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July 23, 2020

BC Maritime Employers and ILWU Canada Urge Continued Vigilance During COVID-19

The International Longshore Warehouse Union (ILWU) Canada and BC Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA) are urging continued vigilance on the waterfront in light of the recent increase in COVID-19 cases. The health and safety of waterfront workers is our number one priority, while at the same time, ensuring that vital cargo continues to move through BC Ports to and from critical regions across Canada.

On July 20, 2020, Provincial Health provided a statement on the recent increase of COVID-19 cases in BC and warned of the potential for “explosive growth” in new cases if British Columbians become complacent:

“The epidemiological data also shows some concerning upward trends: The infection rate for new cases is increasing above one to one, and we are also seeing an uptick in our case curve. This tells us that we are on edge of increasing our social interactions too much and are at risk of a rebound,” Provincial Health Officer Bonnie Henry.

“We are taking the recent increase in COVID-19 cases seriously. We’ve worked hard with the ILWU to implement robust COVID-19 health and safety protocols at BC’s ports and urge everyone that now is not the time to become complacent. We must all remain vigilant to protect the health and safety of our colleagues and families,” Mike Leonard, President & CEO, British Columbia Maritime Employers Association.

“ILWU and BCMEA are jointly committed to continuing the fight against COVID-19 in British Columbia. We will continue to work together on the ground to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 at work and at home,” Rob Ashton, President, ILWU Canada.

BCMEA and ILWU are reminding all waterfront workers to continue to wash their hands frequently and thoroughly, stay home if they are sick and follow all COVID-19 specific procedures at work and in the community, which includes physical distancing wherever possible. Where physical distancing is not possible, to please wear a non-medical mask to protect themselves and others.

We remain jointly committed to the health and safety on the Waterfront while keeping critical cargo flowing to support Canada’s fight against COVID-19.

For more information on COVID-19 waterfront protocols, please visit <https://www.bcmea.com/resources/covid-19-information/>.

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