



Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0L8

Mr. Jean-Pierre Fortin
Acting National President
Customs and Immigration Union
1741 Woodward Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K2C 0P9

Dear Mr. Fortin:

This is in response to your May 10, 2010 letter to Mr. Stephen Rigby, President of the Canada Border Services Agency's (CBSA), wherein you express concerns with the CBSA's Three-Year (Triennial) Re-certification and Skills Maintenance Session and the Lacolle Pilot Project.

As you know, the CBSA's annual re-certification program has been in place for nearly two years. During the mandatory two-day (15 hour) session, armed officers are given the opportunity to practice their Course of Fire and Control and Defensive Tactics (CDT) skills before having to demonstrate proficiency in areas like the five CDT components of handcuffing, baton, OC spray, weapon retention, and carotid control techniques. The decision to extend the re-certification session to two days from the initial one-day requirement was made in October 2008. This change gave officers additional time on the firing range to practice their shooting skills and successfully complete re-certification on their first attempt, although they are provided with three opportunities to re-certify in firearms proficiency. A two-day session also allows for adjustments on Day 2 for participants who require additional CDT practice and re-certification attempts. In addition, under the program, officers who do not successfully demonstrate their proficiency during the first two-day re-certification session, are provided with a three-day training assistance session that includes additional opportunities to re-certify and further tailored training assistance (three more days).

As you note in your letter, the CBSA is now introducing a Three-Year (Triennial) Re-certification and Skills Maintenance Session. The Customs and Immigration Union (CIU) was consulted on this plan and provided with advance information on the program on March 9, 2010, prior to the information

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being posted on Atlas. At that time, you did not indicate that you had concerns with the general principle of re-certification, or that you felt the CBSA was not in line with other Canadian law enforcement agencies.

The CBSA's intention is to ensure that the first officers going through the third-year re-certification requirement benefit from the best training program possible. The decision to deliver the Three-Year (Triennial) Re-certification and Skills Maintenance Session in Ottawa, initially, was made in order to ensure that the program could be properly monitored and any necessary changes made immediately; and having one centralized location facilitates this task. Once the training program will have sufficiently matured, it will be decentralized. You and other CIU officials were apprised of this and of our intention to establish a regional training delivery infrastructure during a briefing held on January 27, 2010. You were also advised that portions of this infrastructure would be in place in October 2010 and that the full organization would be in place by April 1, 2011.

Your letter also raises concerns regarding our fiscal responsibilities. Although this is laudable, I assure you that cost implications are always taken into consideration when such decisions are made. The chosen training infrastructure for the re-certification program will give us the necessary: classroom space; simulators; simulation and scenario rooms; as well as gymnasium space. Our intention is to expand the training delivery program as the size of our armed workforce expands, and to enter into long term lease agreements or rental arrangements to reduce travel costs only when it makes economic sense to do so. The limited number of officers needed to attend Three-Year (Triennial) Re-certification and Skills Maintenance Sessions did not justify the construction of a full and complete infrastructure in the first year of delivery.

With respect to the Lacolle Pilot project, the responsibility for border enforcement in Canada is shared between the CBSA and the RCMP with clearly defined roles and responsibilities regarding port of entry activities, both at individual ports of entry and between them. The CBSA values its strong relationship with the RCMP and believes a joint approach, building on current roles and responsibilities, is the most effective and responsible means of securing Canada's border. The CBSA also believes that the most effective, safe, and financially responsible approach for the Government of Canada is to build on existing legislative frameworks and organizational expertise and to focus CBSA efforts on ports of entry and intelligence related functions. The outreach portion

of the project will include a CBSA uniformed presence, in addition to a role in the command centre that will ensure operational support through the sharing of intelligence, the execution of data base queries of CBSA enforcement systems, and the provision of expertise on issues involving port of entry operations.

I would like to thank you for bringing your concerns to our attention. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Camille Therriault-Power

c.c.: Stephen Rigby, President of Canada Border Services Canada
Luc Portelance, Executive Vice-President of Canada Border Services Agency

