

TIGHTENED BORDER RULE SCRAPPED IN THE SENATE

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A proposed federal rule that would have made crossing the U.S.-Canadian border much tougher has been scrapped by a Senate committee, Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., said Thursday.

Leahy said the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a spending bill that deleted new immigration rules that critics feared would create huge bottlenecks at the border.

At issue were provisions contained in the 1996 immigration reform law that were going to force the Immigration and Naturalization Service to check everyone entering and leaving the United States starting in October.

They also would have required Canadians to carry more documentation when crossing the border.

Leahy praised Sen. Judd Gregg, R-N.H., chairman of the Senate Appropriations subcommittee that oversees the Commerce, Justice and State departments, for moving to delete the rules.

The move came just weeks after Gov. Howard Dean returned to Vermont from a conference with eastern Canadian provincial premiers and northeastern U.S. governors.

"What it would mean for Vermont is simply a disaster," Dean said on his return from the conference. He noted trade with and tourism from Canada play a huge role in northern states' economies.

"It has to be fixed," he said. "It will totally strangle the trade between Canada and the United States."

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