

# **JUSTIFICATION FOR EMERGENCY REVIEW**

## **U.S. Passport Demand Study Phase II**

### **OMB # 1405-xxxx, SV-2007-0021**

Section 7209 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA), enacted on December 17, 2004, requires the Secretary of Homeland Security (DHS), in consultation with the Secretary of State, to develop expeditiously, and implement by January 1, 2008, a plan to require U.S. citizens and certain other categories of individuals to present a passport or other sufficient documentation of identity and citizenship when entering the U.S.

This law has had significant effect on travel to Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean, which are the most common destinations for U.S. citizens that currently do not require a passport for entry. Land border crossings from Canada and Mexico represent the largest number of United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (U.S. VISIT) Customs and Border Protection (CBP) inspections; therefore, we expect this population to have the greatest impact on passport demand. U.S. VISIT and CBP statistics from FY 2001 estimate that U.S. citizens represent 39 million crossings along the northern border and 93 million crossings along the southern border. There is no established method for determining the unique number of land crossings, passport possession or passport demand of land travelers.

The Department began planning for increased passport demand even before Congress passed IRTPA and anticipated the need for increased staff to handle the demand. Recognizing the uncertainty of passport demand and the need for reliable information to guide the Department's planning efforts, the Department conducted an initial passport demand study in 2005. The methodology for this study involved face-to-face interviews at 14 land border crossings on the Canadian and Mexican borders. The results of this study were useful in establishing initial demand trends using a static snapshot of travel and passport application behavior. Passport Services used this data to initiate a program of resource upgrades for meeting demand.

We projected demand for passports aggressively, based upon the results of the initial study, and believed that we had planned accordingly; however, our estimate turned out to be low. Beginning in February 2007, application trends suggested that passport demand had grown faster than projected. Demand far exceeded our capacity. We responded immediately with both short-term and long-term measures in an effort to provide Americans with passports in a timely and secure manner. These measures proved insufficient, compelling Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff to provide temporary relief from the recently adopted passport requirement; however, that temporary measure is to be lifted in September 2007.

Our response to the crisis that began in February 2007 assumed that the surge was a short term phenomenon; however, as time passed, the surge continued. Receipts have come in

at higher than expected levels this year, so that pending passport application work has increased three-fold since January 2007 and the average passport processing time lengthened from six weeks in December 2006, to ten to twelve weeks today.

It is now apparent that the surge is not a short-term phenomenon as assumed, and that further long-term resource and infrastructure commitments are required. Once again, the Department faces uncertain passport demand and the need for reliable information to guide its planning efforts; but this time, it arises in the midst of a passport crisis requiring an emergency response. The Department requires more data to determine how much more permanent and temporary hiring it must do handle the future Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) related passport demand, as well as to acquire all of the associated necessities, such as: office space, bandwidth, equipment, and support personnel. Consequently, the Department is compelled to request emergency approval from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to conduct a new Passport Demand Study.

Approval is needed on an expedited basis because, while Passport Services has concluded that it must immediately begin to build up resources and infrastructure to meet this unexpected surge in demand, we need reliable predictions of future demand to know how much investment we require and how we can most effectively allocate our resources. Time is of the essence. The temporary relief adopted June 7, 2007, is to expire in September 2007. We must make and put into operation our resource decisions before then. Furthermore, the updated study results are essential for Passport Services to develop an appropriate 2008 budget request, including the required resource and infrastructure capacity increases. Given the time required for conducting the study, compiling and analyzing the responses, translating those results into operational requirements and incorporating those requirements as part of the ongoing iterative budget process, emergency processing by OMB is required.

The Department has therefore determined that:

1. This collection is needed prior to the expiration of time periods normally associated with a routine submission for review under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act;
2. This collection is essential to the mission of the Department of State; and
3. The use of normal clearance procedures will prevent the Department from obtaining timely information needed for planning resource allocation and developing an appropriate and timely 2008 budget request to address the unanticipated level passport demand and associated workload increase. Failure to ascertain an accurate estimate of passport demand may lead to misallocation of resources. In particular it may lead to under-allocation, which would result in demand exceeding resources. This could result in the avoidable extension of the passport crisis, with associated

significant delays in passport issuance, which will in turn affect U.S. citizen travel and commerce with countries bordering the U.S.

Therefore, the Department of State requests OMB approval for this collection by July 6, 2007.