

## Port employers follow ILA, praise Trump for new union contract, avoiding strike

USMX statement comes after ILA called president-elect a 'hero'

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(Photo: Jim Allen/FreightWaves)

Port employers represented by the United States Maritime Alliance on Thursday praised President-elect Donald Trump for helping them reach agreement on [a new labor deal](#) and avert another strike by the International Longshoremen's Association.

The rare public statement by USMX Chairman and Chief Executive David Adam came just one day after the union called the soon-to-be 47th president a "hero" for backing its effort to win a new contract.

"Today, following two days of intensive bargaining with the ILA, USMX members met to begin the formal review process to finalize the tentative Master Contract agreement," Adam said in a statement posted on the USMX website. "The agreement includes provisions that will increase wages, strengthen retirement and healthcare benefits, maintain current jurisdiction, and allow us to modernize our ports – making them safer and more efficient, and building the capacity we need to keep the American economy the global leader in trade.

"The deal is a testament to the USMX and ILA's shared commitment and long history of prioritizing creating a stronger future for our industry and protecting and creating good-paying American jobs."

Adam, who has stayed out of the spotlight during the drawn-out negotiations, added, "Thanks in large part to President Trump's leadership, this agreement reflects our joint commitment to supporting American workers and strengthening our ports so that American businesses can continue to thrive giving them access to markets around the world to sell their products and keep our economy strong.

“On behalf of our members, we look forward to working with President Trump and his Administration.”

The sides on Wednesday announced that they had come to an agreement on automation technology for container handling at Eastern Seaboard and Gulf Coast ports, something the ILA had fiercely opposed, saying it would eliminate union jobs.

Employers insisted automation was desperately needed on the docks to improve efficiency and boost ports’ global competitiveness.

Under the terms of the agreement, terminal operators and ocean carriers will be permitted to expand the use of semiautomated machinery in exchange for guaranteeing the creation of union jobs specifically tied to that equipment.

The 25,000 ILA dockworkers in container-handling at 14 port locations will also get a 62% pay raise over the six years of the contract. That was agreed to following a three-day strike by the union in October.

“He’s a hero to our ILA union and members,” said union President Harold Daggett, in a release. “President Trump gets full credit for our successful tentative Master Contract agreement.”

Details of the new pact aren’t expected to be completed and the contract voted on by union members until late summer or fall. Until then the sides will continue working under the terms of the current contract.

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