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inbound

Friedmann's fearless forecast, 2009 edition

Washington insider offers his take on what lies ahead on the trade policy front.

By [DC Velocity Staff](#),
From the [May 2009](#) issue

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Peter A. Friedmann's rapidfire rundown of issues affecting international traders is one of the highlights of the annual Northeast Trade and Transportation Conference of the Coalition of New England Companies for Trade (CONNECT). Friedmann, a wellconnected trade attorney and exSenate counsel, represents CONNECT and other trade groups in Washington.

Here are just a few nuggets from this year's address:

- *Mexican trucks.* The Teamsters were behind the spending bill provision that cut funding for the onagain, offagain crossborder trucking pilot mandated by NAFTA. Mexico will file a complaint with the WTO but may not be placated. Meanwhile, Friedmann is fielding calls from agricultural producers hurt by Mexico's retaliatory tariffs on 90 U.S. products. Most of U.S. growers' "irregulars"—damaged fruits and vegetables—are shipped to Mexico, but the tariffs make that business a moneyloser.

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- *The Employee Free Choice Act.* Passed by the House but temporarily blocked in the Senate, EFCA would allow employees to form a collective bargaining unit without a secret ballot and would require employers to submit to binding arbitration in some circumstances. "Business will throw everything they have against this issue. It will rivet everybody's attention."
- *West Coast labor.* If the Teamsters get Los Angeles and Long Beach to require drayage drivers to work for carriers under the ports' clean air rules, the union will legally be free to organize the drivers. Drayage costs could conceivably rise enough that importers will shift more cargo away from those ports."The question the ports need to ask is, Do we care about clean trucks or about creating union jobs?"
- *Trade security tit for tat.* China now wants 24hour advance notice prior to loading U.S. exports on board a vessel. Expect more of the same, Friedmann warned. "We have to be prepared for the possibility that every time we impose security restrictions on imports, our foreign customers will demand the same restrictions on U.S. exports."

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