



**PORT OF OAKLAND
SEAPORT**

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MARITIME e-NEWS



Cargo crunch easing

For the past six months, a cargo surge stressed West Coast seaports. Strong U.S. consumer spending, coupled with tariff fears, sent unprecedented import volume across the docks.

The phenomenon was seen here at home. The Port of Oakland set an all-time volume record in 2018. It began 2019 with the busiest January in its history.

Now, it may be time for a ceasefire. Industry analysts expect container volume to moderate in the months leading up to the late summer peak season. That could be a good thing. West Coast ports – including Oakland – are still recovering from the cargo onslaught. Here's what they've faced:

- Pressure on the labor supply;
- Slower vessel operations;
- Ships at anchor awaiting berth openings;
- Imports unavailable for rapid pick-up;
- Increased turn times for harbor truck drivers.

Vessels delayed in Southern California have been arriving late – and in bunches – at Oakland. That has magnified the challenge created by the import surge. However, relief should be on the way.

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Lytle back



*Chris Lytle,
Executive Director*

Chris Lytle has returned to full-time duty as Executive Director at the Port of Oakland. Mr. Lytle took a temporary leave at the end of 2018 for a medical procedure. He returned in January and has re-assumed responsibility for all Port operations and activities.

"It's good to be back," said Mr. Lytle. "I'm feeling better and glad to be working again with our staff and wonderful customers. I appreciate all the well-wishes that came in while I was gone."

Mr. Lytle has guided the Port of Oakland since 2013. He previously served as Executive Director of the Port of Long Beach.

Delphine Prevost



Women in maritime

Should there be more women working in the maritime sector? Absolutely, says one Port of Oakland official. Maritime Division Administration and Finance Manager Delphine Prevost will make that case this month at the Cal Maritime Academy. Ms. Prevost will speak to cadets March 16 at the academy's Women in Maritime Leadership Conference.

The academy is part of California's State University System. It prepares students for careers in transportation and logistics, among other professions.

Ms. Prevost, oversees Port maritime leasing as well as pricing and major infrastructure projects. She's got some advice for women interested in her profession: "Listen, learn, earn respect, and be confident but humble," says the 17-year Port veteran. "And remember - have some fun!"

A UC Berkeley graduate with a Masters Degree from McGill University, Ms. Prevost has been involved in major Port projects. They include a recently constructed \$100 million rail yard adjacent to a planned Seaport Logistics Complex.

Justin Taschek



New Projects Administrator

Justin Taschek has been appointed Senior Maritime Projects Administrator at the Port of Oakland. In his new role, Mr. Taschek will oversee project teams working to implement the Port's Maritime master plan.

Mr. Taschek is a 6-year Port veteran. He worked as one of the Port's Wharfingers before taking his new assignment. Mr. Taschek is a graduate of Cal Poly State University and the Cal Maritime Academy. He has six years' experience as a shipboard maritime officer.

Mr. Taschek replaces Eric Napralla, who last year was named the Port's Chief Wharfinger.



Representatives of the Nansha and Oakland ports celebrate their agreement

Sister port agreement signed

The Port of Oakland hosted Port of Nansha, China officials who were in Oakland this month to tour the seaport and visit Cool Port Oakland, the newest refrigerated distribution center at the Oakland Seaport. The Port hopes the relationship will stimulate more business and help in bringing a first port-of-call to Oakland.

Nansha is in South China and is part of the Guangzhou Port Group Co. Ltd. Port of Oakland Chief Wharfinger Eric Napralla and Maritime development and Business Representative Katie Olson-Kenney welcomed several officials including Port of Nansha President and CEO John L. Painter, Guangzhou Port Co. Vice General Manager and Senior Economist Nansha Song and Port of Nansha Vice President of Sales and Marketing Western Region Rod Wagoner.

The Port of Nansha moved more than 15 million TEUS in 2018. It's the only deep-water container terminal on the west Pearl River Delta region and provides international shipping services to Europe, America, Middle East, and the Mediterranean Sea.

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The Port said ocean carriers have omitted some West Coast sailings in anticipation of lower cargo volumes. That could help ease the cargo crunch, eliminating the vessel backup in San Francisco Bay while accelerating import deliveries. At the same time, additional longshore labor is being trained to work on the docks. It could be several months before labor reinforcements are ready for duty, but they should be available at peak season.

After a 5 percent increase in 2018, the Port said it wouldn't forecast cargo volume growth for 2019. It explained that global trade uncertainties continue to cloud the outlook. It added, however, that if the consumer-driven U.S. economy remains strong, further import gains could be realized.

February volume dipped as expected

A six-month-long containerized cargo surge came to a halt, as expected, at the Port of Oakland last month. The Port said that its total February cargo volume was down 1.3 percent from a year ago.

February import cargo decreased 5 percent, year-over-year, the Port reported. It was the first decline in import volume since July 2018. February exports were down 8.2 percent. The shipment of empty containers back to origin destinations increased nearly 7 percent.

The Port attributed decreased volume mostly to a pause by shippers following a 2018 global trade frenzy. Shipments spiked last year as importers rushed cargo to the U.S. ahead of anticipated tariff increases. Analysts have since predicted an import slowdown due to jammed warehouses and delays in tariff hikes.

The Port said export volume has been held down by a strong U.S. dollar. When the dollar is strong, American goods are costlier for overseas purchasers.

Shipping lines have responded to lower volumes by canceling some Asia-U.S. voyages, the Port said. Asia is the Port's primary trading partner. Oakland reported a 9.7 percent drop in February vessel calls compared to last year.