

U.S. Department of Transportation

Trucks Crossing the U.S.-Mexico Border

- Until 1982, trucks from Mexico could drive anywhere in the United States.
- Since 1982, trucks from Mexico have been able to drive only in the roughly 25-mile commercial zone along the U.S. border and can make deliveries in U.S. cities like San Diego, El Paso and Brownsville.
- Cargo destined beyond the commercial zone must be off-loaded and transferred, which has given rise to a highly inefficient international supply chain on our southern border.
- A limited demonstration program to test implementation of the trucking provisions of the North American Free Trade Agreement, supported by Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton and approved by Congress in 1993 will allow a small number of Mexican trucking companies to be screened for possible trial authority to make deliveries beyond the commercial zones for one year.
- The companies **must pass** a safety audit by U.S. inspectors, including a complete review of driver records, insurance policies, drug and alcohol testing programs and vehicle inspection records.
- In two months, Mexico will have published its final application procedures and will begin processing applications from U.S. companies for authority to operate throughout Mexico.
- Since the mid-1990s, the rate of Mexican trucks taken off the road for **safety violations** has **dropped** 64 percent, from 59 percent to 21 percent (*comparable to the U.S. average*).

U.S. Safety and Security Requirements Await Trucks from Mexico

- Since 1995, **the federal government has spent more than \$500 million** to improve border inspection stations and hire more than 600 new federal and state truck inspectors.
- Mexico's **trucks and their drivers must meet all U.S. safety and security requirements** before they will be allowed to drive beyond the border region.
- **Every truck** that crosses the border as part of the pilot **will be checked – every truck, every time.**
- **Any truck** with a **safety violation** that poses a risk to the traveling public – no matter how small or large - **will be stopped** until the problem is fixed.
- Drivers **must** have a valid commercial license, proof of medical fitness, and comply with hours-of-service rules.
- Drivers **must** be able to understand and respond to questions and directions from inspectors.
- Drivers **may not** be sick, tired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Trucks **must be** insured and meet rigorous U.S. safety standards for the entire vehicle, including brakes, steering systems, tires, axles, hoses, fuel tanks, head and tail lamps, turn signals, suspension systems, frame integrity and cargo securing equipment.
- **No** trucks hauling **hazardous materials** or buses carrying **passengers** will be involved in the test program.
- All trucks and all drivers entering the U.S. **are screened by U.S. Customs and Border Protection Officers**, which could include radiation portal monitoring and x-ray inspections of high risk cargo.
- All drivers must **provide advanced cargo information**, must **meet immigration entry requirements** and are subject to the U.S. import requirements.

Good for Consumers

- Every day, nearly **\$2.4 billion in trade** flows between the United States, Mexico and Canada. U.S. merchandise exports to Mexico and Canada are up **157 percent**. The economies of all three countries have grown by more than 40 percent since NAFTA was signed.
- **75 percent of this commerce is carried by commercial trucks**, but the **current system** of transferring products from the truck of one country to that of the other **costs consumers \$400 million a year**.
- Long-haul trucking to and from Mexico will allow goods to get to the marketplace as efficiently as possible on both sides of the border which translates into cost savings to the consumer.

Keeping Our End of the Bargain

- President George H.W. Bush signed the historic NAFTA treaty in 1992.
- In 1993, Congress ratified NAFTA and President Bill Clinton signed into law legislation to implement the treaty.
- The trucking provisions of NAFTA were put on hold in 1995. In 2001, a NAFTA dispute resolution panel ruled that the United States was violating its NAFTA obligations by adopting a blanket ban on trucks from Mexico.
- In 2001, Congress approved and President George W. Bush signed legislation detailing 22 safety requirements that must be met before allowing trucks from Mexico to drive beyond the U.S. commercial zones.
- In 2002, U.S. Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta certified that DOT had met each of the 22 requirements set by Congress. The last three audits by the U.S. DOT Inspector General confirm it as well.
- Litigation stymied the DOT program; a 2002 U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruling that barred implementation of the treaty's trucking provisions. The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously reversed the decision in 2004.
- U.S. DOT began working immediately with its Mexican counterparts to develop a NAFTA trucking pilot program.