



NEWS IN BRIEF

ITC Begins Analysis of USMCA

The International Trade Commission (ITC) has begun its analysis of how the United States, Mexico, Canada Agreement (USMCA) will affect industry consumers and the U.S. economy. The analysis is being done to prepare a mandatory report for Congress to review under the ratification process. The ITC will hold public hearings on November 12. Requests to appear must be received by October 29 and should be sent to the ITC secretary at ITC Headquarters (500 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20436).

The ITC is also requesting written comments to be submitted, which can be mailed to the same address. Written submissions are due by December 20. The ITC has 105 days after the President sent the agreement to Congress to submit their review.

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USTR Announces Trade Talks with EU, Japan, United Kingdom

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) informed Congress this week that, under the direction of President Trump, they will begin trade talks with the European Union, Japan and the United Kingdom. The USTR sent official notifications to the leaders of both Houses, as required under Trade Promotion Authority. Official negotiations cannot start for 90 days from the notification and the USTR must publish its negotiating objectives at least 30 days before the negotiations can start.

The announcement with details from the office of the USTR can be found on [their website](#).

PierPass 2.0 Going Into Effect Nov 19

The members of the West Coast Marine Terminal Operators Agreement (WCMTOA) have issued a notice that the new version of PierPass 2.0 will go into effect on November 19. This is a new off-peak program to provide extended gate hours at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

We have written about this program in the past. In review, the new PierPass will change the charges for containers picked up or delivered to the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach. The fee for a 20-foot container (TEU) will be \$31.52 and the fee for all other size containers will be \$63.04. However, the new PierPass program fees will be charged on **all** loaded containers moving in and out of the ports by truck, regardless of the time of pick-up. There will no longer be pick-ups of cargo that are free of charge for being picked-up daily after 6 p.m.

The main change of the program is that pick-ups will now be tied to an appointment system. Currently, 9 of the 12 terminals in the two ports already have appointment systems

that drayage truckers are already familiar with. The last 3 terminals will have their appointment systems launched before the implementation of the PierPass 2.0.

Under the current PierPass, much of the congestion at the Ports has been eliminated, though congestion does still exist. Truckers often form long line by bunching up just before the beginning of the night shift. Also, without appointments, the truckers arrive at any time and are often forced to wait in a line for their turn to be serviced. The hope is that the appointment system will provide more flexibility and enhance truck efficiency at the ports.

All of the marine terminals will have an appointment system. Trucks can arrive for an appointment, including grace periods of two hours for all appointments. In addition, all terminals agreed that their last appointment times of the day will be 3:30 p.m. on the first shift and 1:30 a.m. on the second shift. The new business rules will take effect when the new program begins, and they are expected to increase efficiencies for users when planning appointments at more than one terminal. The terminals have all agreed to common appointment windows and rules as well as common last appointments for each shift. As the program does move forward, the Marine Terminal Operators will consider more common rules and processes.

Miscellaneous Tariff Bill Now in Effect

The Miscellaneous Tariff Bill (MTB) that was passed in September is now in effect, as of October 13. The MTB is a list of very specific items which U.S. businesses have petitioned Congress to grant lower duties or duty-free status, because the products are not made in the United States. These imported items have been vetted to be important to U.S. businesses and U.S. jobs.

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The MTB list gives an HTS number under heading 9902 for the approved product and a very detailed description of the product that was approved. It also includes the HTS number that the product may be found under. It is important to note that not all items under that HTS number qualify for the MTB duty rate. It only applies to items that very specifically meet that description.

If you think you may have products that qualify for an MTB special provision, Carmichael can run a report of the classifications in your history that may qualify. Once you get the list of those potential HTS numbers, you will need your production team to analyze whether the product does fit the MTB description and then tell us what specific item(s) would qualify for treatment under MTB. Please contact your Carmichael service person to request a report to be run.



By **Todd Boice**, President