

January 11, 2022

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario,
K1A 0A6

RE: Preventing Trucker Shortage for Manufacturing Industry

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau:

As the representative of Canada's manufacturing and exporting sector, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) is very concerned that the vaccine mandate for truckers, slated to take effect this Saturday, will severely impact the availability of labour in the sector and exacerbate Canada's supply chain problems. I am writing to urge the government to postpone the implementation of the vaccine mandate to avoid a crisis at the border and to sustain this critical transportation system.

Canadian manufacturers rely on cross-border trucking to get materials into their plants and to ship their goods to the US market. The trucking industry moves close to 80 per cent of the annual \$648 billion in Canada-US trade. As manufactured goods make up a significant portion of this trade, truckers are thereby a key part of the integrated North American production ecosystem. Without adequate trucking services, manufacturers would be unable to maintain their supply chains and production will slow or stop across the country. This would result in catastrophic outcomes, including plant closures, layoffs, food and essential goods shortages, and empty shelves across the country. We must prevent this scenario from happening.

Manufacturers are strong supporters of vaccinating all Canadian citizens, including truckers. And while we agree that governments across the globe need to enact policies to get more people vaccinated, we must balance that against the economic disruptions those policies may cause. At this time, a vaccine mandate for truckers could sideline up to one fifth of their workforce. The new labour crisis caused by this vaccine mandate would be on top of the current trucker shortage that presently stands at 23,000 unfilled jobs. This shortage is not a minor problem. For the past year, it has been the major cause of supply chain bottlenecks and rapid price inflation and is a threat to future investment in Canadian manufacturing.

Moreover, other front line health sectors have been exempted from vaccine mandates because of the negative impacts it would have on their workforce participation rates. Given that precedent, we believe that truck drivers should be treated no differently, especially since they are not primary health care providers, and they are responsible for such an integral part of the continental transportation network.

CME asks you to delay implementing this vaccine mandate and to help the trucking industry vaccinate its workforce and provide testing options for workers who are not yet vaccinated.

We would be pleased to speak to you at any time on this time-sensitive and critical issue, including bringing together a selection of senior executives from our membership to inform you directly about the impacts of the current policies.

Sincerely,



Dennis A. Darby, P.Eng., ICD.D
President & CEO
Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters
Chair, Industry Advisory Roundtable on Testing, Tracing, and Data

CC:

Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance
Hon. François-Philippe Champagne, Minister of Innovation, Science, and Industry
Hon. Mary Ng, Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade