TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

TODD STAPLES
COMMISSIONER

May 13, 2011

The Honorable Ray LaHood
U.S. Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, D.C. 20520

Re: Pilot Program on NAFTA Long-Haul Trucking Provisions:
Docket Number FMCSA-2011-0097

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am in strong support of the implementation of the cross-border long-haul trucking pilot program with Mexico in exchange for the removal of Mexico's retaliatory tariffs on many U.S. goods. For too long, Texas farmers, ranchers and consumers have paid the price for this trade dispute. In our fragile economy, Mexican agricultural products are coming into the United States duty free while our exporters are paying the price for political gridlock.

Mexican tariffs have damaged U.S. agricultural exports in addition to depressing the market value for the affected commodities. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service recently released a report showing the tariffs reduced the total value of the targeted agricultural exports by $240 million or 27.1% from March 2010 to February 2011. Mexico's list of retaliatory tariffs affect $190 million in Texas agriculture products, including Christmas trees, onions, lettuce, pork and dozens of other commodities.

It is about time the U.S. complies with its NAFTA obligations. I ask for swift implementation of a secure cross-border passageway between the United States and Mexico to support American jobs and expand market access for an export dependant industry like agriculture.

Sincerely yours,

Todd Staples

Todd Staples

TS/NC/nc

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