



Second International Pacific Rim Mining and Maritime Unions Seminar “Globalizing Solidarity”

May 22 – 26, 2005
Long Beach, California

Network of Pacific Rim Unions Unite to Fight Globalization’s Impact on Communities and Regional Economies

State Senator Lowenthal, L.A. Mayor Hahn and Port of Los Angeles Harbor Commissioner Warren provide opening remarks at May 23 press conference for Long Beach event.

(SAN FRANCISCO, CA)—**May 17, 2005.** With growing consolidation in a global economy, unions from throughout the Pacific Rim are gathering in Long Beach, CA next week to seek a stronger voice on the conditions of workers, the health and welfare of their communities, and the security and success of the transportation chain.

The Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach are a case study in the opportunities and threats posed by increased international trade, as these sister facilities hold the promise of a sustained strong economy for southern California and the threat of increased congestion and pollution for the nearby communities. But these ports are just one element in the vast network of industrial and transportation enterprises that constitute the increasing importance of multinational corporations in the day-to-day life of working men and women in the United States and around the world.

The **Second International Pacific Rim Mining and Maritime Unions Seminar**, May 22- 26 in Long Beach, will bring together union leaders from Australia, Japan, Canada, Mexico, Chile, Panama, New Zealand, South Africa, Viet Nam the United States, and other nations to find paths for combating the negative effects of multinational corporate operations. Whether it is the risk of unsecured cargo containers moving across the Asia-Pacific region into vulnerable ports, the excess of shipping companies that operate outside most Pacific Rim nations’ laws under flags-of-convenience, or the devastation caused by the anti-worker policies of extractive companies such as Rio Tinto, people and communities are being hurt by the actions of multinational companies.

The opening day of the seminar will feature comments by **State Senator Alan Lowenthal** (D-Long Beach), **Los Angeles Mayor James K. Hahn** (D-CA), and **Port of Los Angeles Harbor Commissioner Thomas Warren** on the state of the southern California economy and the role of the ports. Hosted by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and the Maritime Union of Australia (MUA), at the Long Beach Convention Center **on Monday, May 23, 2005 at 9:00 a.m.**, their remarks will follow a welcome by ILWU International President James Spinosa and a keynote speech by AFL-CIO Secretary Treasurer Richard Trumka.

The **Mining and Maritime Unions Seminar** will bring together representatives from labor unions that comprise important elements in the transportation chain, from the workers in the mines who extract raw materials, to those who work in industries that produce the goods traded internationally, to those who move those goods in ships around the world, to the dockworkers and truckers in the ports on both sides of the Pacific who unload and move those goods.

Labor representatives from mining, trucking, steel, stevedoring, and maritime industries will come together near the third largest port in the world to explore common issues like port security, the transportation infrastructure crisis, and domestic and global trends in the Pacific Rim's economy and political environment. They will seek international answers to current global economic trends, where multinational firms increasingly make decisions affecting workers.

The following subjects and others will be addressed by seminar attendees:

- **International supply chain logistics:** The practices of big box retail industry giants like Wal-Mart affect the economy of the entire Pacific Rim region. Not only did they import most of their merchandise during the brief peak cargo season in 2004, but they received preferential treatment in moving their cargo through crowded ports. Participants will consider how the process disadvantages smaller businesses and competitors seeking to engage in international trade.
- **Environmental impacts of international trade:** All the cheap products coming into U.S. ports have some hidden costs that participants will discuss. Not only is there pollution and environmental degradation in many countries where goods are extracted or produced, but the impact of growing imports is being felt in local port communities. Most major ports in the country are confronting the impact of growing air pollution from ships, trucks, and dock equipment, as well as the pressure of increased congestion in their neighborhoods and on their highways.
- **Trade policies in the Pacific Rim:** The terms of a 2001 World Trade Organization agreement allow the U.S. to set a 7.5 percent cap on Chinese import growth when necessary. Recently, the U.S. government lifted tariffs on apparel imports from China, but, on May 13, reversed its position on three categories. Seminar attendees will discuss the potential impacts of such policy shifts on the supply chain in the Pacific Rim.
- **Human Rights:** Around the world, workers often face intimidation and threats in the face of multinational expansion. Last year, a labor leader in Chile, Jorge Silva Beron, had his skull fractured by police during a peaceful demonstration by dockworkers at the port terminal of Iquique. Beron and his union, FETRAPI, were demanding wage increases in their contract. Beron will update seminar attendees on their struggle.

For more information about the May 23 opening day press conference, please contact **John Showalter**, ILWU Coast Public Relations Specialist, **415.775.0533, x. 117** john.showalter@ilwu.org . A seminar agenda is available at www.ilwu.org.

The ILWU represents 60,000 working women and men in five states (California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii) and Canada. Through more than 60 locals ILWU unites longshore workers, warehouse workers, watchmen, clerks, ferry and tugboat workers, tourism industry workers and agricultural workers.