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## **“USMX Proposes Deep Cuts In Master Contract”**

### **Master Contract Bargaining Update #3 (February 12, 2009)**

The Longshore Workers' Coalition has begun work on a mobilization strategy after receiving employer counterproposals calling for steep givebacks on the last day of the opening round of the negotiations in Orlando, Florida, for a new deep-sea master contract.

#### **ILA UNITY FOR A STRONG CONTRACT**

It has been the LWC's position all along that if the United States Maritime Alliance demands givebacks, the ILA should break off the early negotiations—the master contract does not expire until September 30, 2010—and focus instead on mobilizing the entire union for a contract fight over the next year.

Management has money, but they are not going to part with it easily. We need to show the USMX that we are united and will not settle for less. **“NO WAGE BRIDGE, NO CONTRACT!”**

#### **CRYING POVERTY**

Negotiations between the ILA and the USMX, the East Coast longshore employer coalition, started on Tuesday February 10 in Orlando, with both sides presenting their key issues.

Predictably the USMX industry analyst, Paul Richardson & Associates, presented a doom and gloom scenario for the industry. However, when questioned by the ILA, the employers did not deny making a profit last year. They also did not deny that they have projected profits for this year.

Various LWC members present reiterated that we are bargaining for the economic recovery, not the recession and we have no intention of accepting a weak offer either now or in the future.

The ILA in turn outlined its main demands: an end to the tiered wages and benefits and container royalty caps, as well as language on work jurisdiction and safety.

#### **USMX INTIAL COUNTEROFFER=DEEP CUTS**

On day two of the negotiations, the USMX came back after reviewing the ILA's proposals and rejected every one of them. This morning the USMX presented their counteroffer: a three-year extension of the current contract.

This will result in a wage cut for all our members. Wages will be frozen. Overtime will be eliminated on weekends and nights. Shift work will be instituted. Container royalty payments will be frozen.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

The established joint labor-management sub-committees will meet over the next few weeks to examine issues relating to specific waterfront crafts. No further bargaining sessions have been scheduled.

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