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DOLE URGES AGREEMENT ON NEW CONTRACT FOR LONGSHOREMEN'S UNION

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- During hearings on agricultural transportation problems this morning, Senator Bob Dole said he had urged Agriculture Secretary Bob Bergland to provide the National Maritime Administration information necessary to delay the threatened dock strike when the International Longshoremen's contract expires September 30. In a September 16 letter to Bergland Dole noted that there was "little progress" in the negotiations of the contract and said he was "particularly concerned that operations through the Gulf ports be maintained since over 75 percent of our grain is exported there."

On September 22, Dole also sent letters to James J. Dickman, President of the Council of North Atlantic Shipping Association and Thomas Gleason, President of the International Longshoremen's Association encouraging "all parties on both sides of the negotiations to work diligently to reach a settlement and prevent a dock strike that could have extremely adverse effects on agricultural exports."

Following is the text of Dole's letter to Bergland:

I am sure that you share my concern over the possibility of a dock strike when the present International Longshoremen's contract expires September 30.

As you know, negotiations for this contract are presently underway but with little progress. I am particularly concerned that operations through the Gulf ports be maintained since over 75 percent of our grain is exported there.

Rather than wait for the outcome of these negotiations, I would suggest that you take steps to make sure that the National Maritime Administration, who can invoke an 80-day delay on any such walkout be furnished any information necessary to substantiate their position if needed to invoke such an injunction under the Taft-Hartley Act.

We must maintain our export shipments or face even more disastrous effects on low farm prices. Your cooperation and attention to this matter will be greatly appreciated.

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