



**BEFORE  
OFFICE OF POLICY  
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

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In the matter of ) )  
Request for Public Comments Concerning ) **Docket DHS-2011-0115**  
U.S. -Canada Action Plan for )  
Perimeter Security and )  
Economic Competitiveness )  
\_\_\_\_\_) )

**COMMENTS OF  
AIRPORTS COUNCIL INTERNATIONAL – NORTH AMERICA (ACI-NA)**

Airports Council International-North America (ACI-NA) files these comments in response to the Department of Homeland Security's Request for Public Comments Concerning U.S. - Canada Action Plan for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness, Docket DHS-2011-0115.

ACI-NA is the trade association representing the state, local, and regional governing bodies that own and operate commercial airports in the United States and Canada. ACI-NA member airports enplane more than 95 percent of the domestic and virtually all the international airline passenger and cargo traffic in North America. Over 350 aviation-related businesses are also members of ACI-NA, providing goods and services to airports.

**General ACI-NA Position**

ACI-NA and its members welcome the *Beyond the Border: A Shared Vision for Perimeter Security and Economic Competitiveness: Action Plan* announced on December 7, 2011 by President Obama and Prime Minister Harper as a good first step in improving the facilitation and security of trade, air travel, and the associated economic benefits for both countries.

ACI-NA is actively engaged with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), particularly the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) to enhance the security and facilitation of air travel and trade. By working collaboratively we can avoid unnecessary costs and harmful impacts on airport operations, while enhancing security and facilitation.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Action Plan, but were disappointed that the U.S. Government did not seek industry input during its development. Therefore, we encourage the U.S. and Canadian Governments to coordinate with ACI-NA on the aviation components of the Action Plan as well as consult on any new initiatives that emerge as the Plan is refined and implemented.

ACI-NA has long urged the Department to take a risk-based approach to security by focusing our limited government and industry resources on those people and goods about which the least is known. Therefore, we were pleased that the Declaration by President Obama and Prime Minister Harper on February 4, 2011 stated “we expect to use a risk management approach” and that “effective risk management should enable us to accelerate legitimate flows of people and goods into the United States and Canada and across our common border, while enhancing the physical security and economic competitiveness of our countries.” We strongly agree that implementing a risk-based approach will enhance security and facilitation to the benefit of both countries and are encouraged that the Action Plan takes such an approach. Further, we urge DHS and its agencies (and their Canadian counterparts) to fully incorporate risk management as a core business practice.

ACI-NA was encouraged that one of the four key areas of cooperation cited by the Declaration and Action Plan is trade facilitation, economic growth and jobs, as well as a strategy for addressing threats early, integrated cross-border law enforcement and critical infrastructure and cybersecurity.

Our comments are mainly focused on those aspects of the United States-Canada Action Plan that deal with air travel and trade.

### **Addressing Threats Early**

ACI-NA generally agrees with the emphasis in this section on the importance of improving the cross-border sharing of intelligence and information in order to address risks and threats at the earliest possible point and to facilitate legitimate travel and trade.

- **Develop a harmonized approach to screening inbound cargo arriving from offshore that will result in increased security and the expedited movement of secure cargo across the United States-Canada border, under the principle “cleared once, accepted twice”.**

ACI-NA supports the Action Plan’s call for mutual recognition of the respective U.S. and Canada air cargo security systems for passenger aircraft, integration of advance data requirements for security screening and a joint strategy to address security risks associated with inbound shipments from offshore. These initiatives would not only enhance security, but also improve facilitation of trade and effective use of resources by minimizing duplication of effort with respect to cargo screening, particularly for passenger aircraft.

- **Mutually recognize passenger baggage screening, as new technology is deployed and implemented.**

ACI-NA applauds the process outlined in the Action Plan to phase out the requirement for rescreening connecting checked baggage arriving at U.S. gateway airports. We view this initiative as providing one of the most important aviation improvements in the Action Plan. We are pleased that a pilot program is already underway at Toronto Pearson International Airport to test and evaluate the high-speed TSA-certified EDS units which will be installed at all Canadian preclearance airports.

For years, ACI-NA has been working on potential solutions with TSA, DHS and Congress to eliminate this redundant rescreening process because it unnecessarily drains limited TSA and industry resources and inconveniences passengers without providing meaningful security benefits. Elimination of rescreening of connecting checked baggage will free up TSA resources; minimize the operational burden on U.S. airports; decrease flight delays; minimize misconnected checked baggage; and improve the passenger travel experience.

### **Trade Facilitation, Economic Growth and Jobs**

- **Adopt a common framework for trusted trader programs that will align requirements, enhance member benefits, and provide applicants with the opportunity to submit one application to multiple programs.**

ACI-NA supports the Action Plan's call for a common framework for trusted trader programs as it would enhance security, but also improve facilitation of trade, and reduce the burden on shippers.

- **Increase harmonized benefits to NEXUS members.**

ACI-NA strongly endorses the Action Plan's emphasis on increasing the number of NEXUS members and enhancing the benefits for NEXUS members. We find this to be another of the key elements of the Action Plan that should facilitate air travel and trade by allowing passengers who have been vetted to use kiosks, thus freeing up CBP and Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers to focus on those passengers who have not been previously evaluated.

ACI-NA has been a long standing proponent of trusted traveler programs including NEXUS (for U.S. and Canadian citizens and permanent residents) in order to facilitate air travel. NEXUS facilitates entry into Canada by air passengers and entry into the United States by air passengers who are using Canadian preclearance airports. It also helps to mitigate the shortage of CBP officers at Canadian preclearance airports and U.S. airports. Therefore, we welcome the plans to allow Canadian and U.S. citizens who do not reside in either country to enroll in NEXUS, and to include third country trusted traveler programs.

We are particularly pleased that the Action Plan will immediately allow NEXUS members to use trusted traveler lanes to clear security at Canadian airports prior to boarding flights to the United States. ACI-NA encourages TSA to allow Canadian NEXUS members to participate in the Pre✓ known traveler pilot program. Similarly, ACI-NA encourages TSA to work with other countries to reach agreements to allow members of international trusted traveler programs that have been appropriately vetted to participate in Pre✓. Allowing

NEXUS members to use trusted traveler lanes in Canadian airports and to participate in Pre✓ will provide significant additional benefits to members and thus create incentives for additional travelers to enroll in the program.

ACI-NA is very supportive of plans to implement a joint marketing campaign to promote trusted traveler programs. We have often urged the U.S. Government to conduct effective public outreach campaigns to inform U.S. citizens and eligible foreign visitors of the existence and benefits of U.S. and other trusted traveler programs. We urge CBP to coordinate with ACI-NA and other aviation and travel associations on this important initiative so that together we can maximize our collective marketing potential. We recommend that CBP utilize this joint campaign to promote Global Entry in the United States and other markets.

We appreciate the work that that already has been done by CBP and the CBSA to allow Canadian citizens enrolled in NEXUS to participate in the Global Entry program. The placement of Global Entry kiosks at all Canadian preclearance airports will allow NEXUS members to utilize kiosks while CBP officers focus on other travelers.

- **Implement Additional Preinspection and Preclearance Initiatives.**
- **Enhance Binational Port Operations Committees.**

ACI-NA welcomes the plan to identify and develop solutions to operational impediments to CBP's operations at Canadian preclearance airports as well as to establish Binational Port Operations Committees at the Canadian preclearance airports, which should assist in crafting solutions, improving the traveler experience while expediting travel and trade.

### **Other Recommendations**

In addition to our previous recommendations, ACI-NA suggests that the following two items be considered for the air environment.

- The Action Plan states "Bring greater transparency and accountability to the application of border fees and charges, with a view to reducing costs to business and promoting trade competitiveness." In order to ensure a better understanding of CBP's budget and challenges ACI-NA recommends that CBP provide detailed information to the aviation industry on the fees levied on air passengers and airlines, including how much money is collected and how the revenues are allocated.
- The Action Plan states "implement a border wait-time measurement system at mutually determined high priority United States-Canada border crossings". ACI-NA recommends that CBP explore whether it can provide useful wait time information for Canadian preclearance airports; something it currently provides for selected U.S. airports.

### **Conclusion**

ACI-NA supports the efforts by the Governments of the United States and Canada as outlined in the Action Plan to enhance the facilitation and security of air travel and trade between the United States and Canada. We believe, if implemented, these initiatives will enhance both security and facilitation, contribute to our economies, increase employment and further strengthen the United States-Canada relationship.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Diane Peterson, Senior Advisor, International Affairs, ACI-NA (Phone: 202/861-8085; dpeterson@aci-na.org).

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Principato', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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