



ILWU Statement of Policy Opposing Tariffs

The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) unequivocally condemns the recent tariffs that the Trump administration has imposed. Tariffs are taxes. These and other reckless, shortsighted policies have begun to devastate American workers, harm critical sectors of the economy, and line the pockets of the ultra-wealthy at the expense of hardworking families. The tariffs have also sown distrust among our allies and inflamed geopolitical tensions. These tariffs are nothing more than a direct attack on the working class and should be opposed outright.

Massive Job Losses Projected Due to Tariffs

Recently imposed tariffs on China have instigated a de facto trade war, with the United States imposing a staggering 145% tariff on all Chinese imports and China retaliating with a 125% tariff on all U.S. imports. Hundreds of thousands of jobs are dependent on or connected to global trade. Constricted trade between the world's two largest economies could lead to devastating job losses for workers employed in the global supply chain.¹ For example, last week, Ocean Network Express announced the cancellation of one of its shipping routes in response to these tariffs. Indirect effects of these tariffs, like rising fuel costs and increased costs of construction materials, have already led to layoffs as American businesses struggle to adapt.

Crushing the Working Class with Higher Prices

Prices for food, gas, and household goods are rising due to tariffs. According to some economic estimates, families will be forced to pay \$1,600 more per year on basic goods and services due to these tariffs.² Everyone knows that the United States is currently in a housing crisis, with sky-high rents and homeownership completely out of reach for millions of Americans. Tariffs that increase the costs of construction will only accelerate this crisis.

Despite claims to the contrary, recent history indicates that the cost of these tariffs will be passed on to the American worker. In 2018 and 2019, when the U.S. imposed tariffs on Chinese imports, those tariffs did not meaningfully change the balance of US-China trade. Instead, the import prices were passed onto U.S. consumers. It is clear that corporations and foreign countries will pass on costs to consumers while they continue to rake in record profits. Meanwhile, families struggling to get by are being hit with higher grocery bills, unaffordable car payments, and

¹ Kaye, D. (2025, March 5). "What to Know About Trump's Tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China." *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/article/trump-tariffs-canada-mexico-china.html>

² Beyer, D. (2025, March). "Trump's Tariff Plans Will Drive up Costs for the Average American Family between \$1,600 and \$2,000 per year." US Joint Economic Committee. https://beyer.house.gov/uploadedfiles/jec_house_dems_trump_tariffs_report_3.3.25.pdf

soaring costs for everyday necessities. These tariffs are nothing less than an economic war on working people.

“America First” Trade Policy in Name Only

The reality is clear: these tariffs don't put “America First” -- they put American working people last. They will kill jobs, raise costs, and fuel economic instability that will ripple through every community in this country. It is undeniable that decades of free trade agreements have negatively impacted American workers and prioritized corporate profits at the expense of good paying, union jobs in America. However, this haphazard and destructive tariff plan is a sad excuse for a “fair trade” policy. We demand fair trade policies that put working class Americans first, protect jobs, and reduce taxes on the American people, not trade policies dictated by a president's whims.

The ILWU stands strong in the fight for fair trade policies that protect American workers and sustain economic growth. We refuse to accept policies that destroy jobs, inflate costs, and sell out the working class. We call on every worker, every union, and every person who believes in economic justice to stand with us against these Trump tariffs.