PATRICK LEAHY
VERMONT

COMMITTEES:
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY
APPROPRIATIONS
JUDICIARY

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–4502

April 28, 2011

The Honorable Alan Bersin
Commissioner
U.S Customs and Border Protection
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20229

Dear Commissioner Bersin:

Thank you for offering to come to Vermont to meet personally with members of the Morses Line community regarding the future of the Morses Line Port of Entry. Unfortunately, the Rainville family – the owners of the property adjacent to the existing port – is unwilling to meet with you and a group of community members to discuss options that could keep the port open.

I favor maintaining a port at Morses Line that meets the national security needs of the 21st Century. However, I understand that the security deficiencies of the existing facility require the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to increase the footprint of the port, alter traffic flow around the building, and modernize the security capabilities. While I remain concerned about efforts to condemn private farmland for the development of a new facility, I hope the community and DHS might find a suitable alternative for improving this port facility.

In stark contrast to the opposition expressed at DHS's May 2010 public meeting in Franklin, Vermont, over the past year there has been an overwhelming outpouring of support from the local community for maintaining the border crossing at Morses Line. Supporters have put together several proposals that they would like to present to DHS to see whether they are practical and feasible. I have enclosed a copy of these proposals for your review.

No Senator has the authority to close or open a border crossing, but I am committed to working to find a solution that works for all parties. While that task becomes much more difficult without the participation of the Rainvilles, I hope that you or a representative could still meet with a group of community members in Morses Line to explore options that would allow DHS to make the necessary security upgrades and keep the port open.

Thank you for your continued attention to this matter. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Patrick Leahy

PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

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RECOMMENDED ALTERNATIVES FOR MORSES LINE BORDER STATION
The Morses Line Working Group
April 22, 2011

Recommendation 1. LPOE Modernization and Operation via Repair and Alterations to the existing LPOE.

Source: U. S. Department of Homeland Security's *Environmental Assessment for the Proposed Modernization and Operation of the Morses Line Land Port of Entry, Franklin County, Vermont. Alternative 3. February 2010, p. 18.*

This alternative was included in the EIS for Morses Line. This alternative would keep the existing port open by implementing recommended upgrades until LPOE Guide standards could be achieved at a later date. The group would recommend that USCBP explore options to build up or expand underground at the existing facility and parcel to meet LPOE Guide standards.

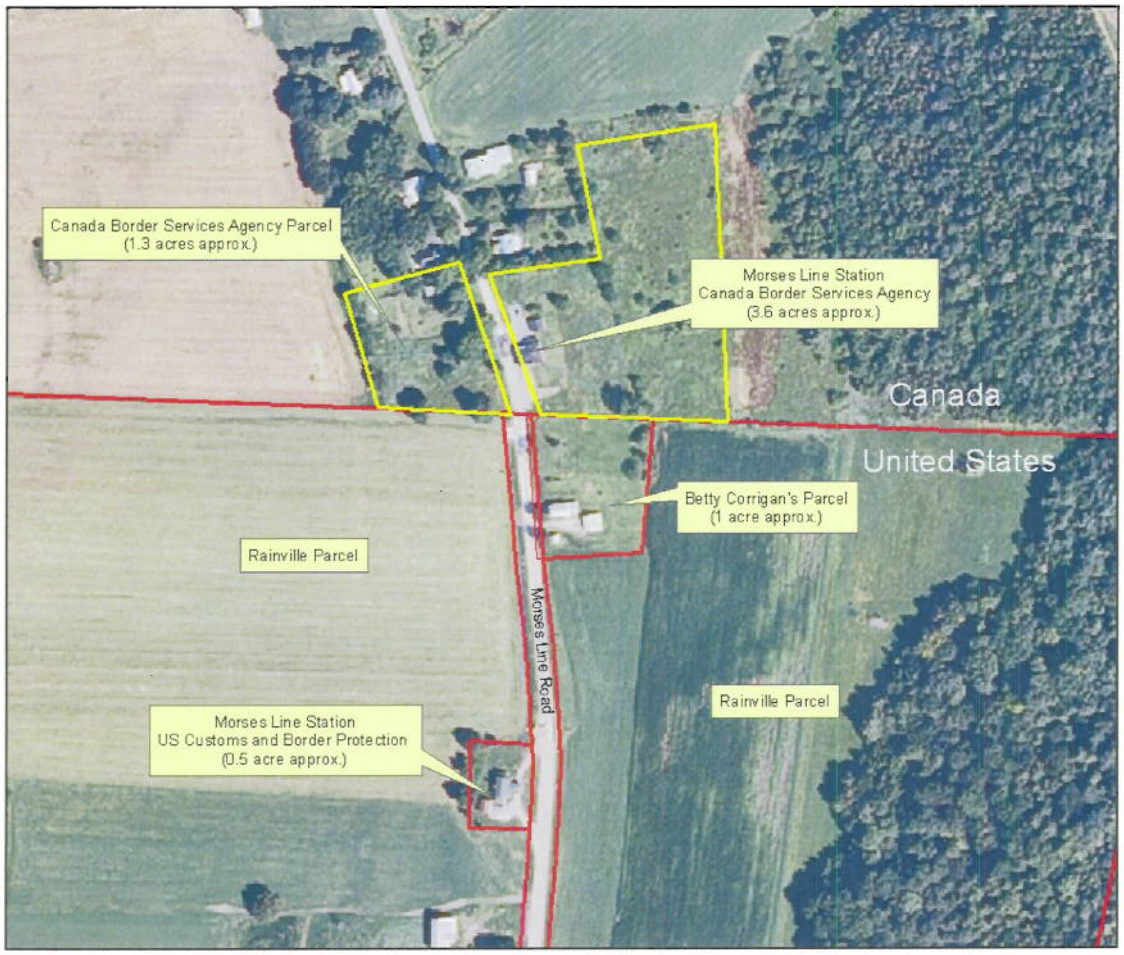
"Alternative 3 consists of modernizing and operating the existing LPOE near Morses Line, Vermont. Under this alternative, no new major construction would occur and no new land would be acquired. An LPOE modernized via R&A would operate as described for Alternative 2. Modernization of the LPOE would consist of necessary R&A that fall under three priorities as established by OFO: 1) Health and Safety, 2) Mission Criticality, and 3)Operational Enhancement.

Alternative 3 consists of modernizing and operating the existing LPOE. Modernization via R&A could include, but would not be limited to, changes in camera systems; repair or installation of fences; repaving, patching, or stripping existing roads; and upgrades to water treatment systems. Expansion of existing inspection areas could occur, with construction of new inspection booths and/or inspection garages. Changes to the exterior and interior of existing buildings, including canopy replacement, could occur. The R&A modernization would bring the LPOE closer to meeting LPOE Guide standards."

Recommendation 2: Purchase of Corrigan Parcel. Result could be shared LPOE with Canadian Border Services Agency or separate USCBP station.

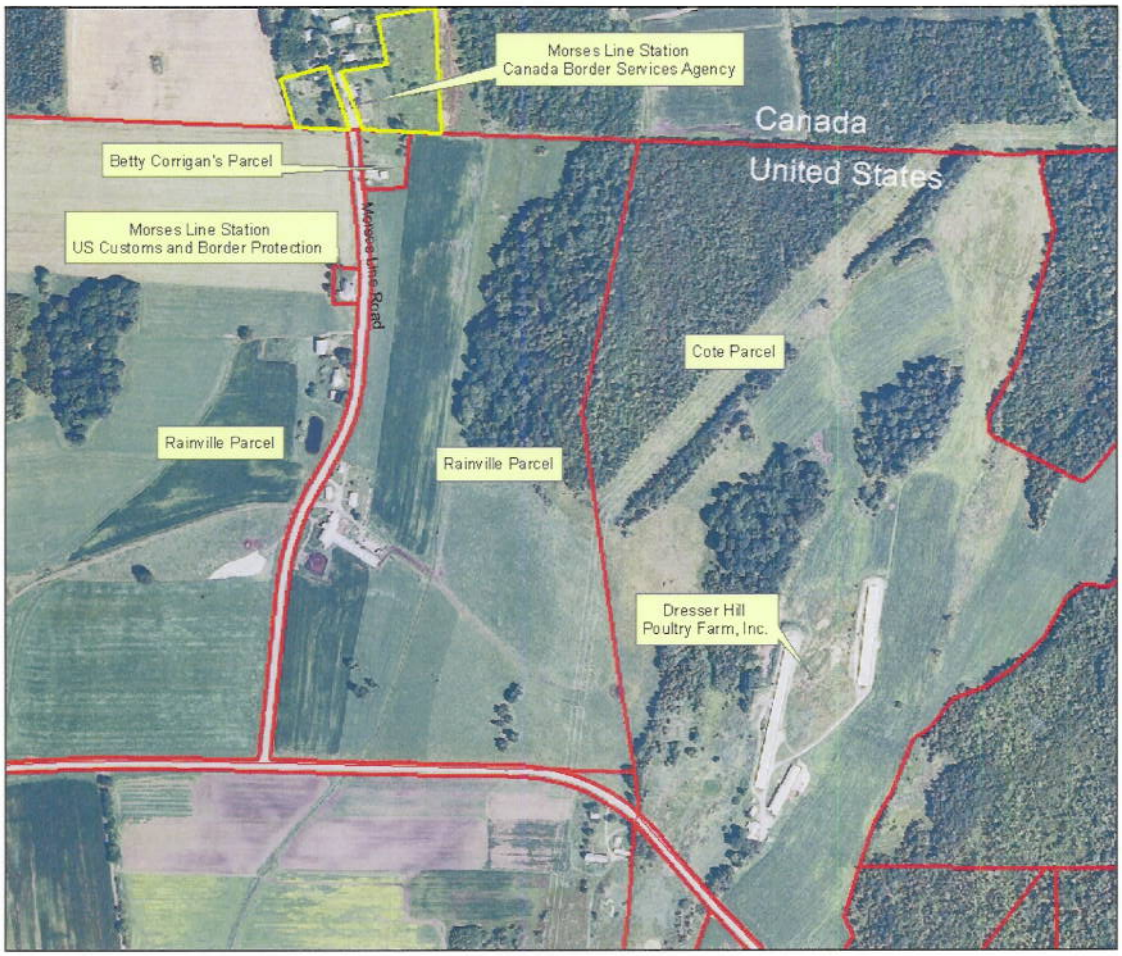
USCBP currently operates a joint border crossing with the Canada Border Services Agency on Border Road in Alburgh Vermont. The Canadian Border Crossing is referred to as the Noyan crossing on Route 205. U.S. Customs and Border Protection and Canada Border Agencies share the same building.

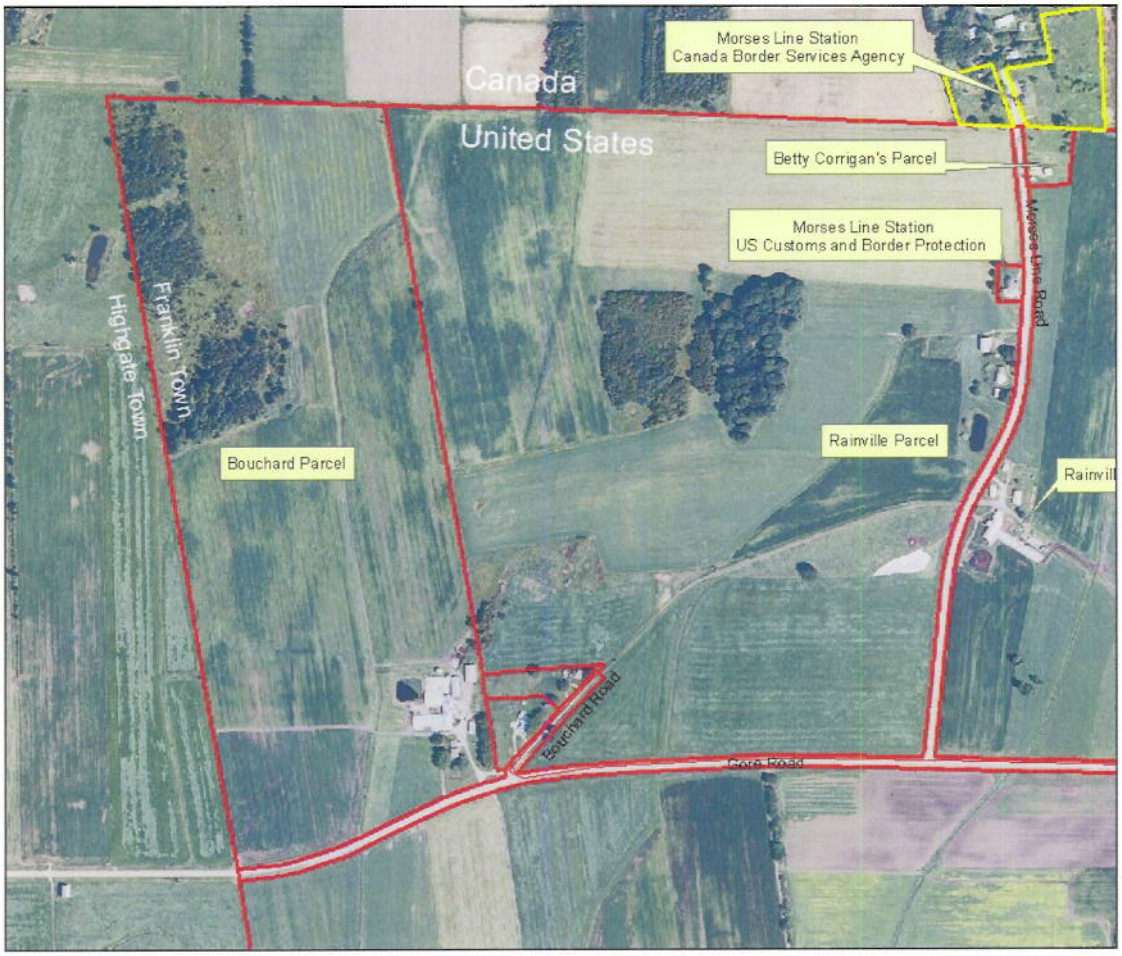
Purchase of the Corrigan Parcel and a reconfiguration of the Morses Line Road may allow for a similar arrangement as the Noyan crossing. The Corrigan property's northern border is the international boundary. The Corrigan house and garage are located between the US and Canadian Border stations at Morses Line. Betty Corrigan met with a member of Morses Line working group, Yvon Dandurand on April 20, 2011 and is willing to sell her property to federal officials if approached.



Recommendation 3: Land Swap between Real Cote and Clement and Betty Rainville.

Real Cote is owner of Dresser Hill Poultry Farm, Inc. in Franklin, Vermont with business ties to Montreal. Real has tried to negotiate an offer to lease, rent or sell parcels on his land to the Rainville family to compensate them for land needed by DHS for Morses Line Station. The negotiations with the Rainvilles have failed to date.



Recommendation 4: Land Swap between Phil and Denis Bouchard and Clement and Betty Rainville.

Brothers Phil and Denis Bouchard own land adjacent to the Rainville's in northwestern Franklin, Vermont.. The brothers are willing to sell or trade land the Rainville family to compensate them for land needed by DHS for Morses Line Station. Negotiations with the Rainville family have failed to date.