

April 29, 2005 - Rep. Slaughter Meets with Homeland Security Officials

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Supports Progress toward Shared Border Management Program

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (N.Y.-28), Ranking Member of the House Committee on Rules and Member of the House Committee on Homeland Security, met with senior officials from the Department of Homeland Security on Thursday, April 28th, to reaffirm her support of recent collaboration between the Peace Bridge Authority and Customs & Border Protection. During the meeting with the Senior Policy Advisor for Cargo and Trade Policy of the Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Directorate and a top official from the Department's Office of Legislative Affairs, Slaughter expressed her gratitude and emphasized the need for continued progress in strengthening the Northern Border region while minimizing the negative effects of increased security on local citizens.

"I am pleased that Customs and Border Security is committed to working with the Peace Bridge Authority on moving forward with the shared border management program. CBP has assured me that they are close to finalizing the border station and facility standards," Slaughter said.

Rep. Slaughter stresses that these standards are critical in moving forward with alleviating traffic congestion at the Peace Bridge and bolstering border security. These plans must be confirmed so that regional concerns over alleviating traffic congestion on the Peace Bridge and the impact of increased security on the local economy can be addressed. Throughout this process, Congresswoman Slaughter has urged increased communication and collaboration between Customs and Border Protection and the Peace Bridge Authority.

"These standards are needed before real progress can be made in alleviating traffic congestion on the bridge. CBP has also agreed to provide the Peace Bridge Authority more timely updates on steps they are taking to implement the shared border management initiative," she reports.

After expressing her stern opposition to the President's proposal to require all persons traveling between the United States and Canada to carry passports, the Department of Homeland Security is currently reviewing Rep. Slaughter's proposed alternative. The Congresswoman's plan would expand the NEXUS program, allowing frequent travelers to cross the border quickly and easily without delay at security checkpoints. To implement this plan, the program would need to be further extended to the residents of Western New York.

"I have received assurances that the Department of Homeland Security is reviewing my request to expand the NEXUS program in Western New York. For the program to work, DHS needs to make NEXUS more customer-friendly. This includes opening up a NEXUS enrollment center in Niagara Falls, and creating a customer service hotline," stated Slaughter.

Representative Slaughter remains a vigilant supporter of the shared border management initiative and will continue to play a vital role in working to strengthen Northern Border security while minimizing the impact of enhanced security measures on New Yorkers.

"I look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with U.S. and Canadian officials, as well as local stakeholders, to implement solutions to the problem of bridge congestion in Western New York," says Slaughter.