# Negotiations intensify over container-handling automation for dockworkers



Union dockworkers and employers are currently engaged in discussions aimed at reaching an agreement on the implementation of container-handling automation, a critical negotiation for U.S. Eastern Seaboard and Gulf Coast ports. Leaders from the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) and the United States Maritime Alliance convened privately on a recent Sunday to address the contentious issue surrounding automation that has emerged as a significant hurdle in finalising a new labour agreement affecting tens of thousands of longshore workers.

The proposed deal to incorporate advanced port automation technology is expected to not only modernise operations but also to generate additional union jobs. However, terminal operators appear to be hesitant, largely due to the financial implications associated with the expanded automation. Reports indicate that these operators are reluctant to incur further costs, particularly in the wake of a significant 62% salary increase that was granted to workers following a three-day strike by the ILA in October.

The urgency of the negotiations is underscored by the looming deadline of January 15, when the current contract extension is set to expire. If an agreement is not reached before this date, it could trigger another work stoppage, leading to the suspension of container operations at numerous ports stretching from Texas to New England. Such an event could have far-reaching consequences for supply chains and trade across the regions involved.

As discussions continue, the focus remains on navigating the complexities of automation in a way that balances technological advancement with labour interests, as both sides work toward a resolution that avoids further disruptions in operations at these vital ports.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bertling.com/news-pool/market/ila-port-strike-update-7-january-2025/> - Corroborates the negotiations between ILA and USMX, the issue of automation, and the looming deadline of January 15, 2025.
* <https://maritime-executive.com/article/report-ila-usmx-to-resume-contract-negotiations-for-east-gulf-coast-ports> - Supports the resumption of contract negotiations, the contentious issue of automation, and the wage increase granted to workers.
* <https://www.elliottdavis.com/insights/ila-agreement-update> - Details the disagreements over automation, the arguments from both ILA and USMX, and the potential economic implications of a strike.
* <https://www.bertling.com/news-pool/market/ila-port-strike-update-7-january-2025/> - Explains the financial implications for terminal operators due to the significant wage increase and the reluctance to incur further costs for automation.
* <https://maritime-executive.com/article/report-ila-usmx-to-resume-contract-negotiations-for-east-gulf-coast-ports> - Highlights the urgency of the negotiations and the potential for another work stoppage if an agreement is not reached by January 15, 2025.
* <https://www.elliottdavis.com/insights/ila-agreement-update> - Discusses the balance between technological advancement and labour interests in the negotiations.
* <https://www.bertling.com/news-pool/market/ila-port-strike-update-7-january-2025/> - Mentions the potential far-reaching consequences for supply chains and trade if a strike occurs.
* <https://maritime-executive.com/article/report-ila-usmx-to-resume-contract-negotiations-for-east-gulf-coast-ports> - Details the involvement of President-elect Trump and his support for the ILA's stance against automation.
* <https://www.elliottdavis.com/insights/ila-agreement-update> - Provides strategies for supply chain resilience in the face of potential disruptions due to the negotiations.
* <https://www.bertling.com/news-pool/market/ila-port-strike-update-7-january-2025/> - Explains the potential transport alternatives being considered in anticipation of a strike, such as routing via the West Coast or using air freight.