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December 20, 2012

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The undersigned associations representing United States manufacturers, farmers, wholesalers, retailers, importers and transportation and logistics providers are writing to express our deep concern about the increasing potential for a strike impacting the East and Gulf Coast ports. The ongoing labor contract negotiations between the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the U.S. Maritime Alliance, LTD (USMX) have been going on for months with very little progress. The latest round of negotiations on December 18th broke down again without resolution. We urge immediate action by your administration to ensure that a strike does not occur when the current contract extension expires on December 29, 2012.

We know that there are important issues for both parties to resolve. These issues will only be resolved if both parties remain at the negotiating table until a deal is reached. We applaud the parties for agreeing to use a federal mediator over the last several months. However, even with the mediator there has been very little progress. Failure to reach an agreement resulting in a coast wide shutdown will have serious economy-wide impacts.

The region, particularly the Northeast, is still recovering from the tragic effects of superstorm Sandy. A port strike or other shutdown will only add to the economic devastation already felt by the region. Just the threat of a shutdown impacting the East Coast and Gulf Coast ports creates a level of uncertainty in a fragile economic climate which has forced many businesses to once again enact contingency plans that come at a significant cost to jobs and our economic competitiveness.

The West Coast lockout 10 years ago cost the U.S. economy \$1 billion a day and took over six months to recover from. The East Coast and Gulf Coast ports and their customers cannot afford a similar situation.

Our organizations believe that both parties can reach an agreement that will ensure the continued success and competitiveness of these ports for the foreseeable future. However, we need to ensure that a shutdown does not occur which would impact hundreds of thousands of downstream customers and businesses who rely on the ports for their success.

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We urge you to take immediate action and use all of the options available to you, including the authority under the Taft-Hartley Act, to keep the parties at the negotiating table and avoid a coast wide port shutdown. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Agricultural Retailers Association	Intermodal Association of North America
Agriculture Transportation Coalition - AgTC	Intermodal Motors Carriers Conference
Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers	International Source Suppliers and Producers Association (ISSPA)
Amcot	International Wood Products Association
American Apparel & Footwear Association	Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce
American Association of Exporters and Importers	Louisiana Association of Business and Industry
American Automotive Policy Council	Michigan Retailers Association
American Chemistry Council	Montana Retail Association
American Coatings Association	Motor & Equipment Manufacturers Association
American Cotton Shippers Association	NASSTRAC, Inc.
American Council of Independent Laboratories	National Association of Chemical Distributors (NACD)
American Farm Bureau Federation	National Association of Beverage Importers
American Forest & Paper Association	National Association of Manufacturers
American Frozen Food Institute	National Cotton Council
American Home Furnishings Alliance	National Council of Farmer Cooperatives
American Import Shippers Assoc.	National Customs Brokers and Forwarders Association of America (NCBFAA)
American Trucking Associations	National Grain and Feed Association
American Meat Institute	National Oilseed Processors Association
American Pyrotechnics Association	National Potato Council
Association of Food Industries, Inc.	National Renderers Association
Association of Global Automakers, Inc.	National Retail Federation
Association of Washington Business	Nebraska Chamber of Commerce & Industry
California Retailers Association	New Jersey Motor Truck Association
Campbell County Chamber of Commerce - Gillette, WY	New Jersey Retail Merchants Association
Cheese Importers Association of America	North American Meat Association
Coalition of New England Companies for Trade - CONECT	North American Shippers Association, Inc.
Dangerous Goods Advisory Council	Pacific Coast Council of Customs Brokers and Freight Forwarders
Express Association of America	Pet Food Institute
Egg Export Council	Plains Cotton Cooperative Association
Fashion Accessories Shippers Association (FASA)	Quality Fruit Packers of Indian River, Inc.
Florida Citrus Packers	Retail Council of New York State
Gamma Industry Processing Alliance	Retail Industry Leaders Association
Harbor Association of Commerce & Industry	Retail Association of Maine
Inland Action	Retailers Association of Massachusetts
Institute of Makers of Explosives	Retail Merchants of Hawaii
	Rhode Island Retail Federation

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San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership
State Chamber of Oklahoma
Sports & Fitness Industry Association
Texas Association of Business
The Fertilizer Institute
The Hardwood Federation
The Health & Personal Care Logistics
Conference, Inc.
The Hosiery Association
The Ohio Council of Retail Merchants
The Longview Chamber of Commerce
The National Industrial Transportation League
The Presidents' Forum of the Distilled Spirits
Industry
The U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association

The Waterfront Coalition
Toy Industry Association
Travel Goods Association (TGA)
United Fresh Produce Association
U.S. Association of Importers of Textiles and
Apparel
U.S. Chamber of Commerce
USA Poultry
USA Rice Federation
Utah Food Industry Association
Utah Retail Merchants Association
Wine and Spirits Shippers Association, Inc
Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA)
Yankton Area Chamber of Commerce

cc: Members of Congress

Department of Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood
Department of Commerce Acting Secretary Rebecca Blank
The Honorable Robert J. Bentley, Governor of Alabama
The Honorable Jack Markell, Governor of Delaware
The Honorable Richard Scott, Governor of Florida
The Honorable Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana
The Honorable Nathan Deal, Governor of Georgia
The Honorable Tom Corbett, Governor of Pennsylvania
The Honorable Martin O'Malley, Governor of Maryland
The Honorable Deval Patrick, Governor of Massachusetts
The Honorable Chris Christie, Governor of New Jersey
The Honorable Andrew Cuomo, Governor of New York
The Honorable Beverly Purdue, Governor of North Carolina
The Honorable Nikki Haley, Governor of South Carolina
The Honorable Rick Perry, Governor of Texas
The Honorable Bob McDonnell, Governor of Virginia