



The Daily Dish

Export Ban Follies

DOUGLAS HOLTZ-EAKIN | SEPTEMBER 24, 2026

Eakinomics hates being right. Only a few days ago, it [devoted](#) this column to the folly of a ban on diesel fuel exports, but concluded with: “A diesel export ban is as empty as a gas tax holiday. But that won’t stop its momentum.” (Shuting Pomerleau examines the [folly](#) in detail.)

Yesterday, Politico [reported](#) that the administration was preparing a 90-day ban on diesel fuel exports. The story included:

Some GOP lawmakers, refining industry executives and even some administration officials are still trying to convince President Donald Trump that a ban would be a bad idea, one that could backfire by eventually raising prices for gasoline, jet fuel and other fuels, said people familiar with the discussions who were granted anonymity to describe internal White House communications.

But as high energy prices continue to bedevil Republican candidates going into tough midterm elections in less than seven weeks, Trump is inclined to announce a ban by the end of the week and consider any blowback “a December problem,” said one oil industry executive who has discussed the ban with senior White House officials.

The congressional panic is palpable, with Senators Grassley and Sullivan, along with Senate candidates Hinson, Turek, and Rogers having called for a ban. The concern is centered in farm states where peak diesel consumption occurs during the imminent harvest season. (Alaska simply has horrific heating needs.) That’s understandable, if disappointing.

But the president is not up for election and this is a moment for cooler heads to prevail. Clearly, that is not happening and the notion that it is “a December problem” is a reflection of the chronic short-sightedness of this administration. Even worse, you can bet that if

imposed, the ban will be extended in December. And again, when it once more approaches sunset. So the right way to think about the issue is as a permanent ban on exports, which is a terrible idea.

The administration should just say no.

Moreover, it is far from clear *how* it would do it. Under what authority would the president ban exports of diesel fuel? Politico simply reports that “the legal process of which is still being worked out.” Expect the ban to be imposed on a legal theory that is as questionable as the policy. Someone would sue, and the administration would have another policy that imposes much uncertainty cost.

The administration should say no because yes is a bad answer – and because it does not have the authority to say yes. But neither will stop its momentum.