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Wage Scale Committee Rejects Contract Proposal Early Negotiations Canceled

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The LWC led the way in a unanimous vote of the 200-plus member Wage Scale Committee. The ILA rejected management's proposal to extend the contract while freezing our 2009 wage increase. Early negotiations have been canceled and the \$1 and \$1.50 raise will go into effect on October 1st.

ILA UNITY

Union delegates appear more unified than ever before and determined to take a stand on a real end to the wage tiers and imposing limits on technology. The Atlantic Coast District prepared a research packet for delegates on employer profits, productivity and the impact of technology. The Longshore Workers' Coalition built bridges with many new faces around the issues affecting ILA members.

Management refused to address the most pressing issues, including strict control of technology on the docks. Delegates from Virginia testified to the devastating impact on jobs that the newly automated APM terminals have had. Delegates made alternative proposals including bringing back the Guaranteed Annual Income to offset job loss, raising the Container Royalty to account for the increased productivity and securing all new work on and off the docks.



A week earlier the LWC exposed the tentative deal to extend the contract brokered by ILA President Hughes. The LWC organized a picket of the emergency ILA Executive Board meeting in Washington, DC on August 26. The meeting was shut down after 15 minutes (see <http://lwcjustice.com/?p=257>).

HUGHES FAILS TO GO IT ALONE

When the Wage Scale Committee delegates met in Florida on Tuesday September 2 it appeared as if the deal was settled. Despite the lack of support from the ILA Executive Board and even after all the Wage Scale Subcommittees unanimously rejected the USMX proposal, President Hughes told the entire delegation that he would bypass the delegation and go directly to a membership vote. However, when it was clear that the entire delegation was furious about being excluded from negotiations, Hughes backed away from that position.

It didn't end there. The following morning, on Wednesday September 3, Hughes made one last attempt to salvage the deal by having Charles Montgomery of Local 1351 make a motion to allow the Executive Board to negotiate with USMX again. Although the motion passed with much expressed disagreement, when management refused to budge the delegation sent back a resounding and unanimous referendum on management's proposal.

There is much work ILA members must do between now and the contract expiration, September 30, 2010, to win a good contract. This was only the first step.