

Trump administration mulling tariff exemptions for key agriculture products

The president paused duties on autos and auto parts imported from Canada and Mexico, raising hopes other industries could also win exemptions from the heavy new tariffs.

By Meredith Lee and Grace Yarrow
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The Trump administration is weighing more exemptions from the new tariffs on Canada and Mexico — this time for the agriculture industry.

Amid deep concern from farm state lawmakers over the fallout for the U.S. agriculture sector, officials are discussing waiving the 25 percent duty on some agriculture products, including Canadian potash, a key ingredient in fertilizer, according to two people familiar with the conversations granted anonymity to discuss the ongoing deliberations.

The White House did not immediately respond to a request to comment.

Canada is the world's leading supplier of the mineral; the United States [sources the vast majority of its potash from its northern neighbor](#).

"You cannot export a potash mine," said Jamie Tronnes, the executive director of the Center for North American Prosperity and Security, a group that pushes for stronger ties between the U.S. and Canada. "It's in the ground [in Canada]. You can't just get it."

GOP lawmakers began lobbying for exemptions for potash well before the tariffs went into effect Tuesday, arguing that supply shortages or price spikes will further drive up food prices.

On Wednesday, they were joined by House Ag Chair G.T. Thompson (R-Pa.), who said in an interview that he'd asked the White House for exemptions for agricultural inputs, emboldened by President Donald Trump's Wednesday afternoon announcement [pausing the North American tariffs on autos and auto parts](#) at the urging of auto makers.

It's the first time Thompson has explicitly said he was pushing for a carve-out, following efforts by other GOP lawmakers, including Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) and Rep. Zach Nunn (R-Iowa).

“I absolutely am weighing in ... things like potash, nitrogen, I’d throw peat moss in there, too, because that’s important to horticulture and mushroom growers,” Thompson said. “I’m not bashful about weighing in with the White House. I got a great relationship with everyone, including the president. The worst thing that can happen is they’ll say no.”

Nunn said Wednesday in an interview that the Trump administration had been open to his and other farm state lawmakers’ request. “They’re being receptive, that’s what we would expect,” he said.

Ari Hawkins contributed to this report.