and rural communities. Although our communication methods have changed over time, Canada Post remains a key part of our national communication network. Gulf Islands lack local financial services. Of the five Gulf Islands in my riding, only one, Salt Spring has banking services. Residents of Salt Spring would also benefit from postal banking. Island residents are required to travel to Salt Spring or Vancouver Island for access to banking services.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated issues with reduced ferries, reduced business hours, lack of access to tax services, and disqualification from Federal relief programs such as the Community Futures Fund. A lack of access to reliable internet and financial services has made enduring this pandemic a time of even greater stress and anxiety for island residents. Postal banking could provide critical infrastructure upgrades Southern Gulf Island residents desperately need. In pursuing this pilot project for the betterment of rural communities, we

cannot exclude communities who face ongoing challenges but lack a 'rural' classification. I would be remiss to not advocate for the Southern Gulf Islands to qualify as test sites for postal banking.

I would be happy to discuss this with you or your staff at any time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth May". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Elizabeth May O.C.
Member of Parliament
Saanich - Gulf Islands
Parliamentary Leader for the Green Party of Canada

Cc: Doug Ettinger, President and CEO of Canada Post
Adam Olsen, MLA Saanich - Gulf Islands
Island Trust Committee, Southern Gulf Islands