



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

DEC 21 2006

Dear Ms. Christensen:

Thank you for your letters of December 4 and November 3 regarding potential public confusion over new passport requirements for U.S. citizens traveling to U.S. territories. The USVI Hotel & Tourism Association brought this concern to your attention. You ask that the Department make clear on its website and outreach materials that U.S. citizens returning to the United States directly from a U.S. territory, such as the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, do not have to present a passport for entry.

We appreciate your bringing this issue to our attention. To avoid any possible confusion, we have updated our travel.state.gov website, adding the following language to the first web page providing information of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative:

The passport requirement does NOT apply to U.S. citizens traveling to or returning directly from a U.S. territory. U.S. citizens returning directly from a U.S. territory are not considered to have left the United States and do not need to present a passport. U.S. territories include the following: Guam, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Swains Island, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Should you have further questions regarding the State Department's implementation of the WHTI, please do not hesitate to contact Mark Bysfield of our Legislative Affairs Office at (202) 647-8729.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey T. Bergner".

Jeffrey T. Bergner
Assistant Secretary
Legislative Affairs

The Honorable
Donna M. Christensen,
House of Representatives.