

**STATEMENT
OF**

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Department of Homeland Security**

Before The

**House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
Subcommittee on Government Management, Organization, and Procurement**

Regarding

“ID Cards: Reissuing Border Crossing Cards”

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Chairman Towns, Ranking Member Bilbray, and other distinguished Members of the Committee, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss the security of the Border Crossing Card (BCC), how it compares with previous versions of the card, and how it is integrated with other federal identification card programs. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in partnership with the Department of State (DOS), is working to secure our homeland by strengthening our ability to accurately identify all persons – U.S. citizens and visitors alike – before they enter the United States. We are accomplishing this through the implementation of secure document requirements at all ports of entry in the United States.

In fiscal year 2007 alone, more than 30,000 individuals were apprehended at ports of entry trying to cross the border with false documents. Advanced technology

embedded in these travel documents, with the appropriate privacy protections and infrastructure, will allow DHS the ability to verify an individual's identity and perform real-time queries against lookout databases even before our officers begin questioning.

In preparation for full implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), DHS awarded a contract on January 10, 2008, to begin the process of deploying vicinity radio frequency identification (RFID) facilitative technology and infrastructure to 354 vehicle primary lanes at 39 high-volume land ports, which process 95 percent of land border traveler crossings. Site surveys to identify construction requirements needed to support RFID technology installation are complete. We have started the actual construction at our land border ports and the installation of the integrated solution will commence shortly. However, until that time, we currently have optical character reader technology in place at air, land, and sea ports of entry. This technology reads any travel document with a machine-readable zone (MRZ), including passports, border crossing cards, trusted traveler cards, permanent resident cards and the new passport card. All CBP officers are currently trained in the use of this technology and this technology is being used right now.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) deployed the new vehicle primary client software application to the ports of Blaine, Washington; Detroit, Michigan; Calexico and Andrade, California; Buffalo, New York; and Nogales and San Luis, Arizona, in anticipation of implementing the vicinity RFID primary lane solution. This critical software deployment quickly and effectively provides officers with vital information on border crossers. The training and tools necessary for the successful transition from the current antiquated, text-based system, to a modern, graphical user interface was successfully delivered to more than 1,600 CBP officers to date.

Deployment will continue to most land border locations, with completion scheduled for fall 2008.

Our decision to adopt vicinity RFID technology for the land border was based on the need to process legitimate travelers as speedily as possible without impacting security. After extensive review of available and even possible technologies, DHS selected vicinity RFID as the best technology for our land border management system – and the standard to which all future land border travel documents will comply. Vicinity RFID technology affords the most benefits for the facilitated movement of travelers. Facilitation requires the ability to read a travel document in advance, verify identity, pre-position information, and, most importantly, perform automated watch list queries without impeding the flow of traffic. Our research and testing indicates that RFID technology is able to accomplish each of these requirements.

A traveler is easily verifiable if a passport or other acceptable document with an MRZ or appropriate RFID technology that can be queried automatically is presented. Processing times are considerably longer for a vehicle with passengers presenting documents that cannot be verified by the inspecting officer using such facilitative technology. Often, a CBP officer will need to manually enter an individual's identifying information into the computer if the documentation presented does not have an MRZ. The additional time it takes to process these individuals contributes to delays.

DOS has worked very closely with DHS to develop a secure, highly tamper resistant passport card that includes vicinity RFID technology and facilitates real time verification of the document at land border ports. The newly redesigned DOS-issued BCC is modeled on the passport card and therefore will have vicinity RFID capability

and will contain multiple layers of overt, covert and forensic security features, making it as counterfeit and tamper resistant as the passport card. The vicinity RFID capability will provide for the same electronic verification of the document as the passport card – which means verifying the document with the issuing source – which is a significant security enhancement over data written or encoded on the card itself.

DHS and CBP have instituted best practices for the collection, protection, and use of personal information for WHTI. No personal identifying information is stored on the RFID tag and all data is stored at remote locations on secure storage devices that can only be accessed via DHS's secure, encrypted networks. Implementation of a card specific tag identifier number will ensure that cloned or duplicated RFID tags can be detected electronically and in real time at the border. On January 22, 2008, DHS published a Privacy Impact Assessment for the use of vicinity RFID technology for border crossings.

Time and motion studies are in progress at the busiest land border ports. These studies examine all aspects of vehicle primary processing and time for each individual inspection activity. A series of computer models were developed to look at cause and effect of the introduction of RFID-enabled documents and their increased use. At every port for which a model was developed, the introduction of RFID-enabled documents significantly reduced primary processing time. For example, at San Ysidro, California, use of an RFID-enabled document reduces vehicle primary processing time by an average of 27 percent. At the Bridge of the Americas in El Paso, Texas, the reduction is an average of 32 percent per vehicle. Both of these estimates are based on actual observations and computer modeling. Although we expect to quickly process the documents of most travelers, we will not focus on speed as the singular measure of

success. Speeding up the document querying and authentication process gives more time for our CBP officers to ask questions and conduct inspections of those who require additional scrutiny. Time now spent examining a document will, instead, be used to probe those seeking to enter the United States who may present a higher risk.

Our trusted traveler programs, NEXUS, Secure Electronic Network for Travelers Rapid Inspection (SENTRI), and Free and Secure Trade (FAST), have a total of 462,000 members and we expect to more than double the number of participants by the end of fiscal year 2009. For frequent crossers, the ability to use dedicated NEXUS or SENTRI lanes at the border for expedited processing is a very clear benefit sought by the traveling public—the processing time for border crossers presenting trusted traveler cards is often less than half that for other travelers. This year, trusted traveler cards are being upgraded to make them WHTI-compliant and will include additional security features to make them more tamper-resistant. We are phasing in replacement of the cards; all SENTRI cards will be replaced by the fall, at which time replacement of NEXUS cards will begin. These documents will include upgraded vicinity RFID technology that will allow them to be verified electronically against secure DHS databases.

Conclusion

These initiatives discussed today are only a portion of CBP's efforts to secure our homeland, and we will continue to provide our men and women on the front lines with the necessary tools to help them gain effective control of our Nation's borders. I would like to thank Chairman Towns, Ranking Member Bilbray and the Members of the

Committee, for the opportunity to present this testimony today, and for your continued support of DHS and CBP. We will be happy to respond to any questions.