WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF LICENSING

Keeping our Borders Safe and Secure

The Washington Border Crossing Program

Governor Chris Gregoire has formed a partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to develop new, enhanced state driver licenses and identification cards. These enhanced licenses and ID cards are being designed to meet the requirements of the recently passed Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI). This new law would require a passport to cross the border, an additional expense that may prohibit families from traveling.

Working with British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell, Governor Gregoire developed a pilot project for enhanced driver licenses to keep British Columbia border crossings secure, fast, and convenient for Washington citizens. Governor Gregoire signed legislation to allow the Washington Department of Licensing to develop the enhanced driver license and ID card and signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of Homeland Security to develop the project.

Quick Facts:

- The enhanced driver licenses and ID cards will keep the Washington border safe and secure while still allowing Washingtonians to move quickly through security.
- They will be voluntary for Washington residents.
- The Washington Department of Licensing will begin issuing the enhanced cards in January 2008.
- They will cost slightly more than a standard license, but significantly less than a passport.
- The cards will require verified proof of citizenship, identity, and residence.
- They will be more secure than a standard license, with security features similar to a U.S. passport.
- The cards will look similar to current licenses and ID cards, but will have an icon on the front that indicates the holder is a U.S. citizen.
- The cards will have technology, required by the federal government, to facilitate rapid identification checks at border crossings, similar to chips already imbedded in U.S. passports.

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