

United States Senate

January 18, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington DC, 20500

President Biden:

I write to urge the Administration to halt the implementation of the vaccine mandates for truck drivers and other essential workers, and to work with Canadian officials to ensure free and fair trade across the U.S.-Canadian border. Both the U.S. and Canada are implementing their own vaccine requirements. These uncoordinated and unnecessary requirements will disrupt critical trade between our two countries.

Over the last few weeks, I have heard from Montana farmers and ranchers who are concerned that these new requirements will make it more difficult for them to get fertilizer and other supplies. Montana producers faced extraordinarily difficult drought conditions over the past year and cannot afford further disruptions as they work to plant this year's crop. Additionally, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, winter weather storms, and inflation continue to effect the supply chain, increasing costs for Montana businesses and consumers.

The Administration must work to protect and increase trade and essential travel across the northern border, not put additional roadblocks in the way. Beginning on January 22, 2022, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) will begin requiring all foreign travelers entering the U.S. to be vaccinated. This includes Canadian and other non-citizen truck drivers, despite the fact that these essential workers have been able to bring supplies to the U.S. and freely cross the border for the first two years of this pandemic.

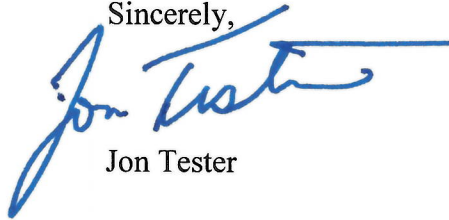
Canada is also implementing policies to restrict cross-border trade. On Saturday, Canada began requiring all essential travelers, including truck drivers, to show proof of vaccination in order to enter the country. Under this policy, Canadian truck drivers who are not fully vaccinated are allowed to enter Canada, but will be required to meet testing and quarantine requirements. However, American truck drivers are now required to be fully vaccinated and must submit all required COVID-19 information to the Canadian government or else they will be turned around at the border. This one-sided vaccinate mandate is already increasing the cost of shipping American produce.

I applaud the steps this Administration is taking to combat the Omicron variant, including expanding access to at-home testing, continuing to ensure vaccines are readily available, and providing additional support to our doctors, nurses, and hospitals. I continue to strongly urge every eligible person to get vaccinated as soon as possible so that we can end this pandemic.

We must continue to work together to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus, especially as we continue to combat the Omicron variant, but restricting trade across the northern border is not the answer. These restrictions on trade will cause confusion, delay shipments, and hurt both the American and Canadian economies. I urge the Administration to support America's producers, truckers, and consumers by halting the DHS mandate and working with Canadian officials to protect the free and fair flow of trade across the U.S.-Canadian border.

I firmly believe that we can find a solution that protects our public health while ensuring essential trade is able to move across the border, and I stand ready to work with you to address these issues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jon Tester", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jon Tester