

# Proposal seeks to try and keep ports open during labor disputes

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

PASCO, Wash. — A bill setting up automatic triggers to start the Taft-Hartley Act process in the event of future labor or management disruptions at U.S. ports is being proposed by U.S. Rep. Dan Newhouse.

The Washington state Republican announced his Ensuring Continued Operations and No Other Major Incidents, Closures or Slowdowns (ECONOMICS) Act at East-day Farms in Pasco earlier this month. Easterday, a family potato farm and packing operation, is one of thousands of farms throughout the West that were impacted by the slowdown of cargo at 29 West Coast ports from May 2014 through February.

It was caused by contentious contract negotiations between the Pacific Maritime Association and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

Newhouse was joined for his announcement by Washington Farm Bureau President Mike LaPlant and Matt Harris, assistant executive director of the Washington State Potato Commission.

## Mandates mediation

The bill would mandate mediation in labor disputes and require a board of inquiry to be convened when certain economic triggers are met. The board would be required to report to the president and the public to recommend whether a Taft-Hartley judicial injunction should be sought to order an end to a dispute. The president or state governors would still have to seek the injunction.

The triggers are:

- When four or more ports are involved.
  - When 6,000 or more port workers are affected.
  - When U.S. exports drop 15 percent or more in one month or 5 percent or more in two consecutive months.
- Any single trigger could start the process, but the bill is still in draft stage and New-



Ben Margot/AP File Photo

**Container ships wait at the dock to be unloaded at the Port of Oakland in February. A monthslong work slowdown clogged export traffic through 29 West Coast ports. Legislation under consideration in Congress is aimed at preventing a replay of the slowdown.**

house is seeking feedback for improvements, he told Capital Press. He said he hopes to introduce the bill within a couple of months.

The definition of strike would be broadened throughout U.S. labor law to include slowdowns, lockouts or threatened strikes or lockouts. A board of inquiry could be triggered for any of those.

The bill is meant to complement HR 3398, the Protecting Orderly and Responsible Transit of Shipment (PORTS) Act, authored by Newhouse and U.S. Rep. Dave Reichert, R-Wash. The PORTS Act, and a companion measure in the Senate, would allow governors of seaport states and territories to invoke the Taft-Hartley Act to order dock workers to work. The PORTS Act includes slowdowns, not just strikes or lockouts, in the Taft-Hartley process.

The Taft-Hartley Act, approved by Congress in 1947, limited the power of labor unions and authorized the president to intervene in strikes that threaten national health and safety.

“There is a lot of interest in preventing the kind of economic losses we experienced this past season,” Newhouse said. “We still haven’t regained (the markets of) some

of the commodities that were lost so it’s still costing producers today.”

## Costly slowdown

The slowdown cost up to \$2.5 billion per day and contributed to an anemic 0.2 percent annualized growth rate in the first quarter of this year, U.S. Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., said in introducing a bill last May that would set up an early warning system of abnormal port operations.

Exports and imports of many commodities through the West Coast were impacted by last year’s slowdown. The Washington state apple industry lost \$100 million in sales, according to the Northwest Horticultural Council.

Total agricultural exports of fruits, vegetables and meats totaled almost \$400 million per week last December, according to the U.S. Agriculture Transportation Coalition. West Coast exports dropped 20.5 percent in the first quarter of 2015, according to the Federal Reserve.

“Two parties should not be able to hold a whole economy hostage,” Newhouse said. “I am trying to keep a sense of urgency in Congress to avoid this happening in the future.”

# Wolf panel discusses ‘wolf-friendly beef’

By DAN WHEAT  
Capital Press

ELLENSBURG, Wash. — The state’s wolf advisory group continued discussing how to help one of its rancher members who lost more than 300 sheep to wolves last year.

The group also talked, during a September meeting at Central Washington University, about a “wolf-friendly beef” label for meat from cattle raised following wolf protection measures.

In a meeting in early September in Tumwater, the group had reached a tentative agreement to help rancher member, Dave Dashiell of Hunter, who estimates he lost more than 300 sheep in July 2014 to the Huckleberry wolf pack in northeastern Washington state.

Dashiell was not at the meeting in Ellensburg, but his brother Stevens County Commissioner Don Dashiell was. He also is a rancher. Don Dashiell said the sheep were worth about \$200 apiece, more than \$60,000 total.

Unable to find suitable grazing land this year, Dave Dashiell moved his flock to a pasture north of Pasco where he’s spent \$10,000 per month on hay. Don Dashiell called it an emergency short-term option that will put his brother out of business in the long-term.

The state Department of Fish and Wildlife killed the pack’s breeding female but dropped plans to kill three more wolves in the pack after Dave Dashiell removed the sheep. The department also compensated Dashiell for 30 to 40 sheep it confirmed as killed by wolves.

Hancock Timber Resource Group offered Dave Dashiell land unsuitable for grazing but didn’t want his sheep back on the land it leased to Dashiell where the slaughter occurred because it was a “public relations nightmare for Hancock,” Don Dashiell told Capital Press prior to the meeting.

During the meeting, the group discussed trying to help Dave Dashiell find suitable grazing land, haz-



Dan Wheat/Capital Press

**Francine Madden, conflict resolution consultant, and state Rep. Shelly Short, R-Colville, talk at Washington wolf advisory group meeting in Ellensburg, Sept. 30.**

ing methods on wolves and what should be on a checklist of actions prior to killing wolves.

Paula Swede, carnivore policy lead in Olympia for Conservation Northwest, suggested helping ranchers by having a label for “wolf-friendly beef” from cattle raised with department wolf protection measures. Dan Paul, state director of The Humane Society of the United States, said as with cage-free eggs, some consumers would be willing to pay more for beef raised with wolf protection measures.

Jack Field, executive vice president of Washington Cattlemen’s Association, said the group should focus on checklists of ways to mitigate and prevent wolves from killing livestock and of efforts that must be tried

before the state kills wolves.

Trent Roussin, a state wolf biologist, said summer wildfires made wolf monitoring and tagging difficult. Two adult female wolves were trapped in an area burned in the Carpenter Road fire, he said. One was a healthy 75 pounds despite missing half of a rear leg, he said. It hasn’t been determined if they are part of the Huckleberry Pack or a distinct pack to the north, he said.

Roussin also reported that one of the Teanaway Pack wolves moved into the eastern end of Whatcom County, making it the second confirmed wolf sighting in western Washington. The other one was a female wolf struck by a vehicle on Interstate 90 near North Bend in April after it had been shot in the right rear leg, apparently several weeks earlier.

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