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Retailers to Obama: Bring the ILWU and PMA to Washington

WASHINGTON, February 20, 2015 – The [National Retail Federation](#) issued the following statement from [Vice President for Supply Chain and Customs Policy Jonathan Gold](#) on the ongoing West Coast port contract negotiations between the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and Pacific Maritime Association (PMA):

“It has been nearly a week since President Obama dispatched Labor Secretary Perez to the West Coast to help settle the protracted contract dispute between the ILWU and PMA. While the Secretary has said the meetings have been productive, we have yet to see a final deal.

“We understand the Secretary has given the parties a deadline to reach an agreement. If a deal is not reached today, we support the decision to move the negotiations to Washington and we call upon the president to personally engage in the discussions until an agreement is reached.

“The nation’s retailers and supply chain stakeholders cannot

afford another week of uncertainty at the Pacific ports, where dozens upon dozens of ships and thousands of containers are held out at sea, and where hundreds of millions of dollars in consumer goods, inventory and merchandise sit idle.

“It is inconceivable that the parties are knowingly and willfully allowing the economy to be held hostage over a particular grievance, individual or issue. While the two sides debate a new contract, millions of American businesses and employers, large and small, and their employees are put at risk due to the impasse.

“The ILWU and PMA need to reach a final agreement today.”

NRF is the world’s largest retail trade association, representing discount and department stores, home goods and specialty stores, Main Street merchants, grocers, wholesalers, chain restaurants and Internet retailers from the United States and more than 45 countries. Retail is the nation’s largest private sector employer, supporting one in four U.S. jobs – 42 million working Americans. Contributing \$2.6 trillion to annual GDP, retail is a daily barometer for the nation’s economy. NRF’s *This is Retail* campaign highlights the industry’s opportunities for life-long careers, how retailers strengthen communities, and the critical role that retail plays in driving innovation. NRF.com

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