

IDAHO POTATO PULSE



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Government Affairs Report By Pat Kole

The article below from the NPC shows the progress being made on eliminating the retaliatory tariffs lawfully imposed by Mexico for the failure of the US to live up to its NAFTA obligations. One would have suspected that there would be full support for resolving this dispute as the US prides itself on following the "Rule of Law" and honoring our legal agreements. However, that's not the case in our Nation's capitol where already some members of Congress are urging that the negotiated resolution of this trade dispute be scuttled. It's crucial therefore that you take the time to follow the link below and make comments in favor of the resolution of this trade dispute. NPC's comments can be found at this link: http://www.nationalpotatocouncil.org/NPC/p_documents/document_211104125014.pdf

Industry Relations Report By Todd Cornelison

NPC Succeeds in Aiding the Elimination of Retaliatory Tariffs

As many of you are already aware, under the Omnibus Appropriations Act of 2009, Congress blocked funding for the Mexican Cross-Border Truck Safety Program. This was a pilot program allowing a small number of Mexican trucks to enter the U.S. while operating in international commerce. The result of this Act put the U.S. in violation of its NAFTA obligations. In retaliation, the Mexican Government placed tariffs on many U.S. products including frozen potatoes. These in turn forced frozen suppliers to process potatoes from other countries, including Canada, because they were cheaper than U.S. processed potatoes. In 2010, with the help of the NPC and the entire potato industry, Congress removed the prohibition on funding allowing the administration to move forward with a new pilot program. Also in 2010, U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and his counterpart in Mexico announced the establishment of a working group to consider next steps in the process. Early in 2011, Secretary LaHood released a concept document for a cross-border trucking program that prioritizes safety while satisfying the United States' international obligations. This "pilot program" marks the beginning of the end for the retaliatory tariffs. The pilot program is as follows:

- Would be three years in duration
- Would require Mexican-domiciled motor carriers to complete a 3-stage process to qualify for permanent operating authority
- Would not grant operating authority to Mexican-domiciled motor carriers without reciprocity for U.S.-domiciled motor carriers
- Would require all Mexican-domiciled carriers and drivers to comply with all applicable U.S. laws
- Would require applicant motor carriers and drivers to pass a Department of Homeland Security screening
- 50 percent of the retaliatory tariffs will be suspended when the agreement is formally signed by the US and Mexico. The remaining 50 percent of the tariffs will be suspended when the first Mexican carrier is approved for cross-border access.

The purpose of the pilot program is to evaluate the safety performance of Mexico-domiciled carriers. The potato industry supports the pilot proposal and is partnering with other industry representatives to urge its adoption.

Please share your views with DOT

FMCSA is accepting public comments on the pilot program until **May 13**. We urge you to share your views with the agency. NPC will soon be submitting comments in support of the proposed pilot program and encourages all state potato organizations and growers to do the same.

To Submit Comments use this link: <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=FMCSA-2011-0097-0001>

The NPC is Now Accepting Nominations for the Environmental Stewardship Award

Do you know of an Idaho Grower who may be eligible for this award? Help us find a Grower to nominate: Contact Todd Comelison (208) 559-4792 with your candidates.

The National Potato Council is accepting applications for the 2010 Environmental Stewardship Award. The award, presented annually, is a component of the Pesticide Environmental Stewardship Program, a partnership between the NPC and the EPA, developed to protect the environment and promote the safe and effective use of pesticides. An educational DVD highlighting their on-farm strategies and practices in pesticide risk reduction and environmental protection highlighting the winner's farm will be developed. The DVD will be used by schools, agricultural organizations and civic groups to demonstrate the potato industry's commitment to sound environmental stewardship.

To nominate yourself or a neighbor, download the [Application Form](#) and submit to the NPC. Applications are due **May 13, 2011**.

Calendar

<u>May</u>	
2-4	United Fresh Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA
3	United of Idaho Board Meeting
12-13	IPC Meeting, Eagle, ID
13	NASS Report: Stocks and Processing to May 1.
14	Annual IPC Marathon, Boise, ID
18	USPB Webinar: Eliminating Barriers to Fresh Potato Sales, Noon-1:30 p.m. CST
<u>June</u>	
7	United of Idaho Board Meeting
10	NASS Report: Stocks and Processing to June 1.
14-15	IPC Meeting, Eagle, ID
22-24	NPC Summer Meeting, Grand Forks, N.D. Click here for Registration information: http://bit.ly/eCxRR9
<u>July</u>	
11-14	USPB Summer Meeting, Columbus, OH
26-27	IPC Meeting, Eagle, ID
29-31	PMA Foodservice Convention, Monterey, CA