

Friday, July 12, 2002.

Hon. Gerry Byrne  
Minister of State for ACOA and  
MP for Humber-St. Barbe-Baie Verte  
Room 207 West Block Via Post to House of Commons  
House of Commons Via Fax to House of Commons and  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6 Newfoundland Constituency Office

Dear Minister Byrne:

I read your July 10th Charlottetown Guardian opinion editorial (If ACOA didn't exist, it would have to be invented) with great interest. First allow me to thank you for finally engaging us on this issue of critical importance to Atlantic Canadians.

I've forwarded an opinion editorial in response to the Guardian and trust that it will be printed in the coming days. However, I believe, as I hope you do, that Atlantic Canadian taxpayers deserve more than simple dueling newspaper OPEDs. The role of government and choice of policy instruments to foster a competitive and prosperous economic climate is a key and longstanding debate which deserves a full, frank and open public discussion.

Mr. Minister, the summer months and absence of demanding parliamentary schedule provide us with a tremendous opportunity to publicly debate this issue. Given its importance, I would be happy to engage you in a debate in Atlantic Canada or elsewhere. All that is required is your acceptance and for you to contact our Ottawa office (see above) and we could quickly iron out details as to a moderator, format, time, etc.

I anxiously await your response, look forward to meeting you "across the podium" and thank you again for ending the silence exhibited by your predecessors at ACOA and engaging in this crucial discussion.

Regards ...  
Walter Robinson  
Federal Director