



MEDIA RELEASE

News from the International Transport Workers' Federation

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ITF welcomes hard-fought deal for ILWU workers on US West Coast

The international Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has welcomed a tentative agreement struck between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) on a new five-year contract covering workers at all 29 West Coast ports of the USA.

Negotiations had been underway since June last year in what had become an increasingly bitter dispute.

The PMA earlier this week ratcheted up their side of the bargaining by banning loading and unloading on nights, weekends and holidays.

The deal was reached with assistance from US Secretary of Labor, Tom Perez, and Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service Deputy Director, Scot Beckenbaugh.

"This is great news for workers at all 29 West Coast Ports, who can now get on with the job and their lives without a protracted negotiation hanging over their heads," ITF president and dockers' section chair, Paddy Crumlin, said.

"I'd like to congratulate ILWU President Bob McEllrath and his negotiating team.

"The ITF and its affiliates have been offering their support and solidarity with the ILWU workers on the West Coast from right around the globe.

"This is a win for dockers the world over."

A joint statement from ILWU President Bob McEllrath and PMA President James McKenna said that parties will not be releasing details of the agreement at this time and that it is still subject to ratification by both parties.

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“After more than nine months of negotiations, we are pleased to have reached an agreement that is good for workers and for the industry,” the joint statement said.

“We are also pleased that our ports can now resume full operations.”

Big ships with capacities of 8,000 to as much as 14,000 20-foot containers call regularly now at West Coast ports.

Some industry experts predict that by 2020 vessels with capacities of 18,000 TEUs will be serving the West Coast.

Vessels of that size are already calling in the Asia-Europe trades, and ports in those regions are struggling to cope with the cargo surges that are created by big ships.

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