

HB 1445-FN - AS INTRODUCED

2026 SESSION

26-2750
06/08

HOUSE BILL ***1445-FN***

AN ACT requiring the issuance of enhanced drivers licenses and Real ID compliant cards for border crossing and proof of citizenship.

SPONSORS: Rep. Johnson, Straf. 11; Rep. St. Clair, Belk. 5; Rep. Veilleux, Hills. 34; Rep. Potenza, Straf. 19; Rep. Plamondon, Hills. 3; Rep. Miller, Straf. 21; Sen. Watters, Dist 4; Sen. Perkins Kwoka, Dist 21

COMMITTEE: Transportation

ANALYSIS

This bill requires the division of motor vehicles to issue enhanced driver licenses and Real ID compliant cards to United States citizens who are residents of New Hampshire for use as identity and citizenship documentation when entering the United States by land or sea.

Explanation: Matter added to current law appears in ***bold italics***.
Matter removed from current law appears ~~[in brackets and struckthrough.]~~
Matter which is either (a) all new or (b) repealed and reenacted appears in regular type.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Twenty-Six

AN ACT requiring the issuance of enhanced drivers licenses and Real ID compliant cards for border crossing and proof of citizenship.

Be it Enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court convened:

1 1 Enhanced Drivers' Licenses and Identification Cards. Amend RSA 263:1-d, I to read as
2 follows:

3 I. The department [~~may~~] **shall** enter into a memorandum of understanding with any federal
4 agency for the purpose of obtaining approval of an enhanced driver's license or enhanced nondriver's
5 picture identification card as proof of identity and citizenship for persons entering the United States
6 at land and sea ports, in accordance with the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative developed by the
7 United States Department of State and the United States Department of Homeland Security.

8 2 Nondriver's Picture Identification Card. Amend RSA 260:21, XII to read as follows:

9 XII. At the request of a resident who is otherwise eligible for an identification card pursuant
10 to RSA 260:21, I and II, and is willing and able to meet the additional requirements of RSA 260:21-a
11 or RSA 260:21-b, the department [~~may~~] **shall** issue a nondriver's picture identification card that is
12 compliant with the standards of the Real ID Act of 2005, Public Law 109-13, and its implementing
13 regulations, including, but not limited to, 6 C.F.R. part 37, or an enhanced identification card as
14 proof of identity and citizenship for persons entering the United States at land and sea ports which
15 meet the standards of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative developed by the United States
16 Department of State and the United States Department of Homeland Security, and its associated
17 regulations, including but not limited to Documents Required for Travelers Departing From or
18 Arriving in the United States at Sea and Land Ports-of-Entry From Within the Western
19 Hemisphere, 73 Fed. Reg. 18,384, Apr. 3, 2008, respectively, in lieu of an identification card defined
20 in RSA 260:21.

21 3 Effective Date. This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.

**HB 1445-FN- FISCAL NOTE
AS INTRODUCED**

AN ACT requiring the issuance of enhanced drivers licenses and Real ID compliant cards for border crossing and proof of citizenship.

FISCAL IMPACT: This bill does not provide funding.

Estimated State Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Revenue	\$0	Indeterminable Increase		
<i>Revenue Fund(s)</i>	Restricted - Highway Fund Cost of Collections - Per the state constitution, costs associated with the collection/administration of highway fund revenue by the Department of Safety is deducted prior to funds being credited as unrestricted highway fund revenue			
Expenditures*	\$0	\$563,000+	Indeterminable Increase	
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	Highway Fund and Restricted - Highway Fund Cost of Collections - Per the state constitution, costs associated with the collection/administration of highway fund revenue by the Department of Safety is deducted prior to funds being credited as unrestricted highway fund revenue			
Appropriations*	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<i>Funding Source(s)</i>	None			

*Expenditure = Cost of bill

*Appropriation = Authorized funding to cover cost of bill

Estimated Political Subdivision Impact				
	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Local Revenue	\$0	\$0	Indeterminable Increase	
Local Expenditures	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0

METHODOLOGY:

This bill requires the Department of Safety enter into a memorandum of understanding with any federal agency for the purpose of issuing enhanced driver licenses and nondriver's identification cards. It also requires that anyone applying for an identification card receives a REAL ID compliance card, however, does not mandate the REAL ID for driver licenses. New Hampshire currently issues both REAL ID compliant driver licenses and identification cards to those that choose to opt in.

To meet the requirements of this bill, the Department states it would need to complete a new card design costing approximately \$163,000. In addition, system changes would be needed to be

able to issue. Estimated development and testing time for this would be approximately \$400,000. Lastly, to implement an enhanced driver license, advanced testing with the Federal government and borders are required to ensure that the RFID chip can be read at an adequate distance, to which costs are indeterminable. In all, the Department estimates costs to be at least \$563,000 to implement the changes in this bill.

The Department states revenue attributable to this bill is indeterminable, as it cannot predict the interest NH residents might have for applying for these enhanced licenses/IDs. Typically, enhanced licenses are popular in areas that have a large metropolitan area on the border, which NH does not have. Additionally, NH currently has a 70% opt in rate to REAL ID compliant licenses. The current cost of a REAL ID license is \$60, making it only a \$20 increase to obtain the enhanced license. For illustrative purposes, if 1% to 2% of applications are for enhanced licenses/IDs, this could increase state revenue by \$76,000 to \$152,000 per year. Also, pursuant to RSA 235:23 ("Apportionment A"), 12 percent of highway fund road toll and motor vehicle fee revenue collected is distributed to municipalities in the year following collection. Therefore, this bill would also increase state expenditures and local revenue, beginning in FY 2028, by an indeterminable amount.

The Department notes that this bill's effective date of January 1, 2027, is likely not feasible as testing, and other implementation measures, could take a couple of years.

AGENCIES CONTACTED:

Department of Safety