Trump intends to sign Mexico deal in 90 days, trade rep says

By LUIS ALONSO LUGO, PAUL WISEMAN AND ROB GILLIES
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has notified Congress that he plans to sign a trade agreement with Mexico — and Canada, if it is willing — in 90 days, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said Friday.

Lighthizer made the announcement in a statement after high-stakes talks that the Trump administration and Canadian officials have been holding in Washington broke up Friday afternoon without a deal. Lighthizer said the talks will resume Wednesday.

The talks are intended to bring Canada into a new trade accord that would replace the North American Free Trade Agreement.

The flurry of events followed a preliminary agreement that the United States and Mexico reached Monday to replace NAFTA with an arrangement that is intended, among other things, to shift more auto manufacturing to the United States.

The Trump administration had insisted that it wanted a deal by Friday, beginning a 90-day countdown that would let Mexican President Enrique Pena Nieto sign the pact before leaving office Dec. 1.

But under U.S. trade rules, the U.S. team wouldn't have to make public the text of the revamped agreement for 30 additional days, possibly buying more time to reach a deal with the Canadians. Lighthizer's statement Friday said Trump intends to sign a new trade deal with Mexico, whether or not Canada is part of it.

Earlier Friday Trump was quoted as saying privately that he wouldn't make compromises with Canada in their trade talks. His remarks raised doubts about whether the two countries could quickly reach a deal to keep Canada in the 24-year-old trading bloc, along with the United States and Mexico.

The *Toronto Star* obtained the president's comments from an interview that he gave to Bloomberg News on Thursday. Trump wanted the comments to remain private. Otherwise, the president reportedly said in the interview, "it's going to be so insulting they're not going to be able to make a deal."

Trump's comments, and the dim picture they drew of the U.S.-Canada negotiations, appeared to dishearten Wall Street, where traders sent stock prices falling in the wake of the report.

On Friday afternoon, Trump took to Twitter and appeared to confirm the *Star*'s report:

"Wow, I made OFF THE RECORD COMMENTS to Bloomberg concerning Canada, and this powerful understanding was BLATANTLY VIOLATED. Oh well, just more dishonest reporting. I am used to it. At least Canada knows where I stand!"

Later, at an appearance in North Carolina, Trump railed against the disclosure of his private comments but again appeared to confirm them.

After the United States and Mexico reached its preliminary agreement Monday, Canada's top trade envoy, Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland, rushed to Washington on Tuesday to try to negotiate Canada's way back into a new version of NAFTA. The U.S.-Canadian talks had been ongoing since then.

After sounding optimistic Thursday, Freeland appeared gloomier on Friday.

"We are looking for a good deal, not just any deal," she told reporters, "and we will only agree to a deal that is a good deal for Canada. We are not there yet."

The U.S. and Canada are wrangling over several tough issues, including American demands for greater access to the Canadian dairy market and Canada's insistence on maintaining NAFTA's existing procedure for resolving disputes.

Oregon pot growers must notify about harvests

By GILLIAN FLACCUS
Associated Press

Beth Nakamura/The Oregonian via AP, File

In this Oct. 13, 2015, file photo, Lauren Silberman, 29, hangs marijuana after harvesting at Michael Monarch's southern Oregon marijuana grow, in Ashland.

PORTLAND — Before Matthew Miller harvests marijuana this fall from his fields in southern Oregon, he'll have to notify the state for the first time ever — a process that could bring inspectors to make sure none of his pot is being illegally diverted.

The new harvest notification policy, which takes effect Saturday, is the first of its kind among states that have legalized marijuana and is intended to ensure legally grown Oregon weed isn't being transported out of state.

It's part of a raft of new measures to appease federal officials who have publicly railed against what they call Oregon's "relaxed" regulatory environment and inadequate oversight of an ambitious legal pot industry.

Oregon has an excellent pot-growing climate, and its rules allow applicants to have multiple licenses, permit out-of-state investment, and don't cap grower licenses — generous policies that have resulted in an oversupply of legal weed, with growers desperate to unload crops now worth half of what they were.

In this environment, the harvest notification rule has riled many cannabis cultivators who say it amounts to more bureaucracy in an industry already struggling to stay afloat.

"They don't do this to any other agricultural crop in the world," said Miller, of Millerville Farms. "All it does is it makes our margin go less and less — and we're already doing just about everything at cost."

Oregon's adult-use market has struggled for months with too much marijuana. As of June, there were nearly 1 million pounds of "usable flower" in the system, and an additional 350,000 pounds of marijuana extracts, edibles and tinctures. Usable flower refers to the dried marijuana flower — or bud — that is most commonly associated with marijuana consumption.

The Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which regulates the state's general use marijuana program, stopped accepting applications for new growing licenses in June so it could process a monthslong backlog. State lawmakers next year will likely consider a cap on the number of permits issued for grows and fund more field inspectors.

Amid the glut, U.S. Attorney Billy J. Williams has pressured the state to tighten the rules and crack down on growers who may be diverting supply to the black market. Sheriffs in the southern Oregon counties most impacted by outdoor growing sites have been vocal about a lack of resources to sleuth out illegal marijuana farms.

State regulators last month targeted one possible problem when they reduced the amount of marijuana flower a medical marijuana patient can buy per day at a retail store from 24 ounces to 1 ounce for a six-month trial period. The change was prompted when the liquor commission noticed a handful of stores were selling flower in bulk over and over again.

And since July, the state has required 750 medical marijuana growers with more than 12 plants to register with the commission. Their plants will now be tracked from seed to sale just like non-medical cultivators' are. Sixteen inspectors are tasked with visiting these larger medical growers to look for diversion, with more to be hired, said Mark Pettinger, commission spokesman.

For the non-medical growers, the harvest rule will require them to notify the state by 9 a.m. on a day they plan to harvest by entering their plans into a cannabis tracking system. State regulators originally wanted 72 hours' notice, but cultivators pushed back.

"It's like an audit. They're going to go out and make sure that plant counts and package count match what's in the system," Pettinger said.

The state general use program has 23 inspectors — not enough to show up at each harvest site — but the possibility that an inspector could come knocking should provide an incentive to follow the rules, he said. The agency will also reconcile the anticipated harvest entered into the system with what actually comes in, he said.

Sixty-five percent of Oregon's outdoor growing sites for recreational use marijuana — 258 farms — are concentrated in two rural counties, making it easier to place resources before harvest time in late September or early October, Pettinger said.

"A lot of growers are far-flung, but we have a concentration of inspectors in southern Oregon, and it's the southern Oregon outdoor growing activity that has anecdotally and historically been sort of a crucible of where a lot of diversion and illegal activity takes place," he said.

Papa John's founder seeks court help in battle with company

Schnatter

NEW YORK (AP) — The founder of Papa John's has filed a lawsuit against the company, its board of directors and CEO in the latest twist in the drama surrounding the pizza chain.

John Schnatter filed the lawsuit in Delaware's Court of Chancery asking the court to help stop what he sees as irreparable harm being done to the company.

Schnatter resigned in July as Papa John's chairman amid a report that he used a racial slur during a media training session. But he remains the Louisville, Kentucky-based company's biggest shareholder and has said his resignation was a mistake.

The complaint filed Thursday is sealed. But a statement from Schnatter's representatives says the lawsuit claims CEO Steve Ritchie and the board of Papa John's International Inc. are harming the company by "their repeated, and ongoing, breaches of the duties of loyalty and care" owed the company.

Papa John's said it will fight Schnatter's lawsuit, which it said is without merit.

"John Schnatter will do anything to distract attention from the harm caused by his inappropriate words," the company said. "He continues to make reckless allegations in his attempt to regain control and serve his own interests."

The lawsuit is the second filed by Schnatter in the court in Delaware.

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