

September 17, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing manufacturers, farmers and agribusinesses, wholesalers, retailers, restaurants, manufacturers, importers, exporters, distributors, transportation and logistics providers, and other supply chain stakeholders, we are writing to you again expressing significant concern about the state of negotiations between the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) to help them return to the bargaining table to restart stalled negotiations. This labor contract, which covers all maritime container ports along the East and Gulf coasts, is set to expire on September 30, 2024. The ILA has repeatedly threatened a coastwide strike if a new agreement is not reached by October 1. As a follow-up to our June 25 letter, we call upon the administration to immediately work with both parties to resume contract negotiations and ensure there is no disruption to port operations and cargo fluidity if a new contract is not reached by the expiration date.

We applaud the ongoing focus of this administration on supply chain resiliency. This administration, more than any other, understands the need to keep our ports open and commerce flowing. We all experienced the significant supply chain congestion that was caused by COVID-19 and the impacts that had on businesses, workers, consumers and the economy. While we may have addressed some of those issues, the supply chain continues to face other challenges. Most notably the ongoing impact of the Houthi attacks on commercial vessels impacting use of the Red Sea and Suez Canal.

This administration has certainly stepped in when other supply chain related labor discussions had the potential to impact the national economy. This includes efforts to help the ILWU and PMA resolve their West Coast port labor negotiations, efforts to help the Class I railroads come to agreement with their unions and efforts to resolve contract negotiations between UPS and the Teamsters. While there was an ongoing threat of disruptions during these negotiations, the administration helped to ensure the parties remained at the negotiating table to achieve a final contract. All without a major disruption to the supply chain.

With two weeks left until the ILA-USMX contract expires and the ongoing threat of a coastwide strike beginning on October 1, it is imperative that the administration engage with the parties to quickly negotiate a new deal or agree to continue negotiations while keeping the ports open and cargo flowing. A strike at this point in time would have a devastating impact on the economy, especially as inflation is on the downward trend.

As we have now seen in the press, there are a number of key issues that the parties need to negotiate for a new contract. However, as we have stated previously, the only way to resolve these issues is for the parties to come back to the bargaining table and actually negotiate the new contract. The administration needs to provide any and all support to the parties in their negotiations. In addition, the administration needs to be ready to step in if a strike or other action occurs that leads to a coastwide shutdown or disruption.

At this critical juncture, it is imperative that the parties return to the table without engaging in disruptive activities that could harm the economy and the millions of businesses, workers and consumers who rely on the seamless flow of goods, both imports and exports, through our East Coast and Gulf Coast ports.

Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Accessories Council  
Agribusiness Council of Indiana  
Agriculture Transportation Coalition - AgTC  
Airforwarders Association  
Alliance for Automotive Innovation  
Alliance for Chemical Distribution  
Amcot  
American Apparel & Footwear Association  
American Automotive Policy Council  
American Chemistry Council  
American Cotton Shippers Association  
American Down and Feather Council  
American Feed Industry Association  
American Forest & Paper Association  
American Home Furnishings Alliance  
American Lighting Association  
American Pyrotechnics Association  
American Soybean Association  
American Spice Trade Association  
AmericanHort  
Association of American Railroads  
Association of Food Industries  
Auto Care Association  
Autos Drive America  
Baltimore Customs Brokers & Forwarders  
Association  
California Bean Shippers Association  
California Retailers Association  
California Walnut Commission  
California Warehouse Association

CAWA - Representing the Automotive Parts  
Industry  
Coalition of New England Companies for Trade  
Color Pigments Manufacturers Association  
Columbia River Customs Brokers & Forwarders  
Association  
Consumer Brands Association  
Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA)  
Council of Supply Chain Management  
Professionals (CSCMP)  
CT Retail Network  
Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association of  
Northern California  
Customs Brokers & International Freight Forwarders  
Association of Washington State  
Customs Brokers & International Freight Forwarders  
of Washington State  
Detroit Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association  
Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S.  
Fashion Accessories Shippers Association  
Florida Feed Association, Inc.  
Florida Retail Federation  
FMI - The Food Industry Association  
Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America (FDRA)  
Forest Resources Association  
Gemini Shippers Association  
Georgia Retailers  
Glass Packaging Institute  
Global Business Alliance  
Global Cold Chain Alliance

Green Coffee Association  
 Greenabl Shippers Association  
 Growth Energy  
 Halloween & Costume Association  
 Hardwood Federation  
 Health Industry Distributors Association  
 Heating, Air-conditioning, & Refrigeration  
 Distributors International  
 Home Fashion Products Association  
 Household & Commercial Products  
 Association  
 Intermodal Motor Carriers Conference  
 International Association of Movers  
 International Dairy Foods Association  
 International Fresh Produce Association  
 International Housewares Association  
 International Shippers Association  
 International Sleep Products Association  
 International Warehouse Logistics Association  
 (IWLA)  
 International Wood Products Association  
 Int'l Freight Forwards & Customs Brokers  
 Association of New Orleans  
 Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association  
 Leather and Hide Council of America  
 Los Angeles Customs Brokers & Freight  
 Forwarders Association  
 Louisiana Retailers Association  
 Maryland Retailers Alliance  
 Meat Import Council of America  
 Meat Institute  
 MEMA, The Vehicle Suppliers Association  
 Mid-Valley Customs Brokers Association  
 Minnesota Soybean Growers Association  
 Missouri Retailers Association  
 Montana Retail Association  
 Motorcycle Industry Council  
 National Aquaculture Association  
 National Association of Beverage Importers  
 (NABI)  
 National Association of Chain Drug Stores  
 National Association of Egg Farmers  
 National Association of Manufacturers  
 National Association of Wholesaler-  
 Distributors  
 National Chicken Council  
 National Coffee Association USA  
 National Cotton Council  
 National Council of Chain Restaurants  
 National Council of Farmer Cooperatives  
 National Customs Brokers and Forwarders  
 Association of American (NCBFAA)  
 National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA)  
 National Fisheries Institute  
 National Grain and Feed Association  
 National Hay Association  
 National Industrial Transportation League  
 National Lumber & Building Material Dealers  
 Association  
 National Milk Producers Federation  
 National Mining Association  
 National Oilseed Processors Association  
 National Pest Management Association (NPMA)  
 National Pork Producers Council  
 National Restaurant Association  
 National Retail Federation  
 National Roofing Contractors Association  
 National Sporting Goods Association  
 National Wooden Pallet & Container Association  
 Natural Products Association  
 NCA - National Confectioners Association  
 New Jersey Motor Truck Association  
 New Jersey Retail Merchants Association  
 New York New Jersey Foreign Freight Forwarders and  
 Brokers Association Inc.  
 North American Association of Food Equipment  
 Manufacturers (NAFEM)  
 North American Home Furnishings Association  
 North American Renderers Association  
 Northern Border Customs Brokers Association (NBCBA)  
 Ohio Council of Retail Merchants  
 Oregon Feed & Grain Association  
 Oregon Trucking Association  
 Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight  
 Forwarders Assns. Inc.  
 Pennsylvania Retailers Association  
 Performance Racing Industry (PRI)  
 Pet Food Institute  
 Philadelphia Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association  
 Plumbing Manufacturers International  
 Portland Cement Association  
 Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association

Recycled Materials Association (ReMA)  
Retail Association of Nevada  
Retail Council of New York State  
Retail Industry Leaders Association  
Retail Merchants of Hawaii  
Retailers Association of Massachusetts  
San Diego Customs Brokers Association  
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership  
Shippers Coalition  
SNAC International  
Society of Chemical Manufacturers &  
Affiliates  
South Carolina Retail Association  
South Carolina Trucking Association  
South Dakota Association of Cooperatives  
South Dakota Soybean Association  
Specialized Furniture Carriers  
Specialty Equipment Market Association  
(SEMA)  
Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance  
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America  
Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA)  
Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute  
Tea Association of the U.S.A., Inc.  
TechNet  
Texas Retailers Association  
The Fashion and Jewelry Trade Association  
The Fertilizer Institute  
Toy Association  
Transportation Intermediaries Association (TIA)  
Travel Goods Association  
Trucking Association of New York  
U.S. Apple Association  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
U.S. Dairy Export Council  
U.S. Fashion Industry Association  
U.S. Meat Export Federation  
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council  
USA Rice  
Virginia Trucking Association  
Washington Retail Association  
Washington Trucking Associations  
West Texas New Mexico Customs Brokers Association  
West Virginia Retailers Association  
Window & Door Manufacturers Association  
Wisconsin Soybean Association

CC: The Honorable Julie Su, Acting Secretary, Department of Labor  
The Honorable Pete Buttigieg, Secretary, Department of Transportation  
The Honorable Gina Raimondo, Secretary, Department of Commerce  
The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary, Department of Agriculture  
The Honorable Lael Brainard, Director, National Economic Council  
Members of Congress  
Mr. Harold Daggett, President, International Longshoremen's Association  
Mr. David Adam, President, United States Maritime Alliance