



**Owner-Operator Independent Drivers Association**

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February 7, 2022

The Honorable Justin Trudeau  
Office of the Prime Minister  
80 Wellington Street  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

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 cross-border vaccination requirements that the Canadian government implemented on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, for essential service providers. The exemption should apply to all U.S. drivers entering Canada as well as any Canadian drivers returning home.

Throughout the COVID-19 emergency, professional truckers have been risking their lives to deliver critical goods to communities throughout the U.S. and Canada. 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. 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. 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 15<sup>th</sup>, the new requirements for essential service providers 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 government 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 Canadian and U.S. citizens, your administration must find less intrusive alternatives that can enhance public safety and foster trade between Canada and the U.S. In light of these concerns, we once again request that you exempt professional truck drivers from the cross-border vaccination requirements that the Canadian government implemented on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022, for essential service providers.

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