

Governor Moore Announces Expanded Port of Baltimore E-Commerce Shipping Service

Among the World's Top Ocean Carrier Companies, ZIM Shipping Lines to Expand to Weekly Service with Larger Ships

ANNAPOLIS, MD—Governor Wes Moore today announced that ZIM Shipping Lines, one of the top ocean carrier container companies in the world and major container shipping customer at Maryland's Port of Baltimore is doubling its service to the state, increasing its E-commerce Baltimore Express frequency from bi-weekly to weekly, beginning at the end of February. ZIM will also increase the size of its ships coming into the port by nearly 50 percent—first utilizing 6,000 twenty-foot equivalent unit container vessels, and eventually 8,000 twenty-foot equivalent unit container ships.

“The Port of Baltimore is one of the most productive ports in the nation and one of Maryland's top economic generators,” **said Governor Moore**. “When one of the leading container shipping companies in the world increases its business here, it's a reflection of the maritime industry's strong confidence in both Maryland's Port and Maryland's workers.”

“Maryland's Port of Baltimore has a reputation for excellent service from a dedicated workforce, and for having state-of-the-art infrastructure and logistics,” **said Acting Maryland Department of Transportation Secretary Paul J. Wiedefeld**. “ZIM and all of our maritime partners know that the Port of Baltimore is the right choice to help them respond quickly to consumer demand, deliver goods to market, and expand economic opportunities here and abroad.”

“Maryland's strategic location and proximity to more than one-third of the U.S. population within an overnight drive has helped spur significant growth in E-commerce around our state,” **said Acting Maryland Commerce Secretary Kevin A. Anderson**. “We are thrilled to see that ZIM is choosing to expand its service, particularly at a time when the demand for goods is rapidly increasing both here and across our nation.”

The Port of Baltimore currently generates about 15,300 direct jobs, with nearly 140,000 jobs overall linked to port activities. It 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 ninth for total foreign cargo value and eleventh among major U.S. ports for foreign cargo handled. Baltimore is the first U.S. port of call for this expanded service.

“Ports America Chesapeake and the Port of Baltimore are delighted with the expanded service to Seagirt Marine Terminal with increased volumes, additional e-commerce capacity and increased global service at the port,” **said Vice President of Ports America Chesapeake Bayard Hogans**. “With the increase from bi-weekly to weekly calls, it shows the strength of our e-commerce and mid-Atlantic market.”

“Additional business from ZIM means more work hours for our longshore labor force,” **said International Longshoremen's Association Local 333 President Scott Cowan**. “This is very good news for the men and women of the ILA.”

The Baltimore Express is operated exclusively by ZIM and offers customers the fastest transit time from Asia to Baltimore. The service began last spring between China, Southeast Asia and the U.S. East Coast. ZIM operates a fleet of close to 100 vessels with significant international container market share. The firm's global footprint includes Transpacific, Cross Atlantic, Cross Suez, Intra-Asia, and Latin America trade lanes.

The upgraded around-the-world weekly service will use the Panama and Suez canals, with a route traveling from Jakarta, Indonesia; Laem Chabang, Thailand; Cai Mep, Vietnam; Yantian, China; Kaohsiung, Taiwan; the Panama Canal; and Kingston, Jamaica before coming to Baltimore. From Maryland, the line follows to Norfolk, New York, Boston, the Suez Canal and Kaohsiung. The call at Kingston will enhance access to goods from Africa.

“This is great news for the Port of Baltimore,” **said Maryland Port Administration and Port of Baltimore Executive Director William P. Doyle.** “ZIM has excelled in utilizing our existing rail network to bring cargo into the Midwest. With our ultra-large, Neo-Panamax cranes and our incredible network of regional distribution, fulfillment, and sorting centers, the future has never been brighter for the container business in Baltimore.”

Baltimore is a prime gateway for goods heading to the e-commerce market and for cargo sent to the Midwest via rail. Maryland’s Port has handled nearly 100 “ad hoc” ship calls—including extra loaders from ZIM—during recovery from the pandemic. Ad hoc ships are vessels diverted to Baltimore that were not on a regularly scheduled service call.

The Port of Baltimore’s rising container business will be further buoyed by expansion of the CSX-owned Howard Street Tunnel in Baltimore, which is underway and scheduled to be completed in 2025. The expanded tunnel will accommodate double-stacked container rail cars traveling to and from the port, clearing a longtime hurdle and providing the East Coast with seamless double-stack capacity from Maine to Florida, as well as the ability to send double-stacked containers by rail into the Ohio Valley and on to Chicago. The project involves clearance improvements in the 127-year-old tunnel and at 21 other locations between Baltimore and Philadelphia.

The Howard Street Tunnel project benefits from public-private investment, including from the federal government, Maryland, CSX. The project is expected to increase the port’s business by about 160,000 containers annually. It also will generate about 6,550 construction jobs and an additional 7,300 jobs from the increased business.

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