

DHS Announces Taiwan's Designation into the Visa Waiver Program

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WASHINGTON - Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano today announced the designation of Taiwan into the Visa Waiver Program (VWP) - streamlining travel for thousands of eligible Taiwan passport holders, while maintaining strong security standards.

"Today's announcement is a major step forward in our long-standing economic partnership with Taiwan," said Secretary Napolitano. "Taiwan's participation in the VWP will not only stimulate tourism in the United States, it will also enable us to work together to maintain the strictest security standards."

Taiwan will join 36 participants in the VWP—which permits visa-free travel to the United States for eligible travelers visiting the United States for 90 days or fewer for business or tourism. In Fiscal Year 2011, the VWP accounted for 18.3 million visits to the United States, or more than 60 percent of tourist and business travelers entering the United States by air.

In accordance with the VWP designation process, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) determined that Taiwan complies with key security and information-sharing requirements - such as enhanced law enforcement and security-related data sharing with the United States; timely reporting of lost and stolen passports; and the maintenance of high counterterrorism, law enforcement, border control, aviation and document security standards.

Like other VWP travelers, eligible Taiwan passport holders will be required to apply for advanced authorization through the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA), a DHS Web-based system. Eligible Taiwan passport holders with an approved ESTA will be able to visit the United States without visas as of November 1, 2012.

Today's announcement supports President Obama's Executive Order on travel and tourism, directing federal agencies to expand the nation's ability to attract and welcome visitors, while maintaining the highest standards of security. In Fiscal Year 2011, 243,186 visitors from Taiwan traveled to the United States.

For more information, visit www.dhs.gov or <https://esta.cbp.dhs.gov/esta/>.

<http://www.dhs.gov/news/2012/10/02/dhs-announces-taiwan%E2%80%99s-designation-visa-waiver-program>