

June 25, 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, importers, exporters, distributors, transportation and logistics providers, and other supply chain stakeholders, we are writing to you regarding labor negotiations between the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX). This labor contract, which covers all maritime ports along the East and Gulf coasts, is set to expire on September 30, 2024. Negotiations were set to begin again on the master contract the week of June 10. Unfortunately, the ILA issued a press release on June 10 stating they would not return to the bargaining table because of a local issue. In addition, the ILA has threatened a coastwide strike if a new deal is not reached before the current contract expires. 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.

One of the key priorities for the administration has been supply chain resiliency and addressing ongoing supply chain challenges. We continue to see maritime supply chain challenges from the ongoing Houthi attacks on vessels transiting the Red Sea. This has led to other supply chain issues: congestion and lack of equipment at overseas ports, carrier capacity issues as they continue to divert vessels away from the Red Sea, and increased freight rates.

With all these existing challenges, the last thing the supply chain, companies and employees — all of which rely on the movement of goods, both imports and exports, through our East Coast and Gulf Coast ports — need is a strike or other disruptions because of an ongoing labor negotiation. As this administration has seen, even the threat of a strike or disruption can have a negative impact on the supply chain.

Such disruptions and their negative economic impact are well documented. We witnessed a significant shift of cargo from the West Coast to the East Coast and Gulf Coast ports because of the challenges and uncertainty during the last West Coast port labor negotiations. While much of that business has remained at the East Coast and Gulf Coast ports, we are starting to see a shift back to West Coast gateways, where a long-term contract is in place, especially as we enter the busy peak shipping season.

We know there are a number of issues for the ILA and USMX to negotiate as part of the contract. However, the only way to resolve these issues is for the parties to come back to the bargaining table and actually negotiate the new contract. We encourage the administration to provide any and all support to the parties in their negotiations so they can reach a final agreement before the current contract expires.

As we have seen with previous supply chain-related negotiations, the only way the parties can reach an agreement that will ensure their continued global competitiveness and that of the supply chain stakeholders that rely upon them is to remain at the table until a new agreement is finalized.

Sincerely,

Agribusiness Council of Indiana	Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA)
Agriculture Transportation Coalition - AgTC	Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP)
Airforwarders Association	Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association of Northern California
Alliance for Automotive Innovation	Customs Brokers & International Freight Forwarders Association of Washington State
Alliance for Chemical Distribution	Distilled Spirits Council of the United States
Amcot	Fashion Accessories Shippers Association
American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)	Fashion Jewelry & Accessories Trade Association
American Chemistry Council	Florida Retail Federation
American Coatings Association, Inc.	Florida Trucking Association
American Composites Manufacturers Association	FMI - The Food Industry Association
American Down and Feather Council	Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America (FDRA)
American Feed Industry Association	Foreign Trade Association
American Forest & Paper Association	Forest Resources Association
American Frozen Foods Institute	Game Manufacturers Association
American Home Furnishings Alliance	Gemini Shippers Association
American Lighting Association	Georgia Motor Trucking Association, Inc.
American Pyrotechnics Association	Georgia Retailers
American Soybean Association	Glass Packaging Institute
American Spice Trade Association	Global Cold Chain Alliance
American Trucking Associations	Grain and Feed Association of Illinois
AmericanHort	Green Coffee Association, Inc.
Arizona Trucking Association	Greenabl Shippers Association
Associated Builders and Contractors	Heating, Air-conditioning, & Refrigeration Distributors International
Associated Equipment Distributors	Home Fashion Products Association
Autos Drive America	Household & Commercial Products Association
California Bean Shippers Association	Illinois Retail Merchants Association
California Building Industry Association	Independent Electrical Contractors
California Citrus Mutual	Intermodal Motor Carriers Conference
CAWA - Representing the Automotive Parts Industry	International Association of Movers
Coalition of New England Companies for Trade	International Dairy Foods Association
Columbia River Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association	International Fresh Produce Association
Consumer Brands Association	International Housewares Association
Cotton Growers Warehouse Association	International Shippers' Association
	International Warehouse Logistics Association (IWLA)

International Wood Products Association
 Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association
 Kansas Chamber & Kansas Retail Council
 Kentucky Retail Federation
 Leather and Hide Council of America
 Louisiana Retailers Association
 Los Angeles Customs Brokers & Freight Forwarders Association
 Maryland Retailers Alliance
 Meat Import Council of America
 Meat Institute
 MEMA, The Vehicle Suppliers Association
 Michigan Retailers Association
 Minnesota Grain and Feed Association
 Missouri Retailers Association
 Motorcycle Industry Council
 National Association of Beverage Importers (NABI)
 National Association of Egg Farmers
 National Association of Manufacturers
 National Association of Wheat Growers
 National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
 National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
 National Cotton Council
 National Council of Chain Restaurants
 National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America (NCBFAA)
 National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA)
 National Fisheries Institute
 National Industrial Transportation League (NITL)
 National Lumber & Building Material Dealers Association
 National Milk Producers Federation
 National Oilseed Processors Association
 National Pork Producers Council
 National Restaurant Association
 National Retail Federation
 National Sporting Goods Association
 National Wooden Pallet & Container Association
 Nebraska Trucking Association
 Nevada Trucking 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 Millers' Association
 North American Renderers Association
 North Carolina Agribusiness Council, Inc.
 Oregon Trucking Association
 Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Assns. Inc.
 Pennsylvania Retailers' Association
 Plumbing Manufacturers International
 PRINTING United Alliance
 Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association
 Recycled Materials Association
 Renewable Fuels Association
 Retail Association of Nevada
 Retail Council of New York State
 Retail Industry Leaders Association
 Retail Merchants of Hawaii
 Retailers Association of Massachusetts
 Rhode Island Trucking Association
 San Diego Customs Brokers Association
 Shippers Coalition
 Society of Chemical Manufacturers & Affiliates (SOCMA)
 South Dakota Association of Cooperatives
 South Dakota Soybean Association
 Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA)
 Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
 Sports & Fitness Industry Association
 Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute
 Tea Association of the U.S.A., Inc.
 Texas Retailers Association
 Texas Trucking Association
 The Fertilizer Institute
 The Halloween & Costume Association
 The Sulphur Institute
 The Sweet Potato Council of the US
 Toy Association
 Transportation Intermediaries Association
 Travel Goods Association (TGA)
 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 Rice
Vinyl Institute
Virginia Trucking Association

Washington Trucking Associations
West Virginia Retailers Association
Window & Door Manufacturers Association
Wine Institute
Wood Industry Association

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