

December 20, 2012

The President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned associations representing United States manufacturers, farmers, wholesalers, retailers, importers and transportation and logistics providers are writing to express our deep concern about the increasing potential for a strike impacting the East and Gulf Coast ports. The ongoing labor contract negotiations between the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the U.S. Maritime Alliance, LTD (USMX) have been going on for months with very little progress. The latest round of negotiations on December 18<sup>th</sup> broke down again without resolution. We urge immediate action by your administration to ensure that a strike does not occur when the current contract extension expires on December 29, 2012.

We know that there are important issues for both parties to resolve. These issues will only be resolved if both parties remain at the negotiating table until a deal is reached. We applaud the parties for agreeing to use a federal mediator over the last several months. However, even with the mediator there has been very little progress. Failure to reach an agreement resulting in a coast wide shutdown will have serious economy-wide impacts.

The region, particularly the Northeast, is still recovering from the tragic effects of superstorm Sandy. A port strike or other shutdown will only add to the economic devastation already felt by the region. Just the threat of a shutdown impacting the East Coast and Gulf Coast ports creates a level of uncertainty in a fragile economic climate which has forced many businesses to once again enact contingency plans that come at a significant cost to jobs and our economic competitiveness.

The West Coast lockout 10 years ago cost the U.S. economy \$1 billion a day and took over six months to recover from. The East Coast and Gulf Coast ports and their customers cannot afford a similar situation.

Our organizations believe that both parties can reach an agreement that will ensure the continued success and competitiveness of these ports for the foreseeable future. However, we need to ensure that a shutdown does not occur which would impact hundreds of thousands of downstream customers and businesses who rely on the ports for their success.

We urge you to take immediate action and use all of the options available to you, including the authority under the Taft-Hartley Act, to keep the parties at the negotiating table and avoid a coast wide port shutdown. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association	Fashion Accessories Shippers Association (FASA)
Agriculture Transportation Coalition - AgTC	Food Marketing Institute
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers	Florida Citrus Packers
Amcot	Gamma Industry Processing Alliance
American Apparel & Footwear Association	Harbor Association of Commerce & Industry
American Association of Exporters and Importers	Inland Action
American Automotive Policy Council	Institute of Makers of Explosives
American Chemistry Council	Intermodal Association of North America
American Coatings Association	Intermodal Motors Carriers Conference
American Cotton Shippers Association	International Source Suppliers and Producers Association (ISSPA)
American Council of Independent Laboratories	International Wood Products Association
American Farm Bureau Federation	Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
American Forest & Paper Association	Louisiana Association of Business and Industry
American Frozen Food Institute	Michigan Retailers Association
American Home Furnishings Alliance	Montana Retail Association
American Import Shippers Assoc.	Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association
American Trucking Associations	NASSTRAC, Inc.
American Meat Institute	National Association of Beverage Importers
American Pyrotechnics Association	National Association of Chemical Distributors (NACD)
Association of Food Industries, Inc.	National Association of Manufacturers
Association of Global Automakers, Inc.	National Association of State Departments of Agriculture
Association of Washington Business	National Beer Wholesalers Association (NBWA)
Automotive Aftermarket Industry Association	National Cotton Council
BizFed, Los Angeles County Business Federation	National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
Beer Institute	National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America (NCBFAA)
California Retailers Association	National Grain and Feed Association
Campbell County Chamber of Commerce - Gillette, WY	National Oilseed Processors Association
Cheese Importers Association of America	National Potato Council
Coalition of New England Companies for Trade - CONECT	National Renderers Association
CropLife America	National Retail Federation
Dangerous Goods Advisory Council	Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States	New Jersey Motor Truck Association
Express Association of America	New Jersey Retail Merchants Association
Egg Export Council	North American Export Grain Association
	North American Meat Association

North American Shippers Association, Inc.  
Outdoor Industry Association (OIA)  
Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and  
Freight Forwarders  
Pet Food Institute  
Plains Cotton Cooperative Association  
Quality Fruit Packers of Indian River, Inc.  
Retail Council of New York State  
Retail Industry Leaders Association  
Retail Association of Maine  
Retailers Association of Massachusetts  
Retail Merchants of Hawaii  
Rhode Island Retail Federation  
San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership  
Society of Chemical Manufacturers and  
Affiliates (SOCMA)  
State Chamber of Oklahoma  
Sports & Fitness Industry Association  
Texas Association of Business  
The Fertilizer Institute  
The Hardwood Federation  
The Health & Personal Care Logistics  
Conference, Inc.

The Hosiery Association  
The Ohio Council of Retail Merchants  
The Longview Chamber of Commerce  
The National Industrial Transportation League  
The Presidents' Forum of the Distilled Spirits  
Industry  
The U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association  
The Waterfront Coalition  
Toy Industry Association  
Travel Goods Association (TGA)  
United Fresh Produce Association  
U.S. Association of Importers of Textiles and  
Apparel  
U.S. Chamber of Commerce  
USA Poultry  
USA Rice Federation  
Utah Food Industry Association  
Utah Retail Merchants Association  
Wine and Spirits Shippers Association, Inc  
Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA)  
Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce

cc: Members of Congress

Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood  
Department of Commerce Acting Secretary Rebecca Blank  
The Honorable Robert J. Bentley, Governor of Alabama  
The Honorable Jack Markell, Governor of Delaware  
The Honorable Richard Scott, Governor of Florida  
The Honorable Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana  
The Honorable Nathan Deal, Governor of Georgia  
The Honorable Tom Corbett, Governor of Pennsylvania  
The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor of Maryland  
The Honorable Deval Patrick, Governor of Massachusetts  
The Honorable Chris Christie, Governor of New Jersey  
The Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Governor of New York  
The Honorable Beverly Purdue, Governor of North Carolina  
The Honorable Nikki Haley, Governor of South Carolina  
The Honorable Rick Perry, Governor of Texas  
The Honorable Bob McDonnell, Governor of Virginia