Port Performance Freight Statistics Program

The *Port Performance Freight Statistics Program* provides summary statistics and detailed analysis for the Nation's largest container, tonnage, and dry bulk ports.

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Introduction

Given that the Nation's maritime ports moves more international cargo by weight and value than any other U.S. mode of transportation, the *Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act of 2015* established the Port Performance Freight Statistics Program in the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The FAST Act requires BTS to report statistics on capacity and throughput at the Nation's top maritime ports.

BTS strives to continually improve the Port Performance Freight Statistics Program. If you have a suggestion on how to make this product better, find an issue, or have a question, please contact us. We welcome your feedback.

The *Introduction* was updated in January 2022 with 2020 or the latest port data available.

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Vessel Dwell Times

The amount of time a vessel spends in a port is a major factor contributing to cargo throughput and performance. Vessel dwell time reveals the amount of time a vessel spends at the port terminal. BTS currently estimates dwell times for container, liquid bulk (tanker), and roll-on/roll-off (Ro/Ro) vessels using U.S. Coast Guard Automatic Identification System (AIS) data.

This *Vessel Dwell Times* section was updated in in January 2022 with data through June 2021. BTS plans to continue updating vessel dwell time data quarterly.

Vessel Dwell Times

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Container Vessel Dwell Times

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Tanker Vessel Dwell Times

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Ro/Ro Vessel Dwell Times

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Port Capacity

Port capacity is a measure of the maximum throughput that a port and its marine terminals can handle over a given time period. This maximum can be set by physical constraints and factors such as air draft restrictions, channel depths, the number and type of container cranes, and the proximity of rail connections.

This *Port Capacity* section was updated in January 2022 with 2020 data.

Port Capacity Metrics

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Air Draft & Channel Depths

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Container Cranes

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Port Throughput

Port throughput can be measured from different perspectives. For example, throughput could be measured by the amount of cargo or the number of vessels that a port handles over a given time period. This includes the total and dry bulk tonnage, number of twenty-foot equivalent units, and vessel calls.

This *Port Throughput* section was updated in January 2022 with 2020 data.

Port Throughput Metrics

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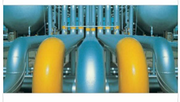
Tonnage



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Dry Bulk

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Container / TEU

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Port Profiles

The *Port Profiles* provide interactive capacity and throughput data for the Nation's largest container, tonnage, and dry bulk ports.

BTS will update this interactive *Port Profiles* as new data or performance measures are made available.

The *Port Profiles* were updated in January 2022 with 2020 or the latest port data available.

Port Data Catalog

The *Port Data Catalog* allows users to filter, view and download the port data used on this site and in the interactive *Port Profiles*.

The *Port Data Catalog* was updated in January 2022 with 2020 or the latest port data available.

Port Data Catalog

Read More

Port Performance Freight Statistics Program | Bureau of Transportation Statistics (bts.gov)

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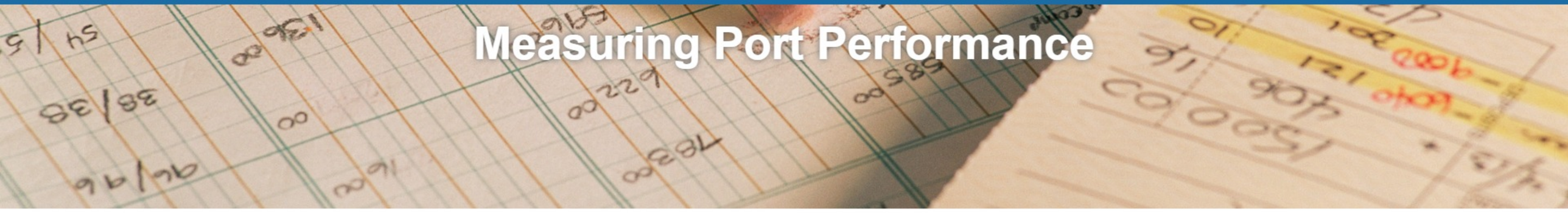

Measuring Port Performance

The Port Performance Freight Statistics Program (PPFSP) provides port performance measures for port capacity and throughput at the Nation's top ports. This program also shows changes in throughput from previous years to illustrate the extent of changes in cargo handled. BTS used the following criteria to select the throughput and capacity measures featured:

1. **Data availability**—Chosen measures must be readily available for almost all ports in order to identify the top 25 ports to which that data applies (e.g., dry bulk and total tonnage, twenty-foot equivalent unit for container ports, and observed vessel calls and types for all ports).
2. **National consistency**—Measures must be based on a nationally consistent definition and collection methodology. Ideally, a measure should be available from a single, authoritative source. If not available, BTS reconciled and validated multiple sources to ensure consistency.
3. **Timeliness**—The most recent information is sought, with a goal of data no more than 2 years old for key measures.
4. **Relevance and clarity**—Measures should be closely connected to the throughput and capacity of ports, terminals, and port infrastructure and be understandable to readers unfamiliar with ports or shipping terminology.
5. **Accuracy and transparency**—Measures should be accurate within defined data quality standards and should come from authoritative sources, as outlined in the detailed *PPFSP Technical Documentation* found on the BTS website, which is available at https://www.bts.gov/PPFS-Tech-Docs.

BTS will update the port performance measures using the most recent data available, highlighting key events that have impacted port performance. In addition to the summary statistics presented here, a complete set of interactive *Port Profiles* that provide capacity and throughput data from 2015 through 2021 (or the latest year available) is available online. The online *Port Profiles* include port characteristics, port dwell times for select vessel types, contextual information, and updates specific to each port.

BTS is continuously making enhancements in response to our data user comments and has improved the usability of its *Port Profiles*. BTS welcomes data user feedback. Please feel free to send us your questions and comments on the *Port Profiles*.

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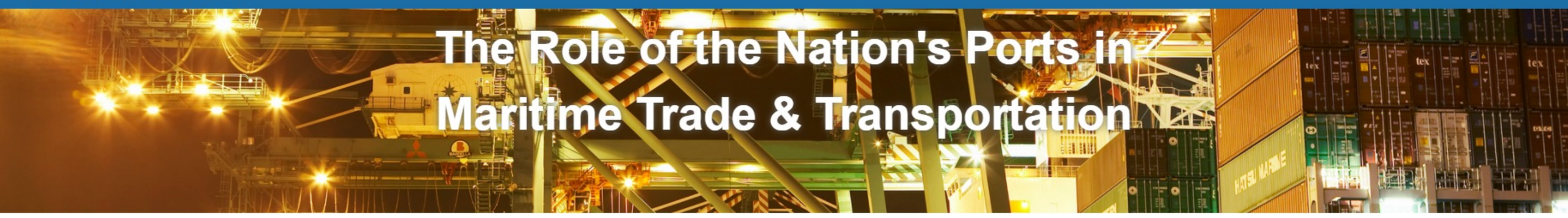
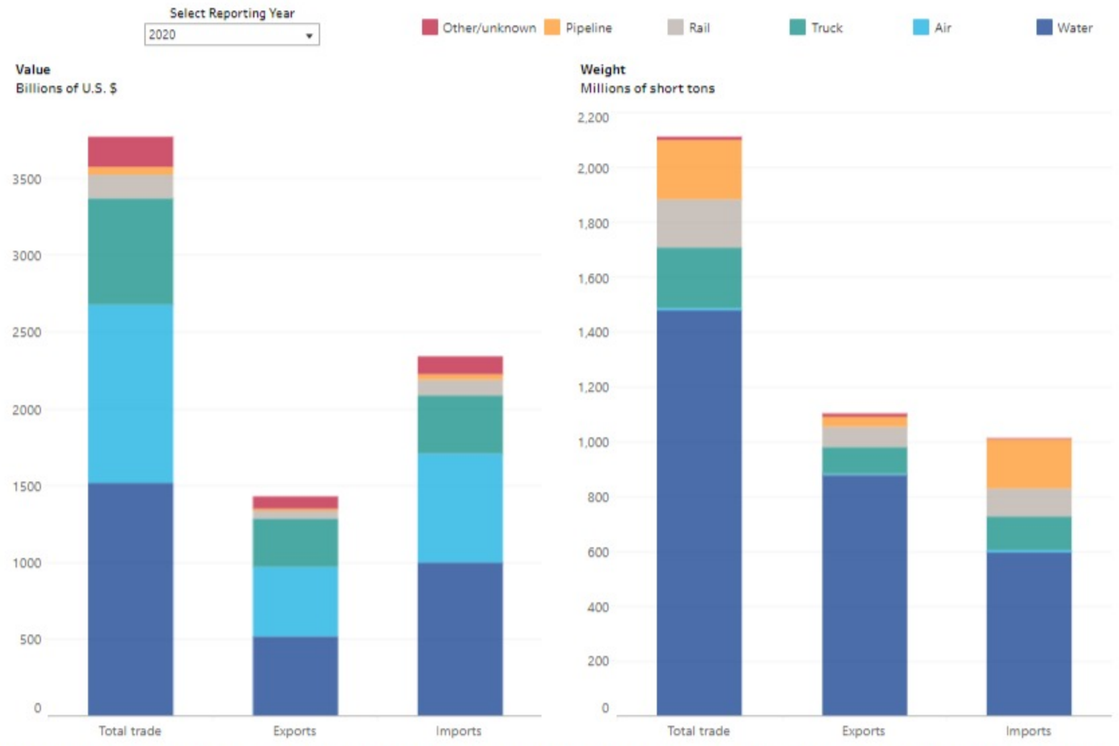


The Marine Transportation System (MTS) consists of waterways, ports, terminals, and intermodal landside connections that allow the movement of people and goods to, from, and on the water. As part of the MTS, the Nation's ports provide critical connections between waterways, highways, pipelines, and railroads.

U.S.-International Freight Flows by Mode and Weight or Value

The figure below shows weight and value of international freight transported to and from the United States by mode of transportation. With various shapes and sizes of vessels plying the worlds rivers, seas, and oceans, water is the leading transportation mode for international freight. Waterborne activity moves 40 percent of freight value and 70 percent of tonnage. In 2020, vessels moved $1.5 trillion, down, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, from $1.7 trillion in 2019. Air is second to water in terms of value with $1.2 trillion (about 31 percent of total U.S.-international freight trade). Truck is second by tonnage with 221 million short tons (about 10 percent of total U.S.-international freight trade).

For every dollar of trade goods exported from the United States by vessel, two dollars are imported to the United States. Most consumer goods imported into the United States are high-value, light-weight, and transported as containerized cargo. Containerized cargo is cargo that will fit into an intermodal shipping container; container vessels provide economies of scale and have been one of the primary focal points of port performance in recent years. Dry bulk (e.g., grains, coal) and liquid bulk (e.g., chemicals, petroleum, liquefied petroleum gas, liquefied natural gas) are low-value and heavy-weight, accounting for the majority of exported tonnage.[1]



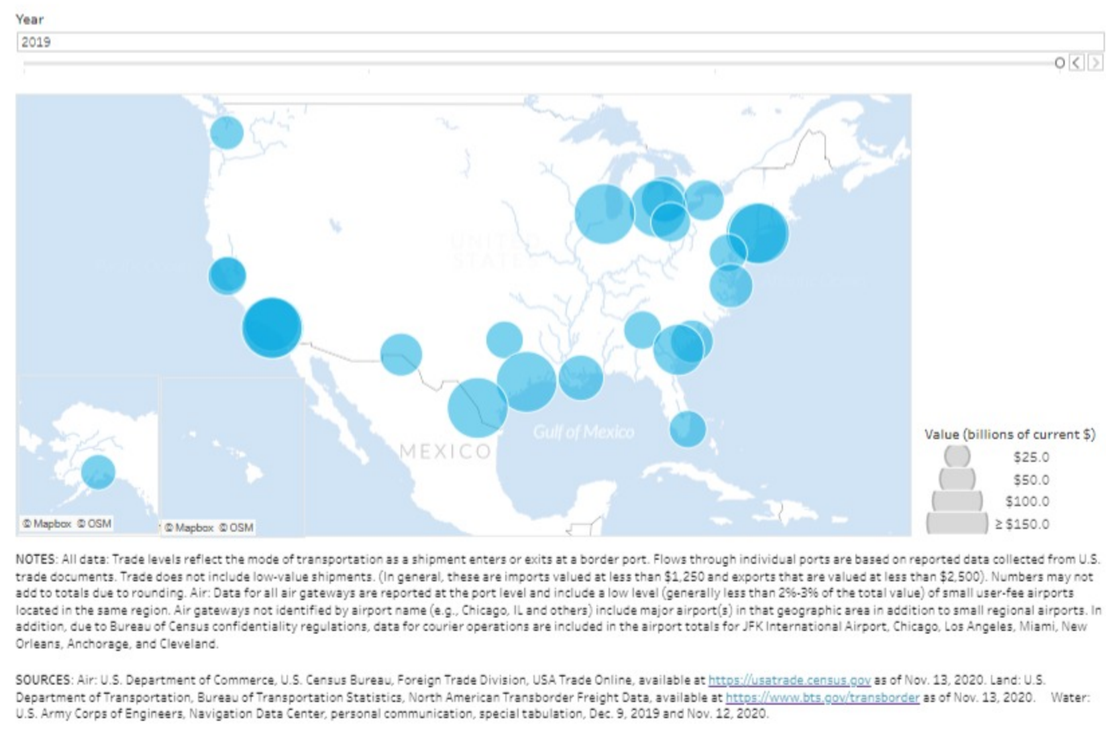
NOTES: 1 short ton = 2,000 pounds. The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) estimated export weight data for truck, rail, pipeline, and other and unknown modes using value-to-weight ratios derived from imported commodities. Totals for the most recent year differ slightly from the USDOT, BTS and Federal Highway Administration, Office of Freight Management and Operations, Freight Analysis Framework (FAF) due to variations in coverage and FAF conversion of values to constant dollars. "Other/Unknown" mode includes movements not elsewhere classified such as flyaway aircraft and shipments for which the mode cannot be determined. Numbers may not add to totals due to rounding.
SOURCES: *Total, water and air data*: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, USA Trade Online, https://usatrade.census.gov/. *Truck, rail, pipeline, and other and unknown data*: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, North American Transborder Freight Data, available at www.bts.gov/transborder as of April 2021.

Top 25 U.S. Foreign Trade Freight Gateways by Value of Shipments

Of the top 25 U.S. international freight gateways (airports, land border crossings, and maritime ports) by value, as shown in the figure below, 10 are maritime ports. These include the maritime ports listed here (ordered by value):

1. New York/New Jersey
2. Los Angeles
3. Long Beach
4. Houston
5. Savannah
6. Norfolk
7. Charleston
8. Baltimore
9. Oakland
10. Tacoma

All 10 of these maritime ports are among the top 25 in terms of container cargo as measured by twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU).[2]



NOTES: All data: Trade levels reflect the mode of transportation as a shipment enters or exits at a border port. Flows through individual ports are based on reported data collected from U.S. trade documents. Trade does not include low-value shipments. (In general, these are imports valued at less than $1,250 and exports that are valued at less than $2,500). Numbers may not add to totals due to rounding. Air: Data for all air gateways are reported at the port level and include a low level (generally less than 2%-3% of the total value) of small user-fee airports located in the same region. Air gateways not identified by airport name (e.g., Chicago, IL and others) include major airport(s) in that geographic area in addition to small regional airports. In addition, due to Bureau of Census confidentiality regulations, data for courier operations are included in the airport totals for JFK International Airport, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New Orleans, Anchorage, and Cleveland.

SOURCES: Air: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, USA Trade Online, available at https://usatrade.census.gov as of Nov. 13, 2020. Land: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, North American Transborder Freight Data, available at https://www.bts.gov/transborder as of Nov. 13, 2020. Water: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Navigation Data Center, personal communication, special tabulation, Dec. 9, 2019 and Nov. 12, 2020.

Footnotes

[1] *Total, water and air data*: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, USA Trade Online, https://usatrade.census.gov/. *Truck, rail, pipeline, and other and unknown data*: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, North American Transborder Freight Data, available at http://www.bts.gov/transborder as of May 2021.
[2] *Air*: U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, USA Trade Online, available at https://usatrade.census.gov as of Nov. 13, 2020. *Land*: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, North American Transborder Freight Data, available at http://www.bts.gov/transborder as of Nov. 13, 2020. Water: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Navigation Data Center, personal communication, special tabulation, Dec. 9, 2019 and Nov. 12, 2020.

Types of Ports

Each and every port has a unique arrangement and number of marine terminals. For example, one terminal may be equipped with grain elevators to unload/load dry bulk commodities such as coal and grains transported by dry bulk vessel, while another uses ship-to-shore gantry cranes to unload/load container cargo from containerships or pipelines to unload/load liquid bulk cargo such as natural gas and oil from tankers.

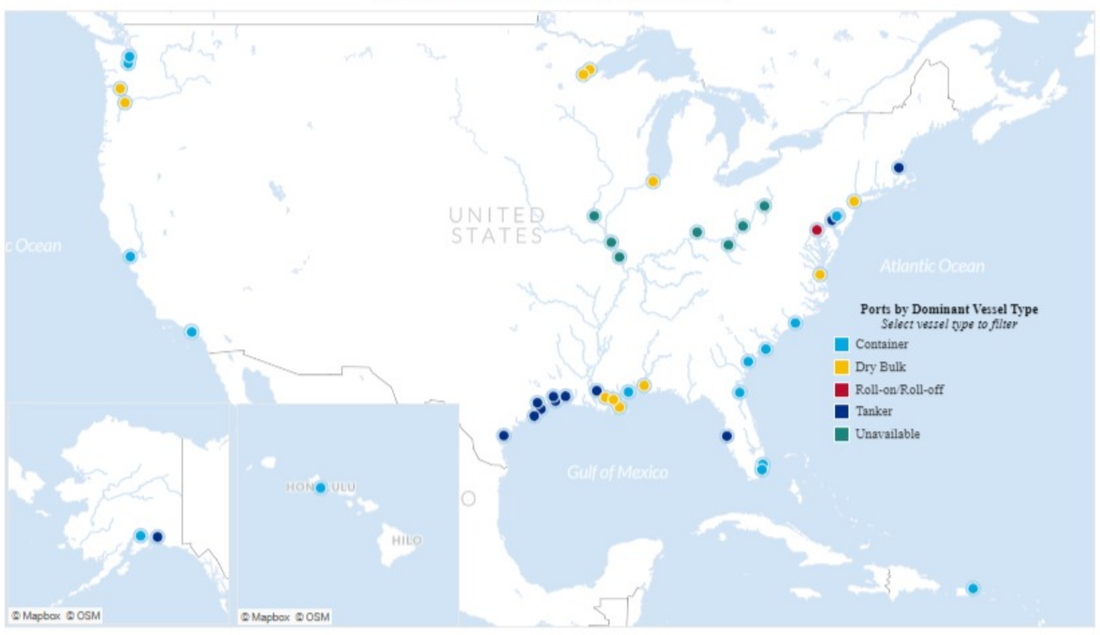
Observed vessel entrances and ship type provide a means for identifying the type of cargo handled by a port. Each category of waterborne cargo handled by a port requires a particular type of vessel and marine terminal. A port's marine terminals must have the necessary cargo handling equipment and supporting intermodal infrastructure. This program covers five major categories of waterborne cargo:

1. Containerized
2. Dry Bulk
3. Liquid Bulk
4. Break Bulk
5. Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro/Ro)

As shown for select ports in the figure below, container vessels predominantly call at ports with marine terminals having good road and rail connections, mostly along the Nation's Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Dry bulk vessels primarily call at ports along the Great Lakes and Mississippi River that are located near the farms growing food and farm products. Ports like Baltimore, Jacksonville, and Tacoma handle a sizeable share of Ro/Ro vessels, which are the dominant vessel type only at the port of Baltimore.[1]

Tankers call at ports with liquid bulk terminals that have pipeline connections or refineries located nearby. These marine terminals are primarily located at ports along the Gulf of Mexico. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, nearly half of total U.S. petroleum refining capacity is located along the Gulf Coast as is more than half of U.S. natural gas processing plant capacity. Further, the states in this region have dense concentrations of interstate and intrastate crude oil, gas, and petroleum product pipelines.[2]

Type of Port as Measured by Entrances & Ship Type: 2020

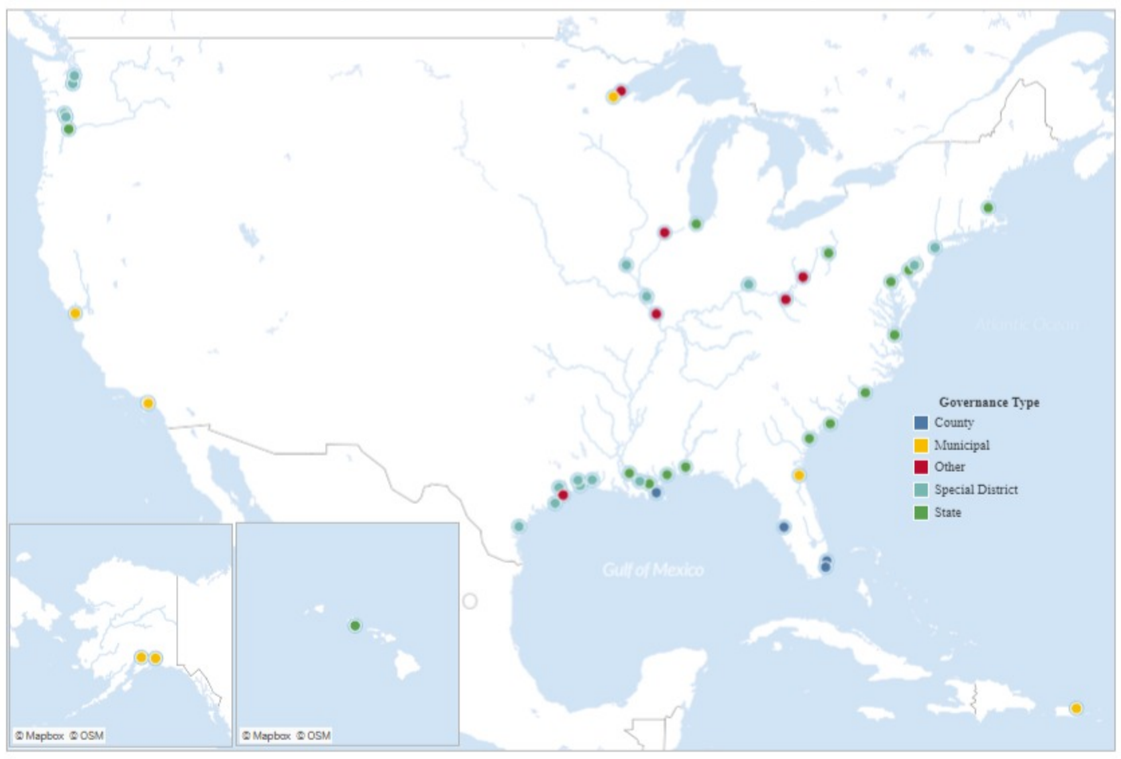


NOTES: AIS signals are susceptible to interference, which can result in doublecounting, missing, or incomplete records. This issue may impact the reliability of our observed vessel activity, especially for ports in close proximity. However, in collaboration with the USACE, BTS takes numerous data quality steps, including verifying our entrance channel watch areas to account for expansion or reconfiguration and changes in vessel activity at each port or waterway. Additionally, vessel lightering and other special operations may differ from observed vessels calls at liquid bulk port terminals.The ports of Cincinnati-Northern KY, Huntington-Tristate, KY, OH, WV; Mid-Ohio Valley Port, OH and WV; St. Louis Metro Port, IL and MO are located on rivers and may handle primarily barges, which are not equipped with AIS and thus unavailable. For additional information, please see the BTS Technical Documentation, which is available at www.bts.gov/PPFP-Tech-Docs.
SOURCE: ***Entrances:*** U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, calculated using AIS data provided by U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, as of July 2021. ***Ports:*** U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon 2020 data, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

Another way to look at the types of port is by port governance. Port governance influences cargo operations and investment decisions. Ports are organized and governed in several ways, each of which has implications for port definitions and data availability. Most ports in the United States are special district governments, followed by ports owned by state, county, or municipal governments.

Special districts (also know as port districts) are authorized by Federal or State law to provide only one or a limited number of designated functions and with sufficient administrative and fiscal autonomy to qualify as separate governments (e.g., the Philadelphia Regional Port Authority, Lake Charles Harbor District, Mid-America Port Commission). Municipal governments are local governments (also known known as cities and towns) authorized in state constitutions and established to provide general government for a defined area (e.g., the Port of Los Angeles is an agency within the City of Los Angeles).[3]

Ports by Type of Government: 2017 Census of Government and 2020 Top 25 Port Rankings



SOURCE: ***Ports***: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon 2020 data, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021. ***Governance***: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, based upon the U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, *Census of Governments* (2017), available at Census.gov as of December 2021.

Footnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, based upon automatic identification system (AIS) data from the U.S. Coast Guard's Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS) archive, processed using the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory's AIS Analysis Package (AISAP) software package.
[2] U.S. Energy Information Administration, Gulf of Mexico Factsheet (July 2020), available at https://www.eia.gov/special/gulf_of_mexico/ as of May 2021.
[3] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, based upon the U.S. Census Bureau, *Census of Government* (April 2019), available at https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cog.html as of June 2021.

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Supply-Chain Disruptions

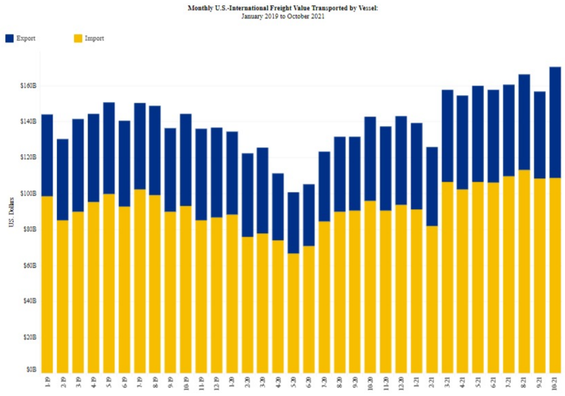
As the COVID-19 pandemic drove a shift in demand from services to goods, major swings in imported goods placed significant stress on U.S. ports in 2020. The 2nd quarter of 2020 was marked by a recession as gross domestic product (GDP) decreased by 31.2 percent. GDP quickly rebounded in the 3rd quarter of 2020 with growth of 33.8 percent.[1]

Combined with production uncertainties created by COVID-19, the whiplash of the brief turnaround between economic contraction and expansion contributed to a major disruption in global supply-chains. This affected the Nation's ports as economic activity in the U.S. and around the world began to return to pre-pandemic levels. In addition to over-burdening ports, supply-chain disruptions contributed to chassis[2] and drayage vehicle[3] shortages at the Nation's container ports. The tightened labor market for drayage drivers further exacerbated port challenges.

Overall, international freight value moved by all modes of transportation fell $752 billion (9.1 percent) and tonnage was down by 233 million short tons (5.2 percent) between 2019 and 2020. That year-over-year decrease, however, conceals the decrease in the 2nd quarter and the significant increase in the latter two quarters of 2020 noted above.

During the first 11 months of 2021 for which data are available, the value of U.S.-international freight increased by 22.2 percent, when compared to the same 11 months in 2020.[4]

Waterborne vessels are the leading transportation mode for international freight, moving 40 percent of U.S.-international freight value in 2020—more than $1.5 trillion—and 70 percent of freight by weight—almost 1.5 trillion short tons.[5] Waterborne vessels continued to move the majority of international freight during the first 10 months of 2021. The figure below shows the monthly U.S.-international freight value transported by vessel. Between January 2021 and October 2021, the monthly U.S.-international freight value transported by vessel increased by about $31 billion (22.6 percent) from $139 billion in January 2021 to $170 billion in October 2021.

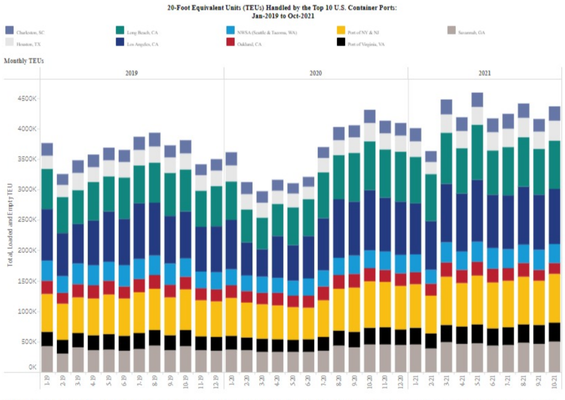


SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, *USA Trade Online*, available at https://usatrade.census.gov/ as of December 2021.

The Nation's ports handle the lion's share of U.S.-international trade and transportation. Of the top 25 U.S.-international freight gateways (airports, land border crossings, and maritime ports) by value, 10 are maritime ports, including the ports of New York and New Jersey, Los Angeles, Long Beach, Houston, Savannah, Virginia, Charleston, Baltimore, Oakland, and Tacoma.[6]

Of the more than $1.5 trillion in U.S.-international trade transported by vessel and handled by the Nation's ports in 2020, containerized cargo comprises about $1 trillion (68.3 percent) and is responsible for most consumer goods imported into the United States. Container vessel cargo has been a primary focal point of port performance in recent years.[7]

The figure below shows that the Nation's top 10 container ports handled relatively low numbers of monthly TEU in the first half of 2020 only to handle higher numbers of monthly TEU in the latter half of 2020, which has continued to grow in 2021. For example, these ports handled about half a million (12.7 percent) more TEU in October 2021 than in October of 2020. Container ports have continued to handle a record-breaking number of TEU through the 3rd quarter of 2021.[8]



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, based upon TEU volumes at the ports of Charleston, SC, http://www.scspa.com/about/statistics/; Houston, https://porthouston.com/; Jacksonville, https://www.jaxport.com/; Long Beach, https://www.polb.com/; Los Angeles, https://www.portoflosangeles.org/; Northwest Seaport Alliance (Seattle - Tacoma), https://www.nwseaportalliance.com/; Oakland, http://www.oaklandseaport.com/; New York/New Jersey, https://www.panynj.gov/; Port of Virginia, http://www.portofvirginia.com/; and Savannah, https://gaports.com/; as of November 2021.

Footnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, available at https://apps.bea.gov/ as of November 2021.
[2] A wheeled framework for carrying a marine cargo container over a road (a "highway" chassis) or within a terminal (a "yard" chassis). As an unpowered frame, a chassis is moved either by an over-the-road truck tractor or by a yard tractor.
[3] Movement of a marine cargo container over public roads by truck, using a chassis.

[4] U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, *USA Trade Online*, available at https://usatrade.census.gov/ as of December 2021.

[5] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, *Freight Facts & Figures*, available at https://www.bts.gov/ as of November 2021.

[6] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, *National Transportation Statistics*, available at https://www.bts.gov/ as of November 2021.

[7] U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau, *USA Trade Online*, available at https://usatrade.census.gov/ as of December 2021.

[8] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics; analysis based on data sources cited in https://explore.dot.gov/ as of November 2021.

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The 2020 Atlantic hurricane season broke records across the board—the most active on record with 30 named storms (top winds of 39 mph or greater), of which 14 became hurricanes (top winds of 74 mph or greater), including seven major hurricanes (top winds of 111 mph or greater). The National Hurricane Center considers any storm that is Category 3 and above, with winds in excess of 130 mph, to be a major hurricane. For comparison, an average hurricane season produces 12 named storms and 6 hurricanes, 3 of which are major hurricanes.[1] Additionally, the usual 21 name list used for Atlantic hurricane season was officially exhausted with the formation of Tropical Storm Wilfred in September 2020. The Greek alphabet was used for the remainder of the hurricane season, using 9 out of 24 letters with the formation of Hurricane Iota.[2]

A record 12 storms made landfall in the United States, of which a record-breaking 7 were billion-dollar disasters, including 6 major hurricanes, listed below, and tropical storm Eta, which made landfall between November 8-12:

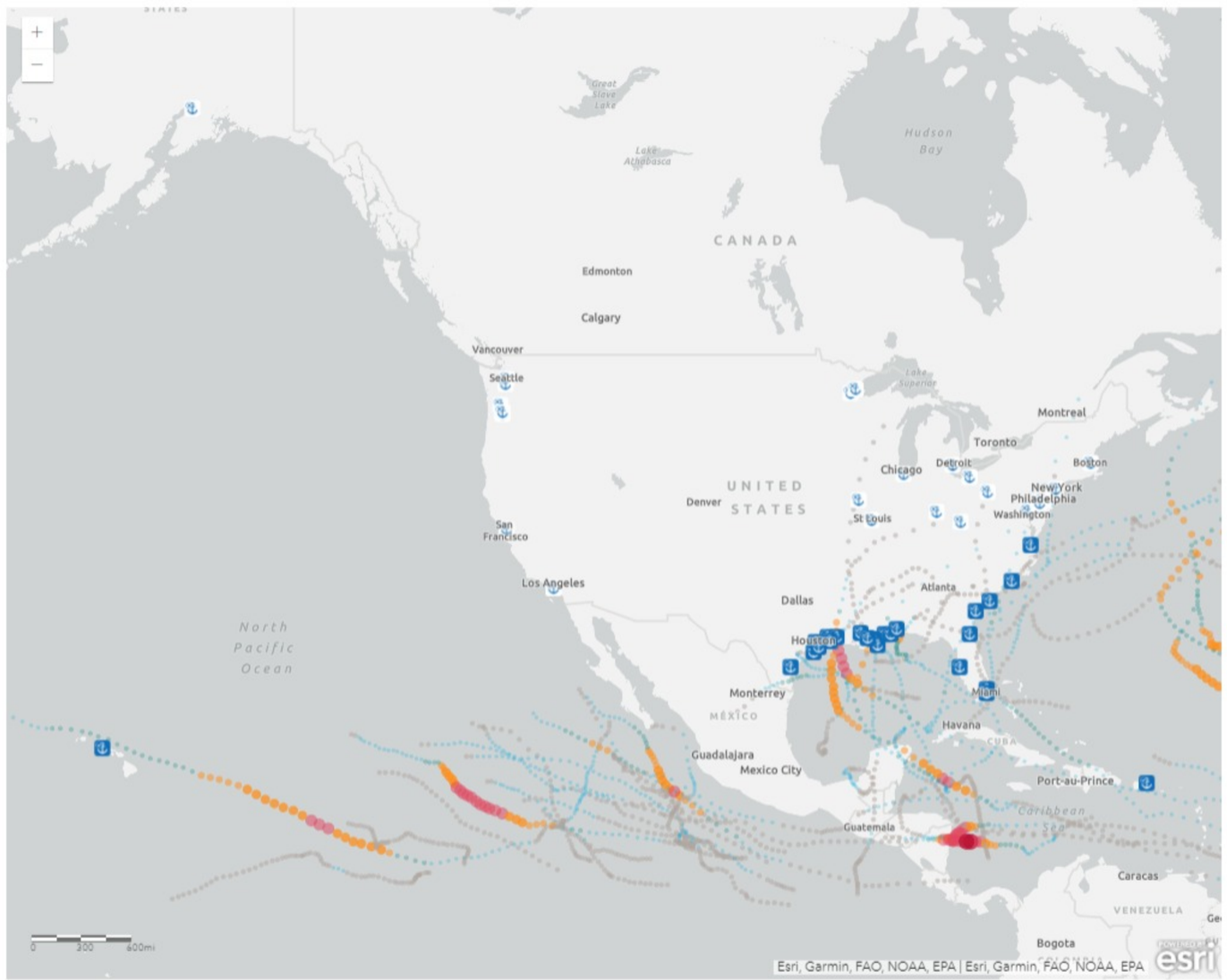
1. Hanna (category 1, July 25-26)
2. Isaias (category 1, August 3-4)
3. Laura (category 4, August 27-28)
4. Sally (category 2, September 15-17)
5. Delta (category 4, October 9-11)
6. Zeta (category 2, October 28-29)

These storms caused $41.1 billion in total damage, averaging $5.7 billion apiece, across the Gulf and South Atlantic coasts. Most notably, Hurricane Laura—one of the strongest hurricanes (by maximum sustained wind speed at landfall) to hit Louisiana caused $19.0 billion alone.[3] As shown in the figure below, several hurricanes and tropical storms made landfall near the Nation's largest ports, which in many cases disrupted port operations and damaged critical infrastructure. The extensive days of port closures were highlighted in the *BTS Spotlight: Tropical Storm Elsa Makes Landfall in Florida; BTS Map Shows U.S. Ports Affected by 2020 Named Storms*.

For example, the port of Lake Charles declared a state of "extreme emergency," allowing for immediate repairs and reconstruction of cargo facilities after extensive damage from a nearly direct hit from Hurricane Laura in late August.[4] Based upon observed tanker vessel calls at the port of Lake Charles, liquid bulk cargo handling was severely curtailed due to the extensive damage, declining by 38 tankers (95 percent) in September 2020. Similar impacts by hurricanes and tropical storms on observed vessel calls can be seen at other ports (e.g., Jacksonville, Mobile). Extreme weather, particularly hurricanes, affect coastal port operations and performance, especially when the ports endure lengthy recoveries due to extensive damage. Measures to improve port resiliency, such as absorbing storm surge and high winds, can improve reliability of capacity and throughput.[5]

Nearly every port along the Gulf and South Atlantic coast endured closures and disruptions due to hurricanes and tropical storms in 2020. In total, 24 of our profiled ports (with 9 along the Atlantic and 15 along the Gulf coasts) were impacted by at least 1 hurricane or tropical storm. Additionally, the ports of Freeport, Galveston, Houston, Port Arthur, Texas City, and Wilmington (NC) were affected by 2 storms each, and the ports of New Orleans, Plaquemines, and South Louisiana were affected by at least 3 storms each. In total, all of these ports had one or more day under hurricane port condition Zulu during 2020 hurricane season.[6] Under port condition Zulu, a port is closed to all vessel activity and routine port waterfront operations suspended by the U.S. Coast Guard's Captain of the Port.[7]

2020 Hurricane Season & the Nation's Top Ports Impacted



SOURCE: *Port Impacts:* U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, based upon the U.S. Coast Guard, *Port Conditions* and Port Authority websites. *Hurricane paths:* based upon track data published by the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Hurricane Center.

Footnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Climate Prediction Center, available at https://www.noaa.gov/ as of May 2021.
[2] U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Hurricane Center, available at https://www.noaa.gov/ as of May 2021.
[3] U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, National Centers for Environmental Information, available at https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/ as of May 2021.
[4] Lake Charles Harbor and Terminal District, Declaration of Extreme Emergency, available at https://portlc.com/ as of May 2021.
[5] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, based upon the U.S. Coast Guard, *Port Conditions*, available at https://homeport.uscg.mil as of May 2021.
[6] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, based upon the U.S. Coast Guard, Port Conditions, available at https://homeport.uscg.mil as of May 2021.
[7] Hurricane Port Condition Zulu means condition set when weather advisories indicate that sustained gale force winds (39-54 mph/34-47 knots) from a tropical or hurricane force storm are predicted to make landfall at the port within 12 hours.

Vessel Dwell Times

The time vessels spend in a port is a major factor contributing to cargo throughput and performance. In collaboration with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, BTS has developed a method to estimate vessel dwell times at U.S. ports using the U.S. Coast Guard's (USCG) Automatic Identification System (AIS) data. AIS is a ship-to-ship and ship-to-shore maritime navigation safety communications system that monitors and tracks ship movements, primarily for collision avoidance.[1] Additional information on the BTS's methodology can be found at https://www.bts.gov/PPFS-Tech-Docs.

USCG has deployed a nationwide AIS (NAIS) system of towers and transceivers to receive and transmit AIS messages. The USACE has also deployed AIS transceivers at inland navigation locks. Together, these provide coverage for most of the ports profiled. An annual summary of the vessel dwell times by ship type is shown below. These show that the dwell times for tankers are longer than those for container vessels, and both are longer than Ro/Ro vessel dwell times. Also, container and Ro/Ro vessel dwell times have increased while tanker dwell times have decreased. *All* vessel types experienced increased variability through 2020 and early 2021.

Detailed interpretative analysis by ship type is provided for container, tanker, and Ro/Ro. Additionally, average container, tanker, and Ro/Ro vessel dwell times for these individual ports are shown in our online *Port Profiles*.

Footnotes

[1] 47 CFR §80.5

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Container Vessel Dwell Times

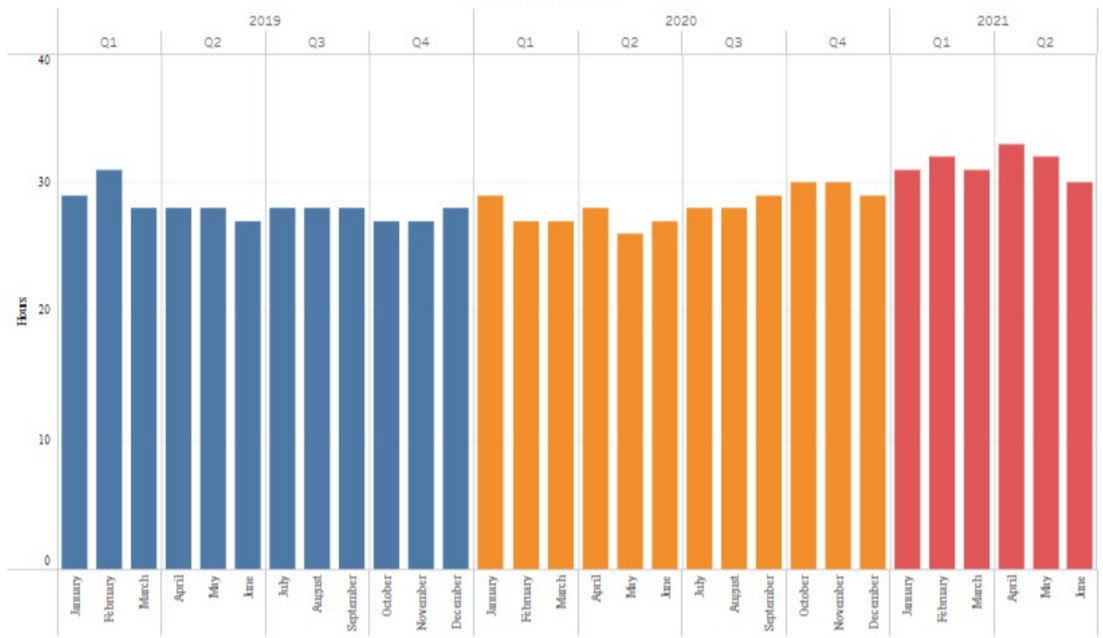
In late 2020 and early 2021, due to port congestion, many vessels waited at anchorages in San Pedro Bay, California, and elsewhere for port access to load and unload containerized cargo. In late December 2021, the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach had 91 container vessels waiting to berth, spending in some cases, many more days at anchor than at dockside. In total, U.S. container ports had about 112 container vessels at anchor waiting to berth on December 21. [1]

The average container vessel dwell time at the top 25 U.S. container ports[2] was estimated at 28.1 hours in 2020, down slightly from 28.2 hours in 2019. Overall, as shown in the figure below, dwell times for container vessels fluctuated monthly, with dwell times increasing steadily throughout the latter half of 2020. Prolonged dwell times can reduce the number of vessel calls a port can handle.

In the first half of 2021, average container vessel dwell times increased to 31.5 hours. The top 25 container ports had 6,537 observed vessel calls, down 1,825 (21.8 percent) from the same period in 2020 despite the overall economic growth in the period indicated by increases in GDP.[3]

Average container vessel dwell times for individual ports are shown in the online *Port Profiles*.

**Monthly Container Vessel Dwell Times at the Top 25 U.S. Container Ports:
January 2019 - June 2021**



NOTES: AIS signals are susceptible to interference, which can result in missing or incomplete dwell time records. This issue may impact the reliability of our estimated dwell times. However, in collaboration with the USACE, BTS takes numerous data quality steps each year, including verifying our port terminal boundaries to account for expansion or reconfiguration and changes in vessel activity at each port terminal. Vessel calls of less than 4 hours or more than 120 hours were excluded as representing calls either too short for significant cargo handling or too long for normal operations. The top 25 container ports are based upon 2018, 2019, and 2020 port rankings published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, calculated using AIS data from the U.S. Coast Guard's Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS) archive, processed by U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory, through the AIS Analysis Package (AISAP) software package, as of December 2021.

Footnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Transportation, Maritime Administration, Office of Policy and Plans/Marine Exchange of SoCal, Special Tabulation, as of December 2021.
[2] The top 25 container ports are based on 2020 port rankings provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center as of December 2021.
[3] The top 25 container ports are based on 2020 port rankings and calculated using 2021 AIS data from the sources cited above.

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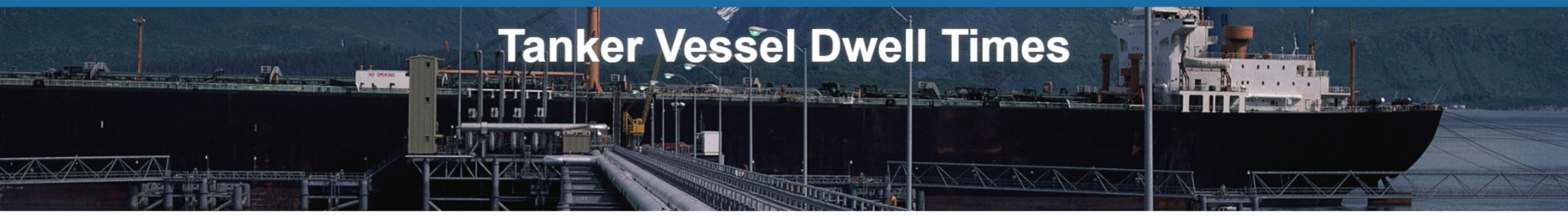
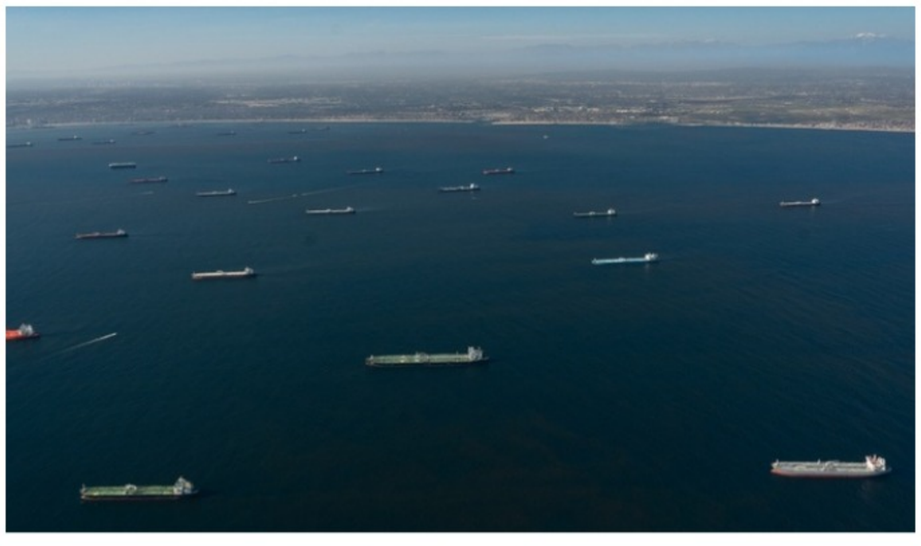


Tanker Vessel Dwell Times

Many tankers ended up idle or used for storage, waiting in anchorages across the country like the dozens of tankers anchored in San Pedro Bay near the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach.

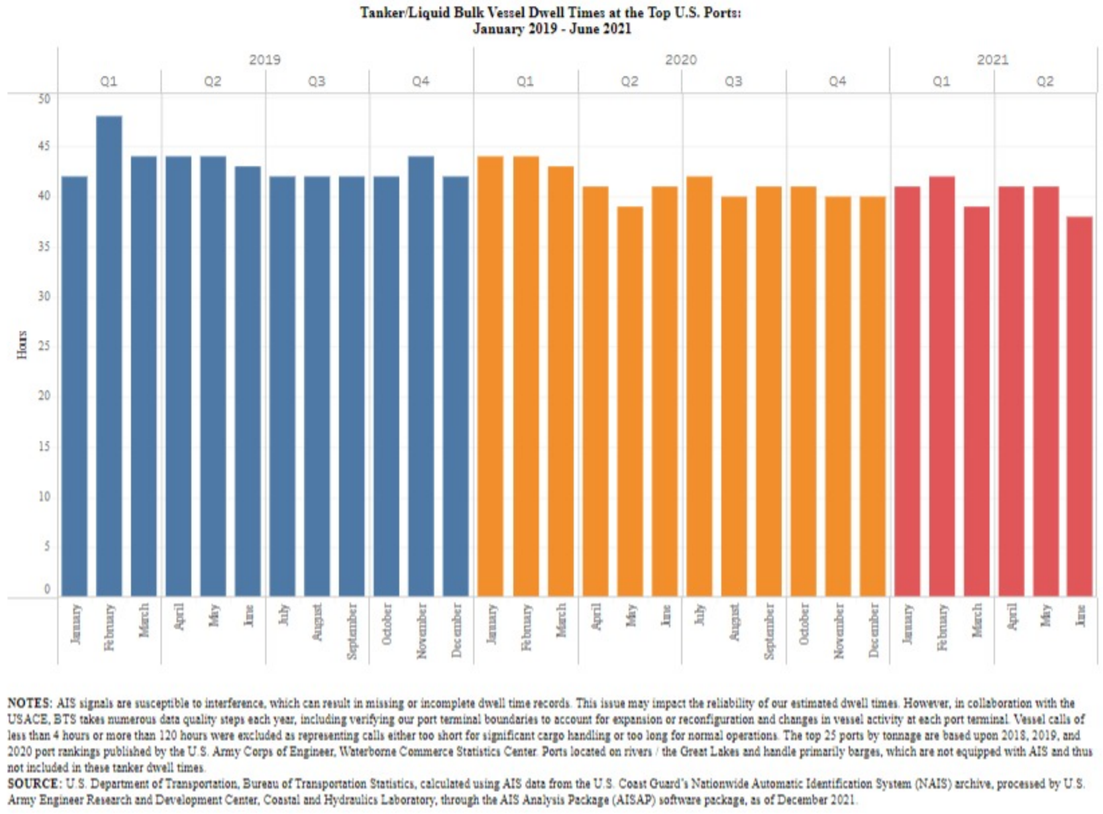


In 2020, U.S. imports of total petroleum and of crude oil were at the lowest levels since 1991. [1] This decrease in U.S. imports may help explain the decline in the number of observed tanker vessels. Only 21 of the top 25 tonnage ports have observed tanker vessel calls.[2] The liquid bulk terminals at these 21 ports had 16,692 observed vessel calls in 2020, down 391 (2.3 percent) from 17,083 in 2019.

As shown in the figure below, average tanker vessel dwell times at these top ports was estimated at 41.4 hours in 2020, down almost two hours from 43.3 hours in 2019.[3] In general, tanker dwell times were about a third longer than container vessel dwell times, most likely because it takes more time to pump petroleum and crude oil than to lift shipping containers from a vessel of similar size.

In the first half of 2021, average tanker vessel dwell time decreased to 40.4 hours.[4] The 21 liquid bulk ports had 7,208 observed vessel calls during the same period in 2021, down 2,441 (25.3 percent) from the same period in 2020. Since 2018, tanker vessel dwell times have improved by showing a general downward trend.

Average tanker dwell times for individual ports are shown in the online *Port Profiles*.



Footnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration, Oil & Petroleum Products Explained: *Oil Imports & Exports* (April 2021), available at https://www.eia.gov/ as of November 2021.
[2] The ports of Cincinnati-Northern KY; Huntington-Tristate, KY, OH, WV; Mid-Ohio Valley Port, OH and WV; St. Louis Metro Port, IL and MO are located on rivers and may handle primarily liquid bulk barges, which are not equipped with AIS and thus not included in the tanker dwell times.
[3] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, calculated using AIS data from the U.S. Coast Guard's Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS) archive, processed by U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory, through the AIS Analysis Package (AISAP) software package, as of December 2021.
[4] The top 25 tonnage ports are based on 2020 port rankings and calculated using 2021 AIS data from the sources cited above.

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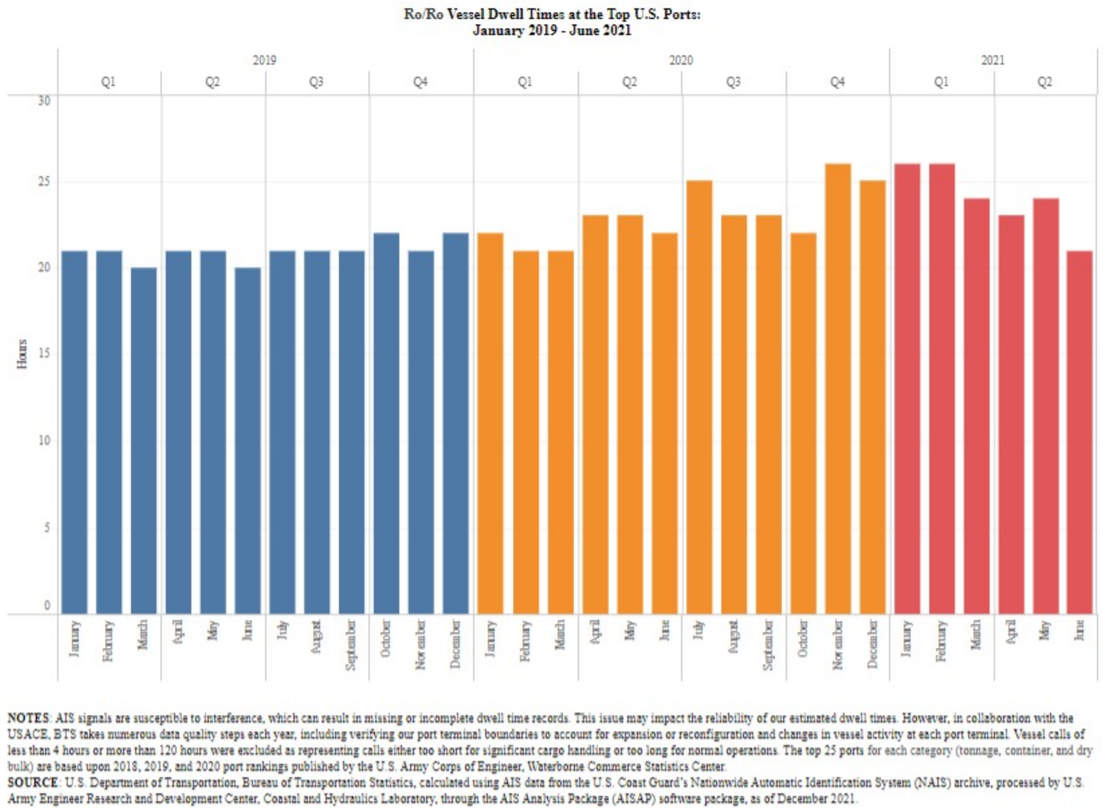
Ro/Ro Vessel Dwell Times

In 2020, only 8.3 million motor vehicles were imported to the United States, down about 1.4 million (14 percent) from 9.7 million in 2019. Remarkably, 2020 saw both a record low of 244,514 motor vehicles imported in May and a high of 954,951 motor vehicles imported in October.[1] Only 22 of the top U.S. ports have observed Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro/Ro) vessel calls.

As shown in the figure below, average Ro/Ro vessel dwell times at these top ports was estimated at 23.0 hours in 2020, up almost two hours from 21.0 hours in 2019. In 2020, there were 3,577 observed Ro/Ro vessel calls, down slightly from 3,815 in 2019. In the first half of 2021, average Ro/Ro vessel dwell time decreased to 23.8 hours. The ports had 1,799 observed vessel calls during the same period in 2021.[2]

Average Ro/Ro vessel dwell times for individual ports are shown in the online *Port Profiles*.



NOTES: AIS signals are susceptible to interference, which can result in missing or incomplete dwell time records. This issue may impact the reliability of our estimated dwell times. However, in collaboration with the USACE, BTS takes numerous data quality steps each year, including verifying our port terminal boundaries to account for expansion or reconfiguration and changes in vessel activity at each port terminal. Vessel calls of less than 4 hours or more than 120 hours were excluded as representing calls either too short for significant cargo handling or too long for normal operations. The top 25 ports for each category (tonnage, container, and dry bulk) are based upon 2018, 2019, and 2020 port rankings published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, calculated using AIS data from the U.S. Coast Guard's Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS) archive, processed by U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory, through the AIS Analysis Package (AISAP) software package, as of December 2021.

Footnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, analysis based upon trade data from the U.S. International Trade Commission, Data Web, available at https://dataweb.usitc.gov/ as of May 2021.
[2] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, calculated using AIS data from the U.S. Coast Guard's Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS) archive, processed by U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory, through the AIS Analysis Package (AISAP) software package, as of December 2021.

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Port Capacity Metrics

Many factors influence port capacity, which is a measure of the maximum throughput that a port and its terminals can handle over a given time period, in tons, twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU), or other units, such as barrels of liquid bulk (e.g., crude petroleum) or number of vehicles handled. Maximum throughput, or capacity, can be set by physical constraints, including the physical size (acreage) of terminals, length of berths, depth of access channels, and the amount and type of cargo handling equipment (e.g., container cranes). Port capacity can also be influenced by operational factors not currently measured in this program (e.g., gate hours) and economic factors, including labor availability and cost. These factors are typically proprietary, making them less likely to be available for public use. Port features that influence capacity are summarized in the table below.

Summary of Throughput Meaures

Element/Metric	Description
Air draft restrictions (feet)	The distance between the mean low-level water line and the lowest point of a bridge or other structure over a shipping channel. The maps in the online Port Profiles present the limiting bridges located within the port vicinity. These restrictions may not affect all terminals in the port
Berth length for container ships (feet)	A location to stop and secure a vessel at a container terminal to load / unload cargo, presenting the total linear footage
Channel depth (feet)	The vertical distance from the water surface to the bottom of a channel. Channel depths may constrain port capacity, especially at coastal ports that serve the largest vessels
Container terminal size (acreage)	A designated area where loaded and empty containers are stored for transfer between vessels and truck or rail modes
Number and type of container cranes	Number of dedicated container cranes for all the terminals capable of serving: 1) Panamax, 2) Post-Panamax, and 3) Super Post-Panamax vessels.
Presence of rail transfer facilities	On-dock rail transfer facilities are present at select ports. Nearby rail facilities are indicated in the overview for each online Port Profile.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Port Performance Freight Statistics Program, June 2021.

Ro/Ro Vessel Dwell Times Home Air Draft & Channel Depths

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Air Draft & Channel Depths

Air draft potentially limits port capacity, especially as increasingly larger vessels come into service. These restrictions may not affect all terminals in a port. For example, some ports might have terminals with no air draft restrictions (e.g., the container terminals at the Port of Virginia) because no bridges cross their navigation channels. The table below shows the air drafts by limiting bridges for select ports, and the online *Port Profiles* show what, if any, air draft or channel depth restrictions exist within the port vicinity.

Air draft restrictions may be eliminated as bridges are either raised or replaced. Several ports have constructed new bridges (e.g., the new Gerald Desmond Bridge at the port of Long Beach, which opened in 2020)[1] or elevated existing bridges (e.g., the Bayonne Bridge at the port of New York/New Jersey, which was completed in 2019).[2] The higher the bridge, the more stacked containers that can pass under (e.g., 8-foot tall containers can reach a combined height of 144 feet when stacked 18 high aboard a megaship's cargo deck).

Air Drafts by Limiting Bridge for Select Container Ports: 2020

Select Air Drafts by Container Port and Limiting Bridge

Dec-21 Update

Port	Bridge	Air Draft in Feet
Baltimore	Chesapeake Bay	182
	Francis Scott Key Bridge	185
Camden-Gloucester	Walt Whitman Bridge	150
	Delaware Memorial	188
Charleston	Ravenel	185
Jacksonville	Napoleon B. Broward	169
Long Beach	Gerald Desmond	155
Los Angeles	Vincent Thomas	185
Mobile	Cochrane-Africatown	140
New Orleans	Crescent City	150
New York / New Jersey	Bayonne and Verrazano-Narrows	215
Philadelphia	Benjamin Franklin	135
	Delaware Memorial	188
Savannah	Talmadge Memorial	185
Seattle	West Seattle	140
Tampa	Sunshine	155
Wilmington (DE)	Delaware Memorial	188

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Channel depths can limit the size of vessels able to call at a port. The Pacific coast ports with their natural harbors, such as the ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles, have the deepest channels. The Mississippi River ports of Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky, Huntington, Pittsburgh, and St. Louis have the shallowest channels. Even if a port's minimum channel depth allows for megaships, the individual marine terminals within the port vicinity may not have the minimum depth alongside to handle them.

Channel Depths for the Select Waterways Serving the Nation's Top Ports: 2020

SOURCE: *Ports*: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon 2020 data, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of November 2021. *Waterways*: USDOT, BTS, National Transportation Atlas Database (April 2021), *Navigable Waterway Lines*, available at https://www.bts.gov/geospatial/national-transportation-atlas-database as of December 2021.

Footnotes

[1] Port of Long Beach, *The Gerald Desmond Bridge Replacement Project*, available at https://newgdbridge.com/ as of December 2021.
[2] The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, *Navigational Clearance Projec*t, available at https://old.panynj.gov/ as of December 2021.

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Container cranes are the link between the waterside and landside, including truck and rail connections or the container yard used for short-term storage. The number and size of cranes affects the number and sizes of container vessels a terminal can service simultaneously. The top 25 container ports operated a total of 542 ship-to-shore gantry cranes in 2020, up 38 from 504 in 2019.[1] This increase is due to the purchase of cranes at new and existing container terminals. This includes the addition of reactivated terminals or the repurposing of other terminals. Of ship-to-shore gantry cranes, 285 are classified as super post-Panamax, which are the most capable.[2] Other marine terminals at ports may use mobile harbor cranes, or container vessels may be equipped with ship's gear to unload/load cargo or transport containers onto trailers (e.g., Anchorage, San Juan).

Several ports are currently replacing their container cranes and/or have container terminal improvement projects underway; thus the inventory of cranes and cranes by size is constantly in flux. The figure below shows the number of container cranes used to unload/load container vessels.

Number of Container Cranes at the Top 25 Container Ports: 2020

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, because upon individual port authority and marine terminal operator websites, incluidng links to terminal-specific websites as of December 2021.

Footnotes

[1] A crane mounted on a "gantry;" a frame or structure spanning an intervening space, often a workspace. The gantry may be mounted on wheels. The top 25 ports for each category (tonnage, container, and dry bulk) are based upon the 2020 port rankings published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center. Cranes include those at active marine terminal, based upon U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, using AIS data from the U.S. Coast Guard's Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS) archive, processed by the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory's AIS Analysis Package (AISAP) software package.
[2] A class of crane that can fully load and unload containers from the largest container vessels currently in operation that can be up to 24-rows of containers in width.

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Rail Connections

All major ports are either directly connected to the rail system or have nearby rail facilities. Bulk terminals have a variety of rail service connections suited to the type and volume of commodities they handle. Most container terminals have either on-dock transfer facilities within the terminal boundaries or off-dock facilities nearby. The table below lists the total number of active terminals, including those with on-dock rail access at the top 25 container ports.[1]

The online *Port Profiles* provides rail connections at each individual port.

Number of Container / Ro/Ro Terminals with On-Dock Rail at the Top 25 Container Ports: 2020

Port (City/State)	Number of container terminals	On-dock rail access
Alaska (Anchorage)	1	
Baltimore	6	3
Boston	2	1
Charleston	3	1
Gulfport	1	1
Honolulu	3	
Houston	3	1
Jacksonville	3	3
Long Beach	8	7
Los Angeles	8	8
Miami	2	1
Mobile	2	2
New Orleans	1	1
New York-New Jersey	5	5
Oakland	5	
Philadelphia	3	2
Port Everglades	2	
San Juan	5	
Savannah	2	2
Seattle	3	3
South Jersey (Camden-Gloucester)	1	1
Tacoma	7	5
Virginia (Norfolk-Portsmouth)	4	4
Wilmington (DE)	1	
Wilmington (NC)	1	1

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, because upon individual port authority and marine terminal operator websites, including links to terminal-specific websites as of June 2021.

Footnotes

[1] Cranes include those at active marine terminal, based upon U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics analysis, using AIS data from the U.S. Coast Guard's Nationwide Automatic Identification System (NAIS) archive, processed by the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory's AIS Analysis Package (AISAP) software package. The top 25 ports for each category (tonnage, container, and dry bulk) are based upon the preliminary 2020 port rankings published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center.

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Port Throughput Metrics

Port throughput can be measured from different perspectives. For example, throughput could be measured by the amount of cargo or the number of vessels that a port handles over time. Port throughput is affected by many variables beyond physical capacity, such as:

- the volume of international or domestic cargo,
- competition between ports,
- contractual arrangements with shipping lines,
- disruptions caused by extreme weather (e.g., hurricanes), and
- connections to inland origins and destinations.

Most coastal ports handle both domestic and international cargo carried on oceangoing vessels, while inland ports (e.g., the ports of St. Louis, Cincinnati, Huntington, Mid-America, and Pittsburgh) almost exclusively handle domestic cargo moved on barges.

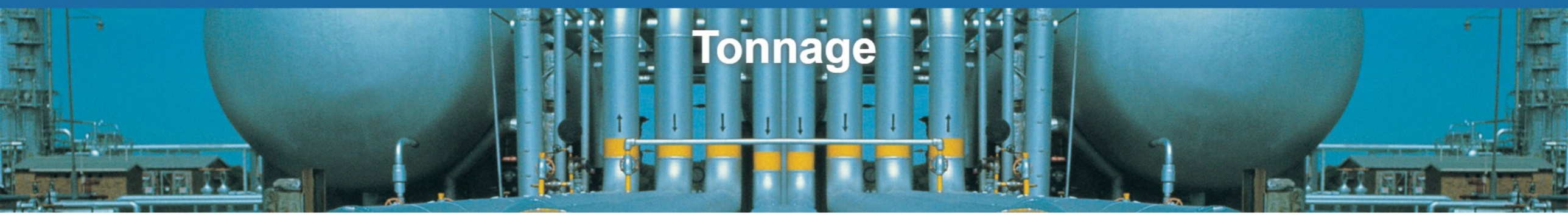
The throughput measures included in this program are summarized below. Vessel dwell times are captured monthly, the food and farm products indices quarterly, and all other throughput measures annually in the *Port Profiles*. Annual data may mask seasonal variations in cargo flows that place periodic stress on available port capacity.

Summary of Throughput Meaures

Element/Metric	Description
Annual container throughput	Inbound loaded, outbound loaded, empty, and total TEU, current year and percentage change from previous year
Annual dry bulk tonnage	Domestic, foreign, import, export, and total short tons, current year and percentage change from previous year
Annual total tonnage	Domestic, foreign, import, export, and total short tons, current year and percentage change from previous year
Annual vessel calls by vessel type	Current year and percentage change from previous year
Average container vessel dwell time	Within port terminal boundaries limited to terminals servicing container vessels (presented in Dwell Times section)
Average liquid bulk vessel (tanker) dwell time	Within port terminal boundaries limited to terminals servicing liquid bulk vessels (presented in Dwell Times section)
Average Ro/Ro vessel dwell time	Within port terminal boundaries limited to terminals servicing Ro/Ro vessels (presented in Dwell Times section)
Top 5 commodities	Total short tons current year and percentage share of total
Top 5 food and farm product commodities	Total short tons current year and percentage share of total

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Port Performance Freight Statistics Program, June 2021.

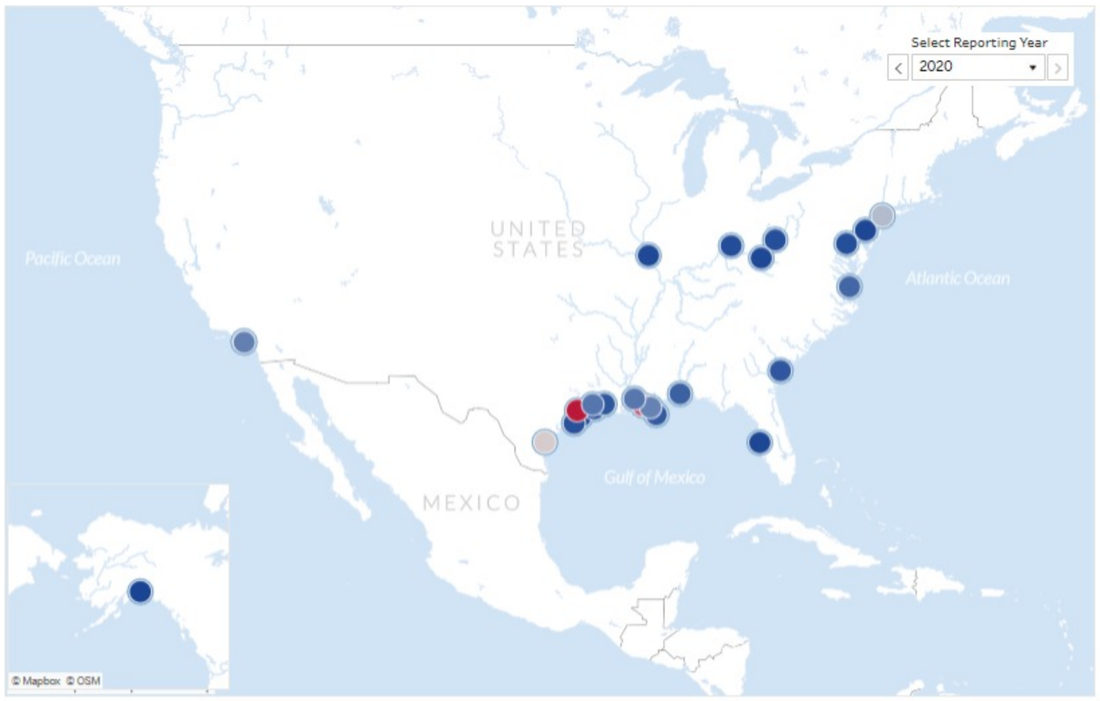
Rail Connections Table of Contents Tonnage



Tonnage

The figure below shows the total amount of imports, exports, and domestic freight handled by each of the top 25 ports by tonnage. In addition to the major container ports along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts, these include ports along Gulf Coast, handling primarily liquid bulk cargo, and river ports, handling primarily dry bulk cargo.

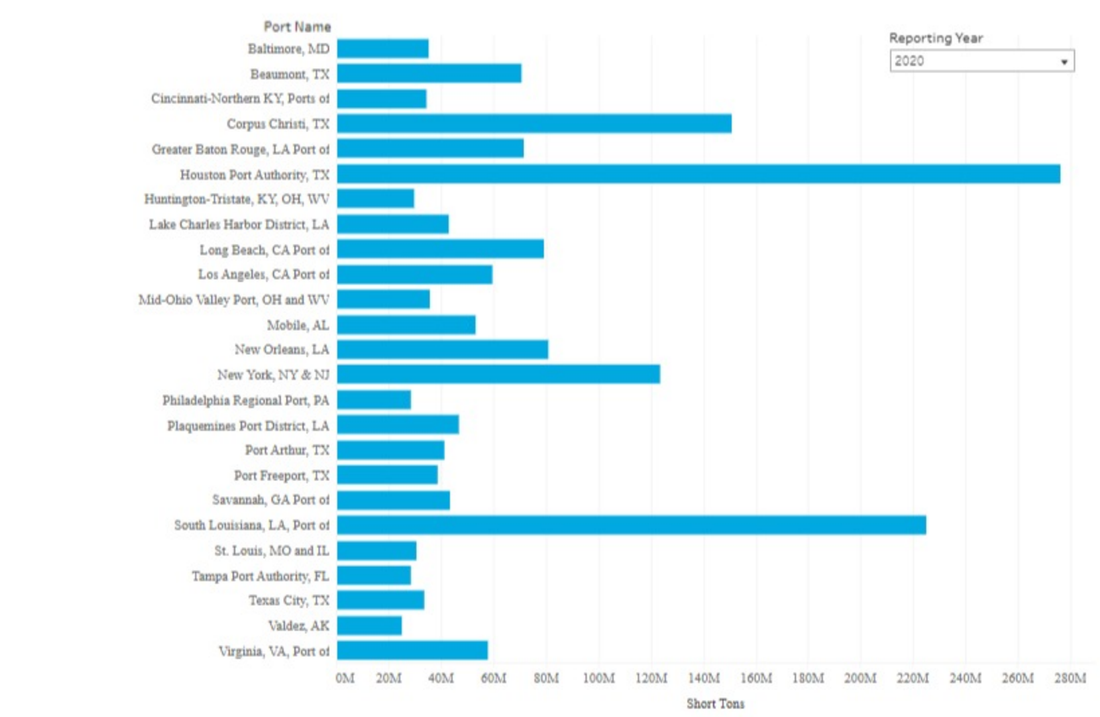
Top 25 Water Ports by Tonnage and Select Year: 2015-2020



NOTES: Due to statistical boundary and definitional changes, the 2020 port data presented here may not be comparable to that of previous years.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon port data published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

The top 25 tonnage ports handled a total of 1,744 million tons of cargo about 71.3 percent of the tonnage handled by the top 100 ranked ports. The top 100 ports account for 95.5 percent of total tonnage handled by U.S. ports. The highest tonnage figures are associated with ports that handle large quantities of both liquid bulk cargo (e.g., petroleum or chemicals) and dry bulk cargo (e.g., coal or grain), such as the ports of Houston, South Louisiana, and Corpus Christi. The 2020 top tonnage port was the port of Houston.[1]

Top 25 Water Ports by Tonnage and Select Year: 2015-2020



NOTES: Due to statistical boundary and definitional changes, the 2020 port data presented here may not be comparable to that of previous years.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon port data published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

Footnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon 2020 data, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

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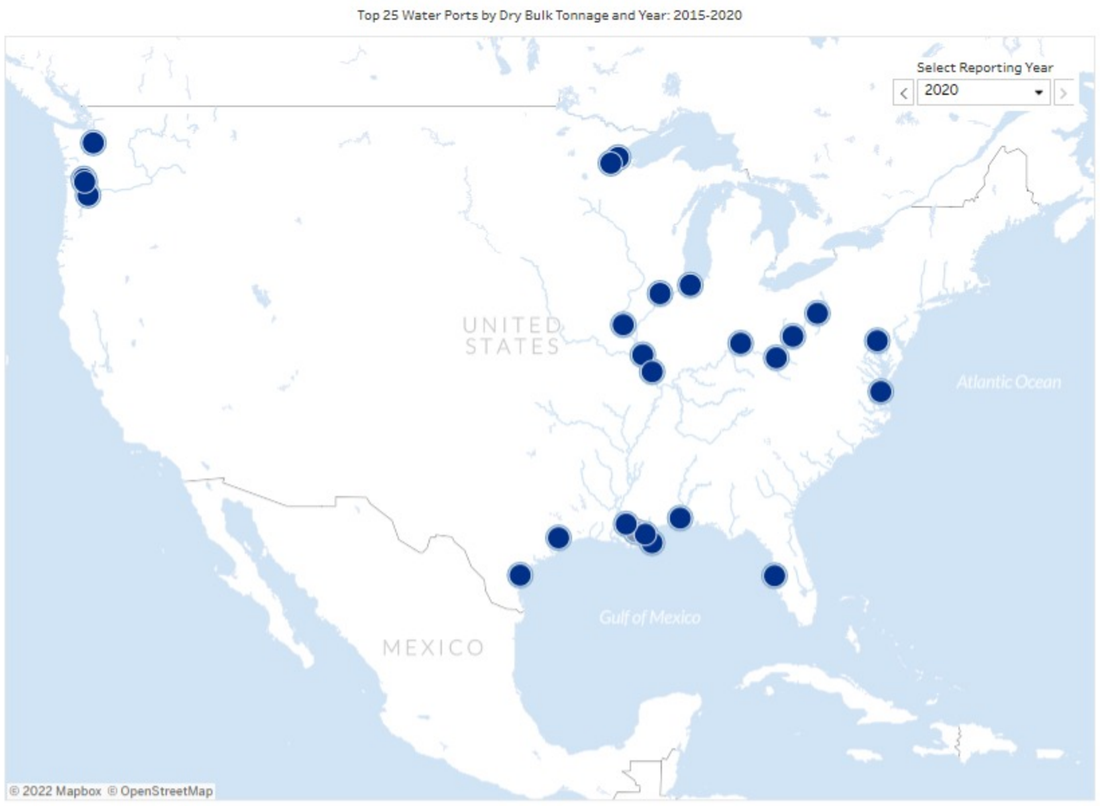
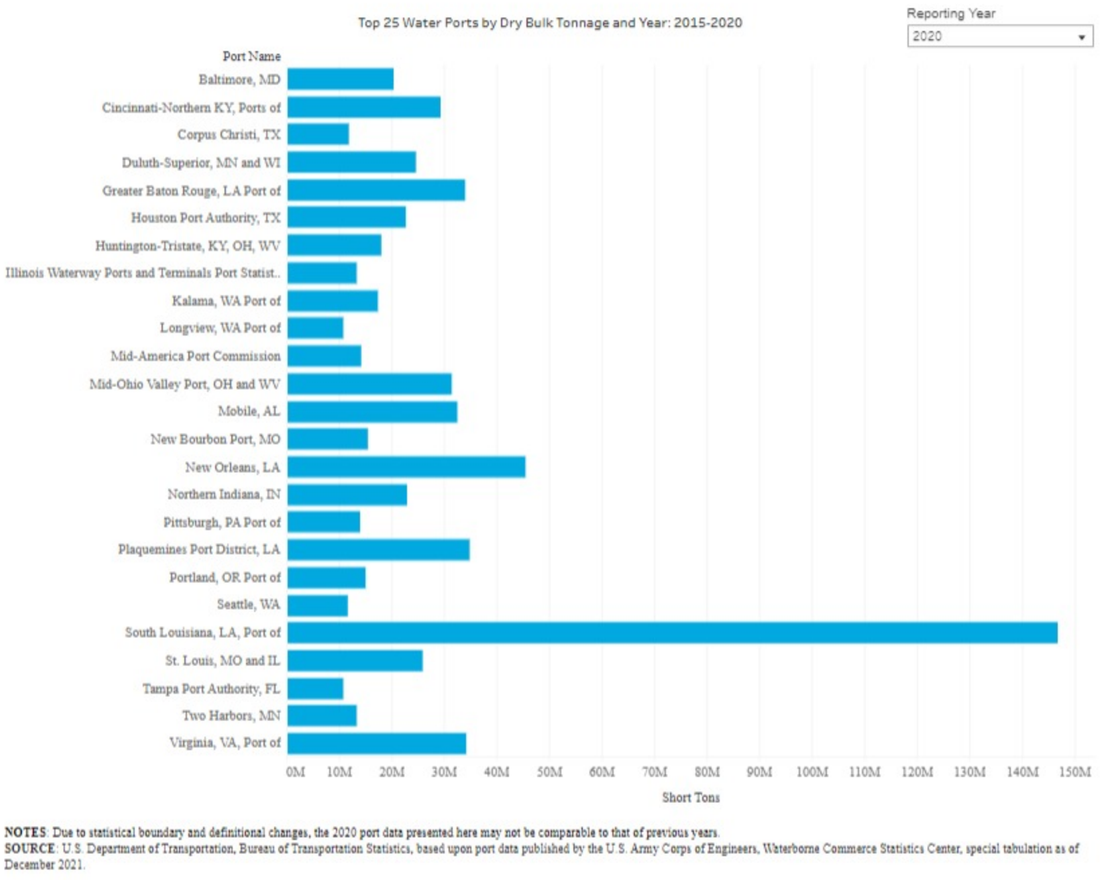
Dry Bulk

The figure below shows the total volume of imports, exports, and domestic freight handled by each of the top 25 ports by tonnage. The Nation's dry bulk ports are primary located along the Great Lakes, the Mississippi River, and the Gulf coast.



NOTES: Due to statistical boundary and definitional changes, the 2020 port data presented here may not be comparable to that of previous years.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon port data published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

The top 25 dry bulk ports handled a total of 672 million tons of cargo, accounting for 70.4 percent of the dry bulk tons handled by the top 100 ranked dry bulk ports. The top 100 ports account for 94.2 percent of total dry bulk tonnage handled by U.S. ports. The port of South Louisiana remained in the top spot and handled by far the greatest volume of dry bulk cargo, more than 3 and 4 times, respectively, than the amount handled by the next ports on the list—the ports of New Orleans and the Plaquemines.[1]



NOTES: Due to statistical boundary and definitional changes, the 2020 port data presented here may not be comparable to that of previous years.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon port data published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

Footnotes

[1] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon 2020 data, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

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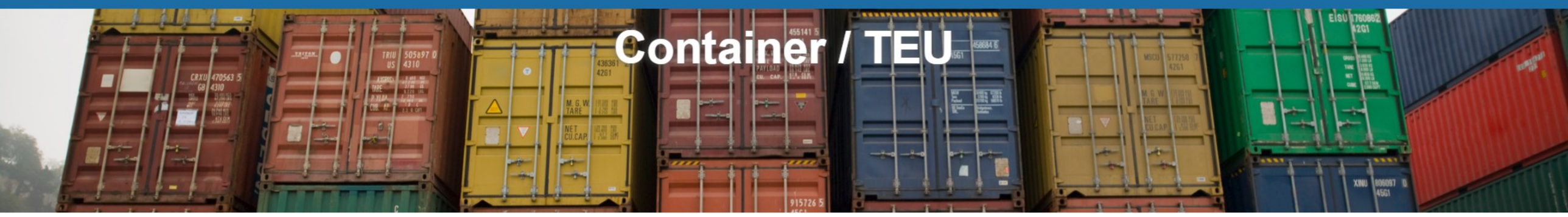
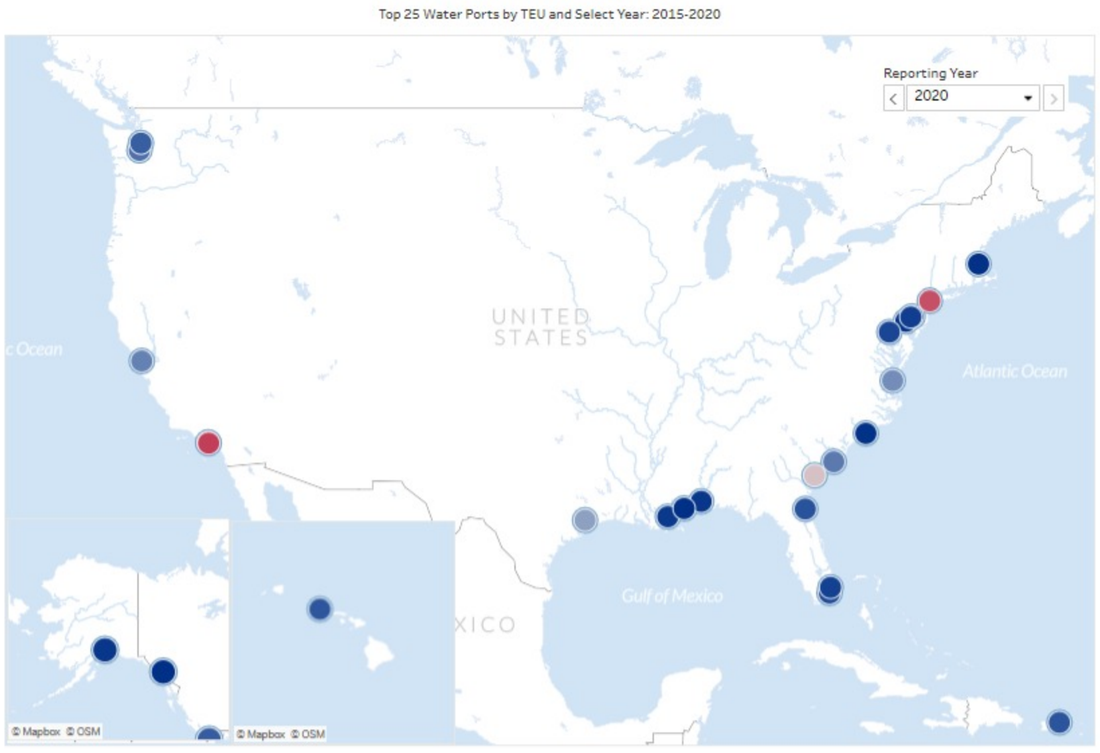


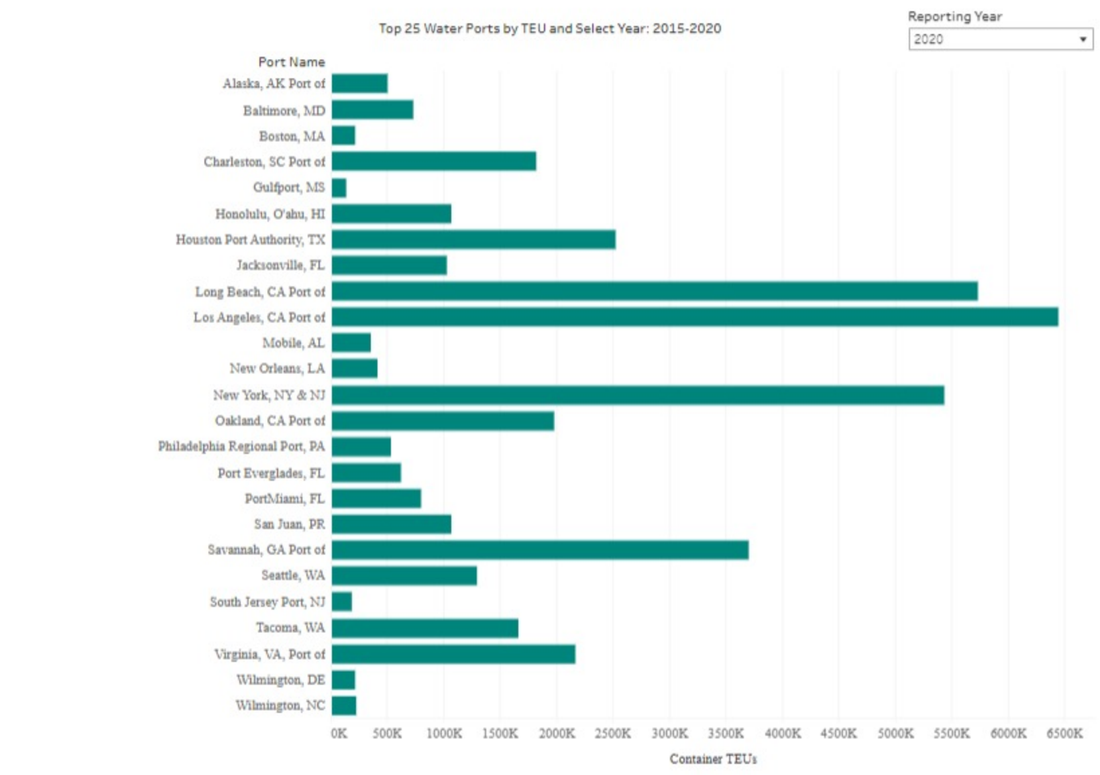
Container / TEU

The figure below shows the total volume of imports, exports, and domestic freight handled by each of the top 25 container ports by twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU). The Nation's container ports are located along the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific coasts.



KEY: TEU = twenty-foot equivalent unit.
NOTES: Based upon port list published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center ranked by loaded domestic and foreign TEU. Container TEU does not include foreign empties. Due to statistical boundary and definitional changes, the 2020 port data presented here may not be comparable to that of previous years.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon port data published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

The top 25 container ports handled a total of 39.8 million TEU, accounting for 96.5 percent of the loaded TEU handled by all U.S. container ports.[1] The container ports with the highest TEU volumes were coastal container ports, such as the ports of Los Angeles, Long Beach, and New York and New Jersey.[2] The 2020 top container port was the port of Los Angeles, California.



KEY: TEU = twenty-foot equivalent unit.
NOTES: Based upon port list published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center ranked by loaded domestic and foreign TEU. Container TEU does not include foreign empties. Due to statistical boundary and definitional changes, the 2020 port data presented here may not be comparable to that of previous years.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon port data published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

Footnotes

[1] Based upon container port list published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center ranked by loaded domestic and foreign TEU. Container TEU does not include foreign empties.
[2] U.S. Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, based upon 2020 data, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Waterborne Commerce Statistics Center, special tabulation as of December 2021.

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