



The IWLA Government Affairs Update

January 7, 2025

Happy New Year IWLA members! Welcome back to *3PL Matters*, your one-stop shop for the logistical thrills and spills that 2025 is already serving up. We hope your holidays were smoother than an East Coast dockyard at high tide because things are about to get interesting. From Canadian political earthquakes to port strike anxiety, from tariff tremors to a big waiver win for one of our allies in Congress, we're kicking off the year with plenty of news to keep you on your toes.

Speaking of staying on your toes, IWLA is thrilled to announce that Doug Sampson has joined RSTAC – proof that when the rail game gets tough, warehouses get Doug. Meanwhile, up north, Justin Trudeau has decided to take a long winter's nap from leadership, leaving Canada juggling leadership transitions and tariff threats faster than a port crane during a container rush. While south of the 49th parallel, a looming port strike, as well as debt ceiling worries and Fed rate cuts, promise to keep the U.S. economy's roller coaster rolling – optimistically in the right direction!

It's a big year already, but don't worry: We've got the latest updates to keep you ahead of the curve – or at least to give you something to read while waiting for dock negotiations to resume.

Immediate Warehouse Issues

IWLA Member Doug Sampson Appointed to RSTAC

IWLA is proud to announce that its executive committee member Doug Sampson has been selected by the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to serve on the Railroad-Shipper Transportation Advisory Council (RSTAC). Sampson, chief commercial officer at Acme Distribution in Aurora, Colorado, will serve a three-year term that commenced Dec. 3, 2024. "Doug will be a thoughtful, experienced contributor to RSTAC," says IWLA President & CEO Jay D. Strother. "We are honored the STB has again selected an IWLA member to serve. This underscores the importance of having a strong voice for warehouse-based third-party logistics providers in shaping transportation policies that affect our industry." Sampson's appointment comes after fellow IWLA member Paul Delp, president at Lansdale Warehouse, completed two full terms with the group. "IWLA extends its heartfelt gratitude to Paul," Strother

continues. “Paul’s exemplary service set a high standard, and his contributions over the years have significantly advanced the interests of our industry. He is an extraordinary advocate for the 3PL community.” Having representation on RSTAC is crucial for warehouses and small shippers that use rail service to move goods. As the transportation landscape evolves, RSTAC provides a platform to advocate for policies that promote efficiency, collaboration, and fairness in the rail supply chain.

Canada’s Trudeau Announces Resignation as Prime Minister

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his resignation Jan. 6 after nearly a decade in power, bowing to rising discontent over his leadership and growing turmoil within his government signaled by the abrupt departure of his finance minister, Chrystia Freeland, on Dec. 16. Trudeau, the latest incumbent to be driven out amid rising voter dissatisfaction worldwide, said it had become clear to him that he cannot “be the leader during the next elections due to internal battles.” He planned to stay on as prime minister until a new leader of the Liberal Party is chosen. He said Parliament, which had been due to resume Jan. 27, would be suspended until March 24. The timing will allow for a Liberal Party leadership race. The political upheaval comes at a difficult moment for Canada internationally. U.S. President-elect Donald Trump has threatened to impose 25 percent tariffs on all Canadian goods if the government does not stem what Trump calls a flow of migrants and drugs in the U.S. — even though far fewer of them cross into the U.S. from Canada than from Mexico, which Trump has also threatened. Canada is a major exporter of oil and natural gas to the U.S., which also relies on its northern neighbor for steel, aluminum, and autos. [Read More](#)

U.S. Dockworkers, Port Employers Set to Restart Talks

Leaders from the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the U.S. Maritime Alliance (USMX) are set to resume contract talks on Jan. 7, as the threat of a strike looms, according to a person familiar with the negotiations. Facing a mid-January deadline to reach a deal, the planned talks are a welcome sign for importers and exporters bracing for a labor disruption that would shut every major port on the U.S. East and Gulf coasts. Those gateways account for roughly half of all the country’s container volumes, according to data compiled by the American Association of Port Authorities. But the issue of whether employers will be allowed to add semi-automated machines to port terminals under the next labor contract may once again prove difficult to resolve. In early October, the ILA reached a tentative deal with ocean carriers and terminal operators on a 62 percent wage increase over six years, suspending a three-day strike but leaving the technology issue unresolved. “Let’s hope the parties can actually get a deal. If not, they must do another extension to avoid a strike,” Jonathan Gold, vice president of supply chain and customs policy at the National Retail Federation, wrote in a Jan. 1 on X, the social-media site formerly known as Twitter. [Read More](#)

IWLA to Host California Lobby Days in Sacramento, Feb. 4-5

IWLA, alongside the IWLA California Chapter, will host its annual California Lobby Days in Sacramento on Feb. 4-5, 2025. This event comes at a pivotal time, as nearly one-third of California’s state legislators are new to their positions, providing a unique opportunity for IWLA members to engage directly with lawmakers. Attendees will advocate for the industry’s economic contributions, forge relationships with policymakers, and participate in tailored legislative meetings with key legislators. The event will also introduce IWLA members to its new California lobbying team, Kirk Kimmelshue and Courtney Jensen of FJK Government Affairs, who will facilitate discussions with key decision-makers. Held at the Sheraton Grand Sacramento, the two-day event aims to strengthen the industry’s voice in shaping policies critical to its success. [Register Here](#)

Container Imports to Surge Ahead of Strike, Tariffs, NRF Predicts

Containerized imports are expected to continue to surge through U.S. ports into the new year as shippers look to beat a possible strike by East and Gulf Coast longshore workers and planned tariffs by the incoming Trump administration, according to a new forecast. October volume totaled 2.25 million twenty-foot equivalent unit through ports covered by the Global Port Tracker. That was off by 1.2 percent from September but ahead 9.3 percent from October 2023. The data did not include the Port of Miami, which has yet to report October volumes. The Port Tracker is produced by the NRF and Hackett Associates. The trade group counts Walmart, Macy’s, Target, Microsoft and Levi Strauss among its members. “Either a strike or new tariffs would be a blow to the economy and retailers are doing what they can to avoid the impact of either for as long as they can,” NRF Vice President for Supply Chain and Customs Policy Jonathan Gold said in a release. “We hope that both can be avoided, but bringing in cargo early is a prudent step to mitigate the impact on our industry, consumers and the nation’s economy.” [Read More](#)

Trump Backs ILA on Automation Concerns

President-elect Donald Trump voiced his support for the International Longshoremen's Association's stance against automation in a Dec. 12 Truth Social post. After meeting with ILA President Harold Daggett, Trump said the financial benefits of automation are "nowhere near the distress, hurt, and harm" the technology creates for workers. In response to the president-elect's statement, the United States Maritime Alliance, or USMX, claimed that automation is needed to support better pay for workers and help American consumers. Trump's meeting with the union comes nearly a month after the ILA and USMX's contract negotiations were halted due to the ongoing automation dispute. Both parties met in November after a three-day strike in October but were unable to move forward with an agreement. With a Jan. 15 deadline to finalize a new deal fast approaching, it's unclear whether Trump's support will move the needle in the contract talks between the ILA and USMX. [Read More](#) [Read Even More](#)

Trump Considering Privatization for Struggling USPS

President-elect Donald Trump has expressed interest in privatizing the U.S. Postal Service, the Washington Post reported. Trump has discussed the possibility of overhauling the agency with Howard Lutnick, his nominee for commerce secretary, as well as with other transition officials, the newspaper said, citing three unidentified people with knowledge of the matter. The president-elect said the government shouldn't subsidize the loss-making organization, the people added. USPS lost \$9.5 billion in the financial year ended Sept. 30, amid a decline in mail volume and slower-than-anticipated parcel shipping, the Post said. It's not clear how Trump plans on overhauling the service. During his first term in office, Trump appointed Louis DeJoy as Postmaster to oversee the embattled agency, whose efforts to cut costs came under criticism following months of service delays and backlogs. [Read More](#)

Wholesale Inflation Accelerated in November

Wholesale costs in the United States picked up sharply in November, signaling that price pressures are still evident in the economy even though inflation has tumbled from the peak levels it hit more than two years ago. The Labor Department reported Dec. 12 that its producer price index — which tracks inflation before it reaches consumers — rose 0.4 percent last month from October, up from 0.3 percent the month before. Measured from 12 months earlier, wholesale prices climbed 3 percent in November, the sharpest year-over-year rise since February 2023. The wholesale price report comes a day after the government reported that consumer prices rose 2.7 percent in November from a year earlier, up from an annual gain of 2.6 percent in October. The increase, fueled by pricier used cars, hotel rooms, and groceries, showed that elevated inflation has yet to be fully tamed. Inflation in consumer prices has plummeted from a four-decade high 9.1 percent in June 2022. Yet despite having reached relatively low levels, it has so far remained persistently above the Fed's 2 percent target. Despite the modest upticks in inflation last month, the Federal Reserve is poised to cut its benchmark interest rate this week for a third consecutive time. [Read More](#)

Ontario Premier Threatens to Cut Energy Supply to U.S. Over Trump Tariffs

Ontario Premier Doug Ford says that his province would cut off energy exports to the U.S. if President-elect Donald Trump moves forward with plans to enact 25 percent tariffs on Canadian products. Canada accounts for roughly 65 percent of all U.S. crude oil imports, in addition to more than \$4 billion worth of electricity each year. According to CBC, Ford said at a Dec. 11 press conference that Canada will "use every tool in our toolbox to fight back" if Trump follows through on his proposed tariffs, and that his own priority is to protect the people of his province and country. "We can't sit back and roll over," he added. Although it's unclear whether Ford would have the authority to unilaterally shut off power to the U.S., the premier said that he hopes any such action would be a last resort. His office estimates that Ontario powered 1.5 million homes in the U.S. in 2023, spread across Minnesota, New York, Michigan, and more. [Read More](#)

Updated Warehouse Issues

Federal Reserve Cuts Its Key Rate by a Quarter-Point

The Federal Reserve cut its key interest rate Dec. 18 by a quarter-point — its third cut this year — but also signaled that it expects to reduce rates more slowly next year than it previously envisioned, largely because of still-elevated inflation. The Fed's 19 policymakers projected that they will cut their benchmark rate by a quarter-point just twice in 2025, down from their estimate in September of four rate cuts. Their new projections suggest that consumers may not enjoy much lower rates next year for mortgages, auto loans, credit cards and other forms of borrowing. Fed officials have underscored that they are slowing their rate reductions as their benchmark rate nears a level that

policymakers refer to as “neutral” — the level that is thought to neither spur nor hinder the economy. The Dec. 18 projections suggest that the policymakers think they may be close to that level. Their benchmark rate stands at 4.3 percent after the latest rate cut, which followed a steep half-point reduction in September and a quarter-point cut last month. This year’s Fed rate reductions have marked a reversal after more than two years of high rates, which largely helped tame inflation but also made borrowing painfully expensive for American consumers. [Read More](#)

Sam Graves Gets Steering’s Blessing for Another Term as Chair of Transportation

The House Steering Committee voted to allow Rep. Sam Graves (R-Mo.) to serve a second term as chair of the Transportation Committee, as has been expected since his lone challenger dropped out of contention for the gavel earlier. The decision comes a week after Steering granted Graves a waiver to bypass conference term limits that hold members to a total of three terms. Graves has spent two terms as ranking member and one as chair. Graves had presented a condensed version of the pitch he made for his waiver in which he hammered home the case to the panel that he can move quickly to implement President-elect Donald Trump’s priorities in the new Congress, especially when it comes to the impending surface transportation bill. The Steering panel apparently liked that pitch, which also was likely strengthened by Graves having only had one full term as chair. [Read More](#)

NLRB Set for Republican Majority After Senate Halts McFerran Nomination

In a 50 to 49 vote, two independent senators joined Republicans last month in blocking Lauren McFerran’s nomination to continue serving on the National Labor Relations Board for the next five years. The vote means NLRB no longer has a guaranteed Democratic majority — and will more than likely flip to a Republican majority, given that Donald Trump is set to take office soon. Previously, attorneys have said that the NLRB under Joe Biden’s administration has made space for unions to thrive — namely, through its August 2023 *Cemex* decision, which gave unions an easier path to organize. Meanwhile, Glenn Spencer, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s Senior VP of Employment Policy congratulated the Senate on its decision. “McFerran’s tenure was characterized by contentious decisions and legal challenges that have drained agency resources and overturned established legal precedents,” Spencer said in a statement. “The NLRB should be focused on promoting fairness, not tipping the scale in favor of a select few in organized labor at the expense of workers and businesses alike.” NLRB’s remaining members include Gwynne Wilcox, David Prouty, and Marvin E. Kaplan. Wilcox’s second term lasts until August 2028, Prouty’s term is up August 2026, and Kaplan’s term ends next August. [Read More](#)

Yellen Urges Swift Action as Debt Ceiling Looms

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said her agency will need to start taking “extraordinary measures,” or special accounting maneuvers intended to prevent the nation from hitting the debt ceiling, as early as Jan. 14, in a letter sent to congressional leaders the afternoon of Dec. 27. “Treasury expects to hit the statutory debt ceiling between January 14 and January 23,” Yellen wrote in a letter addressed to House and Senate leadership, at which point extraordinary measures would be used to prevent the government from breaching the nation’s debt ceiling — which has been suspended until Jan. 1, 2025. The department has in the past deployed what are known as “extraordinary measures” or accounting maneuvers to keep the government operating. But once those measures run out the government risks defaulting on its debt unless lawmakers and the president agree to lift the limit on the U.S. government’s ability to borrow. “I respectfully urge Congress to act to protect the full faith and credit of the United States,” she said. After a protracted debate in the summer of 2023 over how to fund the government, policymakers crafted the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which included suspending the nation’s \$31.4 trillion borrowing authority until Jan. 1, 2025. The federal debt currently stands at roughly \$36 trillion — which ballooned across both Republican and Democratic administrations. And the spike in inflation after the coronavirus pandemic pushed up government borrowing costs such that debt service next year will exceed spending on national security. [Read More](#)

A New California Law Bans Your Boss from Ordering You to Attend Anti-Union Meetings

Starting Jan. 1, California employers won’t be able to require workers to attend any meetings related to their political or religious views — or how their bosses feel about unions. That’s according to a new law, Senate Bill 399, that is one of the most prominent of the usual wave of new workplace laws businesses are expected to follow each year. The legislation came as the Legislature’s Democratic supermajority sought to support a rising wave of unionization across California and the nation. The law bans mandatory workplace meetings in which the employer discusses their “opinion about religious or political matters,” the latter of which is defined to include the decision on whether to join

a union. Workers cannot be disciplined for refusing to attend such a meeting under SB 399. The new law's proponents, including the California Labor Federation, say such meetings can intimidate workers out of exercising their right to unionize, though retaliation from employers is already illegal. Business groups such as the California Chamber of Commerce, as well as IWLA, opposed the new law, arguing it would infringe on employers' right to free speech and ability to discuss the effects of laws or regulation on their industries. The law includes exceptions for employees, such as those working for political parties, whose job includes talking about politics. In November, the board ruled in a case involving Amazon that captive-audience meetings violate the federal law guaranteeing workers the right to unionize, but many labor experts expect the decision to be overturned once President-elect Donald Trump takes office. In that case, California's ban on the meetings would still apply, though employers have been challenging other states' captive audience laws in court. [Read More](#) [Bill Summary & Text](#)

Canada Orders Postal Workers Back to Job

The Canadian government asked an independent labor board to order 55,000 Canada Post Corp. workers back to the job, a move that's expected to end a strike that disrupted mail service for nearly a month during the busy holiday season. Labor Minister Steven MacKinnon announced Dec. 13 he has referred the matter to the Canada Industrial Relations Board. He has asked the board — if it agrees the parties are at an impasse — to order the postal service and workers to resume operations and to extend their existing contracts until May 22. This is the third time the government has asked the CIRB to intervene in a labor dispute since August. Members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers walked out on Nov. 15, halting mail delivery across the country at a crucial time of year. As of Dec. 13, the strike has cost small businesses C\$1.6 billion (\$1.1 billion) per day, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business said in a news release. [Read More](#)

Arizona City Gifts Land for New Cross-Border Trucking Port

The U.S. General Services Administration and the city of Douglas marked the transfer of 80 acres to a new commercial port of entry site in development in Cochise County, Ariz., along the U.S.-Mexico border. Some 130 people attended a Dec. 4 signing ceremony hosted by city Mayor Donald Huish at the site of the future construction site for the new port, five miles west of the existing Raul Hector Castro Land Port of Entry. "We are not just investing in infrastructure; we are investing in our community's future," Huish said. "This project will enhance trade, border security, create jobs and strengthen our connections countywide, statewide and nationally." The Castro port, expanded 27 years ago from the original facility built in 1933, can no longer handle today's traffic and commercial vehicle inspection demands. It is the only commercial and noncommercial border crossing between Douglas in southeastern Arizona and Agua Prieta in Mexico. GSA has budgeted \$319 million for the project, which has an estimated completion date of 2028. Once the facility opens, CBP will relocate all commercial operations there that are currently being handled at the existing Castro port. [Read More](#)

CPKC Completes Second Span Over Rio Grande at Laredo Gateway

The \$100 million Patrick J. Ottensmeyer International Railway Bridge is officially complete. The second span across the Rio Grande — linking Laredo, Texas, with Nuevo Laredo, Mexico — doubles Canadian Pacific Kansas City's cross-border capacity because it allows the railway to eliminate the four-hour northbound and southbound directional running windows that created bottlenecks on its original lone single-track bridge. "Completion of this internationally important project more than doubles our capacity to move freight through the border at the largest international trade port of entry in North America," CPKC CEO Keith Creel said in a statement Dec. 17. The single-track, 1,170-foot span was built 35 feet downstream from the existing bridge that was opened in 1920. "By linking expanding markets for our customers, this CPKC investment will accelerate growth between the industrial heartland of Mexico and points across the United States and Canada," Creel said. Kansas City Southern received presidential permits for the project in 2020 and broke ground in late 2022. The bridges are now named in honor of Ottensmeyer, the last president and CEO of KCS, who died in July. [Read More](#) [Read CPKC Press Release](#)

REMINDER: IWLA Whitepaper Helps Warehouse Operators Navigate OSHA Inspections

IWLA has released *Navigating an OSHA Inspection: A Guide for Third-Party Logistics Warehouse Operators*, a whitepaper developed by the IWLA Regulated Goods Council. This timely resource equips members with practical strategies to prepare for and manage OSHA inspections, ensuring safety compliance and operational efficiency. As OSHA's National Emphasis Program (NEP) intensifies scrutiny on warehouses and high-risk facilities, this guide offers actionable insights, from pre-inspection preparation to post-inspection protocols. Members can access the whitepaper in the resources section of the IWLA website or [via this link](#).

To strengthen our advocacy on behalf of warehouse operators, IWLA is seeking member input on any recent OSHA inspections at your facilities. Reports of increased inspections under the NEP have raised concerns about potential overreach, and your experiences are essential for helping us document these impacts and bring them to the attention of elected leaders. We are also collecting information on third-party participation during inspections under the Worker Walkaround Rule—a regulation IWLA is actively challenging—and any citations related to heat or ergonomics hazards. By participating in our brief survey, you'll directly contribute to IWLA's efforts to push back against regulatory overreach and advocate for fair policies that support our industry. Your voice matters—please take a moment to share your insights and experiences with us. Thank you for helping us fight for your interests!

[Link to Survey](#)

Questions? Contact [Bruce Linderman](#) or call 847.813.4698

If you like this, let us know [here](#)!

The IWLA 3PL Matters Update is designed to inform you on legislative and regulatory issues that directly impact and affect your warehouse and how you conduct business. The 3PL Matters Update is disseminated every three weeks and provides a look at recent developments and activities from the prior three weeks, as well as a look at what to expect in the upcoming weeks.
