

INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION



1025 CONNECTICUT AVE, NW
SUITE 507
WASHINGTON, DC 20036
(202) 463-6265
(202) 467-4875 FAX

ROBERT McELLRATH
President

RAY A. FAMILATHE
Vice President

WESLEY FURTADO
Vice President

WILLIAM E. ADAMS
Secretary-TREASURER

November 3, 2015

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the men and women of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, I am writing to express my strong opposition to an amendment introduced by Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA) that places performance metrics on workers at our ports. The ILWU also opposes an amendment offered by Rep. Reichert (R-WA) and others that mandates a GAO study be conducted to further denigrate our west coast ports at a time when we are working hard to restore trust with the shipping community. If either of these amendments is adopted on the floor, we strongly urge you to vote against final passage of the Drive Act, H.R. 22.

Representative Newhouse's amendment is unprecedented. It places productivity metrics on longshore workers. Currently, the Bureau of Transportation Statistics does not track the performance of transportation workers in any mode of transportation as it is proposed in the Port Performance Act. The DOT's mission is to promote safety and infrastructure investment, not to collect and track data on private transportation workers to increase their productivity.

Representative Newhouse's amendment is irresponsible. If this legislation becomes law there will be tremendous pressure from terminal operators to speed up operations on the docks in order to appear more appealing to shippers. When crane drivers, at the behest of employers, are pressured to sacrifice safety for speed workers die.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics lists the accident report for longshore workers at 6.6 accidents per 100 workers. That is more than three times higher than the 1.9 rate for railroad workers and double the rate for long haul trucking and coal mining. Does Congress really want to pass legislation that will undoubtedly increase the number of serious injuries and fatalities on the docks? Telling a crane driver to work faster is a recipe for a complete catastrophe.

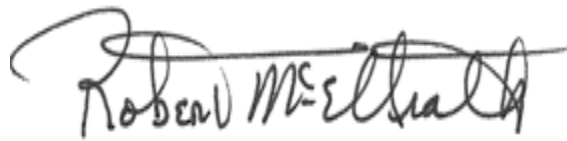
The Newhouse amendment has two real goals: One, to create a brand new, unfunded and unprecedented federal program which grants permission to the federal government to go inside privately operated port facilities to track worker productivity, such as the average container lifts per hour, and two, to undermine long established federal labor standards that protect workers and their right to collectively bargain.

The Reichert amendment would mandate a General Accounting Office Study to evaluate the labor negotiations that took place between the ILWU and our employer, the Pacific Maritime Association. The transportation bill is not the place to revisit labor negotiations or labor law. The amendment would duplicate a GAO study already being conducted at the request of Senator Deb Fischer(R-NE). It is a complete waste of hard earned taxpayer money!

Again, the ILWU wants to be in a position to support the multi-year comprehensive transportation legislation passed out of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on a non-partisan basis. Chairman Shuster and Ranking Member DeFazio have worked well together to produce a bill that we can support. Importantly, the bill prioritizes a dependable unprecedented level of investment in our national freight network which is needed for ports in the United States to compete with Canada and Mexico for goods bound for the American consumers.

Please vote no on the Newhouse and Reichert amendments and pass a non-partisan, multi-year transportation bill to meet the critical infrastructure needs in our country. Again, if Congress passes an amendment that places the safety of our workforce in jeopardy, we cannot be a part of it. We would urge a no vote on final passage.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert McEllrath". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke extending across the middle of the name.

Robert McEllrath
International President