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Port Breaks Record With 4.4 Million Containers

With another strong month of imports in December, the Port of Long Beach broke its record for yearly container cargo volume – handling 4,408,480 20-foot container units in 1999, an 7.6 percent increase over 1998's 4,097,689 20-foot equivalent units (TEUs). Long Beach remains the nation's busiest container port.

(TEUs are a standard measure for the steel cargo containers commonly used interchangeably on ships, trucks and trains.)

“The totals reflect a remarkable period of growth for the U.S. economy and the Port of Long Beach,” said Wilma D. Powell, the port's director of trade and maritime services. “The U.S. economy remains strong, and so is the American consumers' appetite for imports. We are projecting strong imports at least through the spring. We also see slow, but steady gains this year for exports.”

In December, the port moved 365,240 TEUs, an 8.5 percent increase over the same month a year ago. The gains were led by an 11.4 percent jump in imports, which totaled 185,572 TEUs. The growth in exports slowed, however, slipping 0.9 percent to 86,697 TEUs.

For the year, imports also paced the port's gains, increasing by 10.5 percent – the fourth consecutive year of double-digit import increases. Long Beach is the leading gateway for imports from Asia, including such consumer goods as clothing, shoes, home furnishings and consumer electronics. Exports rebounded slightly, increasing by 1.6 percent. With much of Asia still recovering from their recent economic crisis, the gains in exports were led by such raw materials as waste paper, recycled metal, plastics and chemicals.

Port of Long Beach						
Container Traffic (TEUs*)						
	LOADED		TOTAL	EMPTIES	TOTAL	
	Inbound	Outbound	LOADED		CONTAINERS	
Dec-99	185,572	86,697	272,269	92,971	365,240	
Dec-98	166,532	87,527	254,059	82,589	336,648	
% change	8.7%	8.2%	8.6%	6.0%	7.9%	
Jan-99	169,397	77,676	247,073	72,239	319,312	
Feb-99	172,482	80,000	252,482	71,647	324,129	
Mar-99	171,913	88,699	260,612	87,362	347,974	
Apr-99	181,575	77,040	258,615	81,071	339,686	
May-99	205,640	87,553	293,193	101,274	394,467	
Jun-99	194,410	78,962	273,372	100,603	373,975	
Jul-99	188,586	74,155	262,741	85,220	347,961	
Aug-99	214,709	80,581	295,290	104,015	399,305	
Sep-99	219,080	82,308	301,388	101,322	402,710	
Oct-99	204,242	84,349	288,591	107,829	396,420	
Nov-99	209,444	91,201	300,645	96,656	397,301	
Dec-99	185,572	86,697	272,269	92,971	365,240	
Year-to-date	2,317,050	989,221	3,306,271	1,102,209	4,408,480	
98 year-to-date	2,096,901	973,647	3,070,548	1,027,141	4,097,689	
% change	10.5%	1.6%	7.7%	7.3%	7.6%	
*TEUs: 20-foot equivalent units or 20-foot-long cargo container						