

## TRUCKING DURING PANDEMICS / EMERGENCIES

### Thoughts from NASCO

- CBSA recently issued mandate for all truck drivers entering Canada to wear masks. Some states have mandated masks for commercial drivers. I suspect we will likely see widespread mandate for mask use in commercial vehicles. The biggest concerns with this mandate is a) where to get the non-medical grade masks and b) who pays for them?

- We need to try to avoid any measure at the border that would see trucks delayed or stopped. We have collectively been working for 20+ years to get away from border “hold ups”. Instead, efforts should be focused on how to streamline at the border, make the border more seamless, and expedite the much-needed supplies across the 49th. For example, NASCO has been touting an opportunity to leverage autonomous technology to “shunt” trailers and shipments back and forth across the border in a 24/7 environment that would eliminate the need for drivers to cross the border. If we had implemented this technology prior to COVID, many of the concerns we are facing today would already be eliminated. This just highlights that pilots and initiatives like this are where we need to focus our attention. Prior to the pandemic, there existed a shortage of good drivers, even fewer who want to cross the border. Many want to be home at night or simply don’t want to deal with the hassles of crossing. Secure “drop yards” at the border free those drivers up to return home, to pick up other shipments, to remain domestic and not have to worry about cross border requirements. Happy to discuss further, but there is a real opportunity to leverage the technology to make this happen and provide a myriad of benefit – including reducing risk and exposure between CBSA/CBP resources and drivers.

- For 20-30 years the trucking industry has been encouraged to conduct business (drive/cross the border) during off-peak hours. Usually related to reducing co-mingling of traffic (and reducing potential for accidents), as well as reducing congestion in urban areas, the challenge has always been that shippers and receivers and even some customs brokers are not open 24/7 and there is no one available to receive them. Prioritizing changes to the shipping/receiving community to function in off-peak hours would be an effort worth supporting. It would also address social distancing issues in times like this, as you companies could work with reduced staff in off peak hours while keeping people employed.

- Mandatory quarantine has already been contemplated by Transport Canada and was met with a resounding “no” from the trucking industry associations across the country. This would virtually eliminate the movement of goods and freight. There simply aren’t enough drivers to make up for the sheer volumes that wouldn’t be allowed to drive due to quarantine. Food for thought.

- For years the trucking industry has been advocating for the better treatment of drivers. NASCO did a session on this at our continental reunion in Columbus last year. It’s been an ongoing challenge as it’s difficult to change the antiquated thinking about what/who a truck driver is. Part of the advocacy has included “driver rights” such as being able to leave the cab to stretch their legs, use the facilities, have a snack, whatever the case may be. Even today there continues to be too many instances where drivers are not even allowed to use facilities at a receiver, and that has contributed to the ongoing challenges in recruiting new drivers to the industry and keeping existing drivers content. Any movement away from supporting drivers’ rights as people to exit their vehicle and stretch their legs, etc., would not be supported by the trucking industry. Instead, this is an opportunity to highlight the value of the truck driver. On social media, mainstream media, government press, etc. more than ever people are thanking

truck drivers for their role in keeping goods on shelves, and medicines in pharmacies. The historic challenges truck drivers have faced of finding enough rest stops, adequate facilities for personal hygiene, food and rest, are all coming to light. There is an opportunity for us to get behind a movement that calls for increased infrastructure and P3 partnerships to provide the things necessary to make truck driving not just a job that can be done, but a job that can be enjoyed. I'd proposed instead of a movement to keep them in their cabs, we look to get behind highlighting businesses that are employing initiatives to thank truck drivers and provide the essentials to them. NASCO members have already started to implement directories of "truck friendly facilities" and "truck friendly routes" to help those on the road adapt to these challenging times. We'd like to see more of this and there is an opportunity under our Emergency Supply Chain Initiative to include these types of businesses and organizations.

- Lastly, the Beyond Preclearance Initiative of which NASCO is a member, is embarking on an effort to identify what needs to be done at the border in times like this to make it more seamless. Prioritizing low risk goods/drivers is a long overdue mechanism and the first thing that comes to mind – where it makes sense – doesn't always require a one size fits all approach.