

December 10, 2009

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators Jeff Bingaman, Tom Udall and Representative Ben Ray Luján today received assurances from the Department of Homeland Security that New Mexico travelers planning to use a state-issued identification to travel after Dec. 31 will not encounter problems.

On a conference call with DHS officials, the delegation offices were once again told the administration preferred to enact new legislation, called PASS ID, which would again postpone the date of compliance. However, contingency plans, including an extension of the deadline for compliance, are in the works if Congress is unable to enact the new bill before adjourning for the year.

“We fully understand the anxiety this situation has caused New Mexico holiday travelers, but we have received every assurance that there is no need for them to worry,” said Bingaman, Udall and Luján. “Anyone planning to travel with a state-issued identification will not be hindered.”

Last month, Bingaman and Udall sent a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano saying that enforcement of the Dec. 31 deadline for REAL ID would cause a significant disruption in air travel. They also pointed out that New Mexico has asked for an extension of the deadline and urged DHS to quickly clarify its plans regarding the implementation of the REAL ID Act.

In November, Luján also reached out to the Department in a letter expressing his concern about the implementation REAL ID in New Mexico. He also asked them to be cognizant of New Mexico’s diverse communities as the Department considered implementation.

Udall continued to press Sec. Napolitano to extend the deadline last week when she testified before his Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

