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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**WESTBOUND TRANSPACIFIC LINES BEGIN PHASED U.S.-ASIA RATE INCREASES**

*Carriers see a bottom in the market, expect pent-up Q4 demand ahead, as rates hover at or near below-cost levels.*

**Oakland, CA / September 8, 2015** – Container shipping lines in the U.S. export trade lane to Asia are recommending phased, across-the-board increases in freight rates, beginning October 1, 2015. The scheduled action reflects the trade’s recovery from congestion challenges earlier in the year; a strengthening market heading into what is typically the trade’s peak season; and an urgent need to halt damaging rate erosion.

Effective October 1, member carriers in the Transpacific Stabilization Agreement (TSA)’s Westbound section will be seeking to establish new target rates in all dry commodity segments that translate into modest increases in most cases, with higher proportionate increases for the most depressed rates. TSA-Westbound lines say they expect to follow with similar, gradual increases in November and December.

“U.S.-Asia freight rates have fallen to historically low levels since the beginning of 2015 due to a strong dollar and unusually weak emerging market demand,” said TSA-Westbound executive administrator Brian Conrad.

“Current westbound rate levels in many cases do not fully cover costs. At best, they make only a nominal contribution to a round-trip sailing, and barely compete for space aboard ship with empty repositioned containers needed in Asia. Worse, at a time when westbound equipment is already in short supply, depressed rates encourage migration of containers to other trades.”

TSA is a research and discussion forum of major container shipping lines serving the trade from Asia to ports and inland points in the U.S. More information about TSA Westbound is at [tsa-westbound.org](http://tsa-westbound.org). TSA members include:

APL Ltd.  
China Shipping Container Lines  
CMA-CGM  
COSCO Container Lines, Ltd.  
Evergreen Line  
Hanjin Shipping Co., Ltd.  
Hapag-Lloyd AG  
Hyundai Merchant Marine Co., Ltd.

Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, Ltd. (K Line)  
Maersk Line  
Mediterranean Shipping Co.  
Nippon Yusen Kaisha (N.Y.K. Line)  
Orient Overseas Container Line, Ltd.  
Yangming Marine Transport Corp.  
Zim Integrated Shipping Services