

Travel Community Welcomes New Federal Initiative to Better Communicate U.S. Security and Entry Policies

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More Than 40 Million Annual Canadian Visits and \$13.5 Billion at Stake with Implementation of Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

The Travel Industry Association (TIA) today praised the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for their national television, print and online communications campaign to educate U.S. and Canadian travelers about new travel document requirements that go into effect on June 1, 2009, as part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI).

"America's travel community applauds DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff and CBP Commissioner W. Ralph Basham for launching this much-needed national campaign," said Roger Dow, president and CEO of TIA. "Explaining changing U.S. security policies is essential to avoiding disruption in cross-border travel and sustaining America's travel economy."

TIA has consistently supported the security measures included in WHTI and worked with Congress to ensure that the program was implemented when the necessary identification documents were available and infrastructure deployed. TIA also has advocated for a large-scale communications campaign to inform the traveling public of changing U.S. security requirements.

While the CBP communications effort is being funded by U.S. taxpayer dollars, the "Travel Promotion Act" (S. 1661 and H.R. 3232) currently pending before Congress would establish a well-funded public-private campaign without taxpayer dollars to better explain changing U.S. entry policies and welcome more visitors from all around the world.

"This new initiative is an example of what the 'Travel Promotion Act' would accomplish on a much larger scale and at no cost to taxpayers," said Dow. "Border states and the entire American economy need a permanent travel promotion and communication program."

Canadians made more than 40 million visits to the United States in 2006, spending more than \$13.5 billion.*

*Sources: Statistics Canada and U.S. Dept. of Commerce

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