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New Truck Fees May Lead to Goods Shortages, Russian Retailers Say

By The Moscow Times

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The new fee for using federal roads, set to come into force on Nov. 15, has angered truck owners across the country.

Major Russian retailers have warned that the introduction of a new federal levy on 12-ton trucks could disrupt supplies and lead to goods shortages in stores, the Kommersant newspaper reported Friday.

The new fee for using federal roads, set to come into force on Nov. 15, has angered truck owners across the country, with roadblock protests springing up in major cities including St. Petersburg, the Siberian city of Novosibirsk and the Urals' Yekaterinburg.

However, according to the Kommersant report, the main problem for logistics companies will likely be the requirement to have satellite devices installed onboard the trucks. These would be linked to personal accounts, enabling drivers to pay the federal levy in advance of or after a journey.

Truck owners and companies were able to register for the scheme a month in advance. However, representatives of retail chains told Kommersant that many drivers will not have been issued the devices in time.

A spokesperson for X5 Retail Group, a leading Russian food retailer owning the supermarket chains Pyatyorochka, Perekryostok, and Karusel, estimated that a third of their supplies might not reach store shelves in time, the NTV channel reported.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told news agency RIA Novosti on Friday that the Transportation Ministry "was making every effort" to reach a compromise with the protesting truckers, adding that both sides "needed to show flexibility" with regard to the new levy system.

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