



DHS Delays the Transition to Full Application of U.S. Immigration Laws in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

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The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano today announced the delayed transition to full application of the U.S. immigration provisions of Title VII of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (CNRA) until November 28, 2009. Title VII extends U.S. immigration laws to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) which currently administers its own immigration system.

Under the CNRA, the Secretary of DHS has the sole authority to delay the June 1, 2009, transition date to U.S. immigration law up to 180 days, after consultation with the secretaries of Labor, Interior and State, the attorney general, and the governor of the CNMI. The Secretary has determined based upon those consultations that it is advisable to exercise that authority fully.

As a result of the Secretary's decision the existing CNMI immigration laws will continue to apply until November 28, 2009. Additionally, the implementation of Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) interim final rule establishing a joint Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program (VWP), that was scheduled to begin on June 1, 2009, also will be delayed until November 28, 2009 and the existing Guam VWP will continue to operate until that date. To effectuate this change CBP plans to issue a technical amendment to the Guam-CNMI interim final rule published on January 16, 2009.

This decision also delays the implementation of the exemption from the current statutorily imposed caps on the number of nonimmigrant H-1B and H-2B petitions granted yearly for employers filing H worker petitions in Guam.

Additional information about the Transition Program and the CNRA can be found on the DHS website: [Transition to U.S. Immigration Law in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands](#).

For more information on the Guam-CNMI VWP, the interim final rule can be accessed on the CBP website at: www.cbp.gov.

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