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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
January 12, 2015**

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PMA OFFICIALS ADMIT TODAY THAT WEST COAST CONGESTION CRISIS HAS BEEN CAUSED BY MANAGERIAL MISTAKES AND NOT PRIMARILY DUE TO DOCKWORKERS

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – In contract negotiations this afternoon, officials from the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) told a federal mediator and longshore negotiators that West Coast ports have reached a point where there is little space available for additional import containers arriving on the docks – and no space for export and empty containers returning to the docks.

The PMA made it clear in the negotiating session that they were not blaming union workers for the primary causes of the congestion crisis, explaining that the lack of space for returning empty and export containers was exacerbating the existing chassis shortage – because the export-bound containers are a key source of desperately needed chassis that have become the #1 choke-point, ever since shipping lines recently stopped providing a chassis for each container arriving to West Coast ports.

After explaining how the lack of dock space for containers and shortages of chassis were crippling the ports, the PMA announced an illogical plan to eliminate night-shifts at many ports. In addition to cutting shifts at major container ports, the PMA cutbacks would also apply to bulk and break-bulk operations – for no apparent reason other than as a cynical tactic to generate anxiety among workers.

The union has noted that cancelling night shifts and reducing bulk operations will do nothing to ease the congestion crisis. The PMA appears to be abusing public ports and putting the economy at risk in a self-serving attempt to gain the upper hand at the bargaining table, and create the appearance of a crisis in order to score points with politicians in Washington.

“Longshore workers are ready, willing and able to clear the backlog created by the industry’s poor decisions,” said ILWU President Bob McEllrath. “The employer is making nonsensical moves like cutting back on shifts at a critical time, creating gridlock in a cynical attempt to turn public opinion against workers. This creates an incendiary atmosphere during negotiations and does nothing to get us closer to an agreement.”

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