

## Press Release

### For Immediate Release

July 21, 2005

### **Prolonged Vancouver Trucker Strike Must End Quickly**

There must be a quick resolution to the Vancouver container trucker strike, now in its fourth week, which has transformed Canada's largest port into a choke point of international trade. Dialogue and compromise between the truckers and the trucking company/brokers must urgently replace confrontation.

I.E.Canada, Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters, whose members account for a significant percentage of Canada's growing imports and exports, especially with Asia, urges the truckers to show good faith by returning to a mediated negotiating table and to resume their vital transportation role while talks progress.

We can sympathize with the demands of the truckers to increase their revenues to offset soaring fuel costs. But one must urgently look at the overall economic realities. Surely, the independent owner/operators stand to lose more business if current cargo diversions to U.S. ports on the Pacific Northwest also become permanent ship diversions.

It's clearly a matter of *force majeure* for all stakeholders as the conflict is felt nationally as well as in British Columbia. Large retailers which import heavy volumes of goods from Asia are looking for alternative routes. Small importers are being badly hurt as thousands of grounded containers are parked in Vancouver terminals. And worse is yet to come, because the peak shipping season for the big Christmas season in department stores has yet to begin. Transferring some short-haul shipments to rail cannot offer the same cost-effective, supply chain solution.

What is of great concern is the revived perception among shippers and shipping lines of Vancouver as an unreliable, strategic port of entry for North America – and this at a time when trade is booming with Asia, China in particular. The past few years have seen several transportation and intermodal nightmares seriously complicate the process of getting goods to market via Vancouver.

By far, China is the port of Vancouver's leading trade partner. Over the past few years, too, China has overtaken Japan as Canada's second major supplier after the United States. Canadian imports from China surged to more than \$24 billion in 2004 from \$18.6 billion.

### **Mary Anderson**

President

I.E.Canada, Canadian Association of Importers and Exporters  
438 University Avenue, Suite 1618  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2K8

416-595-5333 ext. 24  
manderson@iecanada.com