


Update: The USMX and the ILA have agreed the extension on the Master Contract will end on Feb. 6, 2013.

The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the U.S. Maritime Authority (USMX) have reached an agreement just a day out from the expiration of a master contract, effectively averting a strike that threatened to paralyze international trade on the U.S. East and Gulf Coasts. 

The two parties had previously locked horns over the issue of container royalties, but in a release today the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS) said a solution had been found.

"The container royalty payment issue has been agreed upon in principle by the parties, subject to achieving an overall collective bargaining agreement," said FMCS director George H. Cohen.

"The parties have further agreed to an additional extension of 30 days (i.e until midnight, January 28, 2013) during which time parties shall negotiate all remaining outstanding Master Agreement issues, including those relating to New York and New Jersey. The negotiation schedule shall be set by the FMCS after consultation with the parties.

"Given that negotiations will be continuing and consistent with the Agency's commitment of confidentiality to the parties, FMCS shall not disclose the substance of the container royalty payment agreement."

Cohen thanked ILA president Harold Daggett and USMX chairman James Capo, for their "ongoing adherence to the collective bargaining process, which has enabled them to avoid the imminent deadline for a work stoppage that could have economically disruptive nationwide implications".

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