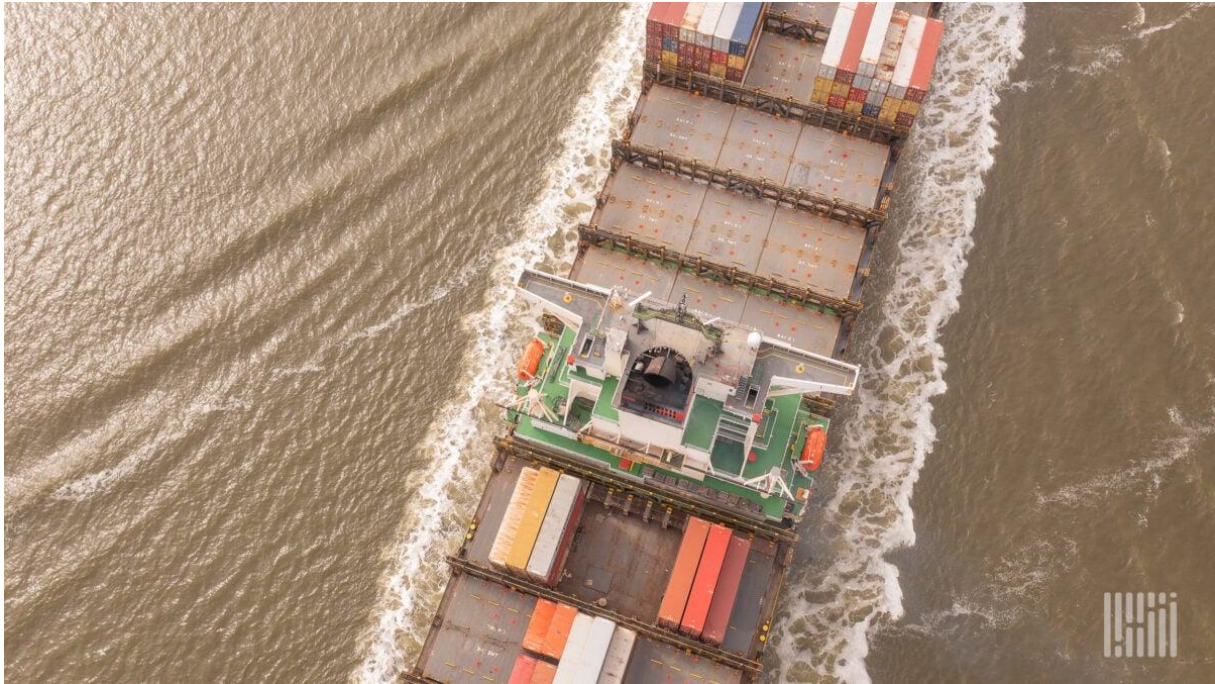


# February freight volumes mixed at Gulf Coast ports

Cargo volume slips in Houston, rises in New Orleans and Corpus Christi, Texas

**Noi Mahoney**

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Port Houston cargo volumes fell 13% year over year in February, primarily caused by weather disruptions in the Houston Ship Channel, officials said. (Photo: Jim Allen/FreightWaves)

Port Houston saw less vessel activity in February due to weather disruptions on its ship channel, while New Orleans and the Port of Corpus Christi, Texas, saw an increase during the month.

## **Houston Ship Channel saw limited February activity amid severe weather**

[Port Houston](#) handled 325,424 twenty-foot equivalent units in February, a 13% year-over-year decline compared to the same month in 2024.

Total import tonnage was down 12% year over year at 2.3 million tons in the month. Imports of steel decreased 13% year over year to 302,359 tons during February.

Ryan Mariacher, chief port operations officer, said fog impacted the Houston Ship Channel in February, leading to fewer vessel calls at the port's Barbours Cut and Bayport container terminals.

"According to [Houston Pilots](#) data for the month of February, fog and weather delays contributed to a 29% reduction in availability of our ship channel, compared to a 2.5% reduction last year," Mariacher said during the port's monthly commission meeting on Tuesday.

Port Houston recorded 613 ship calls during the month, a 13% year-over-year decrease, while barge calls totaled 290, an 11% year-over-year decline.

“Mother Nature was mad at us, so that led to the tonnage reduction. Overall tonnage at our multipurpose facilities was down 9% for the month, driven primarily by decreases in our liquid bulk and dry bulk imports,” Mariacher said.

Container import tonnage slipped 12% year over year to 1.4 million tons. Export tonnage decreased 11% year over year to 2.6 million tons in February.

Total revenue tonnage across Port Houston’s terminals decreased 12% year over year in February, totaling 4.9 million tons.

Full import containers in February decreased 14% year over year to 142,661 TEUs, while full export containers declined 16% year over year to 122,740 TEUs.

Movements of empty export containers were down 16% year over year in February to 37,955 TEUs. Empty import container movements at the port were up 22% year over year to 22,068 TEUs in the month.

Mariacher said disruptions across the global supply chain also contributed to lower monthly volumes at Port Houston.

“There’s some other things that are occurring in the economy, obviously on the global scale, and some things local that also contributed to that,” Mariacher said. “But with the bounce back we’ve been seeing [in March], we think that weather was a significant driver last month.”

**Related:** [January freight volumes mixed at Gulf Coast ports](#)

#### **Port of New Orleans reports 11% increase in container volumes**

Boosted by shipments of coffee, chemicals, wood, resins and paper, the [Port of New Orleans](#) saw an 11.7% year-over-year rise in container volumes at 47,763 TEUs during February.

“There are positive signs for containerized cargo – with February volumes representing a 34% increase compared to January,” port spokeswoman Kimberly Curth told FreightWaves. “Top containerized exports included plastic resins, various chemicals and paper. The top imports included coffee, wood products and chemicals.”

Breakbulk cargo totaled 75,785 short tons in February, a 27% decrease compared to the same month in 2024.

While breakbulk cargo at the port was down year over year, Curth said volumes are up 10% year to date for fiscal year 2025. The port’s fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

“The port handled 740,571 short tons of breakbulk cargo year to date. The growth in breakbulk cargo has been driven by increases in steel, natural rubber and project cargo imports,” Curth said.

The port handled 7,820 Class I railcar switches in February, a 14.7% year-over-year decrease. The port handles switching operations for the six Class I railroads that operate in New Orleans: BNSF Railway, CN, CSX, CPKC, Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific.

#### **Port of Corpus Christi’s cargo volume results mixed**

[The Port of Corpus Christi](#) moved 16.7 million tons of cargo in February, a 6% year-over-year increase from the same year-ago period.

The port handled 10.4 million total tons of crude oil during the month, a 12% increase compared to February 2024.

The Port of Corpus Christi had 189 ship calls in February, compared to 187 in the same month in 2024. The port handled 400 barges in February, a 2% year-over-year increase.