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Editorial: U.S. should have foreseen boost Mexican in tariffs

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Neighbors are supposed to behave neighborly toward each other.

Mexico recently announced it will increase tariffs on about 90 U.S. products, and if American officials did not see it coming, they should have.

The announcement came after the U.S. decided to end a pilot program that allowed some Mexican trucks to transport products into this country, a program that seemed to be proceeding smoothly despite the criticism of free trade opponents.

While opening the border to long-haul truckers was a key provision of the North American Free Trade Agreement, the effort was stalled until the Bush administration launched the pilot program, which addressed concerns about safety standards for Mexican drivers.

All was fine until President Obama signed the \$410 billion omnibus spending bill, which included a measure killing the pilot program.

The Mexican government reacted quickly and angrily, announcing its plans to boost the tariffs on the U.S. products.

The move will affect about \$2.4 billion in trade involving agricultural and industrial products from about 40 states.

"We consider this U.S. action to be wrong, protectionist and a clear violation of the treaty," Economy Secretary Ruiz Mateos told reporters. "By deciding to protect their trucking industry, they have decided to affect other countries and the region."

It is hard to argue with Mateos. You do not have to be a lawyer or a diplomat to know that a deal is a deal. And this is one deal that was broken by the U.S., and now we see the consequences.

Officials said the president has directed both Cabinet members and key legislators to come up with a new trucking program. That is a good start, but all of this could have been avoided if the U.S. had honored commitments that were made long before this administration.

Trust is the key component any relationship between countries, and the U.S. is now in the position of having to rebuild that trust.