



**30th Annual Conference of the New England Governors
and the Eastern Canadian Premiers
Newport, Rhode Island - May 11-13, 2006**

RESOLUTION 30-4

**RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL
INITIATIVE**

WHEREAS, the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP) is a vital regional forum for cooperation in areas related to security and economic development in the northeastern part of the continent; and

WHEREAS, the NEG/ECP is continuously seeking ways to strengthen its cooperation in order to ensure the security of all citizens of Canada and the United States and to enhance their economic competitiveness, particularly in the light of the new continental security context and extensive transborder economic integration; and

WHEREAS, the NEG/ECP fully recognizes that security is a prerequisite for trade and that transborder security must remain a priority for all governments in Canada and the United States; and

WHEREAS, the Canada-United States border relationship is unique with more than 300,000 business people, tourists and regular commuters traveling between Canada and the United States every day, and more than \$1.1 billion in two-way trade each day; and

WHEREAS, the New England states and Eastern Canadian provinces have a common interest in maintaining a secure and open border between Canada and the United States; and

WHEREAS, on September 1, 2005, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of State confirmed their intention to implement the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which will require all U.S. and Canadian citizens to have a passport or other accepted secure document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States by January 1, 2008; and

WHEREAS, under the current WHTI proposal, this requirement will apply to all air and sea travel to or from Canada beginning on December 31, 2006, and will be extended to all U.S.-Canada land border crossings after December 31, 2007; and

WHEREAS, the NEG/ECP supports the underlying objectives of the WHTI, namely those related to enhancing security and harmonizing identity document standards between Canada and the United States; and

WHEREAS, the WHTI, as currently outlined, will negatively impact trade, tourism, and the daily lives of citizens in border communities; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order 12866 gives the Office of Management and Budget the mandate to review individual regulations and policies developed by federal agencies - including Notices of Proposed Rulemaking, and the authority to designate individual regulations as significant regulatory action and to request that the Federal agency responsible for a significant regulatory action conduct a thorough impact study of said regulation;

WHEREAS, Section 3.f.1 of Executive Order 12866 defines as significant regulatory action any regulation which has "an annual effect on the economy of \$100 million or more or adversely affect in a material way the economy, a sector of the economy, productivity, competition, jobs, the environment, public health or safety, or State, local or tribal governments and communities"; and

WHEREAS, on August 29, 2005, the Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador and the Governor of Rhode Island, as Co-Chairs of the NEG/ECP, and on behalf of their fellow premiers and governors, wrote to the U.S. Secretary of State and the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security to encourage the U.S. Government to adopt a flexible and reasonable approach in implementing the WHTI which would meet security imperatives while minimizing the negative impact on border crossings by legitimate travelers; and

WHEREAS, numerous governors, premiers, U.S. and Canadian legislators, and bi-national regional forums, including the Council of State Governments' Eastern Regional Conference, have expressed similar views with regard to the WHTI; and

WHEREAS, the NEG/ECP recognizes that border communities, and business, travel and tourism industries have expressed legitimate concerns about the implementation of the WHTI;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG/ECP) request the United States Government, following the Regulatory Planning and Review process outlined in Executive Order 12866, to conduct an economic and social analysis of the anticipated impact of WHTI on cross-border trade, tourism and local community activities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT NEG/ECP urges the United States Government and the Government of Canada to fully explore, in close consultation with states and provinces, options with regard to the implementation of the WHTI, including timelines, terms, technologies, transition measures and alternative identity documentation; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the NEG/ECP undertake an active campaign coordinated with other interested parties and organizations to urge Congress to delay the implementation of the WHTI; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT NEG/ECP further urges the United States Government to revise the terms of the implementation of the WHTI, based on the findings of the analyses, and in collaboration with the Government of Canada, states and provinces, to ensure that the border between Canada and the United States remains secure and open; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT NEG/ECP encourages all governments to pursue collaborative actions at the local, regional and national levels to minimize the impact that the WHTI will have on travelers, communities, tourism and industries; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the NEG/ECP direct the Standing Committee on Trade Cooperation to investigate the anticipated impacts of the implementation of the WHTI on the region and to explore the development of possible joint mitigation efforts and report the Committee's progress back to governors and premiers for the 2007 meeting of the Conference.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT NEG/ECP shall continue to exchange information, on an on-going basis on their respective positions with regard to the WHTI and, when appropriate, on other transborder security issues; 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, and members of the Congressional delegation for the New England states.

**Adopted at the 30th Annual Conference of New England Governors and Eastern
Canadian Premiers, Newport, Rhode Island, May 13, 2006.**

Donald L. Carcieri
Governor of Rhode Island
Co-chair

Patrick Binns
Premier of Prince Edward Island
Co-chair