

## Dali crew hailed as 'heroes' as details emerge of deadly Baltimore bridge smash

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NTSB

The president of the United States yesterday hailed the rapid actions of those onboard the ill-fated *Dali* containership in the moments before it [slammed into a bridge in Baltimore](#), saying they had saved many lives.

Six people carrying out road repair on the Francis Scott Key Bridge are presumed to have died when they fell into the icy cold Patapsco River below at 1.30 am yesterday as the 300 m long box ship lost power and slammed into one of the pillars.

The bridge, a major thoroughfare, immediately collapsed, but calls from the ship just prior to impact ensured there were not more cars and people at risk.

"There's a ship approaching that has lost their steering," an official with the Maryland Transportation Authority can be heard saying in radio traffic recorded just prior to impact.

"Personnel onboard the ship were able to alert the Maryland Department of Transportation that they had lost control of their vessel, as you all know and have reported. As a result, local authorities were able to close the bridge to traffic before the bridge was struck, which undoubtedly saved lives," President Joe Biden said yesterday.

Maryland governor Wes Moore described the crew as "heroes" and said that their quick response had "saved lives" because authorities were able to stop the flow of vehicle traffic on to the bridge in the two minutes between the call and the collision.

The vessel suffered a complete blackout, according to Clay Diamond, the executive director of the American Pilots Association, who was briefed by the state harbour pilots' group. Video footage of the incident corroborates this, with the ship clearly losing power.

An inspection of the *Dali* last year at a port in Chile reported that the vessel had a deficiency related to "propulsion and auxiliary machinery." The inspection, conducted on June 27 at the port of San Antonio, specified that the deficiency concerned gauges and thermometers. The vessel was also involved in an allision at the port of Antwerp in 2016.

The 9,962 teu *Dali* is listed on VesselsValue as owned by Grace Ocean Investment and registered in Singapore. All crewmembers, including the two pilots, were uninjured in the incident while the ship's bow is badly damaged.

The vessel had left Baltimore at 1 am on Monday morning and was heading for Colombo, Sri Lanka, according to the maritime data platform MarineTraffic.

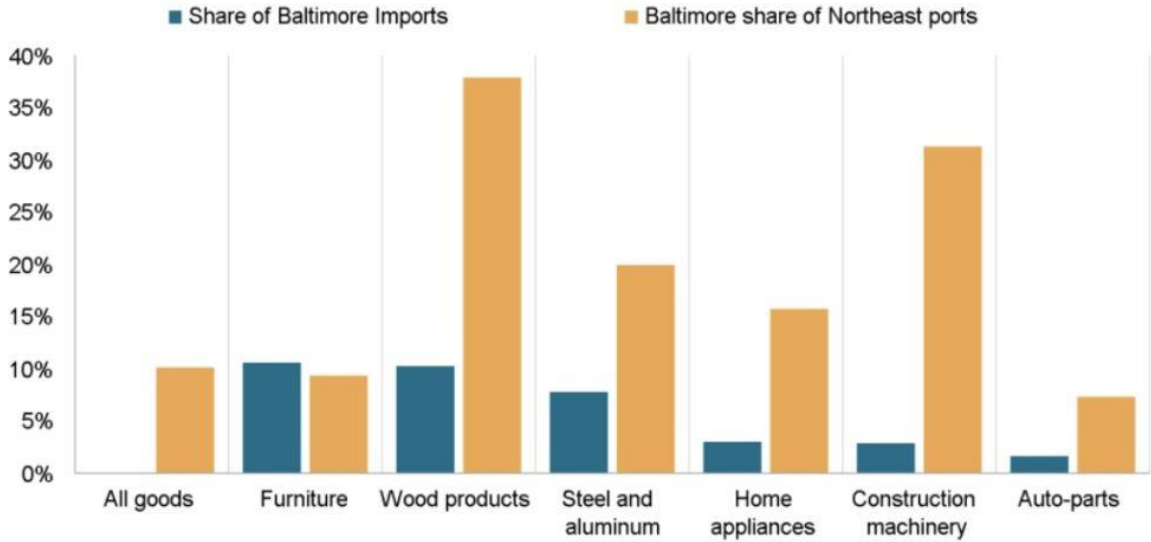
The *Dali* is chartered by Maersk and managed by Synergy Group on the 2M service between Asia and the US East Coast.

Maersk said yesterday it is now omitting Baltimore on all its services for the foreseeable future, until it is deemed safe for passage through the area.

All other shipping lines have had to reroute as well as debris from the downed bridge blocks the entrance to most terminals at the port, the ninth largest maritime gateway in America and one of the country's top roro destinations. The debris has also trapped many ships in port.

**Commodities among most exposed to Baltimore**

Share of containerized freight imports, 12-months to Jan. 31, 2024



Data compiled March 26, 2024.  
Source: S&P Global Market Intelligence.  
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Many containers have been badly damaged at the bow of *Dali* with cargo insurers WK Webster noting yesterday: "There is likely to be significant cargo loss and damage as a result of this very serious incident, including to a number of containers which are reported to be hanging from the bridge. It also seems almost certain that the vessel will not be proceeding with the voyage in the near future resulting in serious delays to all cargo on board."

"At this stage it's not possible to know what the reopening timeline may look like," stated a report from broker Arrow. "Given the importance to automobile imports, the container trade, cruise ships and coal exports, we suspect there will be a concerted effort to reopen the port as quickly as possible. The impact on the local economy will begin immediately, consequently, resuming operations will likely become a priority."

A map of the inaccessible main terminal facilities and their footprint in the Baltimore port complex has been created by Dr Jean-Paul Rodrigue from Texas A&M University and is carried below.

