



November 29, 2012

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

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the National Retail Federation, I am writing to express our concern with the current strike at the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach as a result of stalled negotiations between the Office Clerical Unit of ILWU Local 63 (OCU) and the Los Angeles-Long Beach Harbor Employers Association (HEA). A prolonged strike at the nation's largest ports would have a devastating impact on the U.S. economy. We call upon you to use all means necessary to get the two sides back to the negotiating table.

As the world's largest retail trade association and the voice of retail worldwide, NRF represents retailers of all types and sizes from the United States and more than 45 countries abroad including department stores, specialty, apparel, discount, online, independent, grocery and chain restaurants, among others. Retailers operate more than 3.5 million U.S. establishments that support one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.5 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation's economy.

The two parties have been negotiating a new contract on and off for over two years, and we know there are tough issues that have remained unresolved during these negotiations. It is critically important, however, that the two parties remain at the table until a new deal is finalized.

A 10-day lockout at the West Coast ports as a result of stalled negotiations in 2002 led to lingering supply chain disruptions and cost the U.S. economy \$1 billion for each day of the lockout. It took the ports a full six months to recover, and the strike had a profound impact on the retailers, importers, manufacturers, agricultural exporters and other affiliated industries that rely on the ports every day. An extended strike this time could have a greater impact considering the fragile state of the U.S. economy.

These negotiations are important to all of the import and export industries who rely on the nation's largest ports to move the nation's commerce and we cannot afford further supply chain disruptions. The two sides must remain at the negotiating table until a deal is reached. We fully believe the two sides can reach an agreement that will ensure the continued competitiveness of these ports for the foreseeable future.

If you have any questions, please contact Jonathan Gold, Vice President, Supply Chain & Customs Policy (202-626-8193; [goldj@nrf.com](mailto:goldj@nrf.com)), in our office. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Shay".

Matthew Shay  
President and CEO

cc: The Honorable Harry Reid  
The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
The Honorable John A. Boehner  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Members of the California Congressional Delegation

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