



**For Immediate Release
May 6, 2011**

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS DENOUNCE UNSAFE CROSS BORDER PROGRAM

U.S. Representatives Sign Letter to LaHood Criticizing Opening Mexican Border

(WASHINGTON) – A bipartisan group of 44 members of Congress sent a letter to Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to voice their opposition to a proposed cross-border program with Mexico. The representatives expressed their concerns over the threat to highway and public safety that would arise by allowing unsafe Mexican trucks to travel freely throughout the United States.

The bipartisan letter, drafted by Reps. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., and Daniel Lipinski, D-Ill., made it very clear that there was little room for negotiation when dealing with Congress on this issue.

"We do not believe this cross border trucking program is in the best interests of the taxpayer or our security," the letter stated. "The current system of Mexican carriers operating within a defined commercial zone is working well for both safety and border security. We strongly oppose the Administration's cross-border trucking proposal."

The Teamsters Union has been leading the fight against opening the Mexican border since NAFTA was enacted more than 17 years ago. The union has mobilized its membership, encouraging them to write the Federal Register to express their opposition to the cross border program. The comment period ends May 13. To learn how you can voice your opposition, visit www.stopMexicantrucks.com.

"The 1.4 million members of the Teamsters Union will fight against the plan to allow these unsafe trucks from Mexico on our nation's highways," said Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa. "There is overwhelming opposition in Congress, from Democrats and Republicans alike, to this plan. Opening the border would be a safety and security disaster."

Founded in 1903, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters represents 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. Visit www.teamster.org for more information.

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Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 4, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue Southeast
Washington, D.C. 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

We are writing to express our concerns over the announced agreement between the U.S. and Mexico regarding cross border trucking. Based on the recently released details by the Department of Transportation, we have concerns that this proposed program could impact the safety of our roads and may create a security breach along our southern border.

Over the years, Congress has demonstrated its opposition to this ill-advised program. In 2007, votes were taken to require safety related restrictions to the pilot program and, in 2009, the pilot program was terminated by Congress. While we understand the need to work to remove the unfair tariffs that Mexico has imposed on U.S. agriculture products as a result, doing so should not come at the expense of the safety of our highways.

The earlier demonstration project showed serious gaps in the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration's (FMCSA) ability to properly manage the program when they failed to assure that every Mexican truck was properly inspected at the border. This is critical from a safety perspective to ensure that the vehicle is being operated by a licensed driver and has completed a safety inspection. With the limited number of Mexican trucks that participated in this demonstration there is concern with the FMCSA's ability to properly monitor a future demonstration project.

In addition, the program will require that Mexican motor carriers have Electronic On Board Recorders (EOBRs) on their vehicles. This requirement comes at the same time FMCSA is working on a rulemaking to require EOBRs for all U.S. carriers. An appalling difference, however, is that funds from the Highway Trust Fund will be used to pay for these devices for Mexican truckers while U.S. drivers will be required to pay for their EOBRs themselves. We feel this is an inappropriate use of the highway funds and an unreasonable expenditure for taxpayers.

More importantly with the recent rise in violence in Mexico and the changing tactics of the Mexican drug cartels, we are also concerned that moving forward with this cross border trucking program at this time is not in the best interests for security along our border. The El Paso Intelligence Center reports that commercial vehicles are widely-used by Mexican drug

trafficking organizations. Setting up a program that allows Mexican long-haul trucks to cross the border and move freely throughout the U.S. could increase this method of smuggling by the drug cartels and serve as a resource for their criminal activity.

Again, we do not believe this cross border trucking program is in the best interests of the taxpayer or our security. The current system of Mexican carriers operating within a defined commercial zone is working well for both safety and border security. We strongly oppose the Administration's cross-border trucking proposal.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress

Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress

Nick Rahall
Member of Congress

Dan Burton
Member of Congress

Candice Miller
Member of Congress

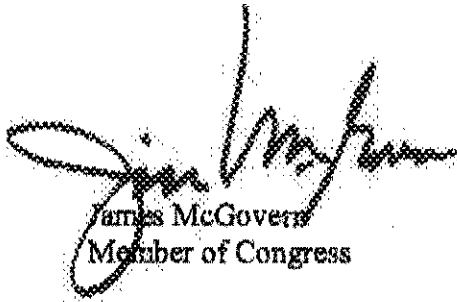
Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress

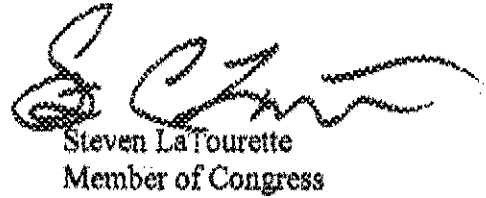
Bob Filner
Member of Congress

Sam Graves
Member of Congress

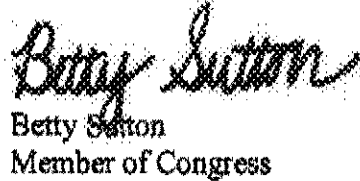
Walter Jones
Member of Congress

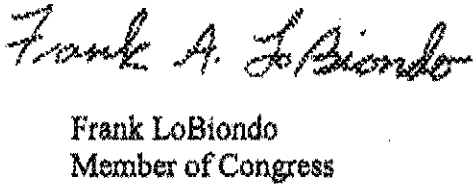
Gary Miller
Member of Congress

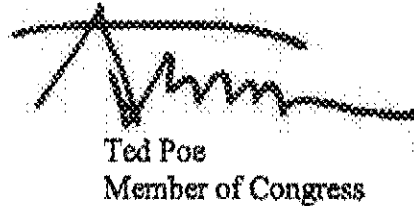

James McGovern
Member of Congress

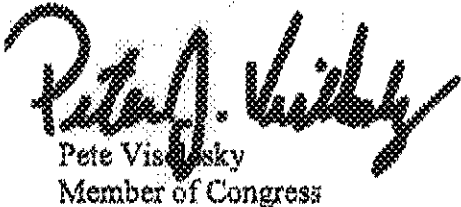

Steven LaFourette
Member of Congress


Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress

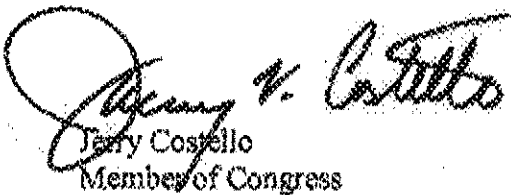

Betty Sutton
Member of Congress

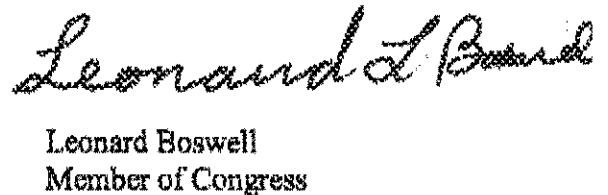

Frank LoBiondo
Member of Congress

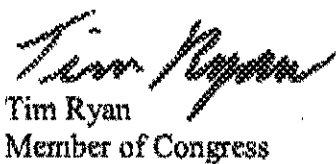

Ted Poe
Member of Congress

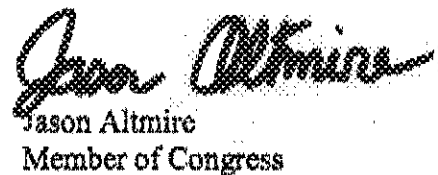

Pete Visclosky
Member of Congress


Mike Michaud
Member of Congress

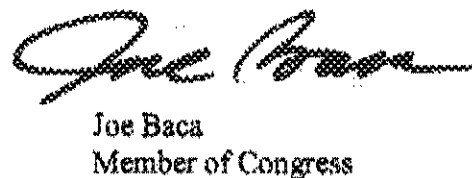

Jerry Costello
Member of Congress

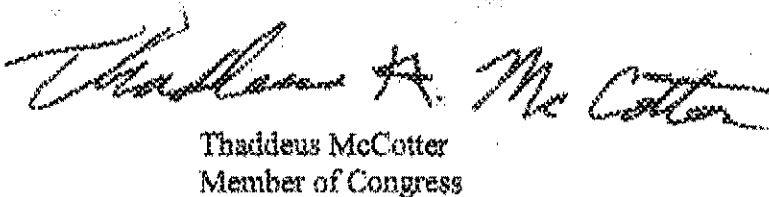

Leonard Boswell
Member of Congress

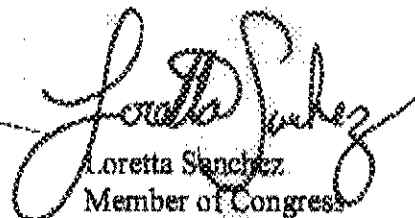

Tim Ryan
Member of Congress


Jason Altmire
Member of Congress


Bill Huizenga
Member of Congress


Joe Baca
Member of Congress


Thaddeus McCotter
Member of Congress

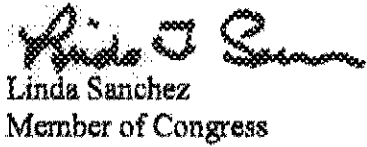

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress



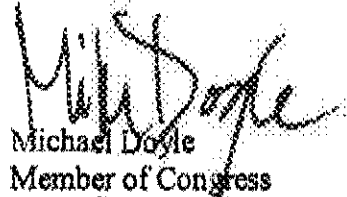
Alcee Hastings
Member of Congress



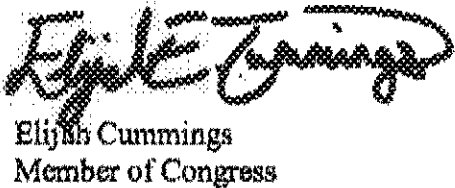
Bruce Braley
Member of Congress



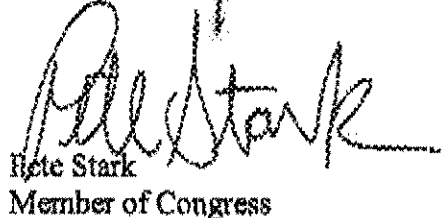
Linda Sanchez
Member of Congress



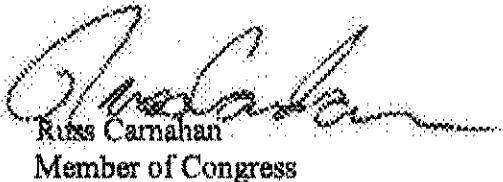
Michael Doyle
Member of Congress



Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress



Pete Stark
Member of Congress



Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress



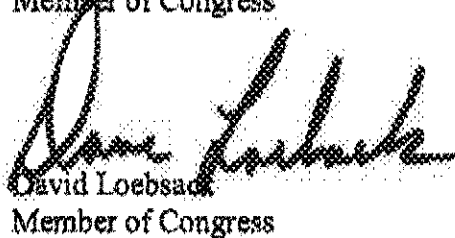
Andre Carson
Member of Congress



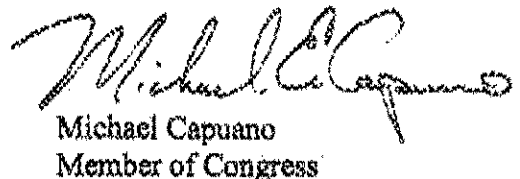
Mark Critz
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell
Member of Congress



David Loebsack
Member of Congress



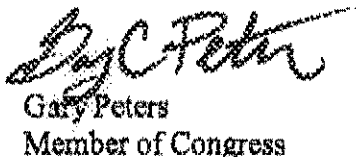
Michael Capuano
Member of Congress



Chris Smith
Member of Congress



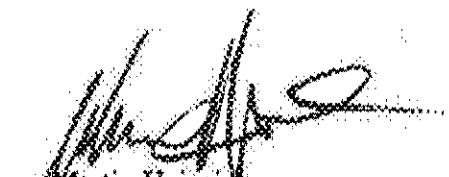
Jon Runyan
Member of Congress



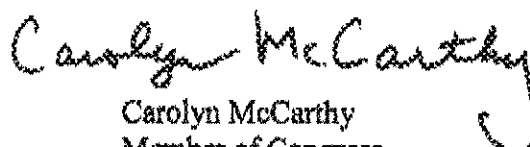
Gary Peters
Member of Congress



Tim Holden
Member of Congress



Martin Heinrich
Member of Congress



Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress