

CLEARANCES	Initial	Date	Date Received in Council Office	Agenda Date	Assigned to:
<i>Originator:</i>	Crawford	7/3/2006		7/25/2006	Finance/Council
<i>Division Head:</i>					
<i>Dept. Head:</i>					
<i>Prosecutor:</i>					
<i>Purchasing/Budget:</i>					
<i>Executive:</i>					

TITLE OF DOCUMENT:
 Resolution regarding the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

ATTACHMENTS:

SEPA review required? () Yes () NO SEPA review completed? () Yes () NO	Should Clerk schedule a hearing ? () Yes () NO Requested Date:
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SUMMARY STATEMENT OR LEGAL NOTICE LANGUAGE: *(If this item is an ordinance or requires a public hearing, you must provide the language for use in the required public notice. Be specific and cite RCW or WCC as appropriate. Be clear in explaining the intent of the action.)*
 Resolution regarding the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

COMMITTEE ACTION:
 7/25/06: Amended and forwarded to Council for approval

COUNCIL ACTION:
 7/25/06: Council Amended and Approved 6-0, McShane absent- Res. 2006-049

Related County Contract #:	Related File Numbers:	Ordinance or Resolution Number: Res. 2006-049
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Please Note: Once adopted and signed, ordinances and resolutions are available for viewing and printing on the County's website at: www.co.whatcom.wa.us/council.

PROPOSED BY: Crawford
SPONSORED BY: Consent
INTRODUCED: July 25, 2006

RESOLUTION NO. 2006-049

**REGARDING THE
WESTERN HEMISPHERE TRAVEL INITIATIVE**

WHEREAS, Whatcom County is home to five land border crossings and a long sea border with British Columbia, Canada; and

WHEREAS, the Douglas and Pacific Highway crossings are the third largest crossings on the US/Canada border for both vehicle and truck traffic; and

WHEREAS, Whatcom County's economy is substantially reliant on its tourism and retail sector, both of which are significantly tied to Canadian traffic; and

WHEREAS, the Canada-United States border relationship is unique with more than 300,000 business people, tourists and regular commuters traveling between Canada and the United States every day, and more than \$1.2 billion in two-way trade each day; and

WHEREAS, Washington State and British Columbia have a common interest in maintaining a secure and open border between Canada and the United States, as the Pacific Northwest's economy depends on such factors; and

WHEREAS, in December 2004, Congress passed, and President Bush signed into law, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which will require all U.S. and Canadian citizens to have a passport or other accepted secure document that establishes the bearer's identity and nationality to enter or re-enter the United States by January 1, 2008; and

WHEREAS, under the current WHTI proposal, this requirement will apply to all air and sea travel to or from Canada beginning on December 31, 2006, and will be extended to all U.S.-Canada land border crossings after December 31, 2007; and

WHEREAS, WHTI, as currently outlined, will negatively impact trade, tourism, and the daily lives of citizens in border regions like Whatcom County, and across both countries; and

WHEREAS, on several occasions, letters have been sent from this region by businesses, political leaders, trade groups, and many others to the U.S. Secretary of State and the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security to encourage the U.S. Government to adopt a flexible and reasonable approach in implementing WHTI which would meet security imperatives while minimizing the negative impact on border crossings by legitimate travelers; and

WHEREAS, numerous governors, premiers, U.S. and Canadian legislators, and bi-national regional forums, including the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), have expressed similar views with regard to WHTI; and

WHEREAS, the Whatcom County Council recognizes that border communities, and business, travel and tourism industries have expressed legitimate concerns about the implementation of the WHTI.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Council respectfully requests that the United States Government conduct an economic and social analysis of the anticipated impact of WHTI on cross-border trade, tourism and local community activities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council will undertake an active campaign coordinated with other interested parties and organizations, including the Business for Economic Security, Trade and Tourism (BESTT) Coalition, to urge Congress to delay the implementation of WHTI.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council respectfully requests the United States Government to revise the terms of the implementation of WHTI, based on the findings of the analyses, and in collaboration with the Government of Canada, states and provinces, to ensure that the border between Canada and the United States remains open to the free and fair flow of trade.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council encourages all governments to pursue collaborative actions at the local, regional and national levels to minimize the impact that WHTI will have on travelers, communities, tourism and industries.

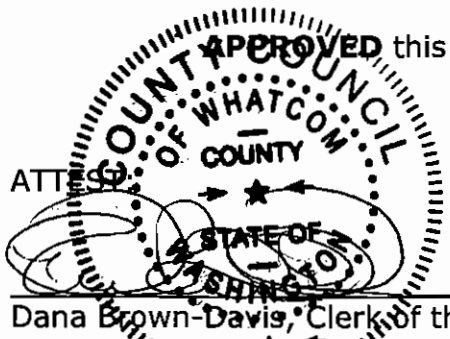
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council is extremely opposed to the erosion of civil liberties that is represented by WHTI and its implementation, and expresses its preference that Congress reconsider its December 2004 approval of the legislation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council respectfully requests the United States Government and the Government of Canada to fully explore, in close consultation with states and provinces, options with regard to the implementation of WHTI, including timelines, terms, technologies, transition measures and alternative identity documentation.

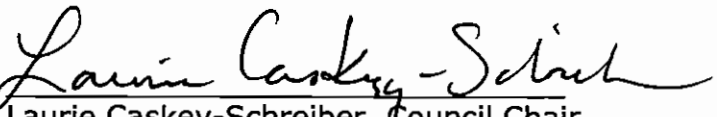
BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council encourages member communities to become engaged in the efforts to address WHTI, most notably by joining the BESTT Coalition; and

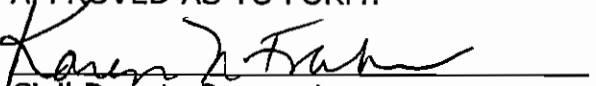
BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the President of the United States, the Prime Minister of Canada, the U.S. Secretary of State and the U.S. Secretary of Homeland Security, the Canadian Minister of Public Safety and the Canadian Minister of Foreign Affairs, the respective U.S. and Canadian Ambassadors, the US Conference of Mayors, the Chairmen and Ranking Members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, the Senate Judiciary Committee, the House Homeland Security Committee, the House International Relations Committee and the House Judiciary Committee, and members of the Congressional delegation for Washington state.

APPROVED this 25 day of July, 2006.

ATTES:  Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON


Laurie Caskey-Schreiber, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Civil Deputy Prosecutor