



For Immediate Release
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***Communications Campaign Needed to Make
New Homeland Security Border Policy a Success***

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

Washington D.C. – The Travel Industry Association (TIA) and the Travel Business Roundtable expressed concern that new rules issued today by the Department of Homeland Security regarding documents needed to cross the U.S.-Canada border are not accompanied by a credible plan to inform travelers of changing requirements. Scheduled to take effect at the height of the 2009 summer driving season, the new document requirements are a part of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). Canadians made more than 40 million visits to the United States in 2006, spending more than \$13.5 billion.*

“Despite receiving hundreds of comments about confusion with the new rule changes, the Department of Homeland Security has yet to implement a comprehensive and well funded communications campaign” said Roger Dow, President and Chief Executive Officer of TIA. “The economic stakes are too high for a casual implementation strategy. A five percent decline in Canadian visits to the United States could cost the American economy nearly \$700 million.”

The travel community supports WHTI, but remains concerned its implementation could result in confusion and logjams at America’s northern border. TIA applauds Members of Congress who ensured that WHTI implementation would occur only when the infrastructure and necessary travel documents were ready for deployment.

The “Travel Promotion Act” (S. 1661 and H.R. 3232) currently pending before Congress would establish a well-funded public-private campaign to better explain changing U.S. entry policies and welcome more international visitors.

“Border states and the entire American economy need an effective travel promotion and communication program,” said Dow.

TIA also urges the U.S. government to redouble efforts to issue the new U.S. passport card so that travelers will have next generation travel documents. In addition, TIA is encouraged that U.S. states and Canadian provinces will issue Enhanced Driver's Licenses to their citizens for cross-border travel and urges such governments to partner with their federal authorities to expand this valuable program.

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

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The Travel Industry Association is the national, non-profit organization representing all components of the \$740 billion travel industry. TIA's mission is to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States. TIA is proud to be a partner in travel with American Express. For more information, visit www.tia.org.