

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Steve Getzug, (310) 633-9444, steve.getzug@hkstrategies.com



LONGSHORE UNION WORK SLOWDOWNS BRING TERMINAL OPERATIONS TO THE BRINK OF GRIDLOCK

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (January 12, 2015) – Eight months since contract talks began, and after more than two months of ILWU-staged slowdowns that have methodically reduced terminal productivity at the five largest ports on the West Coast, operations are approaching complete gridlock.

Since late October 2014, the ILWU has crippled what were fully productive terminals in the Pacific Northwest and Oakland, and exacerbated a difficult congestion issue at the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach by intentionally withholding dozens of essential skilled workers each shift for the past 10 weeks.

The ILWU's action in Southern California goes against 15 years of precedent and targets precisely the skilled workers who are most essential to clearing congested terminals. By withholding an average of 75 yard crane drivers each day, the ILWU has stalled the movement of tens of thousands of containers, PMA estimates. Since November 3, the Union has reduced these yard crane operator positions in Southern California by 67 percent.

Last week, after repeated calls by PMA for the involvement of a federal mediator, the ILWU agreed to outside intervention. Since the mediator joined the talks, no further agreements have been reached and ILWU work slowdowns have continued to the point where many terminals are in peril of complete gridlock.

ILWU members, among the highest paid union workers in America, are receiving full wages and benefits while stifling productivity and putting West Coast port terminals at the brink of full shutdown. To date, the ILWU and PMA have reached tentative agreements on health care and increases to pay guarantees. That tentative agreement provides fully employer-paid health care benefits valued at \$35,000 per worker annually. PMA also has proposed pay increases and pension enhancements. There are no takeaways in the PMA proposal.

“The PMA has a sense of urgency to resolve these contract talks and get our ports moving again,” said PMA spokesperson Steve Getzug. “Unfortunately, it appears the Union’s motivation is to continue slowdowns in an attempt to gain leverage in the bargaining. The ILWU slowdowns and the resulting operational environment are no longer sustainable.”

The PMA has alerted the local port authorities to the deteriorating situation on the docks.

#