



February 9, 2026

Subject Line: OMB Control Number 1651-0111, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), Department of Homeland Security

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the New York State Tourism Industry Association, we appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) proposed revisions to the Arrival and Departure Record (Form I-94) and the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), OMB Control Number 1651-0111. Anecdotally, I can share that in discussions with our colleagues abroad and in Canada, the proposed changes are viewed as overreach, exceeding the purpose and requirements of security, venturing unnecessarily into the realm of invasion of privacy. I support the use of biometrics and scanning as well as an array of increasingly sophisticated technology and techniques to protect our borders. I do not endorse the universal deep dive into every traveler's social media history. This is a measure that should be the exception to the rule, not the rule.

As you know the U.S. travel industry, and particularly New York State's travel industry, generates substantial economic activity through international visitation and global commerce. International visitors support hundreds of thousands of jobs across the United States and contribute meaningfully to national economic prosperity and competitiveness. We are deeply concerned that the proposed expansion of data collection requirements on the ESTA application, particularly social media information covering the previous five years, will have unintended and far-reaching consequences for inbound travel and international business engagement. These changes have already generated significant confusion and alarm among international travelers, foreign media, and Visa Waiver Program (VWP) partner governments, and are creating uncertainty for international visitors.

A recent survey of international travelers from Visa Waiver Program (VWP) countries conducted by the World Travel & Tourism Council [revealed](#) that two-thirds of the over 4,500 travelers surveyed said they were aware of the proposed policy already, with a large share saying it would make the U.S. feel less welcoming and less attractive for both leisure and business travel. Further, over one-third of those surveyed revealed that they would be somewhat or much less likely to visit the U.S. due to the new proposal. The potential decline in travelers—over a 23% reduction from VWP countries—could cost the U.S. an estimated \$15.7 billion in lost visitor spending and over 150,000 lost jobs. This would be devastating to not just the travel economy, but to states and communities across the country.

The chilling effect of this proposal on inbound travel from VWP countries cannot be overstated. For international travelers—particularly business travelers—mandating that they provide extensive social media information, and highly sensitive personal data such as DNA, are deeply concerning. Faced with these requirements, many travelers may opt to conduct business and visit alternative markets rather than the U.S.

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and facilitating the success of NYSTIA members.*



We commend CBP for all it does to improve and secure the American travel experience. Our industry appreciates CBP's mission to protect national security while facilitating lawful travel and trade, which is so vital to our economy. Policies that increase barriers to entry or create uncertainty for traveler's risk deterring lawful visitation, weaken the United States' competitive position as a global destination, and undermine the success CBP has made to improve seamless and secure travel at our ports of entry.

The Visa Waiver Program (VWP), which is intentionally different from a cumbersome visa process, has long-balanced security, economic growth, and strong international partnerships. Preserving that balance is critical to maintaining U.S. leadership in global trade, travel, and innovation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. We encourage CBP to reconsider this proposal and stand ready to work together to implement policies that protect security while maximizing economic growth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "R. Provost".

Robert C Provost
President & CEO

Cc: NYSTIA Board of Directors

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