



January 5, 2022

Hon. Omar Alghabra
Via email
Minister of Transport

RE: Accommodations for Canada's trucking Industry to protect our supply chain

Dear Minister,

We are monitoring the evolving COVID-19 situation with particular attention to daily global updates related to the Omicron variant. The emergence of this new variant necessitates a response from you that demonstrates to the public that as this virus evolves so too does the response from government.

As you know, the trucking industry moves, by value, close to 70% of the \$648 billion dollar Canada-US trade. In total, there are 160,000 truck drivers moving Canada-US trade – about 120,000 of these drivers are Canadian with the remaining 40,000 being American.

When the vaccination mandate was originally announced to take effect on January 15th, 2022, it was expected that upwards of 20% of the 120,000 Canadian truck drivers crossing the US-Canada border would have likely remained unvaccinated by January 2022. Of the 40,000 US-based truck drivers crossing the border, CTA estimated that upwards of 40% of these drivers would not be prepared to meet the vaccine mandate requirement. Although carriers have been able to modestly raise their driver vaccine rates, many Canadian fleets are still preparing for reductions in their driver pools between 10-20%, with some businesses in certain regions of Canada anticipating well over 20% loss of drivers.

Driver loss will disproportionately hurt the most vulnerable businesses first such as building materials, food for retail sale, and grocery warehouses that will see a loss in service levels. With these service disruptions, small family businesses that ship Canada-US goods will suffer, and most likely to be de-listed. These reductions will have a competitive impact on Canadian manufacturing, cause challenges for animal welfare from livestock carriers and cause serious challenges to the food supply chain.

Canadians are already experiencing disruptions in receiving goods and more Canadian drivers will only make matters worse.

We are concerned that this government has no plan to avoid much worse disruption of supply chains and has not taken steps to ensure that food and critical components get where they are needed. Back on November 5, 2021, we saw the US Government grant exemptions for vaccine mandates for truckers who are alone in their cab (the definition of socially distanced profession). We are simply asking what is the government's plan to support the trucking industry? How and when will vaccine mandates be enforced and will the government support rapid testing as an alternative? Finally, when will this government take action to protect supply chains and increase their resiliency and stability?

While we strongly support vaccination to curb the spread of COVID-19, our trucking industry is a sector that has shown very little or no transmission of COVID-19 within the workplace and we urge you to accommodate this industry so that Canadians don't suffer.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Lantsman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Melissa Lantsman, MP