



The Maryland Port Administration PRESS RELEASE

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AUTOS/LIGHT TRUCKS, CARGO AT PORT OF BALTIMORE SHOW STRONG REBOUND FROM COVID-19 LOWS

*March Figures for Autos/Trucks Up 229% Compared to Low Point During
Pandemic; Numbers in All Categories Signal Continued Economic Recovery*

(BALTIMORE, MD) – Led by outstanding increases in car and light truck volumes, the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore’s state-owned, public marine terminals continued to show strong recovery in March compared to figures from 2020 in the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Autos, roll on/roll off farm and construction equipment and containers each had significant gains last month compared to their COVID-19 low points.

With 58,032 units in March 2021, autos and light trucks showed a remarkable 229% increase compared to its low point in May 2020 during the pandemic. The auto/light truck category also posted a month-over-month increase of 102.8% over February 2021, and a year-over-year increase of 13.6% from March 2020.

“The Port of Baltimore continues to demonstrate the strength of our state’s economic recovery,” said Governor Larry Hogan. “With the rebound of consumer demand and buying power, the industry remains confident in the Port’s ability to bring goods to market.”

CARS, HEAVY MACHINERY SEE LARGEST GAINS FROM COVID-19 LOWS

In addition to the tremendous increase in cars and light trucks, the Port of Baltimore handled 97,146 tons of roll on/roll off equipment in March, an increase of 97.6% in that category compared to its low point in June 2020. General cargo, with 983,829 tons, was up 34.1% compared to its June 2020 low, while container volumes, with 49,942 boxes, was up 5.3% against its June 2020 low.

Categories were up compared to February 2021 as well: In addition to the 102.8% increase posted by autos/light trucks, roll on/roll off was up 112% and containers were up 3%. The roll on/roll off category also posted a 20.2% year-over-year increase compared to March 2020, while general cargo was up 3.46% year-over-year.

“Baltimore is coming back strong,” said Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) Executive Director William P. Doyle. “Consumers are buying; that’s evident from our car and container numbers. People have adjusted their purchasing habits toward e-commerce, and the Port of Baltimore is an e-commerce logistics hub that can help our customers take advantage of the many local distribution, fulfillment and sorting centers. We’ve also learned to respect and deal with COVID-19 impacts to our industry. We encourage our workforce – and the public – to get vaccinated.”

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Governor Larry Hogan | MDOT Secretary Gregory Slater | MDOT MPA Executive Director William P. Doyle

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The Port continues to gain new business and increase business from existing customers. The Port has served 19 “ad hoc” ships – vessels diverted to Baltimore that were not on a regularly scheduled service call – since mid-July 2020, totaling more than 31,000 Twenty-foot Equivalent Unit (TEU) containers.

Additionally, a new multi-year contract with the Metsa Group of Finland and Logistec Corporation is consolidating Metsa’s Mid-Atlantic paper product volumes through Baltimore using carriers Spliethoff Group and Royal Wagenborg. The contract will generate hundreds of jobs. Metsa is bringing more than 370,000 tons of rolled paper to Maryland for products such as corrugated cardboard boxes and other e-commerce packaging, and is utilizing warehousing space that has been underused or vacant for years

“Industry counts on strong partnerships along every link of the supply chain,” said MDOT Secretary Greg Slater. “As the demand for consumer goods recovers in Maryland and across the region, our partners see the Port of Baltimore has the skilled labor, the capacity and the state-of-the-art infrastructure needed to keep their products moving reliably and efficiently. As we rebound from the pandemic, investments at the Port of Baltimore are serving Maryland’s economy and consumers very well.”

Prospects for even more capacity at the Port got a boost this month with completion of dredging for a second, 50-foot deep berth at the Seagirt Marine Terminal, which is managed under a public-private partnership (P3) between MDOT MPA and Ports America Chesapeake. Creation of the second deep berth involved removal of more than 465,000 cubic yards of sediment and will allow the terminal to handle two ultra-large ships simultaneously. Four additional Neo-Panamax cranes are scheduled to arrive this summer and will be operational later this year.

The growing container business accentuates the need for the planned expansion of Baltimore’s Howard Street Tunnel. The tunnel project will allow the tunnel to accommodate double-stacked rail cars moving cargo to and from the Port, and connect to rail lines up and down the East Coast. The project is benefiting from public-private investment from the federal government, Maryland, CSX and others.

The Port of Baltimore generates about 15,300 direct jobs, with nearly 140,000 jobs overall linked to Port activities. The Port ranks first among the nation’s ports for volume of autos and light trucks, roll on/roll off heavy farm and construction machinery, and imported gypsum. It ranks 11th among major U.S. ports for foreign cargo handled and 10th for total foreign cargo value.

The health and safety of the Port of Baltimore workforce is paramount, and the public marine terminals have maintained stringent CDC-recommended health and safety measures to ensure safety of its labor force, tenants and partners. MDOT MPA encourages the use of face coverings and social distancing measures for individuals working at the marine terminals, and encourages teleworking for those able to do so. Temperature screenings and other preventative procedures are also continuing.

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