



The Maryland Port Administration

PRESS RELEASE

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CARS, LIGHT TRUCKS REMAIN A DRIVING FORCE IN PORT OF BALTIMORE RECOVERY FROM COVID-19 LOWS

Key Cargos Up Double Digits in April Compared to Low Points During Pandemic

(BALTIMORE, MD) – A strong recovery continued in April at the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore’s state-owned, public marine terminals, with key cargo indicators up double-digits compared to COVID-19 lows and several categories also posting year-over-year increases. Autos and light trucks, roll on/roll off farm and construction machinery and overall general cargo each showed gains compared to April of last year to strongly lead the Port’s recovery.

“The activity at the Port of Baltimore is further proof of Maryland’s strong economic recovery,” said Governor Larry Hogan. “By maintaining a strong flow of goods through the Port to respond to consumer demand, we continue to demonstrate that Maryland is open for business.”

The Port of Baltimore has handled more autos and light trucks than any other U.S. port for 10 consecutive years, and the rebound from pandemic lows indicates continued strength in that category. In April, 34,672 autos and light trucks came across the Port’s public docks, a tremendous 97% increase compared to the category’s pandemic low point in May 2020. Autos/light trucks were also up 23.5% year-over-year compared to April 2020. In addition to new vehicles, the Port also handles previously owned vehicles. In April, that category was also up – an increase of 27% compared to the same month last year.

April figures also showed an impressive increase for another key commodity, roll on/roll off farm and construction equipment. Public terminals at the Port handled 85,405 tons of heavy machinery, up 73% compared to the category’s low point in June 2020 and a 30% increase compared to April of last year.

Overall general cargo, with 937,439 tons, was up 28% at the Port compared to the category’s June 2020 low, and up 7% year-over-year. Containers, with 50,866 boxes, was up 7% against its June 2020 low.

“Big things are happening at the Port of Baltimore,” said Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) Executive Director William P. Doyle. “Our cargo figures are bouncing back strong. Farming and construction are picking up once again — worldwide — and American-made equipment is being exported to global markets through the Port of Baltimore. Consumers also are making more purchases online, and with our incredible local e-commerce logistics network we are handling the increased demand.”

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

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“We are also moving forward with rail and terminal infrastructure projects that will help generate thousands of jobs and grow our business for many years to come,” Executive Director Doyle continued. “I thank our Port of Baltimore workforce for doing such amazing jobs and for following COVID-19 health and safety protocols during these challenging times.”

“The pandemic showed us the importance of strong infrastructure and a dedicated workforce to ensure the reliable movement of goods throughout Maryland, even in challenging circumstances,” said MDOT Secretary Greg Slater. “Our investments and partnerships at the Port of Baltimore have helped Maryland weather the COVID-19 storm, and are now helping us capitalize on the region’s economic recovery.”

The Port continues to gain new business and increase business from existing customers. The Port has served 21 “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 containers. The Port also entered a new multi-year contract with the Metsa Group of Finland and Logistec Corporation which 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 and bring more than 370,000 tons of rolled paper to Maryland for products such as cardboard boxes and other e-commerce packaging.

The Port is also expanding capacity to serve two ultra-large container ships at one time. Dredging is complete for a second, 50-foot-deep berth at the Seagirt Marine Terminal, which is managed under a public-private partnership between MDOT MPA and Ports America Chesapeake. More than 465,000 cubic yards of sediment were removed and placed in the Masonville dredge containment facility. Four additional Neo-Panamax cranes are scheduled to arrive this summer and will be operational later this year. Baltimore remains one of a few East Coast ports with the ability to handle these supersized vessels.

Complementing the new Seagirt cranes and the Port’s growing container business are plans to expand Baltimore’s Howard Street Tunnel. The project will allow the tunnel to accommodate double-stacked container rail cars, clearing a longtime hurdle for the Port of Baltimore and giving the entire East Coast seamless double-stack capacity from Maine to Florida. The project involves clearance improvements in the tunnel and at 22 other locations between Baltimore and Philadelphia. When completed, it is expected to increase the Port’s business by about 160,000 containers annually. It will also generate about 6,550 construction jobs and an additional 7,300 jobs from the increased business. The project is benefiting from public-private investment from the federal government, Maryland, CSX and others.

For auto and roll on/roll off customers, MDOT MPA is reconstructing and strengthening its Dundalk Marine Terminal berths to better accommodate the increasing size of heavy farm and construction machinery. The Port of Baltimore currently handles more of this commodity than any other port in the nation.

The Port 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 our workforce is paramount, and the Port has maintained CDC-recommended health and safety measures to ensure the safety of its labor force, tenants and partners. MDOT MPA still 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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