



HAUDENOSAUNEE

MOHAWK - ONEIDA - ONONDAGA - CAYUGA - SENECA - TUSCARORA

HAUDENOSAUNEE DOCUMENTATION COMMITTEE

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A Message from the Haudenosaunee Documentation Committee

News Release

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On Monday and Tuesday March 12 & 13, 2007, the Haudenosaunee Documentation Committee sent 5 delegates to meet with Washington officials on the border crossing issue. One goal of these meetings was to educate the U.S. officials: describe who we are, as the Haudenosaunee, and to describe our treaty relationship with the U.S. Another goal was to announce that we are enhancing our existing identification cards to satisfy the new Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) rules.

The congressional offices we met with are very much against the time frame of WHTI. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) expects to have all the travel document requirements in place by January 1, 2008. These offices are actively working to push back the deadline and they are looking to include several types of acceptable travel documents, not just passports or pass cards.

Overall, the congressional offices seemed willing to discuss the idea of the Haudenosaunee having its own ID card as an accepted travel document as long as it meets international security requirements.

The DHS, and all its affiliates (Border Patrol, Gen. Counselor's Office, Office of Screening, etc) were reluctant to discuss the impending WHTI rules for land crossings. The DHS will propose new WHTI rules within the next couple of months. However, the DHS seemed very interested in our goal of having our own ID card, as long as it meets international security requirements. We went on to explain that our card and system could be used as a pilot project for other nations which straddle the border. We further went on to say our card system could be used as a template for all Native nations.

Aside from the security level of the ID card, the DHS is concerned with the issue of citizenship. We are not declaring ourselves American or Canadian. They understand our position and they are offering creative ways to work around that. The fact that they were at least open to having discussions on this and that they offered creative solutions is very promising.

The Canadian offices we met with have the same concerns as the Congressional offices. They want to slow down the process and push back the deadline. Canada is also very interested in having other acceptable travel documents. In fact, Ontario is currently in the process of enhancing their drivers license so it will match the impending rules of WHTI. Although Canada is affected by WHTI rules in the same manner as we are, it is important to keep an open dialog with Canada on this border crossing issue.

In summary, the DC meetings went very well. The HDC is already planning the next round of meetings. In the meantime, we are working diligently on the development of our ID card manufacturing system.