



07 February 2023

MR. PATRICK RONAS

President
Association of International Shipping Lines (AISL)
Heritage Building, Vasquez St.
Malate, Manila

Dear **Mr. Ronas**:

The Department of Trade & Industry (DTI) mandate of ensuring industry competitiveness and consumer protection has always been the agency's top main goal. The issue of container deposit refunds is not new and has been plaguing the logistics industry and the consumers therein. We recognize the purpose of requiring a container deposit which is to cover the loss, damages, demurrage, or detention of containers. However, the turnover of the release of container deposits to consignees and customs brokers is an issue of its own as it prevents the competitiveness of these industries and their clients.

On 13 June 2022, former Secretary Ramon M. Lopez endorsed the Container Ledger Account. From 289 members last September 2022, the principals of CLA have grown to 16 shipping lines/ NVOCC, 177 consignees/ freight forwarders, and 204 brokers/ CFS operators warehouse operators (a total of 397) as of February 2023.

During a discussion between DTI and the Department of Transportation (DOTr), both agencies agreed to jointly endorse CLA given that the CLA appears to be an effective solution in simplifying the container deposit management and return between CLA subscribers (shipping lines, consignees, and brokers). Moreover, CLA Philippines have garnered support and endorsement from industry logistics groups such as the Association of Shipping Lines (AISL), the Association of Off-Dock CFS Operators of the Phils. (ACOP), Philippine Liner Shipping Association (PLSA), Philippine Multimodal Transport and Logistics Association, Inc. (PMTLAI), Port Users Confederation of the Philippines (PUCP), and Supply Chain Management Associations of the Philippines (SCMAP).

We maintain the belief of CLA is a viable option in addressing the issue of container deposits. There have been positive benefits to stakeholders as it has proven to reduce procedures, time, and cost as well as improve the competitiveness of SMEs.

We, the DTI and DOTr strongly urge the shipping line members of AISL to subscribe to the CLA System Portal as an alternative to address the issue of container deposits.

Thank you.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mary Jean Pacheco'.

MARY JEAN PACHECO, CESO, II
Assistant Secretary

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY
DIGITAL PHILIPPINES**