

Hoffa Leads Teamster Rally Against Cross-Border Trucking

Early-Morning Demonstration on Border Urges Congressional Action

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(San Diego, CA) – Teamsters rallied Wednesday to show they oppose letting unsafe trucks from Mexico drive on U.S. highways.

Led by Teamsters General President Jim Hoffa, the group urged Congress to end the dangerous cross-border trucking program. The early morning rally was held at the Otay Mesa border crossing.

“If Congress won’t act to protect drivers on U.S. highways, the Teamsters will convince the court to do so,” Hoffa said. “American motorists shouldn’t have to pay the price for George Bush’s recklessness in pushing this program forward.”

Both the House and the Senate voted overwhelmingly to ban funding for the pilot project earlier this year. The bill—a spending bill known as Transportation-HUD—must still pass the Senate before it reaches President Bush’s desk.

Under the pilot program, only a handful of Mexican motor carriers are currently allowed to travel beyond the narrow border zone.

The Teamsters have continued the court battle to stop the program since unsuccessfully seeking an emergency injunction in September.

Joined by the safety group Public Citizen, Teamsters filed arguments on Monday with the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. The brief responded to the Bush administration’s arguments. The Teamsters filed their first brief on Oct. 19.

“We filed hundreds of pages of legal arguments in the past few months that show the Bush administration broke the law in dozens of ways with this so-called ‘pilot project,’” Hoffa said.

“Mexican trucks driving on our roads have to be as safe as U.S. trucks,” Hoffa said. “That’s the law. But the Bush administration just ignores the law.”

“Drivers who would be disqualified from holding a U.S. commercial drivers license could still drive around the U.S. if they’re based in Mexico.

“Mexican drivers don’t have the mandatory training that U.S. drivers have. Mexican drivers don’t have to meet the same strict drug-testing requirements that U.S. drivers do.

“Mexican drivers don’t have to comply with U.S. rules on how long they can drive,” Hoffa said. “.So someone could drive 10 hours in Mexico before arriving at the U.S. border and then drive another 11 hours inside the United States, even though U.S. rules don’t allow 21 hours of driving.

“I totally reject the argument that the Teamsters are against Mexican truck drivers,” Hoffa said. “We are against the companies that exploit them and the governments that don’t live up to their responsibilities to make sure the highways are safe.”

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters represents more than 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.