

Texas Gulf Coast ports record strong freight movements in May

Houston's container volume jumps 21%; Corpus Christi boosted by crude oil shipments

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Port Houston recently welcomed the MV Bremerhaven on its first trip to the port. The new service will connect Mexican and European ports. (Photo: Port Houston)

Port Houston's container cargo volumes surged 21% in May; while the Port of Corpus Christi, Texas, recorded a 6.7% increase in total shipments.

Port Houston sees boost in cargo volumes from consumer spending

[Port Houston](#) handled 364,866 twenty-foot equivalent units in May, a 21% year-over-year (y/y) increase.

Buoyed by regional consumer spending on items like furniture, hardware and other retail goods, the port handled 164,572 TEUs in load imports in May, an 18% y/y increase, according to a [news release](#).

"For the month of May, compared to 2023, our business remains very strong," Roger Guenther, executive director at Port Houston, said during the port's monthly commission meeting on Tuesday. "Total cargo combined across all of our port facilities is up about 6% for the year. That's being led by containers, which is up 14% in TEUs for the year to date."

Year to date, loaded container imports are up 13% y/y to 797,458 TEUs.

Loaded exports for May totaled 131,690 TEUs, a 21% y/y increase this month, while year-to-date loaded exports are up 15% y/y at 655,116 TEUs.

"Imports and exports are strong and general cargo, although it's still down a bit for the year mainly due to some declines in steel exports. ... But overall, it's been a solid year, and as we approach the halfway point of 2024, we're in good shape," Guenther said.

Steel imports in May were up 48% y/y to 436,027 TEUs. Exports of steel were up 100% y/y to 65,333 TEUs.

Total import tonnage was 2.7 million tons in May, a 2% y/y increase and a 19% month-to-month increase.

Exports from the port totaled 2.9 million tons, a 28% y/y increase and a 19% m/m increase.

Related: [Gulf Coast ports report mixed cargo movements in April](#)

Ryan Mariacher, chief port operations officer, said both the port's Bayport and Barbours Cut Container Terminals remained busy in May.

"At our container terminals, Bayport and Barbours Cut, we had one of the busiest months since February, when we set a record for container movements," Mariacher said. "We continue to see strong growth in both the import and export areas, respectively. Our import-export loaded split continued to track at about 55-45."

Port Houston recorded a container volume increase of 20% y/y to 375,965 TEUs in February, a record for the month.

Mariacher said cargo volumes at the port's multipurpose facilities were down in May compared to the same period last year.

"It continues to be down year to date, with total tonnage down 10%, but we did close the gap by about 5% year over year in May," Mariacher said.

"While steel remains down for the year, May was our biggest month in over a year. Cement also remains a strong commodity in our multipurpose facilities, with tonnage outpacing last year by about 3%."

The port totaled 714 vessel calls in May, a 0.3% increase from last year. Barge calls at the port totaled 310 during the month, a 13% increase compared to May 2023.

Port Houston also recently welcomed the MV/OOCL Bremerhaven on its first trip. The vessel arrived at Bayport Container Terminal on June 3 as part of Ocean Alliance's ATG1/Victory Bridge operation.

The vessel connects Mexican imports from Veracruz and Altamira, with a transit time of four days from Veracruz and two days from Altamira. After Houston, the line offers direct service to Le Havre, France; Antwerp, Belgium; Rotterdam, Netherlands; and Bremerhaven, Germany, before returning to Mexico.

Port of Corpus Christi posts gains in crude oil, dry bulk goods

[The Port of Corpus Christi](#) in South Texas moved almost 17.5 million tons of cargo in May, a 6.7% y/y increase.

The port handled 11.6 million tons of crude oil during the month, an 8% y/y increase. Exports of crude oil for the month totaled 10.7 million tons, an 8% increase from last year.

Shipments of petroleum totaled 4.7 million tons during May, a 6% y/y decrease. Exports of petroleum totaled 3.7 million tons for the month, a 2% decrease from the same month last year.

Dry bulk cargo totaled 729,593 tons during May, a 60% y/y increase. Shipments of bulk grain totaled 139,003 tons, a 108% y/y increase.

Shipments of chemicals totaled 271,316 tons in May, a 12% y/y increase.

The Port of Corpus Christi had 368 barge calls in May, a 28% y/y decline from 2023. The port also recorded 192 ship calls during the month, the same total from May 2023.