

Data Spotlight

April 1, 2021

Suez Canal Blockage by Ever Given Will Affect U.S. Ports, Businesses, Consumers

The temporary blockage of the Suez Canal by the grounded container ship *Ever Given* affects cargo movement well beyond the Mediterranean and Red Seas. As of 9 PM (UTC +2), Monday, March 29, the goods on the 51 container ships that awaited canal access are delayed getting to the businesses and people who need them. Of those, 25 are coming from or going to ports here in the United States. Combined, the 25 ships have the capacity to carry more than 217,400 TEUs, and that is *a lot* of delayed cargo.

Note: TEUs, 20-foot equivalent units, are a unit of measure for container traffic equal to a standard shipping container.



Data spotlights represent data and statistics from a specific period of time, and do not reflect ongoing data collection. As individual spotlights are static stories, they are not subject to the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) web standards and may not be updated after their publication date. Please contact BTS to request updated information.

En route to and from the U.S., those 25 container ships make intermediate stops, and we don't know how much of their capacity is in use or how much cargo they might pick up along the way, so we cannot say precisely how much of their cargo is going to or from the U.S. We also do not know how much of the cargo destined for Europe is part of a supply chain for products manufactured in Europe and sold in the United States.

However, we do know that delay of these vessels [directly affects activity at the ports](#) of New York-New Jersey, Baltimore, Norfolk, Charleston, Savannah, Miami, and Houston, as well as the many Americans who rely on them. The Port of Savannah, for example, with a supply chain reaching deep into the Midwest, is the Nation's busiest gateway for U.S. containerized agricultural exports. BTS tracks freight flows into and out of the United States by mode in the [Freight Analysis Framework](#).

This interruption exacerbates a global supply chain disrupted by the COVID-19 coronavirus [as previously reported by BTS](#). Within days, the backup created by the *Ever Given* stranding extended to more than 300 ships. Though halfway around the world, this delay of vessels awaiting canal passage will have an impact on businesses and consumers here at home.

NOTE: The count of container ships awaiting Suez Canal access has been updated from an earlier version of this story. The count in the earlier version was as of 11:30 PM (UTC +2) on Friday, March 26.

