

Portland Terminal 6 aid “urgently” needed, report says

Maritime gateway seeking private operator

[Stuart Chirls](#)

Monday, September 02, 2024



Terminal 6, Port of Portland. (Photo: Port of Portland)

A maritime shipping coalition led by the Port of Portland is asking the state for money to keep Oregon’s only international container terminal running while it searches for a private operator for the money-losing facility.

Calling container shipping through Terminal 6 “essential” to state businesses, the port and stakeholders on Aug. 23 presented a plan to Gov. Tina Kotek calling for public investment in the terminal, and outlining how to maintain the facility’s services while the port continues to seek a private operator, known as the landlord model.

“Making sure container service remains available for Oregonians and businesses across the region – whether they’re in the seafood, grain or animal feed industry, or sell building supplies, tires, shoes and toys – will require public and private support,” Port of Portland Executive Director Curtis Robinhold said in a release. “This is a critical piece of Oregon’s economy, and it urgently needs financial assistance from the state to continue to serve shippers across all of Oregon.”

Kotek requested the business plan after pledging in May to continue services at T6, subsidized by the port despite years of “significant” financial losses. Her proposed 2025-27 biennial budget will include \$35 million for capital investments and channel maintenance in the lower Columbia River, and \$5 million in operational stop-gap funding from the Oregon Emergency Board this fall.

The report is supported by importers and exporters including supermarket operator Kroger, apparel importer Columbia Sportswear, and labor representatives.

“Container service provides hundreds of local jobs, along with many more in connected industries and communities,” said Leal Sundet, secretary of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 8, which represents most of the terminal’s workers, in the release. “The people who work these jobs spend their money locally, and they’re supporting shippers and industries from all over the state. Container service is the lifeblood of the region – it drives the economy.”

The port plan emphasized that it cannot sustain continued losses without “significant investment” from the state as well as unspecified “efficiencies” from the shipping industry.

According to the report, the marine container service underpins 1,500 jobs and generates \$20 million in state and local tax revenue annually.

The port said it has negotiated new rates with the container shipping companies serving T6 along with labor efficiencies with the ILWU and reduced fees with Harbor Industrial, the terminal’s container stevedore.

The port is also working with the coalition’s advisory council on additional solutions ranging from new shipper marketing strategies to business initiatives aimed at doubling container volumes over the next five to seven years. Both short- and long-term investments from the state would reduce the unspecified financial loss facing the Port in the next year, enabling it to continue working toward operational stability.

The proposed funding must be approved by legislators in September and during the 2025 Legislative Session.