

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
AdvaMed
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 Clean Power Association
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
Associated Equipment Distributors
Association of American Railroads
Association of Food Industries
Auto Care Association
Autos Drive America
Baltimore Customs Brokers & Forwarders Association
California Bean Shippers Association

California Citrus Mutual
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
Consumer Technology Association
Corn Refiners 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	Motorecycle Industry Council
GAMA - the Game Manufacturers Association	National Aquaculture Association
Gemini Shippers Association	National Association of Beverage Importers (NABI)
Georgia Retailers	National Association of Chain Drug Stores
Glass Packaging Institute	National Association of Egg Farmers
Global Business Alliance	National Association of Manufacturers
Global Cold Chain Alliance	National Association of Wholesaler- Distributors
Green Coffee Association	National Chicken Council
Greenabl Shippers Association	National Coffee Association USA
Growth Energy	National Corn Growers Association
Halloween & Costume Association	National Cotton Council
Hardwood Federation	National Council of Chain Restaurants
Health Industry Distributors Association	National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
Heating, Air-conditioning, & Refrigeration Distributors International	National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of American (NCBFAA)
Home Fashion Products Association	National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA)
Household & Commercial Products Association	National Fisheries Institute
Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC)	National Grain and Feed Association
Intermodal Motor Carriers Conference	National Hay Association
International Association of Movers	National Industrial Transportation League
International Dairy Foods Association	National Lumber & Building Material Dealers Association
International Franchise Association	National Marine Manufacturers Association
International Fresh Produce Association	National Milk Producers Federation
International Housewares Association	National Mining Association
International Housewares Shippers Association	National Oilseed Processors Association
International Shippers Association	National Pest Management Association (NPMA)
International Sleep Products Association	National Pork Producers Council
International Warehouse Logistics Association (IWLA)	National Potato Council
International Wood Products Association	National Restaurant Association
Int'l Freight Forwards & Customs Brokers Association of New Orleans	National Retail Federation
Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association	National Roofing Contractors Association
Leather and Hide Council of America	National Sporting Goods Association
Los Angeles Customs Brokers & Freight Forwarders Association	National Turkey Federation
Louisiana Retailers Association	National Wooden Pallet & Container Association
Maryland Retailers Alliance	Natural Products Association
Meat Import Council of America	NCA - National Confectioners Association
Meat Institute	NCBFAA Shippers Association, Inc
MEMA, The Vehicle Suppliers Association	New Jersey Motor Truck Association
Mid-Valley Customs Brokers Association	New Jersey Retail Merchants Association
Minnesota Soybean Growers Association	New York New Jersey Foreign Freight Forwarders and Brokers Association Inc.
Missouri Retailers Association	North American Association of Food Equipment Manufacturers (NAFEM)
Montana Retail Association	

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