

NEWS IN BRIEF

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The Current Senate Di Minimis Bill will Not be Included in Legislation this Year

We had recently written that Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore), the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee has introduced legislation that would tighten up the Di minimis rules for entry by not allowing goods assigned additional duties by Section 301 action, nor goods subject to anti-dumping or countervailing duties. It would also bar goods designated as import sensitive by GSP such as textiles, apparel, or leather goods. We expected this bill to be included in the current China bill set for the end of the year. Members of the Senate would prefer a more detailed bill on di minimis, and Ecommerce and it is not expected to be included in a larger bill until next year.

East Coast and Gulf Ports Labor Update

The ILA has stated if the new contract is not in place by the end of September, they will authorize a work stoppage at the East Coast and Gulf ports. The ILA is making demands for graduated pay increases of \$5.00 per year, the end of all automation for moving cargo at the terminals and for extending union jurisdiction beyond the marine terminals (not yet defined). The ILA Wage Scale Delegates had meetings last week and have voted unanimously to support ILA President Harold Daggett's call for a strike on October 1, if a new agreement is not reached with the USMX.

New Penalties on WPM

We have seen a few new penalties on Wood Packing Materials. Bracing in containers is considered to be WPM. In one penalty all the wood pallets were clearly labeled with the required heat treatment markings. However, the Emergency Action Notice (EAN) stated that one piece of the bracing did not have the proper labeling. The entire shipment was refused and had to be shipped back, and a \$167,000.00 penalty was issued. We suggest that you remind your venders and 3PL's to be aware that bracing is included in the WPM and to have lumber with markings available for bracing and that the markings are easily seen.

Panama Canal Restrictions are Being Eased

Recent rains have lifted the water levels at the Panama Canal. This has allowed the Panama Canal Authority (PCA) to increase the draft in the waterway to 50 feet. This increase means that fully loaded vessels can again make the run through the canal. The number of ships that can move through the canal has already been increased to 34 per day, up from a low of 22 per day. The rain is expected to continue normal annual rates through November

CBP Requiring Better Descriptions on Shipping Documents

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has issued instructions concerning vague descriptions on shipping bills of lading that used to create the cargo manifest. Descriptions such as parts or even machine parts do not give CBP enough information to do their enforcement and targeting review. This program was initially set up for the thousands of ecommerce shipments, but it is now becoming a part of regular shipment review. CBP is giving entry filers a warning when a description is considered to be too vague. When a broker sees such a message, we share with the importer so he can have vendors make corrections for future shipments. We have learned that CBP is considering holding shipments for description corrections. We suggest you share the list of examples of vague descriptions with corresponding better descriptions that CBP has published. The list can be found at: [Examples of Unacceptable vs Acceptable Cargo Descriptions | U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(cbp.gov\)](#)



By **Todd Boice**, President