Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 30, 2015

Mr. Robert McEllrath
President
International Longshore Warehouse Union
1188 Franklin Street, Fourth Floor
San Francisco, California 94109

Mr. James McKenna
Chairman and CEO
Pacific Maritime Association
555 Market Street, Third Floor
San Francisco, California 94105

Dear Mr. McEllrath and Mr. McKenna:

On behalf of our constituents, who depend on trade and the efficient flow of commerce, we strongly urge both parties to quickly resolve their differences and put an end to the nine months of negotiations. The impact of the current negotiations on port operations and the movement of goods is felt in all parts of the supply chain and across the entire country. Our constituents are losing business, letting employees go, and worrying about the future. As trade supports over 38 million jobs across the country, we strongly urge your organizations to reach an agreement, because the inability to reach consumers outside our borders impacts jobs here at home.

The efficient flow of goods is critical to our regional and national economy. In fact, last year, according to the Department of Commerce, imports and exports comprised thirty percent of our nation's gross domestic product (GDP), as our total trade reached five trillion dollars. These numbers highlight the importance of trade to our economy and emphasize how we rely on our infrastructure, and, especially in this case, our seaports.

The millions of jobs supported by this commerce also offer a glimpse at how the economic activity supported and driven by our ports reaches far beyond their borders to our farms, manufacturing facilities, and businesses. Therefore, the inability to ship perishable products in a timely manner and to import manufacturing inputs is devastating to communities across the country. As these negotiations continue, the U.S. agriculture industry suffers as our specialty crop producers are facing lost export sales and increased costs for cold storage, and the U.S. meat and poultry industry estimates losing at least $40 million each week. This will have a long-term impact as well, as our farmers lose market share.

We were pleased to see that your organizations jointly requested the assistance of a federal mediator, and we had hoped this would help facilitate a resolution. However, we are becoming increasingly concerned the negotiations are not progressing and a shutdown is possible, which our trade-dependent communities, and nation cannot withstand. According to recent studies, the ten day West Coast port shutdown that occurred in 2002 cost the economy over $15 billion. A study by the National Retail Federation and National Association of Manufacturers suggests a current day shutdown would be worse – over $21 billion for ten days and impacting 169,000 jobs. Moreover, even if a resolution is reached quickly, our constituents will endure months of attempting to clear the backlog at the ports and some business may never be recovered.

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We again urge you to come to a swift resolution for our workers, ports, communities, manufacturers and farmers.

Sincerely,

DAVE REICHERT
Member of Congress

KURT SCHRADER
Member of Congress

DAN NEWHOUSE
Member of Congress

CATHY MCMORRIS RODGERS
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

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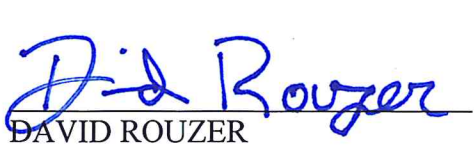

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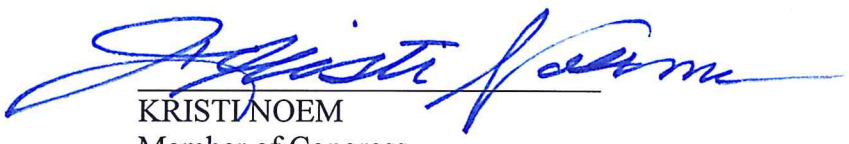

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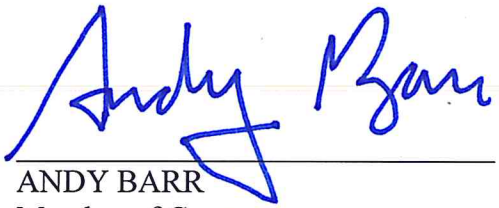

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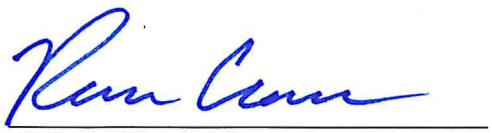

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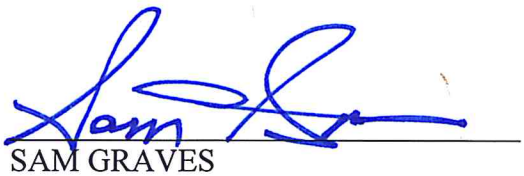

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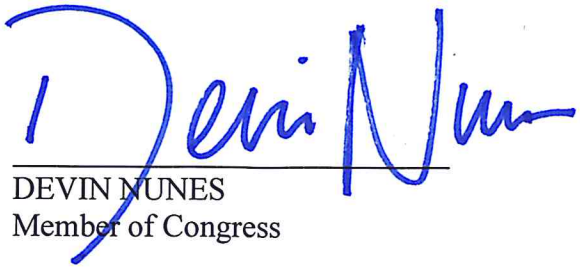

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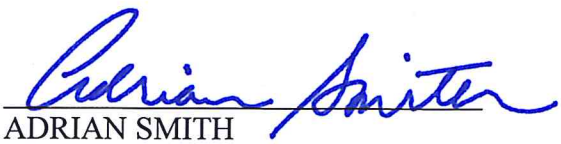

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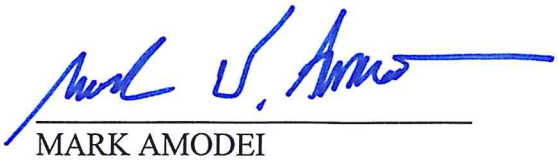

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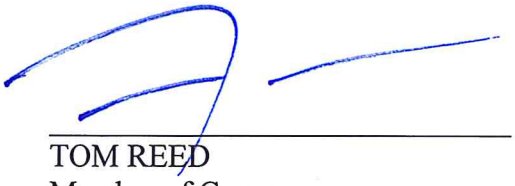

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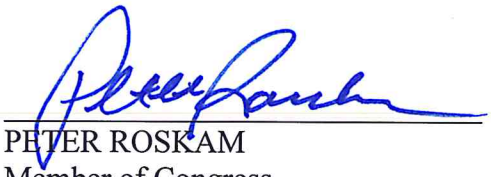

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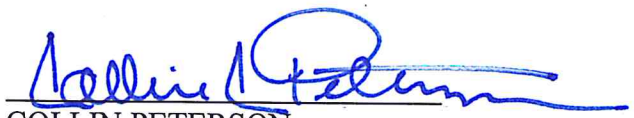

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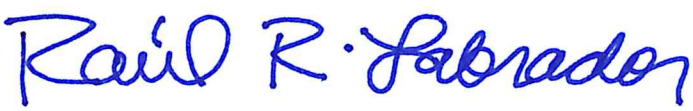

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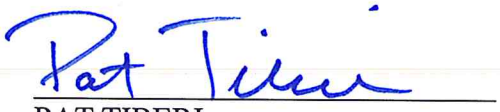
Member of Congress



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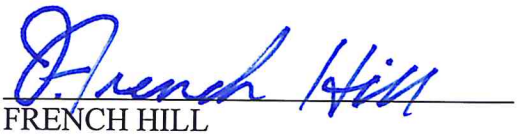

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