

# Fears of Commerce Crunch as Texas Border Inspections Continue Amid Border Crisis

By [Charlotte Cuthbertson](#)

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DEL RIO, Texas—John Esparza’s phone has been ringing off the hook since April 7.

As the president and CEO of the Texas Trucking Association, Esparza has been fielding calls nonstop since the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) started conducting “enhanced commercial vehicle safety inspections” on vehicles traveling from Mexico.

The inspections are being conducted on state roads just beyond several ports of entry, which backs up the line into Mexico.

“Without a doubt, it is a major concern for all of us currently,” Esparza told The Epoch Times. “Regardless of what causes the slowdowns, when we see slowdowns at the border, it has a down-the-food-chain effect ... all the way to the grocery store.”

Several ports of entry between Texas and Mexico have suffered major slowdowns in recent days as the DPS began inspections as part of Gov. Greg Abbott’s [border security](#) plan.

DPS officers have conducted the inspections since April 6 at seven ports of entry—Brownsville, Los Indios, Pharr, Laredo, Eagle Pass, Del Rio, and El Paso. Texas has 28 land ports of entry with Mexico.



*John Esparza, president and CEO of the Texas Trucking Association. (Photo courtesy of TXTA)*

The Texas Trucking Association has 1,000 member companies ranging from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies, according to its website.

Esparza said he's been in touch with the governor's office since the inspections started and is seeking further clarification on the ultimate goal.

"We don't disagree with what the governor is doing. What we're trying to do is help him reach the goals with our partners over at the Department of Public Safety without impeding commerce. And that can be a challenge," Esparza said.

"I think the industry is rightfully concerned about what this is going to mean in the days and weeks, and potentially months to come. We just don't know yet."

Dante Galeazzi, the CEO and president of the Texas International Produce Association, was quick to send a letter to Abbott.

"We implore you to modify the deployment of this enforcement action," Galeazzi wrote on April 8. "Last night, commercial trucks crossing the Pharr International Bridges were in a miles-long line that took until nearly 2 a.m. this morning to clear the bridge. Today, the line is at a stand-still as trucks are crawling out of the import lot."

Galeazzi said \$9 billion and more than 1.28 billion pounds of fresh produce crosses from Mexico into Texas annually.

“This is destroying our business and the reputation of Texas. I foresee companies making plans to move their business to New Mexico and Arizona,” he said.

DPS hasn’t said how long it intends to continue with the inspections. Mexico is Texas’s top trading partner, with \$88.5 billion worth of goods flowing both ways across the Texas–Mexico border annually, according to Global Edge.

Abbott’s office didn’t respond by press time to a request for comment and also a query as to whether the Biden administration has reached out to him.



*The line of trucks waiting to get into the United States from Mexico at the Laredo bridge in Texas on April 12, 2022. (Screenshot of bridge cam)*

On April 6, Abbott directed DPS to start conducting the inspections in a letter to the agency’s director, Col. Steven McCraw.

“As you have explained, the cartels that smuggle illicit contraband and people across our southern border do not care about the condition of the vehicles they send into Texas any more than they care who overdoses from the deadly fentanyl on board,” Abbott wrote.

“In response to this threat, which is projected to grow in the coming months, I hereby direct the ... DPS to conduct enhanced safety inspections of vehicles as they cross international ports of entry into Texas.”

Abbott made the announcement several days after the Biden administration said it intends to end the Title 42 pandemic-related expulsions at the border on May 23.

As of April 10, DPS had inspected 3,443 commercial vehicles, of which 807 were placed out of service for “serious safety violations to include defective brakes, defective tires, and defective lighting,” according to Lt. Christopher Olivarez, DPS spokesman for south Texas.

“Additionally, 79 commercial vehicle drivers were placed out of service. The total number of violations detected thus far is 11,566.”



*Border Patrol agents apprehend and transport illegal immigrants who have just crossed the river into La Joya, Texas, on Nov. 17, 2021. (Charlotte Cuthbertson/The Epoch Times)*

On April 11, Mexico’s undersecretary of Foreign Trade sent a letter to Abbott, “to find joint solutions to keep trade flows uninterrupted,” according to a Twitter [post](#) by Undersecretary Luz María de la Mora.

Esparza said he hopes the border slowdown issue doesn’t get to where trade routes move from Texas to New Mexico or Arizona.

“Is that blowing things out of proportion? Maybe not at this point,” he said of a possible shift west. “How long [inspections] will last can change behavior that’s not necessarily positive for Texas and the movement of freight in Texas.”

The Texas Association of Business didn’t respond to a request for comment. The U.S. Chamber of Commerce also didn’t respond to a request for comment.

In the past six months, 1 million illegal immigrants from 157 countries have been apprehended at the southern border, according to Border Patrol Chief Raul Ortiz.



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