SFIA Encourages Parties to Start West Coast Port Labor Negotiations

In an effort to avoid a repeat of the disruption caused by the work slow-down during the last round of negotiations on a new labor contract for west coast port workers, the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA) joined over 100 organizations on a letter to the leaders of the unions and ports encouraging them to hold early discussions on a new contract or extension of current one.

The last time contract talks dragged out for nine months and led to ships stacking up outside west coast ports due to a work slowdown. The disruption in the flow of commerce cost the U.S. economy billions of dollars. View the letter sent to the International Longshore and Workers Union and Pacific Maritime Association below:
Dear Mr. McEllrath and Mr. McKenna:

The undersigned organizations representing manufacturers, farmers and agribusinesses, wholesalers, retailers, importers, exporters, distributors, transportation and logistics providers, and other supply chain stakeholders are writing to follow up on our March 15th letter encouraging the ILWU and PMA to begin early discussions on either a contract extension or a new contract. We strongly believe a contract extension is critical to ensure stability and predictability at West Coast ports.

You have both recognized the negative economic impact of disruptions and slowdowns that occurred during the last negotiations. We believe starting negotiations early will help avoid a repeat of that experience. As we have previously stated, we believe a new model for future negotiations needs to be developed, one which stresses early and continuous dialogue. This should include a pledge by both parties to ensure there are no disruptions to cargo movement during negotiations. Maintaining the arbitration mechanisms in the existing contract for the duration of the negotiations, even if the contract expires before a final agreement is reached, is critical to that process.

We applaud your organizations for considering an extension of the current contract. However, we now call upon you to agree to the requests and begin the negotiations. We fully believe that agreeing early to a contract extension or a new long-term contract will provide the stability and predictability that is needed for global competitiveness that will benefit all stakeholders (labor, terminal operators, cargo owners, etc.) who rely on West Coast ports.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association
Agriculture Transportation Coalition
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers
Almond Alliance of California
American Apparel & Footwear Association (AAFA)
American Association of Exporters and Importers
American Chemistry Council
American Coatings Association, Inc.
American Cotton Shippers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Forest & Paper Association
American Import Shippers Association
American Potato Trade Alliance
American Pyrotechnics Association
American Soybean Association
American Trucking Associations
Association of Food Industries
Association of Global Automakers
Auto Care Association
California Business Properties Association
California Chamber of Commerce
California Dried Plum Board
California Fresh Fruit Association
California League of Food Processors
California Retailers Association
California Trucking Association
California Walnut Commission
CAWA - Representing the Automotive Parts Industry
U.S. Meat Export Federation
United Fresh Produce Association
United States Fashion Industry Association
USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
Washington Association of Wheat Growers
Washington Council for International Trade
Washington Farm Bureau
Washington Retail Association
Washington State Hay Growers Association
Washington State Potato Commission
Washington State Tree Fruit Association
Washington Trucking Associations
Western Growers
Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America