



Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific

MARINE DIVISION -- INTERNATIONAL LONGSHORE & WAREHOUSE UNION
NATIONAL OFFICE • 1711 W NICKERSON ST, SUITE D • SEATTLE, WA 98119 • (206) 284-6001 • FAX (206) 284 5043



April 15, 2015

Robert McEllrath
President
ILWU
1188 Franklin Street
San Francisco, CA 94109

Dear President McEllrath,

I am in receipt of a Letter of Understanding (LOU) regarding Picket Lines, dated July 1, 2014, between the Pacific Maritime Association and the ILWU, and signed March 3, 2015, by you, as ILWU President. The LOU states in part that:

“... Prior to the establishment of any picket line by an ILWU Affiliate about the premises of an employer affecting the work of employees covered by the PCLCA, either party may require a meeting of the Joint Port Labor Relations committee of the port affected (or an Area Committee or the Coast Committee, if such is agreed to be appropriate) and such meeting shall be held immediately (within 24 hours). Without such meeting, a picket line by an ILWU affiliate shall not be considered a legitimate and bona fide picket line.”

I am deeply disturbed about the implications of this letter.

We affiliated with the mighty ILWU in November of 1980, after the ILWU shut down the West Coast in response to the arrest and imprisonment of then IBU President Don Liddle and Secretary-Treasurer Larry Miner for their refusal to order 800 striking IBU members at Washington State Ferry to drop their picket lines and return to work. That act of selflessness and solidarity is the legacy of the ILWU that I embrace and respect.

Twenty-three years ago, the San Francisco Region of the IBU picketed a notoriously non-union tug and barge company, Bay Bunkering, during an attempt to bunker a Matson ship at their Oakland terminal. Bay Bunkering threatened to undermine our hard won first-class tankermen contract with Crowley Maritime Company. On May 19, 1992, at 4:00 PM, the tug “Sea Dive” began picketing the barge alongside the ship. At the same time we set up a massive picket line outside the terminal gate. The Local 10 BA showed up immediately and none of our brother and sister longshore workers crossed our picket line. The MEBA chief on the ship refused to hook up the hose and production came to a standstill. Even the Pile Butts, Local 34, working down the street from the terminal shut their job down in solidarity with us. On the second day, with the tensions mounting, Matson agreed to order the barge away from the ship, and we took our picket line down! It was a magnificent experience and I was proud of our organization. That was the final act that drove Bay Bunkering out of the San Francisco Bay.

REGIONAL OFFICES

PUGET SOUND
1711 W. Nickerson, Ste. D
Seattle, WA 98119
(206) 284-5040
FAX: (206) 284-5043

REGION 37
1711 W. Nickerson, Ste. D
Seattle, WA 98119
(206) 284-5321
FAX: (206) 284-5043

COLUMBIA RIVER
2435 NW Front Ave.
Portland, OR 97209
(503) 228-6000
FAX: (503) 223-2556

SAN FRANCISCO
450 Harrison Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 896-1224
FAX: (415) 896-1226

HAWAII
451 Atkinson Drive
Honolulu, HI 96814
(808) 944-0611
FAX: (808) 944-8051

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA
1911 N. Gaffey, Ste. A-B
San Pedro, CA 90731
(310) 521-9003
FAX: (310) 521-9094

ALASKA
880 Glacier Hwy, #112
Juneau, AK 99803
(907) 790-9644
FAX: (907) 790-9646

KETCHIKAN
Post Office Box 6300
Ketchikan, AK 99901
(907) 225-6360
FAX: (907) 225-8656

April 15, 2015
Page 2

Not long after that we received a call from the President of ILWU Local 10 that they needed help to man a picket line at Pier 92, when Manson (an IBU employer) was off loading pipe at Pier 92 with iron workers employed by Sheedy Drayage Company, instead of longshore workers. IBU members enthusiastically joined the picket line en masse and assisted with the Port of San Francisco and Sheedy to get the longshore workers on the job.

On the Columbia River last year, some of our members lost their pay, and some their jobs to stand in solidarity with longshore workers in their struggle for a contract.

We must not drift from the ILWU Guiding Principles established in 1953 by our founding fathers:

. . . IV “To help any worker in distress” must be a daily guide in the life of every trade union and its individual members. Labor solidarity means just that. Unions have to accept the fact that the solidarity of labor stands above all else, including even the so-called sanctity of the contract. We cannot adopt for ourselves the policies of union leaders who insist that because they have a contract, their members are compelled to perform work even behind a picket line. Every picket line must be respected as though it were our own.”

It is a basic right of our members to honor union picket lines. If any ILWU affiliates’ members are willing to stand up and fight for their contract, and they choose to go out on strike, we can't let somebody outside our organization, union or employer, decide our picket line is not valid, and not worthy of support. Union members have a fundamental responsibility to honor other unions’ picket lines – that is what we can do– that is what we have done for each other.

Our history has made us the great organization we are today that is respected by the labor movement as one of the most powerful and compassionate unions today. I appeal to you to reject the March 3, 2015, Letter of Understanding (Picket Lines), as it compromises our core values and jeopardizes one of our most treasured strengths - solidarity and selflessness shown to one another in times of crisis and struggle.

Sincerely,



Marina V. Secchitano
San Francisco Regional Director

cc: Alan Cote, President IBU; Terri Mast, Secretary Treasurer IBU; IBU Regional Directors: Rich Gurtiza, Region 37; Brian Dodge, Columbia River Region; Peter Hart, Puget Sound Region; Josh Stevenson, Alaska Region; Donovan Duncan, Hawaii Region; John Skow, Southern California Region; Robert Irminger, SFR Chair; Fred Pecker, Secretary Treasurer ILWU Local 6; Melvin Mackay, President ILWU Local 10; Sean Farley, President ILWU Local 34