

*Statement from Western Growers' President and CEO Tom Nassif on the West Coast Port Slowdown:*

**“The conflict between the Pacific Maritime Association (PMA) and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) is harming California’s exports of perishable fresh produce. This is of great concern for our state’s economy. In just the last quarter of 2014, the value of U.S. exports of fresh vegetables, fruit and tree nuts to major markets in the Pacific Rim region totaled over \$5 billion.**

**Inbound ships have been waiting for up to two weeks for berth space and with the port congestion, ships are delayed an additional week before being unloaded. Last night’s announcement from the PMA that it will halt loading and unloading at 29 West Coast ports for four days out of the next five, makes this situation even worse. Outbound export shipments of perishable agricultural commodities, which would normally be making delivery at the destination port of call, may not be loaded on board. Perishable agricultural commodities cannot withstand these types of unplanned delays and neither can customers. Many shippers have made the hard decision to forego exports hoping to find alternative homes for their produce, in some instances fetching a lower price for the farmers.**

**Western Growers has reached out to elected officials and regulatory agencies hoping to increase pressure on ILWU and PMA to bargain in good faith and to stop any work slowdown or lock-out, in an effort to get port activities back to as**

near normal as possible; even then it will take weeks to untangle this nightmarish logistical situation. Non-perishable exports, although delayed, will survive, but for perishable agricultural commodities the losses will only continue to escalate. We strongly urge President Obama to become personally and immediately engaged to get both sides to end this dispute and quickly restore operations at our ports.”