



**Homeland
Security**

February 28, 2020

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio:

Thank you for your letter dated January 24, 2020, to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Acting Secretary Wolf asked that I respond on his behalf.

You requested that DHS inform Congress of our progress with conducting REAL ID public awareness and preparing for potential disruptions at TSA airport screening checkpoints when card-based enforcement begins on October 1, 2020. In my January 8, 2020 response to you, I shared that DHS has taken the following actions to engage the traveling public and make them aware of the upcoming enforcement date: (1) REAL ID signs and videos posted at all airport security checkpoints; (2) Transportation Security Officers verbally notifying travelers with noncompliant identification of the upcoming deadline at airport checkpoints; (3) REAL ID Marketing Toolkits, including REAL ID signs, posters, bookmarks, videos, and other materials offered to key stakeholders such as airports, airlines, travel associations; and (4) established a TSA REAL ID website with information for the public, states, and private sector. DHS also plans additional outreach and engagement efforts to increase the messaging around the deadline throughout this year, including coordinated messages at the state level with Congressional staff offices.

DHS has conducted REAL ID webinars and briefings with all the major airlines, airports, and travel industry organizations. Most of the airlines have informed DHS of their plans to begin delivering REAL ID messaging in early 2020. Multiple airlines, including Alaska, American, and United, have already begun their REAL ID outreach and engagement efforts. Travel industry associations including the United States Travel Association (USTA), Airlines for America (A4A), and the Global Business Travel Association have been collaborating with DHS to conduct significant REAL ID outreach. For example, both USTA and A4A completed national surveys to measure the public's level of REAL ID awareness and preparedness, and USTA has sponsored signage across multiple airports. Additionally, we worked with USTA on the questions for their upcoming follow up survey planned for this month.

In addition to one-on-one relationships with individual state driver's licensing agencies, DHS has developed a longtime working relationship with the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA). DHS participates in the AAMVA national and regional conferences and provides briefings at AAMVA Board of Director meetings. This past summer, DHS sent letters to the Governors of all 56 states and territories, and the Mayor of the District of Columbia, reminding them of the fast-approaching enforcement deadline and the fact that noncompliant cards will not be accepted for official federal purposes. DHS also offered to collaborate with the Governors, Homeland Security Advisors, and DMV Directors on REAL ID public outreach and engagement. This was followed up with an informal request for the states to provide DHS with information on their progress issuing REAL ID compliant licenses and IDs. The states responded over the summer, allowing DHS to establish an initial baseline indicating that 27% of the licenses and IDs issued were REAL ID compliant. In September, DHS sent a follow up letter that expressed appreciation for the information and requested monthly updates. The states now report that they have collectively issued more than 95 million REAL ID-compliant driver's licenses and ID cards (34%) out of 276 million total cards. While this is a noteworthy improvement over the 67 million REAL ID-compliant cards previously reported, DHS has urged the American public to get a REAL ID immediately and not wait until the deadline.

Additionally, DHS issued a Request for Information (RFI) on November 7, 2019, requesting substantive business and technical proposals that could streamline the REAL ID application requirements while still ensuring the security and protection of identity information. DHS received 69 submissions by the RFI closing date of December 9, 2019. While many of the proposals will require changes in regulation or statute, DHS was able to implement one of the recommendations immediately. On February 19, 2020, the Acting Secretary announced he was providing the states increased flexibility regarding the electronic submission of required documents for REAL ID applicants. Specifically, the states may now add the pre-submission of identity and lawful status source documents, through a secure electronic process, prior to an applicant's in-person DMV visit. The states had requested this flexibility and the result will be a faster, more streamlined process for DMVs and the American public. The Department looks forward to working with Congress to advance the most viable solutions for streamlining REAL ID issuance requirements.

DHS maintains that the best way to prevent potential disruptions at screening checkpoints is to increase the traveling public's awareness of REAL ID enforcement and the REAL ID adoption rate. TSA is also working to identify appropriate options to help mitigate the public area security risk at airports and security of screening checkpoints when full enforcement begins on October 1, 2020, should a significant number of travelers arrive at airports without a REAL ID-compliant driver's license or other acceptable form of identification (e.g., passport, Enhanced Driver's License, or military ID).

I assure you that DHS is serious about implementing REAL ID, which stems from a critical 9/11 Commission recommendation that Congress subsequently enacted into law. We are taking all available steps to mitigate the potential impact it could have on the traveling public and are working closely with our government and industry partners in these efforts.

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Thank you again for your letter. The co-signers of your letter will receive separate, identical responses. Should you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact the DHS Office of Legislative Affairs at (202) 447-5890.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James W. McCament". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

James W. McCament
Senior Official Performing the Duties of Under Secretary
Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans