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News Release

Port Shipments Decline Amid Weak Retail Sales

Downturn also follows shifts in vessel deployments

May 13, 2016

Following a solid first quarter, Port of Long Beach container cargo volumes decreased in April compared to the same month in 2015, after lower-than-expected consumer spending in recent months. The decline also reflects evolving vessel alliances that have shifted ship deployments.

Overall, Port container cargo volume was down 22.1 percent last month, compared to April 2015. Amid a soft retail climate in the U.S. and economic woes overseas, the decline in imports was accompanied by exports that were down 18 percent due to the continued strength of the U.S. dollar.



Commenting on the volume decline, Port of Long Beach CEO Jon Slangerup said: "The additional berthing choices offered by vessel alliances are dispersing cargo across more terminals and ports. These volume shifts will continue to occur as newly formed alliances take shape. Our long-term outlook remains strong as we continue to invest in our facilities and offer world-class customer service."

Through the first four months of 2016, cargo volume was down 2.2 percent, reflecting slowing economic growth nationally. U.S. GDP was up 1.7 percent in the fourth quarter of 2015 followed by 2016 first quarter GDP growth of only 0.5 percent.

The Port moved a total of 478,842 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units, a standard shipping measure) in April. This includes 247,316 TEUs in imports — largely consumer goods — while exports totaled 112,805 TEUs. Empty containers were down 25.8 percent to 118,721 TEUs, which are returned overseas to be refilled with imports.

"Economic conditions today are very volatile, but we remain confident in our long-term prospects," noted Harbor Commission President Lori Ann Guzmán. "The Port of Long Beach is preparing for economic uncertainty by carefully reviewing our budget and looking for savings at every opportunity. While we still have significant modernization projects planned for the next 10 years, the pace of the projects will be determined by the health of the economy."

For the latest monthly cargo numbers, [click here](#).

For more details on the cargo numbers, please visit www.polb.com/stats.

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