

## **International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) Halts Negotiations with United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) Amid Automation Disputes**

North Bergen, NJ – (June 10, 2024) The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) today announced the suspension of talks with the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) scheduled for Tuesday, June 11, 2024. This decision arises amidst ongoing negotiations of local agreements under the coast-wide Master Contract, set to expire on September 30, 2024.

The ILA canceled Master Contract talks with USMX after discovering that APM Terminals and Maersk Line are utilizing an Auto Gate system, which autonomously processes trucks without ILA labor. This system, initially identified at the Port of Mobile, Alabama, is reportedly being used in other ports as well.

A spokesperson for the ILA stated, "Here we go again! This is another example of USMX members unilaterally circumventing our coast-wide Master Contract. This is a clear violation of our agreement with USMX, and we will not tolerate it any longer."

"There's no point trying to negotiate a new agreement with USMX when one of its major companies continues to violate our current agreement with the sole aim of eliminating ILA jobs through automation," said International President Harold J. Daggett, who serves as chief negotiator for the union.

The ILA will not meet with USMX until the Auto Gate issue is resolved. Additionally, the union is still waiting on results from an audit for jobs created out of new technology, a report they have been anticipating for almost two contract periods. The ILA has observed an increasing number of IT personnel on marine terminals, with concerns that APM and Maersk's IT departments in Charlotte, North Carolina, are encroaching on their jurisdiction.

"We are not taking this lightly," the ILA cautioned.

The ILA is monitoring and keenly aware of APM Terminals and Maersk Line's repeated attempts to circumvent the ILA-USMX Master Contract. and cut ILA jobs through the introduction of automation and semi-automation equipment.

"Most of the problems the ILA is facing on the East and Gulf Coast all stem from APM Terminals and Maersk Line," the ILA added. "Maersk Line, the second largest ocean carrier in the world, has a track record of pushing automation. They started semi-automation in the Port of Hampton Roads, and have full automation at Pier 400 in Los Angeles, California. The ILA lost tens of thousands of jobs in the 1970s due to containerization, and APM and Maersk seem to be leading the charge to eliminate good, family-sustaining jobs right here in the U.S."

The ILA has long expressed deep concern over the impact of automation on jobs, highlighting APM Terminals and Maersk Line's abuse of the ILA Master Contract, which have led to job losses in various ports.

ILA President Daggett made it clear that the union will take a firm stance against any technology that threatens ILA jobs. He spoke extensively at the union's quadrennial convention last summer, about Maersk Line's history of pushing automation down the throats of workers around the world.

“Who the hell is a foreign company like Maersk, to come on to American soil and build fully automated terminals,” the ILA leader asked in a fiery speech to hundreds of ILA delegates at that July 2023 Convention. “This foreign company Maersk tries to shove fully automated terminals down our throats and for what reason? To eliminate good paying American jobs, ILA jobs.”

The ILA leader expressed criticism of President Joe Biden and lawmakers for turning a blind eye to automation and its devastating effect on American workers.

“How can this Administration allow a foreign company like Maersk, and other foreign shipping companies, to get away with this?” President Daggett asked in his convention remarks, as he warned Maersk and other foreign companies of the consequences of their plans to automate. “Mark my words, there is going to be an explosion, and the ILA and dockers around the world are going to light the fuse.”

His son, Dennis A. Daggett, who serves as the ILA’s Executive Vice President, echoed these sentiments in his own convention remarks, as he stated that the relationship with USMX is not as it appears.

"We want ironclad language and the actual intent of that language in writing," he told ILA convention delegates last July. "Years after we sign a contract, everyone seems to get amnesia."

Today as the ILA announced cancelation of talks with management, ILA Executive Vice President Daggett said: “I guess they (USMX) just thought our speeches at the convention were for show. Well, I hope they realize by now that every word spoken was real and sincere."

The ILA is now putting action behind those words as it cancels talks with USMX.

The ILA believes there are many issues that need to be resolved in their current agreement before they resume negotiations. With less than four months until the contract's expiration, the ILA has very little faith that these issues will be addressed in time. "Historically, management has been known to drag their feet or kick the can down the road, but I think this time it caught up with them."

The ILA continues to call on the Administration and President Biden to recognize the threat posed by foreign-owned companies attempting to undermine American jobs. "We won't stand for it, and neither should they," the spokesperson concluded.

### **About the International Longshoremen’s Association:**

The International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) is the largest union of maritime workers in North America, representing 85,000 longshore workers along the East Coast, Gulf Coast, Puerto Rico, Great Lakes, and major U.S. rivers. Its membership includes longshore workers in Eastern Canada and the Bahamas. The ILA is dedicated to ensuring fair labor practices and protecting the rights and jobs of its members.