

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515–2201

August 4, 2025

The Honorable Michael MacDonald
Chairman
Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group
Senate of Canada
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A4
Canada

Dear Chairman MacDonald,

I write to you not only as the U.S. Representative for Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula, but also as a fellow member of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group.

In recent years, communities across my district—and across much of the northern United States—have been increasingly impacted by the devastating effects of wildfire smoke originating in Canadian forests. While wildfire activity is a natural occurrence, the volume, frequency, and intensity of recent smoke events are unlike anything we've experienced before. These events have resulted in widespread air quality alerts, school closures, outdoor activity cancellations, and serious public health risks throughout Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula.

The effects on public health have been especially troubling. Hospitals and clinics across my district are seeing higher rates of respiratory distress, particularly among vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and those with preexisting conditions. The combination of chronic exposure and limited local control over the source of the problem has left many of my constituents feeling frustrated and forgotten.

As partners with a long and productive history of cooperation, I urge the Canadian government to take more active steps to manage and mitigate wildfire risk—including forest thinning, fuel reduction, and the use of prescribed burns where appropriate. These are well-established practices that could greatly reduce the scale and intensity of wildfires and the transboundary smoke that follows. The science and tools exist; what's needed is the will to act with urgency.

As members of the Canada–United States Inter-Parliamentary Group, we share not just a commitment to mutual understanding, but a responsibility to address issues of shared concern. The air our citizens breathe does not respect international boundaries. It is critical that forest management and wildfire mitigation be treated as a bilateral environmental and public health priority.

I stand ready to work with you and our Canadian colleagues in good faith to improve coordination, elevate this issue within our respective governments, and take meaningful action to protect the well-being of our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jack Bergman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jack Bergman
Member of Congress