

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	California Citrus Mutual
AdvaMed	California Retailers Association
Agribusiness Council of Indiana	California Walnut Commission
Agriculture Transportation Coalition - AgTC	California Warehouse Association
Airforwarders Association	CAWA - Representing the Automotive Parts Industry
Alliance for Automotive Innovation	Coalition of New England Companies for Trade
Alliance for Chemical Distribution	Color Pigments Manufacturers Association
Amcot	Columbia River Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association
American Apparel & Footwear Association	Consumer Brands Association
American Automotive Policy Council	Consumer Technology Association
American Chemistry Council	Corn Refiners Association
American Clean Power Association	Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA)
American Cotton Shippers Association	Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP)
American Down and Feather Council	CT Retail Network
American Feed Industry Association	Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association of Northern California
American Forest & Paper Association	Customs Brokers & International Freight Forwarders Association of Washington State
American Home Furnishings Alliance	Customs Brokers & International Freight Forwarders of Washington State
American Lighting Association	Detroit Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association
American Pyrotechnics Association	Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S.
American Soybean Association	Fashion Accessories Shippers Association
American Spice Trade Association	Florida Feed Association, Inc.
AmericanHort	Florida Retail Federation
Associated Equipment Distributors	FMI - The Food Industry Association
Association of American Railroads	Footwear Distributors & Retailers of America (FDRA)
Association of Food Industries	
Auto Care Association	
Autos Drive America	
Baltimore Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association	
California Bean Shippers Association	

Forest Resources Association  
 GAMA - the Game Manufacturers 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  
 Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC)  
 Intermodal Motor Carriers Conference  
 International Association of Movers  
 International Dairy Foods Association  
 International Franchise Association  
 International Fresh Produce Association  
 International Housewares Association  
 International Housewares Shippers 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 Corn Growers Association  
 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 Marine Manufacturers Association  
 National Milk Producers Federation  
 National Mining Association  
 National Oilseed Processors Association  
 National Pest Management Association (NPMA)  
 National Pork Producers Council  
 National Potato Council  
 National Restaurant Association  
 National Retail Federation  
 National Roofing Contractors Association  
 National Sporting Goods Association  
 National Turkey Federation  
 National Wooden Pallet & Container Association  
 Natural Products Association  
 NCA - National Confectioners Association  
 NCBFAA Shippers Association, Inc  
 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	Specialty Soya and Grains Alliance
North American Renderers Association	Specialty Vehicle Institute of America
Northern Border Customs Brokers Association (NBCBA)	Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA)
Ohio Council of Retail Merchants	Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute
Oregon Feed & Grain Association	Tea Association of the U.S.A., Inc.
Oregon Trucking Association	TechNet
Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders Assns. Inc.	Texas Retailers Association
Pennsylvania Retailers Association	The Fashion and Jewelry Trade Association
Performance Racing Industry (PRI)	The Fertilizer Institute
Pet Food Institute	Toy Association
Philadelphia Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association	Toy Shippers Association Inc
Plumbing Manufacturers International	Transportation Intermediaries Association (TIA)
Portland Cement Association	Travel Goods Association
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association	Trucking Association of New York
Recycled Materials Association (ReMA)	U.S. Apple Association
Retail Association of Nevada	U.S. Chamber of Commerce
Retail Council of New York State	U.S. Dairy Export Council
Retail Industry Leaders Association	U.S. Fashion Industry Association
Retail Merchants of Hawaii	U.S. Meat Export Federation
Retailers Association of Massachusetts	U.S. Peanut Federation
San Diego Customs Brokers Association	U.S. Tire Manufacturers Association
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership	USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
Shippers Coalition	USA Rice
SNAC International	Utah Food Industry Association
Society of Chemical Manufacturers & Affiliates	Utah Retail Merchants Association
South Carolina Retail Association	Virginia Agribusiness Council
South Carolina Trucking Association	Virginia Retail Federation
South Dakota Association of Cooperatives	Virginia Trucking Association
South Dakota Soybean Association	Washington Retail Association
Specialized Furniture Carriers	Washington Trucking Associations
Specialty Equipment Market Association (SEMA)	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