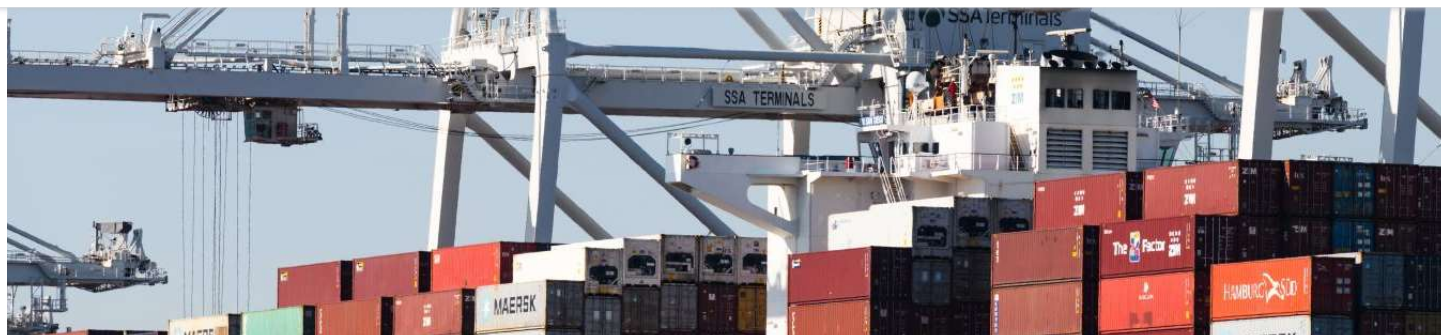


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ILWU, PMA hope to reach West Coast contract deal 'soon'

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The ILWU and PMA recently resumed negotiations after agreeing to set aside a controversial jurisdictional issue involving Terminal 5 in Seattle (pictured). Photo credit: Ian Dewar Photography / Shutterstock.com.

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West Coast longshore workers and their marine terminal employers on Thursday said negotiations on a new contract are continuing and the two sides “remain hopeful of reaching a deal soon.”

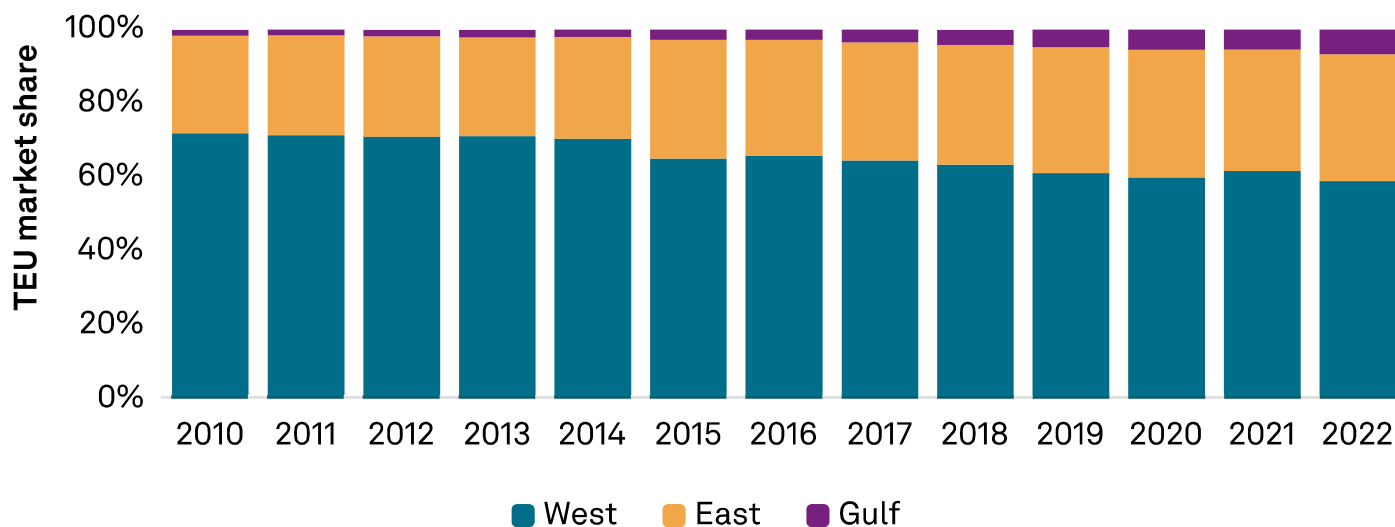
While largely repeating prior talking points, the joint statement from the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) and Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) was notable given the rare communication from the two sides amid negotiations that are now approaching 10 months. And it comes just days before the start of the *Journal of Commerce's* TPM23 conference in Long Beach, where many key stakeholders from container shipping around the globe are due to gather.

The statement also comes amid growing frustration among US importers and West Coast ports that more than nine months of talks have yet to produce a deal. The lack of a contract has spurred some shippers to reroute discretionary cargo away from the US West Coast in order to avoid any disruptions linked to the ongoing negotiations. Data from PIERS, a *Journal of Commerce* sister company within S&P Global, shows that the West Coast's market share of US imports from Asia fell to 58.8 percent last year, from 61.5 percent in 2021. That resulted in share gains for the East and Gulf coasts.



US West Coast ports cede share amid ILWU negotiations

Market share of containerized US imports from Asia by US coast



Notes: 2022 YTD

Source: PIERS, S&P Global

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Two weeks ago, the *Journal of Commerce* reported that the ILWU and PMA had

Thursday's joint statement made note of a prior agreement on health benefits and said the ILWU and PMA "remain committed to resolving remaining issues as expeditiously as possible."

"Talks are continuing on an ongoing basis until an agreement is reached," the statement said.

The statement also said that "West Coast ports have continued to operate" during the negotiations, which began last May 10 in San Francisco. Yet the Port of Oakland saw occasional shutdowns and service interruptions late last year that have been attributed to ILWU members putting pressure on maritime employers.

Those labor actions also shifted down to the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach where shippers, terminal operators, and truckers say work slowdowns by ILWU members have interfered with cargo operations.

A new collective bargaining agreement would cover 22,000 workers at 29 ports along the West Coast.

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