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Port of Long Beach narrowly misses record August

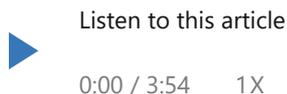
More empties moved, volume gained from neighboring Port of LA



Kim Link Wills • Friday, September 16, 2022 2 minutes read



Empty containers moved through the Port of Long Beach in August increased 7.2% to 301,001 twenty-foot equivalent units. (Photo: Shutterstock)



BeyondWords

While imports declined by more than 5%, progress moving empty containers off the docks helped propel the Port of Long Beach to a near-record August.

The Southern California gateway in August moved 806,940 twenty-foot equivalent units, down just 764 TEUs — or 0.1% — from the same month a year ago, which was the port's busiest August ever.

Imports were down 5.6% to 384,530 TEUs, but exports were up 1.6% to 121,408 TEUs and empty containers moved through the port increased 7.2%

to 301,001 TEUs.

"We're making great strides in reducing the number of ships queuing to enter the San Pedro Bay ports complex and quickly moving imports and empty containers out of the terminals," Mario Cordero, executive director of the Port of Long Beach, said in a news release. "We are collaborating with stakeholders to provide more information, more space and more flexibility across the supply chain."

Cordero issued a statement Thursday in which he thanked the Class I railroads, labor unions and President Joe Biden for working to [avoid a nationwide strike](#) that could have stopped the port's great strides in their tracks.

"The San Pedro Bay port complex moves 40% of the nation's cargo and almost 30% of U.S. freight moves by rail," Cordero said. "It's not difficult to see what an interruption of service during the critical peak shipping season would have meant both here and for the greater national supply chain."

The Port of Long Beach said it has [broken cargo records](#) in six of the last eight months. The port moved 6,600,560 TEUs during the first eight months of 2022, up 4% from the same period last year.

The Port of Long Beach also has gained volume lost by its neighbor. When reporting cargo figures Thursday, Gene Seroka, executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, said about [40,000 TEUs shifted](#) to Long Beach in August.

The Port of LA's imports in August [were down 16.8%](#) year over year, which Seroka blamed, in part, on perceived port congestion and fears of an International Longshore and Warehouse Union walkout that are sending more volume to the East and Gulf coasts. (The Georgia Ports Authority, for example, reported this week that its August volume was [up 18.5% year over year](#).)

The Port of Long Beach is preparing for a more productive future. Earlier this week, the Long Beach Harbor Commission gave the green light to a \$170

million channel deepening project.

"We already accommodate some of the largest ships in the world here," Cordero said. "Deepening and improving our waterways will give these vessels more room to maneuver and to do so more efficiently by taking on more containers, reducing the number of ship calls and associated emissions."

The project, which will be paid for by the port and the federal government, includes deepening the Long Beach approach channel from 76 feet deep to 80 feet, deeping parts of the west basin from 50 feet to 55 feet and constructing an approach channel and turning basin to Pier J South with a depth of 55 feet.

Port officials said an [Army Corps of Engineers study](#) showed that deepening and widening channels would lead to improved vessel navigation and safety and national economic benefits of almost \$21 million annually.

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#Gene Seroka

#Mario Cordero

#Port of Long Beach

#Port of Los Angeles

#President Joe Biden