



STATE OF NEW YORK | EXECUTIVE CHAMBER
DAVID A. PATERSON | GOVERNOR

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GOVERNOR PATERSON ANNOUNCES FEDERAL AGREEMENT TO ISSUE ENHANCED DRIVER LICENSES IN NEW YORK STATE

New Secure Document Will Speed Border Crossings, Enhance Upstate Economy

Enhanced Licenses Should be Ready by End of Summer

Governor David A. Paterson today announced an agreement between New York State and the Federal Department of Homeland Security (DHS) permitting the state to issue an Enhanced Driver License (EDL). The new license is being developed by the State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and it will boost the Upstate economy by expediting cross-border land and sea travel for the citizens of the State. The secure document can be used in place of a passport, which will soon be required for all border crossings by next summer. It is anticipated that the EDL will be available from the DMV by the end of the summer.

“The development of this license will help to ease long lines at our New York-Canada border crossings, allowing commerce to flow more freely and securely in and out of the state,” said Governor Paterson. “It represents a major step forward that will help the Upstate economy and offer a convenience for all New Yorkers who travel in North America. I commend the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Federal Department of Homeland Security for working out an agreement that allows New York to proceed with the Enhanced Driver License.”

To get an EDL, New Yorkers will be required to visit a DMV office to provide various proofs of identity and citizenship, which will be verified by the DMV. The verification will support the DMV’s core principle of one driver, one license and each EDL will have various security features within the document. The Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI)-compliant EDL will cost \$30 more than a current state driver license, but will cost less than a U.S. passport. The EDL license will not look significantly different from the current document, but it will have additional features to clearly indicate that it is an Enhanced Driver License.

Participation in the EDL project will be voluntary and open to all New York State residents who are United States citizens. The approved business plan outlines the State’s implementation of the Department of Homeland Security and State of New York Border Crossing project, which involves the development and issuance of an EDL that will be accepted at U.S. land and sea border crossings.

The New York DMV worked to develop the EDL to support business by easing transit between our neighboring countries under the WHTI, which is intended to increase U.S. border security. Under that federal provision, citizens of New York would have to provide a passport in order to enter the U.S. from Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean and Bermuda starting on June 1, 2009, unless they have a federally authorized alternative such as the EDL. The EDL is being made available by the end of the summer to allow sufficient time for citizens of New York to get the newly-approved travel document. New York

expects to be the second state in the nation to offer an EDL.

Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said: “New Yorkers appreciate as much as anyone the value of secure identification. Enhanced Driver Licenses are a win for U.S. citizens in New York State and a win for the security of the rest of the country. New York has been a true partner in developing the Enhanced Driver License, and I urge other states to do the same.”

Senator Charles E. Schumer said: “We have always said that the Enhanced Driver Licenses is the way to go, and the agreement I helped broker between the Governor's office and Secretary Chertoff in Washington, D.C. is now bearing fruit. We must move full speed ahead because with the Enhanced Driver License we can have our cake and eat it too: it strengthens our security but places no burden on cross-border commerce or on Americans and Canadians traveling between the two countries.”

Congressman John M. McHugh, Co-Chairman of the House Northern Border Caucus, said: “I am very encouraged by this development. As I have long said, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative must be implemented in a manner that effectively preserves and facilitates the safe and secure movement of people and trade along the Northern Border. This is of utmost importance to the residents of the 23rd Congressional District of New York. The Enhanced Driver License will allow New Yorkers to meet this looming documentation requirement in a cost effective matter. I will continue to work with my colleagues on the Federal, State, and local levels to help ensure a smooth transition.”

Deputy Secretary for Public Safety Michael Balboni said: “Securing our nation's borders is one of our most important responsibilities. The new Enhanced Driver License will allow New Yorkers to quickly pass through U.S. borders while ensuring the validity of their identities and protecting our homeland security. I'd like to thank Secretary Chertoff for his commitment to this critical issue. New York State is prepared to continue working with our federal partners to implement the Enhanced Driver License.”

DMV Commissioner David J. Swarts said: “This agreement between the Department and DHS is a sound policy for recognizing the benefits of the new license option. The EDL will go a long way to ensure the Upstate economy does not suffer from the new federal mandate for border crossing.”