

## CDC Announces Intent to Restart Process & Write New Rules for Bringing Dogs into the United States

**For Immediate Release**  
December 16, 2024

**Contact:** [Annie Clark](#)  
202-224-2523

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*In a win for Maine dog owners, border communities, and the Can-Am  
Crown International Dog Sled Race,*

### **CDC Announces Intent to Restart Process & Write New Rules for Bringing Dogs into the United States**

*Temporary measures will remain in place until the new rules are published*

**Washington, D.C.** – The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced that it will revisit a previous final rule related to the transport of dogs across the U.S.– Canada border following continued pushback from U.S. Senator Susan Collins and other northern border state senators and stakeholders. When previewing the new rulemaking process with Senator Collins, the CDC Director acknowledged the agency had erred in not balancing the concerns of dog owners and those in border communities with its goal of limiting the spread of canine rabies when its previous final rule was decided earlier this year.

“Today’s CDC announcement is good news for Maine dog owners, border communities, and the Can-Am International Dog Sled Race. I am pleased that the CDC has acknowledged its previous error and committed to

restarting the rulemaking process for bringing dogs into the United States,” **said Senator Collins**. “I will continue to advocate for Maine dog owners and our border communities as the CDC works to develop a more appropriate solution to personal dog importation.”

This update comes as part of the Fall 2024 Unified Agenda. In the Agenda, CDC announced its intention to amend and clarify the requirements for the importation of dogs, including requirements for dog importations from rabies-free and low-risk countries into the United States. The goal of the new proposed rule will be to ensure the agency strikes the right balance of preventing the importation of dog-maintained rabies virus variant, while minimizing the burden on people traveling with their dogs from rabies-free and low-risk countries. Canada is recognized by the U.S. CDC as a dog rabies-free country.

This summer, Senator Collins raised concerns that the importation rule proposed by the CDC would create unnecessary requirements for individuals traveling with their dogs across Canada's borders into the United States. She wrote to the CDC [twice in July](#) calling on the federal agency to not implement this misguided rule on August 1st as planned, and instead postpone implementation until a regulation can be drafted that incorporates feedback from stakeholders and affected parties, allows the importation of dogs from canine-rabies-free countries like Canada as well as low-risk countries, and protects public health.

Following feedback from Senator Collins and other border state Senators, Canadian health officials, and key stakeholders like the American Kennel Club, the CDC delayed and simplified a burdensome component of the rule. Dogs entering the U.S. from low-risk or dog rabies-free countries like Canada no longer need veterinarian signed or endorsed forms through an implementation period lasting until at least April 1, 2025. CDC’s decision to revisit the rule altogether provides clarity that more burdensome components of the May 2024 final rule will not go into effect as planned.

For dogs entering the U.S. from low-risk or dog-rabies-free countries like Canada, the revised rule currently requires travelers to fill out one form—the CDC Dog Import Form. The CDC Import Form can be filled out the day of travel, and the receipt can be shown to airlines and border officials as a printed copy or by phone. This form requires a simple self-attestation that the dog has not been in a high-risk country in the past six months. Additionally, based on revisions announced by CDC, the form will be good for travel into the U.S. for six months from the date of issuance and can be used for multiple entries.

The announced changes have alleviated some of the cost and time spent on compliance, such as having to get paperwork certificated frequently. This would have been particularly burdensome for regular travelers and those that travel between Maine and Canada for sled dog races or other dog competitions. Despite this meaningful update, CDC has continued to require all dogs entering the U.S., including those from low-risk and dog-rabies-free countries, to be at least six-months old and be microchipped. New rulemaking will allow CDC to revisit – and stakeholders to weigh in on – these previously unchanged components.



## City of Calais

Washington County, Maine

Mailing Address:

PO Box 413

Calais, ME, 04619-0413

## Contact Information

Phone:

207-454-2521

Email:

[info@calaismaine.org](mailto:info@calaismaine.org)

Fax:

207-454-2757

## Office Hours

Monday - Friday

8:00 am - 5:00 pm

11 Church St

Calais, ME, 04619-1603