



31st Conference
New England Governors and
Eastern Canadian Premiers

31^e Conférence
Gouverneurs de la Nouvelle-Angleterre
et premiers ministres de l'Est du Canada



Resolution 31–3

RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE

WHEREAS, the New England governors and Eastern Canadian premiers (NEG/ECP) reaffirm the importance of balancing security and fluidity requirements with regard to the Canada-United States border; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution 30-4 adopted on May 13, 2006 in Newport, Rhode Island, the NEG/ECP urged the United States Government to analyze the potential economic and social impacts of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), to delay its entry into force, to fully explore options with regard to its implementation and to review its terms and conditions; and

WHEREAS, on September 26th, 2006, the United States Congress passed the *Fiscal Year 2007 Homeland Security Appropriations Act*, including an amendment allowing for a delay in implementing the WHTI until June 1, 2009; and

WHEREAS, the NEG/ECP continue to invoke the need for a maximum period of time in order to research alternative solutions that would minimize the negative impacts of the WHTI implementation on trade, tourism, and the daily lives of citizens in border communities; and

WHEREAS, the NEG/ECP have noted the recent Notice of Proposed Rulemaking of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of State (DOS) for the land and sea portion of the WHTI, and their announced intent not to implement the so-called passport requirements for U.S. and Canadian citizens until a later date, expected to be in the summer of 2008; and

WHEREAS, the implementation date will be determined by a number of factors, including the availability of WHTI compliant documents on both sides of the border; and

WHEREAS, the NEG/ECP applaud the openness shown by the United States Government to consider resorting to identity documentation other than the passport to enter the United States by land and sea.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP) request the United States Government to take full advantage of the deadline extension granted by the Congress by setting the date of entry into force of the WHTI provisions related to land and sea borders at June 1, 2009; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the NEG/ECP urge the United States Government and the Government of Canada to explore and assess, in collaboration with states and provinces, all available options with regard to the identity documents that could be accepted on the same basis as the passport for land and sea border crossings; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the NEG/ECP will assess the feasibility and opportunity of using drivers' licences as an alternative document to the passport, and if the results prove positive, will support the development of pilot projects in this field; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the NEG/ECP request the governments of the United States and Canada to explicitly recognize the membership cards of the FAST and NEXUS programs and to increase their benefits by making them more accessible; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the NEG/ECP call upon their respective federal authority to quickly take appropriate measures to improve and accelerate the passport issuance process, to review the established terms and conditions of renewal and to establish a passport office in each state and province; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the NEG/ECP call on all governments to coordinate their action in order to conduct a communications campaign aimed at the general public, most notably at the business community; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the NEG/ECP are invited to express their reactions and their positions to the release by the Department of Homeland Security of its Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on the WHTI on or before August 15th; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Canada, the U.S. Secretary of State and the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, the Canadian Minister of Public Safety and the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the respective U.S. and Canadian Ambassadors, members of the National Governors Association and of the Canadian Council of the Federation, and the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, the Senate Judiciary Committee, the House Homeland Security Committee, the House International Relations Committee and the House Judiciary Committee, members of the Congressional delegation for the New England states, and the Presidents of the Council of State Governments, of the Eastern Regional Conference of the Council of State Governments and of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

*Adopted at the 31st Conference of New England Governors
and Eastern Canadian Premiers, June 26, 2007.*



Premier Robert Ghiz
Prince Edward Island
Co-chair



Governor James Douglas
Vermont
Co-chair