

June 3, 2009

Chief and Councillors:

By letter dated April 27, 2009, I informed you of the decision made to delay the implementation of the Secure Certificate of Indian Status (SCIS) pending completion of a quality assurance review of the issuance process of the SCIS. I also informed you that Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) would not be in a position to deliver the SCIS to First Nation communities located near the Canada-United States border in advance of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) effective date of June 1, 2009.

Today, I want to inform you of recent announcements made by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

The Government of Canada has been informed by DHS that the WHTI will be applied with a practical and common sense approach, which includes a period of flexibility. **During this period of flexibility, the current versions of the Certificate of Indian Status (plastic and paper laminate) will be acceptable documents to present when visiting the United States by land or water.** The period and extent of this flexibility are entirely at the discretion of U.S. officials.

I would also like to share with you that on May 4th, 2009, the Government of Canada received official notification from the United States that the U.S. Department of Homeland Security approved the SCIS business plan and is in the process of designating the SCIS as a WHTI-compliant document to visit the U.S. by land or water. This means that once the SCIS is implemented nationally, it will be accepted when visiting the United States by land or water. This positive development attests to the confidence we have in the security and integrity of the new SCIS.

Once again, please note that the document requirements for travelling to the United States by air require a valid Canadian passport or Nexus Card. Information on document requirements and the period of flexibility can be found on the Customs Border Patrol website at or Canadian Border Services Agency websites (links below).

- [www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/news\\_releases/05272009\\_7.xml](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/newsroom/news_releases/05272009_7.xml)
- [www.cbsa.gc.ca/whti-ivho/cert-ind-eng.html](http://www.cbsa.gc.ca/whti-ivho/cert-ind-eng.html)

.../2

Canada

I hope this update addresses concerns you may have had arising from the delay in implementing the new SCIS. As a reminder, regular updates on the implementation of the Secure Certificate of Indian Status can be found at: <http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/br/is/scs/index-eng.asp>.

Yours sincerely,



Ray Hatfield  
Director General  
Individual Affairs