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**ILWU Slowdowns Lead to Temporary Suspension of Vessel Operations
on Four Weekend, Holiday Dates**

Yard, Gate and Rail Operations Will Continue on “Premium Pay” Work Dates

SAN FRANCISCO (Feb. 11, 2015) – In light of ongoing and costly ILWU slowdowns, PMA members will temporarily suspend premium-pay weekend and holiday vessel operations on four upcoming dates, while yard, gate and rail operations will continue at terminal operators’ discretion. In Southern California, terminal operators will expand daytime vessel operations on non-holiday weekdays.

Weekend and holiday pay rates command a premium of at least 50% of the basic longshore wage rate. As a result, working hours on those days would be paid at between \$54 and \$75 per hour for longshore workers and clerks, and between \$77 and \$92 per hour for foremen. PMA members have concluded that they will not conduct vessel operations on those dates, paying full shifts of ILWU workers such high rates for severely diminished productivity while the backlog of cargo at West Coast ports grows.

“Last week, PMA made a comprehensive contract offer designed to bring these talks to conclusion,” said PMA spokesman Wade Gates. “The ILWU responded with demands they knew we could not meet, and continued slowdowns that will soon bring West Coast ports to gridlock. What they’re doing amounts to a strike with pay, and we will reduce the extent to which we pay premium rates for such a strike.”

While the ILWU has claimed that the parties are “this close,” they continue to push demands that would cripple the West Coast waterfront. In particular, the Union is demanding the right to fire any arbitrator who rules against them at the end of each contract period, even though those arbitrators are the referees who keep West Coast ports operating smoothly. During the 2008 – 2014 contract period, the four area arbitrators found the ILWU guilty of more than 200 slowdowns or work stoppages.

“The ILWU’s current slowdowns, now in their fourth month, show the very reason that we need a healthy arbitration system in place,” Gates said. “It is essential to be able to prevent the crippling slowdowns that are impacting workers and businesses across the nation.”

The four dates affected by the suspension of vessel operations are Thursday, 2/12 (Lincoln’s Birthday); Saturday, 2/14; Sunday, 2/15; and Monday, 2/16 (Washington’s Birthday). Again, yard, gate and rail operations will continue.

Last week, after nine months of contract talks, PMA last week made a comprehensive contract offer that would raise ILWU wages by 14 percent over five-years, on top of current average full-time wages of \$147,000 per year. It would maintain fully employer-paid health care, worth \$35,000 per year, and increase the ILWU pension to as much as \$88,800 per year. The pay guarantee program would ensure that longshore workers are paid for 40 hours per week, even if no work is available, and the ILWU would have jurisdiction over the maintenance and repair of truck chassis.

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