

CANADA Daily News and Updates January 22nd 2024

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Ocean Updates

Federal Officials Brought in to Assist Labour Negotiations at Port of Montreal

Federal officials have been brought in to help prevent a third labour stoppage in four years at the Port of Montreal.

Dock workers at Canada's second-busiest port have been without a labour deal since their pact expired Dec. 31. About 1,290 longshore workers and 165 checkers work for the Maritime Employers Association (MEA) in Montreal.

Union and management officials have held several mediation meetings – including some this month – in a bid to reach a new collective agreement, MEA spokesperson Anabel Martin Kaigle said Wednesday. Experts from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service are taking part in the discussions, she added.

Read more in an [article from The Montreal Gazette](#).

Local 514 Bargaining Update – Canada's West Coast Ports

On January 10, the British Columbia Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA) filed a notice of dispute, seeking conciliation assistance from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services in an effort to conclude a negotiated collective agreement with ILWU Local 514 Ship and Dock Foremen that ensures certainty for Canada's West Coast ports.

In response, the Minister has appointed three conciliation officers to assist the parties in reaching a negotiated settlement.

Pursuant to the Canada Labour Code, the conciliation officers have a 60-day mandate from the day of appointment (up to March 19). Any extension beyond 60 days can be made only by mutual consent of the parties. At the end of the conciliation period, a 21-day cooling off period

begins (up to April 9). Scheduling of conciliation meetings is to be confirmed in the coming days.

Read more in an [update from BCMEA](#).

Container Spot Rates Rocket Even Higher as Red Sea Crisis Drags On

The Drewry World Container Index (WCI) Global Composite jumped to \$3,777 per forty-foot equivalent unit for the week ended Thursday. It's now up 173% year to date.

With the exception of the COVID boom period in December 2020 through October 2022, this week's global spot-rate reading is the highest on record since the WCI debuted in June 2011.

This was supposed to be a terrible year for container lines, courtesy of a tidal wave of newbuilding deliveries. According to Alphaliner, 2.3 million TEUs of new capacity were delivered last year, with an additional 3.2 million TEUs set to arrive in 2024.

But ocean shipping rates are acutely exposed to geopolitical events. The Houthi attacks, which have forced container ships to reroute en masse around Africa's Cape of Good Hope, changed the supply-demand equation. Linerlytica now predicts "windfall earnings for carriers in Q1 2024."

Read more in an [article from American Shipper](#).

Customs Regulatory

CARM Webinar for Non-Resident Importers

Businesses located outside of Canada that ship goods to customers in Canada and are responsible for customs clearance and other import-related requirements – Non-Resident Importers (NRIs) – must register on the CARM Client Portal.

If you are, or your supplier is, an NRI, CBSA invites you to attend its webinar, Registering on the CARM Client Portal for Non-Resident Importers, available only in English.

Webinar registration options

- Thursday, February 1, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm ET – [Register](#)
- Thursday, February 8, 8:00 to 9:00 am ET – [Register](#)

International Business/Government

The Interim Report of the WCO Exploratory Study on a Possible Strategic Review of the Harmonized System

The World Customs Organization (WCO) has published the [interim report](#) of the exploratory study on a possible strategic review of the Harmonized System (HS).

The interim report provides information on the state of consideration to date, outlining the preliminary analysis of the inputs collected. The report strongly affirms the HS as a crucial trade classification system with no identified superior alternative. It also recognizes that there are areas where improvements to the HS could be made to improve usability or extend its capabilities.

The analysis consists of two sections.

- The first section deals with potential improvements to specific areas/aspects of the HS, its tools, and procedural matters to strengthen the usability and predictability of the HS.
- The second section explores potential strategies to respond to changing needs, noting that some of new expectations on the HS can be challenging or infeasible as the HS is currently structured.

Read more in a [press release from the WCO](#).