



The Maryland Port Administration

PRESS RELEASE

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PORT OF BALTIMORE CONTINUES TO HELP NATION'S SUPPLY CHAIN BY EASING UNPRECEDENTED CONGESTION AT PORT GATEWAYS

*Noble Ace Vessel Visits Baltimore With Approximately 600 Mercedes
Vehicles Originally Destined For West Coast*

(BALTIMORE, MD) – For many people anticipating a new Mercedes-Benz for the holidays, the Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore may be helping deliver that wish – while also helping ease unprecedented levels of congestion at other American ports. On Monday, the Port of Baltimore welcomed the vessel *Noble Ace*, which discharged 1,800 new Mercedes-Benz vehicles, including approximately 600 that had been scheduled to be unloaded on the West Coast. The International Longshoremen's Association, Ports America Chesapeake, Mercedes-Benz, and the Maryland Department of Transportation Maryland Port Administration (MDOT MPA) teamed up late last week to prepare to handle the increased volume.

"The international maritime industry believes in the Port of Baltimore, and this increase in business reflects that confidence," said Governor Larry Hogan. "Throughout the pandemic, the men and women who work at Maryland's Port have maintained it as a solid, reliable link in our nation's supply chain. Today, cargo is moving through the Port and heading to homes, retail stores, and other businesses across the country."

The Mercedes-Benz shipment is among several recent strides made by the Port of Baltimore to help address supply chain issues:

- Recently the Port began handling fuselage components of the Airbus A220 series of aircraft. The MPA worked closely with shipping firm Wallenius Wilhelmsen, ocean carrier Airbus and logistics partner Louis Dreyfus Freight Solutions. Components are being loaded at the Port of Dalian in China, coming through the Panama Canal, and heading straight to Baltimore. From here, the parts then head to an assembly plant in Canada.
- The Port of Baltimore has begun handling Kubota farm and construction equipment on roll-on/roll-off (Ro/Ro) vessels instead of container ships due to supply chain issues. Japan-based Kubota is one of the largest manufacturers of farming equipment in the world.
- The Port of Baltimore continues to receive "ad hoc" ships – vessels diverted to Baltimore that were not on a regularly scheduled service call. Since July 2020, 26 ships have been diverted to the Port of Baltimore due to nationwide port congestion.

"The Port of Baltimore has had a successful year recovering from the effects of the pandemic, and has played a key role supporting the supply chain up and down the East Coast deep into America," said MDOT Secretary Greg Slater. "The infrastructure investments Maryland and its partners are making at the Port are laying the foundation for new jobs, greater capacity and even more business in the future."

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

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“Cargo continues to move through the Port of Baltimore,” said MPA Executive Director William P. Doyle. “Our creative RoRo solutions for cargo and strong e-commerce abilities, combined with our efficient warehousing and distribution markets, are making us an extremely attractive option for cargo owners to avoid supply chain issues at other ports. We look forward to continuing to work closely with all of our partners, including our great truckers, to bring cargo through Maryland.”

The Port of Baltimore also added new container services this year on two of the largest international container shipping companies in the world, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) and Maersk. The MSC Indus 2 service is an Indian Subcontinent and Mediterranean service that includes an eight-ship string of 8,500 Twenty-foot Equivalent container (TEU) vessels, while Maersk started a new Southeast Asia/Vietnam and China service through Baltimore including a string of up to 13 ships with carrying capacities of 4,500-plus TEU containers.

Last month, groundbreaking was held for Baltimore’s Howard Street Tunnel Expansion project, which will expand the CSX-owned tunnel to allow for double stacked container rail cars, clearing a longtime hurdle for the Port. It will also give CSX rail on the 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. With the tunnel expansion project, Baltimore will be able to send double stacked containers by rail into the Ohio Valley and onto Chicago.

The Howard Street Tunnel project benefits from public-private investment from the federal government, Maryland, CSX, and others, and 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.

In September, the MPA and Ports America Chesapeake, its public-private partner at Seagirt Marine Terminal, welcomed four additional ultra-large, Neo-Panamax cranes. The cranes are undergoing thorough testing and are expected to be operational during the first quarter of 2022. Baltimore is one of a few East Coast ports with the ability to handle some of the world’s largest vessels, and the new deep berth will allow two of these massive ships to be serviced at the same time.

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.

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