Port Recovery Metrics

(2025 JCR, p. 115)

A Report to the Maryland General Assembly
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee
and
House Appropriations Committee

Maryland Port Administration

May 2025

JCR Request

The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) prepared this supplemental report in response to language contained in the 2025 Joint Chairmen's Report (JCR). The language states:

> *"**Reports on Port Recovery Metrics**: The committees request that the Maryland Port Administration (MPA) provide two reports updating the committees on progress that the Port of Baltimore is making in recovering from the temporary port closure caused by the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge. The reports should provide information on cargo tonnage and other activity metrics for calendar 2024 and 2025 to date with comparisons to the same period before the collapse of the bridge. The first report should be submitted June 1, 2025, and the second report should be submitted December 1, 2025.*"

Background

The Helen Delich Bentley Port of Baltimore (Port) is a 50-foot-deep-water port that consists of six state-owned marine terminals, managed by the Maryland Port Administration (MPA), as well as private marine terminals. The MPA state-owned marine terminals are Seagirt Marine Terminal, Dundalk Marine Terminal, South Locust Point Marine Terminal, North Locust Point Marine Terminal, Masonville Terminal, and the Fairfield Marine Terminal. These terminals handle MPA general cargo commodities, including containerized cargo, automobiles, farm and construction machinery, forest products and breakbulk cargoes, such as iron and steel and palletized cargo. The private terminals handle cargoes including salt, coal, and metals as well as autos and some containerized cargo. There is also a terminal for cruise ships.

The Port has a significant economic impact in Maryland, supporting over 273,600 cargo-related jobs in Maryland, including approximately 20,000 direct jobs at the Port.[1] The Port generates more than $5 billion per year in personal income to Maryland residents, and roughly $4 billion in annual taxes and business revenues. As such, it is a key contributor to the economic vitality of the region and those who make their living and support their families through maritime commerce.

Francis Scott Key Bridge ("Key Bridge") Collapse

In the early morning of March 26, 2024, the cargo ship M/V Dali left the Port and struck the Key Bridge, causing it to collapse into the Patapsco River. The shipping channel that the Key Bridge spanned provides access to more than 30 public and private marine terminals that make up the Port. The allision and collapse of the Key Bridge blocked the Port's main channel, preventing commerce and cruise vessels from reaching MPA terminals and all but one private marine terminal, and causing a significant loss in business and revenues for the Port. On April 1, the Unified Command, led by the U.S. Coast Guard and Army Corps of Engineers, opened a

[1] Martin Associates, *The 2023 Economic Impact of the Port of Baltimore in Maryland*, Prepared for the Maryland Port Administration, March 13, 2024.
https://mpa.maryland.gov/Documents/MarylandEconomicimpactofPOB2023.pdf

temporary, shallow-draft channel that allowed for the passage of small vessels and workboats. Over the next month, the Unified Command opened two additional alternate channels and a limited access deep-draft channel.

On June 10, after 78 days, the Port's main 700-foot-wide, 50-foot-deep shipping channel was safely reopened. The allision and collapse of the Key Bridge caused cargo destined for the Port to be diverted to other ports. Although the channel was fully reopened on June 10, the Port's business did not return to its pre-allision levels. As of this report, the Port's business is still recovering. The full extent of the damages inflicted on the Port and the State by the Dali's destruction of the Key Bridge remain to be determined.

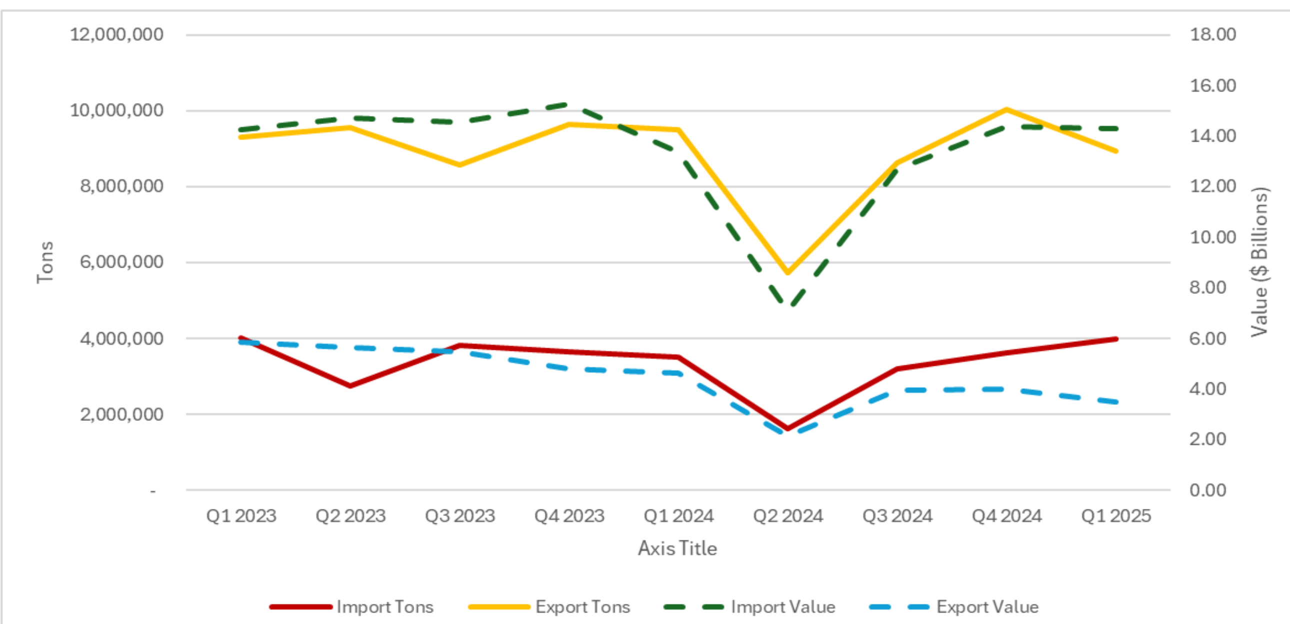
Recovery Is Ongoing

The allision and collapse of the Key Bridge resulted in a loss of cargo volumes for the Port. The Port had a significant decline of about seven million tons of cargo in 2024 compared to 2023.

In 2023, the year prior to the allision and collapse, the Port handled a record 52.3 million tons of foreign cargo with a record total value of $80.8 billion.

In 2024, the Port handled 45.9 million tons of foreign cargo. 2024 was the second-highest tonnage recorded by the Port. Although a nominally good result, our analysis leads us to conclude that, but for the Dali's destruction of the Key Bridge, 2024 likely would have surpassed 2023's record for cargo. Cruise activity declined in 2024, with fewer cruise ships and passengers.

Port Cargo Activity – Import/Export – Q1 2023 thru Q1 2025
State-Owned and Private Terminals



Source: USA Trade Online

Cargo Breakdown and Ranking by Commodity
State-Owned and Private Terminals

In 2023, the Port ranked as the ninth largest U.S. port in foreign cargo tonnage and the fourth largest on the East Coast.

In 2024, following a reduction in cargo activity as a result of the allision and Key Bridge collapse, the Port's national ranking dropped from ninth to eleventh largest. The Port remained the fourth largest for cargo tonnage among East Coast ports. The breakdown of the Port's 2024 cargo tonnage includes:

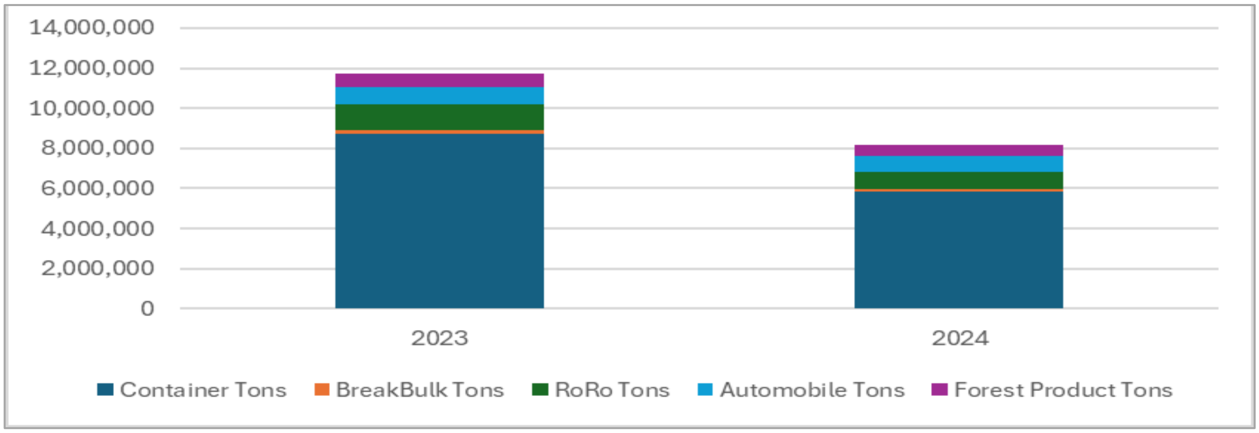
- Coal exports (58%)
- General cargo imports: including containers, autos, breakbulk and farm and construction machinery (19%)
- Liquified natural gas exports (13%)
- General cargo exports (5%)
- Gypsum, salt and sugar imports making up the remaining (5%)

Containers, autos, farm and construction machinery, and breakbulk make up 90% of the dollar value of cargo moving through the Port. In 2024, the Port remained the second-largest port in the U.S. for exported coal, and third among U.S. ports for imported sugar and alumina. The Port ranked second in imported salt and first in imported gypsum. However, after 13 consecutive years, the Port lost its ranking of first among U.S. ports for handling autos and light trucks following the Dali's destruction of the Key Bridge and the Port's subsequent closure.

MPA General Cargo Tonnage
State-Owned Terminals

Sixty-one percent (61%) of all vessels arriving in the Port docked at an MPA state-owned terminal. Compared to 2023, MPA general cargo volumes declined 30% in 2024, including in key targeted commodities such as autos, containers, farm and construction machinery, and forest products.

MPA General Cargo Tonnage
State-Owned Marine Terminals



Source: MPA BRASS

Cargo Volumes by Quarter (Q1 2023 through Q1 2025)
State-Owned Marine Terminals

	Q1 2023	**Q2 2023**	**Q3 2023**	**Q4 2023**	**Q1 2024**	**Q2 2024**	**Q3 2024**	**Q4 2024**	**Q1 2025**
Containers (twenty-foot equivalent units)	265,182	283,686	287,753	289,934	258,013	36,631	192,864	253,707	279,124
Automobiles (units)	90,373	100,091	97,251	103,177	78,534	50,030	121,174	114,319	109,807
Ro/Ro (tons)	325,510	355,048	335,412	298,827	265,937	134,612	239,972	208,107	194,586
Forest Products (tons)	164,003	177,861	179,077	145,402	155,381	98,165	172,497	143,476	159,463
Other Breakbulk (tons)	45,363	50,735	44,385	40,128	35,849	20,959	45,585	42,265	39,036
Cruise (passengers)	100,692	105,826	117,342	120,262	90,363	48,660	111,374	103,450	95,900

Source: MPA BRASS