



HAUDENOSAUNEE

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HAUDENOSAUNEE DOCUMENTATION COMMITTEE

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A Special Report from the Haudenosaunee Documentation Committee

DHS Proposed Border Crossing Rules to Allow Native IDs

Onondaga Nation Territory - June 27, 2007

On Wednesday, June 20, 2007, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued its proposed new rules to administer its land border crossings. The rules were expected to impose a passport or passport card requirement on all travelers across the land border. Instead, this requirement was postponed indefinitely and DHS proposes to allow a special exemption so that Indian nations like the Haudenosaunee can carry their own identification instead of a US/Canadian passport or passport card. While political work to have our specific identification system recognized by DHS is ongoing, this exemption supports our mandate and would be open to other Indian nations and their citizens on both sides of the border who “*cross the border for a traditional purpose.*”

The proposed rule specifically identifies the Haudenosaunee as an Indian nation that engages in traditional border crossing. The HDC is pleased that our message regarding the importance of free passage across the border for Haudenosaunee people has been received so clearly by DHS. We believe our efforts to educate DHS about our need to continue using our own documentation to cross the border will assist other Tribes and Nations across the continent, and we hope that our work on the issue might serve as a model for others.

The proposed rules are open for public comment until August 27. After that time, they may be made final with or without changes.

The HDC is analyzing the proposed rules and will submit comments to DHS once this analysis is complete. The rules may have some significant problems and leave open many important unanswered questions. For example, the rules state that as of January 31, 2008, all travelers who cross the land border must present government-issued identification and a birth certificate or similar document. It is not clear what impact this would have on Haudenosaunee people. Prior to the submission of our comments, we hope to get as much information as possible from DHS about details related to the rules. Our work will then focus on ensuring that the rules do not interfere with our border crossing rights.