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January 14, 2021

Pacific Maritime Association
Chad Lindsay, Vice President
1 World Trade Center 1700
Long Beach, CA 90831

Re: Suspension of Availability Requirements and GST Due to COVID-19 Surge

Dear Chad,

Due to the current devastating surge in COVID-19 infections in Southern California and among longshore workers, marine clerks, foremen and the identified Casual workforce in the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, ILWU Locals 13 and 63, with the support of ILWU Local 94, hereby formally reiterate, in writing, several requests that Local 13 and 63 have made verbally, and repeatedly, in LRC meetings over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As the Employers are well aware, the industry has been hit hard by COVID-19, particularly in the last few months. Coastwide, from November 30, 2020, to January 1, 2021, we are aware of approximately 433 COVID-19 infections, with an additional 200 reported cases of exposure. The numbers for January 2021 are even more severe with an estimated 166 COVID-19 infections to date. These infections have resulted in at least 8 deaths: 1 in August 2020, 5 in December 2020, and 2 thus far in January 2021. These numbers are too high. It is incumbent upon the Employers to do more to safeguard the lives and welfare of the workforce.

To that end, ILWU Locals 13 and 63 are requesting the suspension of the 8.34 availability requirement for Class A longshore workers and marine clerks, the suspension of the 70% availability requirement for Class B longshore workers, and the suspension of the 6-month availability requirement for Casuals. We request that the suspension of these availability requirements be retroactive to December 2020.

Currently, COVID-19 infection rates in the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, and in Southern California generally, far exceed the rates that existed at the outset of the pandemic when these availability requirements were previously suspended by the Employers.

There is tremendous and justified fear among the workforce of becoming infected with COVID-19, particularly in light of the numerous known outbreaks at the Ports, and the nature of our work which involves new points of exposure on a daily basis. On the whole, the workforce skews older, and many have expressed that they have made the difficult decision not to work because of their age or pre-existing conditions that make them particularly susceptible to severe COVID-19 complications.

Locals 13 and 63 also request that all Employer Complaints related to 8.34 and 70% availability, covering the time period of March 2020 to present, be dropped, and that all Casual workers who have been removed for availability reasons during the current COVID-19 pandemic be reinstated.

Finally, Locals 13, 63, and 94 are requesting that all GST classes be suspended immediately. We now know that COVID-19 is airborne, that six feet of social distance between individuals does not guarantee infection will not occur, that contact with an infected person for more than 15 minutes creates a serious risk of transmission, and that there is a new, more contagious strain of COVID-19 circulating in the United States.

Based on these current facts, it is a serious threat to the health and safety of the workforce to require 10 to 20 workers to intermingle in an indoor classroom environment for over six hours to take GST.

Please contact us to discuss these requests.

Sincerely,



Ramon Ponce de Leon
President
ILWU Local 13



Michael A. Podue
President
ILWU Local 63



Daniel G. Miranda
President
ILWU Local 94

cc: ILWU Coast Committee
James McKenna, PMA