

Ministry of Tourism

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Dear Tourism Partner:

Today, you have an important opportunity to defend Ontario's tourism industry – and your business.

All it takes is a letter to U.S. authorities who are overseeing implementation of the proposed requirement that everyone, including returning U.S. citizens, would need a passport to enter the United States at land crossings.

By working with like-minded U.S. legislators, we have already seen the deadline for requiring a passport at land crossings pushed back 17 months. Now the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has proposed a number of rules that would govern – and limit – the passport requirement.

One of the rules that DHS is proposing mirrors Ontario's earlier suggestion that children under the age of 16 be allowed to enter the United States by land or sea without a passport. Another, also championed by Ontario in earlier correspondence and in meetings with DHS, would lift the requirement for organized groups of youths 18 and under.

You can help get those helpful changes adopted, and can push for more progress in modifying the passport proposal. Because the U.S. government measures the volume of responses to its rulemaking to indicate the level of support or opposition to its proposals, I encourage you to weigh in on this matter of such great importance to our industry.

As you know, Ontario's consistent position has been that an existing, commonly carried document, such as a driver's licence with upgraded security features and a citizenship designation, should be accepted for crossing into the United States.

Please find below some of the key points that the Ontario government has made in its submission – points you may wish to include in your own letter to DHS.

- We strongly support the objective of enhancing security at our shared border.
- We urge the Department of Homeland Security to pursue a robust public outreach program in a manner that will effectively reach American travellers, particularly as it could add clarity to what rules are currently in place.
- We recommend that the rule contains explicit recognition of an enhanced driver's licence with citizenship information as an acceptable document for entry into the U.S. by both Canadian and American citizens.
- We welcome the commitment by the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of State to consider other travel documents developed by various U.S. states and the governments of Canada and Mexico that would denote identity and citizenship and would satisfy WHTI requirements.

- There are many preparations to be made in advance of any implementation of the WHTI at the land borders. The U.S. government must take the time to make the right decision that improves security without damaging healthy cross-border trade and commerce.
- We urge the U.S. Administration to take full advantage of the extension that Congress has provided to ensure that the necessary personnel, technology, infrastructure, training, and mass communications are in place across the Canada-U.S. border prior to the full implementation of the WHTI.
- We support the proposal that U.S. and Canadian children under 16 be allowed to travel with a birth certificate rather than a passport, and we also support the proposal that U.S. and Canadian children under age 19, who are travelling with public or private school groups, religious groups, social or cultural organizations, or teams associated with youth sport organizations, be allowed to present a birth certificate, when travelling under appropriate supervision, rather than a passport.
- The WHTI is expected to affect both countries, but most severely in border communities. If the WHTI is implemented before all technology, infrastructure, training and communications are in place, it could result in chaos and confusion, leading to further delays at the border, with potentially significant effects on both economies.

The deadline for submissions is August 27, 2007. Submissions should include the reference **USCBP-2007-0061-0001**, and can be sent by mail to:

U.S. Customs and Border
Protection, Office of International Trade
Office of Regulations and Rulings
Border Security Regulations Branch
1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. (Mint Annex)
Washington, DC 20229, USA.

Alternatively, you can make a submission electronically, at www.regulations.gov, by clicking on "Search for Dockets" and entering the "Docket ID": **USCBP-2007-0061**.

We continue to work with our colleagues at all levels of government in Canada, and with like-minded U.S. officials and legislators to champion the concerns of the tourism industry.

I hope you will participate in this very important process. Please accept my best wishes.

Yours sincerely,



Jim Bradley
Minister