

Canadian government steps in to end port lockouts

The Minister of Labour in Canada has imposed binding arbitration on employers and unions to bring end port stoppages on the country's west coast and in Montreal.

[Marcus Hand](#), Editor

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Credit: Port Authority of Prince Rupert

On Tuesday morning the Labour Minister Steven MacKinnon announced he would use his powers under Section 107 of the Canada Labour Code and direct the [Canada](#) Industrial Relations Board (CIRB) to order Parties at ports in Quebec and across Canada's West Coast to resume operations and impose binding arbitration on the employers and unions in order to reach a settlement.

Dockworkers were locked out of terminals at Vancouver and Prince Rupert ports on 4 November after the ILWU Local 514 issued a strike notice. While on Saturday longshoremen at Montreal port were locked out on Saturday following the union's rejection of its latest contract offer.

A statement from the Minister of Labour said, "Collective bargaining negotiations between the parties in the ports of British Columbia, Montreal, and Quebec are all at an impasse. The responsibility for these negotiations belongs to the parties alone, but the impacts are being borne by all Canadians. We simply cannot afford this uncertainty and instability at the moment."

Canada's west coast ports alone move \$800 million worth of goods daily through the country's largest ports in Vancouver and Prince Rupert.

Imposing binding arbitration between employers and unions at the CIRB, the Minister of Labour ordered existing collective agreements to be extending until new ones are reached.

Related: [Canadian dockers locked out of BC and Montreal ports](#)

Representing employers on the west coast the BC Maritime Employer Association said, "The BCMEA intends to follow direction received from the CIRB and will inform member employers of operational updates as soon as possible."

The unions had previously said the lockout in British Columbia was a move by employers to force federal involvement and binding arbitration.