



Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association

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February 7, 2022

The Honorable Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

The Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association (OOIDA) is the largest trade association representing the views of small-business truckers and professional truck drivers. OOIDA has over 150,000 members in North America, including nearly 1,000 Canadian drivers. OOIDA's mission is to promote and protect the interests of its members on any issues that might impact their economic well-being, working conditions, and the safe operation of commercial motor vehicles (CMVs) on our roads.

We are requesting that professional truck drivers be exempted from the vaccination requirements that the administration implemented on January 22, 2022, for non-U.S. essential workers seeking to enter the U.S. via land ports of entry at the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders.

Throughout the COVID-19 emergency, professional truckers have been risking their lives to deliver critical goods to communities throughout North America. Prior to January 2022, truckers were operating safely back and forth across the U.S.-Canadian border to ensure North Americans had the food and supplies they needed without having to show proof of vaccination or disclosing any other aspects of their personal medical history. In fact, the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency has classified truck drivers as essential to the viability of our nation's infrastructure because trucking is such a vital component for domestic and global trade.

Since commercial drivers spend the majority of their time alone in their vehicle and outside, there is no evidence that truckers present a higher risk of spreading the virus. The Department of Labor acknowledged this fact in guidance for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's proposed vaccination and testing emergency temporary standard (ETS) issued in November 2021. The guidance stated, "Therefore, the requirements of the ETS do not apply to truck drivers who do not occupy vehicles with other individuals as part of their work duties. Additionally, the requirements of the ETS do not apply to truck drivers who encounter other individuals exclusively in outdoor environments." Because the current cross-border policy disregards the economic contributions of the trucking industry and overlooks the basic operating

procedures of the profession, we urge you to immediately exempt professional truck drivers from the vaccination mandate.

An arbitrary vaccine mandate should not prevent hard-working men and women from earning a living. The trucking profession is by no means an easy one and the pandemic has highlighted many of the difficult working conditions drivers are forced to endure. For instance, finding a safe place to park is something most people take for granted, but it's a daily struggle for hundreds of thousands of long-haul truckers especially when public rest stops started closing up. Throughout the pandemic, shippers and receivers have been restricting access to their facilities, including restrooms. Even now, finding a place to use the bathroom can still be problematic. Initially, drivers weren't able to find masks, hand sanitizer, or even bottled water. Truckers were delivering everything most folks needed to survive, but couldn't actually buy much of it themselves. In the face of all these challenges, the perseverance of truckers never faltered. Truck drivers choose to find ways to overcome every obstacle they encounter to bring us our essential needs. Unfortunately, cross-border drivers cannot meet those needs if they are not allowed on the road.

Since January 22nd, the new requirements for essential workers have impeded trade and commerce between the U.S. and Canada. Many drivers have elected not to operate cross-border under the new rules, while others continue to experience excessive wait times at border entry points because of the new protocols. This has intensified existing challenges facing North American freight networks and the supply chain and has resulted in higher prices for consumers.

We support efforts from your administration to combat the spread of COVID-19, however we cannot endorse short-sighted policies that disrupt commerce, put truckers out of work, and create shortages for essential supplies. Rather than imposing a heavy-handed mandate on the trucking workforce who has delivered time and time again for both U.S. and Canadian citizens, your administration must find less intrusive alternatives that can enhance public safety and foster trade between the U.S. and Canada. In light of these concerns, we once again request that you exempt professional truck drivers from the cross-border vaccination requirements that the administration implemented on January 22nd, 2022, for non-U.S. essential workers.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Spencer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Todd Spencer
President & CEO
Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association