

INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION



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February 11, 2015

To: Longshore Division Locals and Pensioners

Re: Update – Status of PCL&CA Negotiations

Brothers and Sisters:

As you know, we are currently in our ninth month of negotiations with the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) over the Pacific Coast Longshore & Clerks' Agreement (PCL&CA), which expired on July 1, 2014. In the past week, PMA has intensified its use of the news media to control public opinion and to divide the union. PMA's latest media campaign is shamelessly dishonest and uses data that is easily verified to be false (including what PMA calls the "average full-time" wage in the industry). Nonetheless, the mostly pro-business news media, particularly the Journal of Commerce, prints whatever PMA feeds them. In this context, it is more important than ever that the ILWU stay strong and united and ignore PMA's propaganda.

One year ago this month, the ILWU held a two week contract caucus. Approximately one hundred local resolutions were submitted for consideration. These local resolutions became the mandate of the Negotiating Committee in 2014 contract negotiations, and your Negotiating Committee has worked tirelessly to carry out this mandate. Now, PMA is saying, and it is being reported in the media, that the Negotiating Committee is withholding a PMA offer and holding up negotiations based on issues that are not important to the membership. This is false. When the parties reach a tentative agreement consistent with the rank and file's bargaining demands, the Negotiating Committee will bring the tentative agreement to the caucus for review and action, as required by the ILWU Coast Longshore Division Bylaws. If approved by the caucus, the tentative agreement is subject to ratification by all Class A and Class B registered longshore workers and clerks in a referendum vote.

The reality is that the parties are very close to reaching an agreement. One of the remaining issues is the question of retaining arbitrators who have openly engaged in conduct that clearly compromises their impartiality, including the development of close and personal relationships that affect decision-making and the failure to disclose these particular relationships and conflicts of interest. The neutrality of arbitrators is the foundation of a healthy grievance machinery. Both parties have recognized at the bargaining table that there is a problem, but, since the bias favors the employers, PMA is refusing to take corrective action.

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I urge the membership to stay strong and united and to ignore the employers' media campaign. Our strength is, and has always been, our unity as an organization. We have fought too hard since 1934 to let a false media blitz divide us.

Please circulate this update to your members at your local meetings. As soon as there is progress to report, the Negotiating Committee will update the Longshore Division Locals.

In solidarity,



Robert McEllrath
International President and
Chairman of the Negotiating Committee

cc: Coast Committee, ILWU Coast Longshore Division

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