



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 10, 2010

## Mexican Trucks Welcomed by Obama Administration

In the midst of a drug war with Mexico so severe that Americans have been warned not to venture into sections of U.S. territory on the U.S.-Mexican border, the Obama administration has agreed to allow Mexican long-haul rigs into the United States without constraints. The White House is enacting the provision to meet the requirements of the North American Free Trade Agreement.



WND reports:

In March 2009, President Obama signed a \$410 billion omnibus spending bill into law, along with the provisions ending the Department of Transportation's Mexican truck demonstration project.

One day after signing the omnibus spending bill, Obama instructed the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to work with Congress, DOT, the State Department and Mexican officials to come up with legislation to create a new trucking project that will meet the legitimate concerns of Congress and the U.S. under NAFTA.

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Immediately following the elimination of the Mexican truck demonstration project in 2009, Mexico increased tariffs on nearly 100 American products. Shortly afterwards, American businesses that were negatively impacted by Mexico's tariffs began to put pressure on President Obama to take action.

Likewise, according to TheTrucker.com, a Mexican official at a Washington luncheon held on October 15 said Mexico would not accept another pilot program.

Jose Luis Paz Vega, head of the NAFTA office at the Mexican embassy in Washington, demanded, "If you put in place a demonstration project similar to what we had, it can begin, but it can be defunded at any time. Mexico is not willing to take that anymore. We need a program that is permanent, that has certainty, and complies with NAFTA. And we're not willing to accept anything less than that."

Fully expecting President Obama to succumb to the demands of the Mexican embassy, as well as those of American businesses hurt by the Mexican tariffs, TheTrucker.com warned that something was coming. According to WND, TheTrucker.com, a trucking industry magazine, warned last month that the Department of Transportation has been patiently waiting until after the November midterms to unveil a proposal DOT expects to resolve the Mexican truck controversy.

However, it was not until after the midterm elections that the Obama administration was to reveal its intentions to comply with the demands made by the Mexican NAFTA officials.

President Obama's decision to allow Mexican trucks into the United States is a striking blow to the unions that supported Obama in 2008. During Obama's presidential campaign, he promised union workers that he would renegotiate the terms of NAFTA in order to preserve American jobs.



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Not only does the proposal come as a surprise to the unions, it is also a stunning blow to Obamas Democratic counterparts like Oregon Representative Peter DeFazio and retiring Senator Byron Dorgan, both of whom have fought vehemently against allowing the DOT Mexican truck demonstration project out of concerns that the Mexican trucks do not conform to American safety regulations.

DeFazio, Dorgan, and many other critics point out that Mexico does not provide driver training, special licensing, drug testing, safety inspections, cargo latching security, Hazmat control, or brake standards to its drivers or vehicles that are comparable to the standards set in the United States, nor do they maintain driver physical requirements.

At the time that the Mexican truck demonstration project began, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration database uncovered a variety of safety violations by Mexican long-haul rigs.

Even if Mexico alleges to make improvements to meet the United States Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance standards, skeptics are concerned that Mexican inspectors will simply take bribes to circumvent the requirements.

Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood has defended the actions of the Obama administration contending that American businesses were struggling under the new tariffs, which amounted to an additional \$2.4 billion cost on American exporters.

It is really putting a huge economic stress on the producers, he remarked.

The dispute over the Mexican trucking project is not unique to Obamas administration as it proved to be a point of contention under the Bush administration as well.

WND writes, The Mexican truck issue was rancorous during the last two years of the Bush administration as Secretary of Transportation Mary Peters fought off repeated efforts by Congress to confine Mexican trucks to a narrow 20-mile commercial area north of the southern border.

Likewise, in 2008, Senator Dorgan managed to provoke a confession from Peters that Mexican drivers originally designated as proficient in English at the border could in fact explain U.S. traffic signs only in Spanish. Dorgan then accused Peters of directly violating a congressional vote to stop the Mexican trucking demonstration project.

With clear opposition from the Bush White House, DeFazio concluded at the time, This administration is hell-bent on opening our borders, but has failed to require the Mexican drivers and trucks meet the same safety and security standards as U.S. drivers and trucks.

It seems some things never change.

*Photo: About 200 teamsters raise their signs while protesting new NAFTA trucking regulations in San Diego, June 18, 1996: AP Images*



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