



Michigan Agri-Business Association

November 4, 2021

Members of Michigan's Delegation to the U.S. House and U.S. Senate:

On behalf of the Michigan Agri-Business Association (MABA) and Michigan Trucking Association (MTA), we are writing to spotlight the serious shortage of truck drivers in Michigan and across America, and our growing concern about further driver shortages. Specifically, truck transportation companies in Michigan are concerned about the impact of a planned vaccine requirement for foreign national essential workers to transit the U.S.-Canada border beginning in January. This adds to the uncertainty already created by an upcoming federal Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) requiring companies with 100 or more workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

Truck transportation is an indispensable element of the agricultural supply chain. Trucks haul 72.5% of all freight transported in the United States, including agricultural products of all kinds along with critical crop inputs such as fertilizer, chemistry and seed. The trucking industry has long faced a driver shortage, but a range of factors, including the COVID-19 emergency, have increased America's truck driver shortage from 61,000 drivers just three years ago to more than 80,000 drivers today. This driver shortage has directly impacted truck transportation companies of all sizes in Michigan.

At a time when more drivers are badly needed, we are concerned pending federal policies will drive even more drivers out of the trucking business. On October 10, 2021, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that beginning in early January 2022, DHS will require all inbound foreign national travelers crossing U.S. land or ferry Points of Entry – including essential workers such as truckers – to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Notably, this essential worker requirement goes well beyond standards the Government of Canada has established for essential workers to transit the border into Canada.

We are concerned a reciprocal policy will be enacted for drivers entering Canada who are U.S. Citizens or Lawful Permanent Residents. Even if no such policy is enacted for drivers entering Canada – which we believe is unlikely – extending a new U.S.-bound vaccine requirement to essential workers will lead to delays, confusion and frustration at land POEs and further discourage U.S. Citizen drivers from being willing to travel to Canada. This would put additional pressure on the supply chain into Canada, our state's number-one export destination in agriculture and many other sectors. As a result, we ask for your help to urge DHS to exempt essential workers from its upcoming action to require full vaccination against COVID-19 to enter the United States at land POEs.

In addition to this border requirement, we remain concerned about the potential impact of the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) ETS requiring companies with 100 or more employees to vaccinate their workers. As we have [previously detailed to the White House Office of Management and Budget](#), this ETS will simply drive more essential workers out of the labor force and will put even more pressure on the truck transportation system. We continue to urge DOL, and the White House, to avoid a wide-ranging mandate on certain U.S. private sector companies.

Together, these policy proposals risk sending even more drivers out of the workforce. While many truck drivers are vaccinated against COVID-19, many are not. We do not believe new vaccine mandates will lead to an increase in driver vaccination rates. Instead, drivers will refuse work that takes them across the border or refuse to work for a larger trucking company. The American Trucking Association recently estimated the industry could lose some 37 percent of drivers through retirements, resignations and workers moving to companies not subject to vaccine mandates, such as local delivery providers who do not transit the border, or companies employing fewer than 100 workers. This will directly impact Michigan agriculture in terms of delays and cost increases.

Both the agriculture and trucking industries are navigating a historic worker shortage and delays in the supply chain. We critically need truck drivers on the road. We ask for your assistance in urging the Biden Administration not to subject truck transportation workers, and other essential workers, to vaccine mandates that will exacerbate the supply chain crisis.

Sincerely,



Chuck Lippstreu
President
Michigan Agri-Business Association



Brian Hitchcock
Chairman
Michigan Trucking Association