

Texas Gulf Coast ports see year-over-year gains in freight volumes

Houston, Corpus Christi, Texas, see higher cargo shipment totals in 2024

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Port Houston handled a record 4.14 million twenty-foot equivalent units in 2024, an 8% year-over-year increase compared to 2023. (Photo: Jim Allen/FreightWaves)

Ports in Houston and Corpus Christi, Texas, reported increased year-over-year cargo movements in 2024 versus 2023.

New Orleans, which did not provide year-end totals for 2024, recorded increased container volumes for the month of December.

Port Houston breaks cargo volume record in 2024

Container volumes at Port Houston rose 8% year over year to a record 4.14 million twenty-foot equivalent units in 2024 versus 2023.

Port Houston also handled a record 53 million tons of cargo at its two public terminals in 2024, up 6% year over year from 2023.

The Bayport and Barbours Cut container terminals also received 4.53 million short tons of steel, the second-highest amount in five years and the third-highest in the past decade, according to a [news release](#).

“It was just a spectacular year,” Charlie Jenkins, CEO of Port Houston, said during the port’s monthly commission meeting on Tuesday. “Loaded exports were up 8% and our loaded imports, which are primarily consumer goods, were up 6%. In 2024 we also made a lot of investment in equipment and infrastructure. Our total capital investment was \$630 million last year.”

In December, the port handled 340,418 TEUs compared to the same month last year, a 4% year-over-year increase.

Loaded exports surged 12% year over year to 135,446 TEUs. Loaded imports fell 1% year over year in December to 149,396 TEUs.

Steel imports saw a 4% year-over-year drop for the month to 343,884 short tons.

Empty container imports increased 24% year over year to 19,082 TEUs, while exports of empty containers fell 8% year over year to 36,494 TEUs.

Ship calls for December totaled 701, compared to 700 vessels last year. Barges calling Port Houston decreased 1% year over year to 310.

Port of Corpus Christi cargo volumes up 1.7% in 2024

The Port of Corpus Christi reported a 1.7 % increase in cargo tonnage in 2024 to 206.5 million tons compared to 2023.

Leading commodities at the port for the year included crude oil, refined products and liquefied natural gas.

Crude oil shipments increased 3.5% year over year to 130.5 million tons in 2024. Dry bulk and agricultural goods increased 8.1% and 39%, respectively.

In December, Corpus Christi handled 18.4 million tons of cargo, a 4% year-over-year increase compared to the same year-ago month.

Total shipments of crude oil fell 7% year over year at the port in December to 11.2 million tons.

Exports of crude oil totaled 10.7 million tons, a 5% year-over-year decrease. Imports fell 16% year over year to 742,997 tons.

Petroleum shipments decreased 2% year over year to 5.6 million tons, while exports fell 2% year over year to 4.5 million tons during the month.

Dry bulk cargo rose 83% year over year in December to 926,508 tons, while shipments of chemicals decreased 29% year over year to 369,139 tons.

The Port of Corpus Christi had 428 barge calls in December, a 14% year-over-year decline. Ship calls totaled 215, the same number of ships calling in December 2023.

Port of New Orleans reports 5% increase in container volumes

The Port of New Orleans saw a 5% year-over-year increase in container volume to 39,432 TEUs in December.

The port did not provide year-end totals for 2024.

Container cargo volumes during December consisted of exports of plastic resins, chemicals and paper. Coffee and chemical products were the main imports.

The Port of New Orleans recorded breakbulk tonnage of 81,616 short tons in December, a 1% year-over-year decrease. Imports of steel and lumber were the top breakbulk commodities during the month, port officials said.

In December, the port handled 8,194 Class I railcar switches, a 6% year-over-year decrease from December 2023. The port handles switching operations for six Class I railroads: BNSF, CN, CSX, CPKC, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific.