



EBTC INFORMATION BULLETIN

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SUBJECT: BORDER IDENTIFICATION CARDS

SOURCE: CBC NEWS

Maine Senator Susan Collins says the United States government will likely start requiring travellers to carry new border identification passes in 2007.

Collins was born a short drive from the Canada-United States border in Caribou, Maine and her sister-in-law is from New Brunswick. She says that Canadian connection helps her understand how important it is for border residents to cross with relative ease.

But she says security is important too, and is touting a plan to adopt a border pass card that Americans and Canadians could use to enter the U.S.

The identification cards would be available to Americans at the post office, costing about \$20 U.S. for anyone over 16 years of age. Those under 16 get the cards for free, as long as they are travelling with a parent.

Collins says the identification card would include biometric information – like a fingerprint – that can be read by a scanner. "Most likely there would be machines that you would use to swipe the card through, or press your thumb or other finger to a reader to ensure there is a match," she said.

The idea of border passes is being met with resistance in Canada, where politicians and business owners fear the extra requirement will slow down trade and tourist traffic.

Veteran Affairs Minister Greg Thompson says the jury's still out on whether biometric scanners effectively transmit accurate information about the user.

But he also acknowledges that Canada will have to do something to appease US concerns about border security. "The reality is that we'll

have to come up with something that's acceptable to both sides, and that's recognized by both sides."

Collins expects the pass cards will be available to Americans early next year and be required for border travel soon after.

She says the cards are a cheaper option for people who don't have a passport. "I don't think this is the first choice of many of the Canadian officials, but they recognize that this is going to be some sort of secure identification, and they view the passcard as being an improvement over the original proposal, that everyone would have to carry a passport."