T

he Teamsters have had enough of workers becoming an afterthought in Capitol Hill policy decisions. There needs to be a way to bring a bipartisan collection of lawmakers together for the good of regular working men and women who are just trying to support their families. And there is one – infrastructure investment.

A better transportation network would help both truckers and the owners of their cargo more efficiently move goods across the country. It would help workers get to their jobs more quickly. And increasing the flow of energy like oil and natural gas would lower prices for consumers and businesses. Plus, construction work would create good-paying jobs.

Rebuilding America is the key to the nation’s future. Whether it’s building new roads or fixing old bridges, the idea is a winner not only for workers but the business community. It’s rare when Congress can help two constituencies with one plan. This is it.

Now is the time to think big. To ignore the need for such a massive program will result in catastrophe for the health, safety and welfare of Americans and the U.S. economy. Let’s get America working and revive our nation to the shining city on the hill it once was again.

LET’S GET AMERICA WORKING
A MESSAGE FROM GENERAL PRESIDENT JAMES P. HOFFA

M

to Stop Merger

The Teamsters have been among the loudest voices regarding Sysco’s $3.5-billion bid to merge with US Foods, identifying some 90 overlapping broadline facilities and up to 2,500 Teamster jobs at risk if the deal goes through. The companies offered to divest and sell a small number of their facilities to Performance Food Group, the third-largest company in the industry.

But on February 19, the Federal Trade Commission filed a lawsuit to block the merger; hearings began in May. While the union applauds the
A MESSAGE FROM DIRECTOR STEVE VAIRMA

AT THE FOREFRONT ON ISSUES THAT MATTER TO OUR MEMBERS

Working families continue to face many challenges. Billionaire-backed politicians are spearheading more laws in more states designed to silence workers. Corporate greed continues to run rampant as major companies like Sysco and US Foods plot mergers and acquisitions with untold consequences for workers.

Fortunately, Teamster members have a powerful union fighting for them—the Warehouse Division is at the forefront of all these issues within the union. We are aggressively organizing new members, pressuring regulators to enforce fairness in the industry, and bargaining strong contracts for workers nationwide.

Our national Sysco-US Foods campaign is gaining momentum. We have successfully sounded the alarm on the dangerous merger between the two companies, calling attention to the harm it could bring to Sysco and US Foods Teamsters. Our national actions are paying off as the FTC heads the warning, and many other consumers have raised about the merger.

In the meantime, we are successfully organizing more Sysco and US Foods workers into the union. We made history last year with our big Sysco organizing victories in Atlanta and Kansas City later in the month. Hunts Point Market is the largest produce market in the world, serving most of the restaurants and grocers in the New York area.

Roma Drivers, Warehouse Workers

Hunts Point Teamsters Win Contract, Wage Increases

Workers at Hunts Point Market in Bronx, N.Y. voted to approve a new, three-year contract in January, with 97 percent of workers voting “yes.” The 1,300 workers, members of Local 202, will receive significant wage increases in each year of the contract. “It’s our best wage and benefits package in two decades,” said Daniel Kane Jr., President of Local 202. The new contract also averred a strike which was authorized by the workers earlier in the month. Hunts Point Market is the largest produce market in the world, serving most of the restaurants and grocers in the New York area.

Roma Drivers, Warehouse Workers

Overwhelmingly Vote for Teamsters

California warehouse workers at Roma Food, a Performance Food Group company, voted by a 3-1 margin in favor of joining Local 630 in Los Angeles in February. The 53 workers in the predominantly Latino bargaining unit are seeking respect and an end to substandard wages, benefits and working conditions. Their victory came on the heels of an earlier organizing victory among the 84 drivers at the facility who voted 82 percent in favor of joining Local 630 in November 2014.

Starbucks Supplier Workers

Drivers and helpers at DPI Specialty Foods voted to join Local 25 in Boston in January. Among the 44 workers, who supply to all Starbucks stores in New England and upstate New York, 37 voted in favor of Teamster representation. The drivers and helpers at DPI sought Local 25 support in an effort to address concerns with employee health care costs, which the company had raised by 8 percent. Workers were also concerned with pay.

More Warehouse Organizing and Contract Wins

FTC’s actions, the fight to protect jobs is far from over. The Teamsters have held numerous actions to keep both union and nonunion workers engaged while raising awareness among customers who are worried about the merger’s effect on competition.

“We will continue do everything in our power to protect our members’ jobs and their union contract,” Vairma said.

Teamsters have been ramping up actions to demand UNFI, the largest organic and natural foods wholesaler in the country, recognize the union formed by drivers in Moreno Valley, Calif., last year. UNFI is a $6.8-billion Fortune 500 company and the primary supplier to Whole Foods Markets.

On February 26, Teamsters and other community leaders protested Sprouts Farmers Market, which is supplied by UNFI. Protesters called attention to Sprouts’ health code violations and UNFI’s community and worker abuses, distributing balloons and leaflets that read, “Sprouts: Unhealthy for our Community.”

UNFI and Sprouts both claim to be values-driven organizations, said Marc Moran, organizer at Joint Council 42 in Pomona, Calif. “We are here today to inform the public about UNFI’s unconscionable behavior.”

UNFI broke federal laws that protect workers’ rights when it intimidated, threatened and fired workers in Moreno Valley. In November 2014, the Teamsters Union was federally certified as the workers’ union after the company managed to delay the counting of the ballots for over a year on a technicality. But UNFI still refuses to recognize the workers’ union.

“Over the years, UNFI has tried to undermine workers who have asserted their rights protected by United States law, even where the Teamsters have been certified as the workers’ union through federally supervised elections,” said Steve Vairma, Teamsters Warehouse Division Director. “UNFI wants to destroy its workers’ fundamental rights to join together to improve their working conditions.”

“Whenever a group of workers at a UNFI warehouse or truck yard attempt to form a union, UNFI management brutalizes them with a barrage of tactics based on contempt and fear, solely for the purpose of intimidating their own workers. It’s time Sprouts took a stand to stop this illegal bullying behavior in their supply chain,” said Randy Korgan, Organizing Director for Local 63 in Covina, Calif.

Following the action at Sprouts, Teamsters and organic food advocates held an action at the annual Natural Products Expo West conference, which was sponsored by UNFI. They informed attendees about UNFI’s abusive and unsustainable behavior toward its workers. Protesters held banners while an airplane banner flew over the Anaheim Convention Center that read, “UNFI: Stop the Bullying.”

Some conference attendees were shocked to hear about UNFI’s illegal behavior. In 2012, the International Labor Rights Forum (ILRF) reported that UNFI engaged in serious violations of workers’ rights, including threatening violence against mostly immigrant workers. The ILRF also found that UNFI violated workers’ rights in Auburn, Wash., when it threatened to permanently replace them.

In March, former UNFI workers testified at a hearing held by the Southern California Commission on a Sustainable Supply Chain.

“Time is up for the bullying and stop the intimidation,” Vairma said.

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TEAMSTERS TURN UP THE PRESSURE AT UNFI

Actions Target Bad Practices of Natural Foods Wholesale Company in California

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