PMSA

West Coast Trade Report

March 2020

Parsing the January 2020 TEU Numbers

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By BOPC at 1:31 pm, Mar 23, 2020

*Please note: The numbers here are not derived from forecasting algorithms or the partial information available from U.S. Customs and Border Protection but instead represent the actual TEU counts as reported by the major North American seaports we survey each month. The U.S. mainland ports we monitor collectively handle over 90% of the container movements at continental U.S. ports. Unless otherwise stated, the numbers in this portion of our analysis do **not** include empty containers.*

Import Traffic

A normally sluggish January was made more glum by news of the fearful corona virus outbreak in Wuhan, China and then by the extraordinary measures the Chinese government took to contain the spread of the epidemic. Chinese factories, which normally close for a week before and after the Lunar New Year (January 25 this year), largely remained shuttered for weeks as much of the nation's population were told to stay home. The impact on maritime trade should start showing up in February's trade numbers, but some forecasters are already seeing a sharp downturn in containerized imports from China. Global Port Tracker, for example, expects February's imports to be down 12.9% year-over-year, while March is expected to see a 9.5% drop from the same month a year earlier.

For January though, port tallies reported thus far show inbound loads off by 3.9% from a year earlier at the two San Pedro

Exhibit 1 January 2020 - Inbound Loaded TEUs at Selected Ports

	Jan 2020	Jan 2019	% Change	Jan 2020 YTD	Jan 2019 YTD	% Change
Los Angeles	414,731	429,923	-3.5%	414,731	429,923	-3.5%
Long Beach	309,961	323,838	-4.3%	309,961	323,838	-4.3%
San Pedro Bay Totals	724,692	753,761	-3.9%	724,692	753,761	-3.9%
Oakland	87,871	81,893	7.3%	87,871	81,893	7.3%
NWSA	102,878	128,615	-20.0%	102,878	128,615	-20.0%
USWC Totals	915,441	964,269	-5.1%	915,441	964,269	-5.1%
Boston	4,336	3,151	37.6%	4,336	3,151	37.6%
NYNJ	322,643	327,345	-1.4%	322,643	327,345	-1.4%
Maryland	45,294	43,869	3.2%	45,294	43,869	3.2%
Virginia	108,884	109,757	-0.8%	108,884	109,757	-0.8%
South Carolina	90,665	88,107	2.9%	90,665	88,107	2.9%
Georgia	188,762	209,583	-9.9%	188,762	209,583	-9.9%
Jaxport	26,698	30,321	-11.9%	26,698	30,321	-11.9%
Port Everglades	26,451	27,730	-4.5%	26,451	27,730	-4.5%
Miami	35,225	39,286	-10.3%	35,225	39,286	-10.3%
USEC Totals	848,958	879,149	-3.4%	848,958	879,149	-3.4%
New Orleans	12,806	12,851	-0.4%	12,806	12,851	-0.4%
Houston	105,047	95,318	10.2%	105,047	95,318	10.2%
USGC Totals	117,853	108,169	9.0%	117,853	108,169	9.0%
Vancouver	138,261	170,370	-18.8%	138,261	170,370	-18.8%
Prince Rupert	49,148	54,481	-9.8%	49,148	54,481	-9.8%
BC Totals	187,409	224,851	-16.7%	187,409	224,851	-16.7%
US/BC Totals	2,069,661	2,176,438	-4.9%	2,069,661	2,176,438	-4.9%
US Total	1,882,252	1,951,587	-3.6%	1,882,252	1,951,587	-3.6%
USWC/BC	1,102,850	1,189,120	-7.3%	1,102,850	1,189,120	-7.3%

Source Individual Ports

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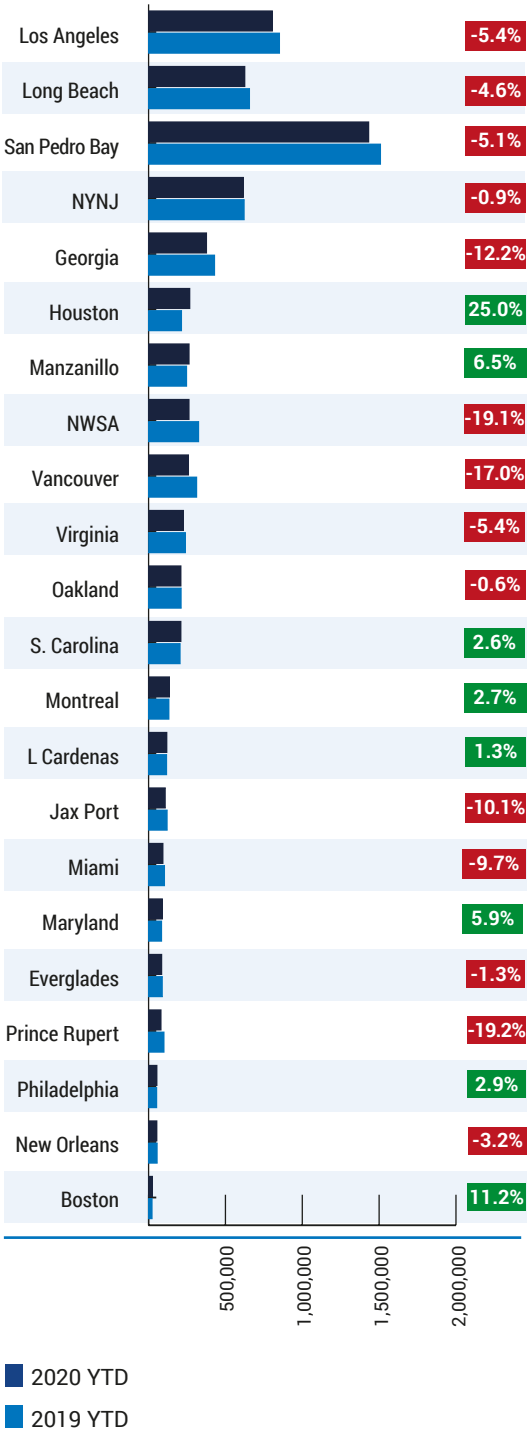
Parsing the January 2020 Loaded TEU Numbers Continued

Exhibit 2 January 2020 - Outbound Loaded TEUs at Selected Ports

	Jan 2020	Jan 2019	% Change	Jan 2020 YTD	Jan 2019 YTD	% Change
Los Angeles	148,207	144,993	2.2%	148,207	144,993	2.2%
Long Beach	108,624	117,288	-7.4%	108,624	117,288	-7.4%
San Pedro Bay Totals	**256,831**	**262,281**	**-2.1%**	**256,831**	**262,281**	**-2.1%**
Oakland	77,842	75,350	3.3%	77,842	75,350	3.3%
NWSA	66,410	72,859	-8.9%	66,410	72,859	-8.9%
USWC Totals	**401,083**	**410,490**	**-2.3%**	**401,083**	**410,490**	**-2.3%**
Boston	3,341	2,743	21.8%	3,341	2,743	21.8%
NYNJ	118,488	111,833	6.0%	118,488	111,833	6.0%
Maryland	20,361	15,947	27.7%	20,361	15,947	27.2%
Virginia	79,328	77,948	1.8%	79,328	77,948	1.8%
South Carolina	68,505	63,750	7.5%	68,505	63,750	7.5%
Georgia	121,960	124,373	-1.9%	121,960	124,373	-1.9%
Jaxport	41,941	40,745	2.9%	41,941	40,745	2.9%
Port Everglades	33,483	33,662	-0.5%	33,483	33,662	-0.5%
Miami	35,324	38,852	-9.1%	35,324	38,852	-9.1%
USEC Totals	**522,731**	**509,853**	**2.5%**	**522,731**	**509,853**	**2.5%**
New Orleans	26,153	25,875	1.1%	26,153	25,875	1.1%
Houston	118,782	87,961	35.0%	118,782	87,961	35.0%
USGC Totals	**144,935**	**113,836**	**27.3%**	**144,935**	**113,836**	**27.3%**
Vancouver	78,156	91,398	-14.5%	78,156	91,398	-14.5%
Prince Rupert	9,735	17,156	-43.3%	9,735	17,156	-43.3%
British Columbia Totals	**87,891**	**108,554**	**-19.0%**	**87,891**	**108,554**	**-19.0%**
US/Canada Total	**1,156,640**	**1,142,733**	**1.2%**	**1,156,640**	**1,142,733**	**1.2%**
US Total	**1,068,749**	**1,034,179**	**3.3%**	**1,068,749**	**1,034,179**	**3.3%**
USWC/BC	**488,974**	**519,044**	**-5.8%**	**488,974**	**519,044**	**-5.8%**

Source Individual Ports

Exhibit 3 January Year-to-Date Total TEUs (Loaded and Empty) Handled at Selected Ports



Source: Individual Ports

Parsing the January 2020 Loaded TEU Numbers Continued

Bay ports, while Oakland posted a strong 7.3% gain. On the Gulf Coast, Houston muscled ahead with a 10.2% surge in inbound loads. Along the East Coast, the Port of New York/New Jersey sustained a 1.4% dip, Savannah was off 9.9%, Charleston enjoyed a 2.9% gain, while Virginia saw a 0.8% dip. Up in British Columbia, imports through Prince Rupert fell 9.8%, while Vancouver's inbound loaded TEU count plummeted by 18.8%.

Export Traffic

On the export side, Long Beach recorded its lowest number of outbound loads for a January since 2016, while Los Angeles posted a 2.2% year-over-year gain. Outbound loads were also up at Oakland by 3.3%. Moving in the opposite direction were the two Northwest Seaport Alliance ports, which recorded an 8.9% decline in outbound loads. Altogether, the five major USWC port saw a 2.3% drop in outbound loads (-9,407 TEUs) from January 2019. In British Columbia, export traffic at Prince Rupert plunged 43.3%, while Vancouver sustained a 14.5% fall-off. On the Gulf Coast, Houston's export volume soared by 35.0%. Back East, export loads from PNYNY were up 6.0%. Collectively, the nine USEC ports we monitor posted a 2.5% (+12,878 TEUs) year-over-year increase in export loads in January.

Weights and Values

Even though the TEU is the shipping industry's preferred unit of measurement, we present two alternative metrics – the declared weight and value of the goods contained in those TEUs -- in hopes of further illuminating recent trends in the container trade along the USWC. For the most part, these numbers contain little good news for USWC port officials.

Exhibit 4: USWC Ports and the Worldwide Container Trade. Exhibit 4 illustrates the almost relentless decline in the overall USWC share of containerized imports (regardless of point of origin) entering mainland U.S ports. The two San Pedro Bay ports saw their combined percentage of containerized import tonnage tumble in January to 27.7% from 34.6% a year earlier. The two also experienced a sharp drop in the declared value of containerized imports to 35.5% from 37.1%. Although the Port of Oakland saw its share of import value and tonnage rise over January 2019, the NWSA ports stayed even in terms of their share of import tonnage but recorded a significant decline in import value.

On the export side, the Southern California ports continued to lose market share, whether measured in tonnage or dollar value. Oakland had mixed results, with a year-over-year gain in export value but a drop in its share of the export tonnage. The NWSA ports' export shares trended downward in both categories.

Exhibit 5: USWC Ports and the East Asia Trade. The numbers that most distress USWC port officials – the figures on containerized imports arriving at U.S. mainland ports from East Asia – were of comfort only to the Port of Oakland. In January, the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach saw their combined share of containerized import tonnage from East Asia slide to 44.0% from 51.4% a year earlier. Meanwhile, their collective share of containerized import value slid to 51.4% from 52.7%. Elsewhere along the coast, Oakland improved both its tonnage and value shares, but the NWSA ports saw declines in both tonnage and value terms.

On the outbound side, the San Pedro Bay ports' share of containerized export tonnage to East Asia slipped to 34.9% from 35.6%, while their combined share of the value of those containerized imports slipped to 39.0% from 41.7%. Oakland experienced a year-over-year bump in both its import tonnage and value tonnage shares. Meanwhile, the NWSA ports saw a drop in their share of export tonnage but a slight increase in their share of the value of U.S. containerized exports going to the Far East.

Who's #2?

It again depends on whether you value loaded boxes or you place a premium of moving boxes, whether there is actually anything in them. When it comes to the total number of both loaded and empty containers handled in January, the Port of Long Beach remains the nation's second busiest container port. For the month, 626,829 TEUs crossed its docks as opposed to the 617,024 TEUs handled by the Port of New York/New Jersey.

However, if you are emphasizing **loaded** boxes, PNYNJ was the busier port in January, with 441,131 loaded TEUs as opposed to 418,585 at Long Beach.

Neither port is close to matching the 806,144 total TEUs or the 562,938 loaded TEUs that passed over the docks at the Port of Los Angeles in January.

Parsing the January Loaded TEU Numbers Continued

Exhibit 4 USWC Ports Shares of Worldwide U.S. Mainland, January 2020

	Jan 2020	Dec 2019	Jan 2019
Shares of U.S. Mainland Ports Containerized Import Tonnage			
LA/LB	27.7%	26.9%	34.6%
Oakland	4.3%	4.3%	3.3%
NWSA	5.2%	4.9%	5.2%
Shares of U.S. Mainland Ports Containerized Import Value			
LA/LB	35.5%	33.8%	37.1%
Oakland	3.7%	3.8%	3.5%
NWSA	5.8%	6.5%	6.4%
Shares of U.S. Mainland Containerized Export Tonnage			
LA/LB	21.2%	20.6%	21.9%
Oakland	6.3%	6.2%	6.5%
NWSA	7.1%	7.7%	8.7%
Shares of U.S. Mainland Conatainerized Export Value			
LA/LB	20.1%	20.9%	20.3%
Oakland	7.4%	7.5%	6.5%
NWSA	4.3%	4.5%	4.4%

Source: U.S. Commerce Department.

Exhibit 5 USWC Ports Shares of U.S. Mainland Trade With East Asia, January 2020

	Jan 2020	Dec 2019	Jan 2019
Shares of U.S. Mainland Ports' East Asian Container Import Tonnage			
LA/LB	44.0%	43.0%	51.4%
Oakland	5.1%	4.8%	3.3%
NWSA	6.7%	7.2%	7.2%
Shares of U.S. Mainland Ports' East Asian Container Import Value			
LA/LB	51.4%	49.8%	52.7%
Oakland	4.4%	4.6%	3.9%
NWSA	8.2%	9.4%	8.9%
Shares of U.S. Mainland Ports' East Asian Container Export Tonnage			
LA/LB	34.9%	36.6%	35.6%
Oakland	9.0%	9.1%	8.6%
NWSA	11.1%	13.4%	13.7%
Shares of U.S. Mainland Ports' East Asian Container Export Value			
LA/LB	39.0%	41.3%	41.7%
Oakland	11.8%	11.2%	10.5%
NWSA	8.5%	8.7%	8.4%

Source: U.S. Commerce Department.

First Glimpse at February's Numbers

Everyone had been bracing for dreadful February numbers, and the numbers we've been seeing so far do not disappoint that expectation.

Port of Los Angeles recorded its lowest of total container traffic (loads + empties) in a February since 2015. Loaded inbound TEUs for the month of February were down 22.5%, while outbound loads dipped by 5.7%. Next door at the Port of Long Beach, inbound loads were down 17.9%, but outbound loads jumped by 19.3%. Together, the two San Pedro Bay ports saw inbound loads fall 20.4%, while outbound loads dropped by 12.8%.

At the Port of Oakland, inbound loads in February were down 9.2%, but outbound loads jumped 15.4%. Overall container traffic at the Bay Area port was off 2.9% from last February. Up at the two Northwest Seaport Alliance ports, import loads were off by 8.0%. Export loads at the Ports of Seattle and Tacoma, however, were up by 4.5%. Still, the total number of containers handled at the two ports in February was down 3.1% from a year earlier.

Collectively, inbound loads at the Big Five USWC container ports were down 17.9% from February of 2019. Outbound loads, meanwhile, were down 7.6%.

Due in part to freight rail disruptions in western Canada caused by protesters opposing a pipeline project in B.C. that began in early February, inbound loaded TEU numbers at Vancouver were down that month by 11.8%. Prince Rupert's February statistics have yet to be announced.

We don't expect to see better numbers in April.

Jock O'Connell's Commentary:
"Who's Fauci?"

One of my abiding complaints about forecasting is that most prognosticators offer estimates that are little more than extensions of the existing narrative. If your port had been growing its container traffic at a 5% CAGR over the past decade, it's a good bet that the forecast for which you'll pay dearly will predict that your container traffic will increase somewhere between a high of 7.5% and a low of 2.5% over the next twenty or thirty years. Unless the forecasting firm recognizes a particularly compelling reason to think otherwise, that's generally what you'll get.

Now, there are always plenty of things that can go wrong with a forecast. Identifying the sundry phenomena that might conceivably rise up to invalidate a cargo outlook should not be that onerous a tax on forecasters' imaginations. Still, most are reluctant to journey too far down the road of supposition, let alone worst-case scenarios. After all, too many caveats may trouble bond holders.

The arrival of COVID-19, the novel coronavirus, serves to remind us that there most definitely are "black swans" that can take a serious bite out of even the most well-crafted forecast.

Back on January 10, the National Retail Federation's Global Port Tracker expected January's containerized imports to be down five percent from January 2019, with February anticipated to be off by an almost identical 4.9%. March, though, was expected to see a 5.2% year-over-year bump.

Enter the blackest swan the world has seen since Poland invaded Russia in September 1939 (if you're following the new historical gospel according to Putin).

The Global Port Tracker forecasts were blown apart by the emergence of a pandemic that began in Wuhan, China and within weeks led Beijing to shut down huge swaths of the Chinese economy. The impact was enormous. Official data for the first two months of 2020 reveal that industrial production in China fell 13.5%, retail sales were off by 20.5%, and fixed asset investment dropped by 24.5% from the same period last year.

North American importers, who had planned for the normal disruption in supplies during the roughly two-week Lunar New Year celebrations, were left scrambling for merchandise as Chinese factories remained shuttered. Scores of blank sailings from Chinese ports to North America's maritime gateways followed.

Not surprisingly, the February 10 revision of the Global Port Tracker's outlook projected February's container imports would plunge 12.9% from a year earlier, while March was predicted to be down 9.5% year-over-year.

Even those dismal numbers paled in comparison to what others were saying. On February 28, the American Association of Port Authorities issued this warning: "Due to the coronavirus outbreak, cargo volumes at many U.S. ports during the first quarter of 2020 may be down by 20 percent or more compared to 2019." That advisory appeared to be consistent with statements by Gene Seroka, Executive Director of the Port of Los Angeles, that his port had been seeing a 25% fall-off in vessel calls.

By the time of its March 9 update, the Global Port Tracker expected that March would see import container volumes to plummet by 18.3% from a year earlier. April, however, was forecast to be down just 3.5%. However, given what's been happening in just the past few days, we should have absolutely no doubt that Global Port Tracker will soon be revising its April forecast very sharply downward.

Yet, what is even more disconcerting than the shocks experienced by forecasters over the past couple of months has been the general tenor of the public discussion in maritime industry circles…up until the day before yesterday.

From the first news of the epidemic's outbreak, the attention of the industry was intently focused on the disruption of the eastbound transpacific supply chain. Imports were ebbing because the sources of many of those imports were Chinese factories that remained closed due to the virus. The lesson U.S. importers thought they gleaned from this disturbance was that they had grown excessively reliant on a limited range of sources. The result was to accelerate planning for a greater diversification in overseas sourcing and to maybe even

Commentary Continued

entertain the notion of making things in the United States.

Remarkably, the discussion seemed to continue without much reference to the spread of the virus, almost as if a cheap science-fiction drama was unfolding as actors remained studiously indifferent to or blithely ignorant of the toxic threat looming up behind them. People remained absorbed with the things that customarily absorbed them. Importers moaned about tariffs. Exporters of perishables complained about a shortage of reefers. West Coast port directors and editorial pundits continued to fret about their loss of market share, even as the tides of the pandemic were closing in on our shores.

"Fauci? Who the #&%$ is Fauci?"

"Oh, just some nut case over at NIH. One of those Deep-State guys. I heard he'd been a Classics major at Holy Cross."

Still, as the epidemic in China spread beyond its borders, our attention broadened only slightly. How are factories in China's Asian neighbors being affected? We accordingly scrutinized every report out of South Korea and Japan and Taiwan and Vietnam, looking for clues about how much the eastbound transpacific trade might fall. (We'd earlier given up on Hong Kong for other reasons.)

Then came news that the virus had somehow arrived in Iran. The disease had obviously found legs or wings. But Iran is an enemy, and so U.S. policymakers had mixed feelings about that outbreak.

The main question on most minds remained how quickly those Chinese factories would be up and running. The big fear was that the ensuing flood of long-delayed imports would overwhelm North American ports and hopelessly clog domestic distribution networks. If ports and transport providers were rehearsing for some eventuality, if they were marshalling their resources to deal with some contingency, it was the prospect that huge fleets of ships would shortly be turning up with massive numbers of laden boxes.

Then the Italians began to fall ill. And then the Spaniards. And within days cases began popping up throughout Europe. As the number of deaths mounted, and publics grew alarmed, authorities embraced increasingly stringent measures aimed at stalling the contagion. Populations were quarantined. Shops, restaurants, bars, churches, museums, parks, beaches were all closed. People were ordered to remain at home or to otherwise minimize contact with others. Citizens unaccustomed to challenging the word of science complied, at least for the time being.

Still missing from the conversation in the United States was any heightened alarm that the epidemic that had become a pandemic that -- by affecting America's economy in the same ways it had affected China's and now Europe's -- would shift the assault on the world's maritime trade from the supply-side to the demand-side. To many Americans, this was the flu, and the Europeans were hyperventilating.

Then some seniors near Seattle died. And a boatload of cruise ship passengers was marooned off San Francisco. Still, policymakers, especially in Washington, D.C., remained unconvinced that this might be a big deal.

Until someone in power finally started to listen to Dr. Anthony Fauci, the Director of the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases who has essentially become the nation's go-to immunologist/epidemiologist.

But by then everything started to change very dramatically. In recent days, U.S. federal, state, and local authorities have begun to impose or, more timidly, recommend steps similar to those now common throughout Europe and formerly common in China. The prospect that the American economy will avert a recession this spring and summer is increasingly dim as consumer spending drops, small businesses fold, major corporations guard their cash, and economic productivity falters.

So, it should come as no real shock that, on March 16, the UCLA Anderson School of Management declared that the United States had entered a recession, ending an expansion that had begun in July 2009. The UCLA economists expect the recession to continue through the end of September. According to their report, the escalating effects of the coronavirus pandemic in March have reduced the first-quarter forecast of GDP growth to 0.4%. GDP growth in the second quarter is expected to slow by 6.5% and by 1.9% in the third quarter. The forecast does not expect normal activity to resume until the last quarter of the year.

Commentary Continued

The forecast comes with two major caveats. If the pandemic is much worse than anticipated, the downturn will worsen. However, if the pandemic abates quickly, economic growth in the second half of the year will be stronger.

Chiming in in recent days, IHS Markit warns that the United States, Europe, and Japan are all headed for recession this year, while JP Morgan expects the U.S. economy to shrink by 1.5% for the full year and unemployment to rise from 3.5% to 6.25% by the middle of the year.

So here we have it. A disease that emerged on the banks of the Yangtze little more than three months ago and which initially choked off so many global supply chains has now metastasized into a pandemic that will suppress global demand through much of the remainder of 2020.

Announcement: Today's scheduled symposium on West Coast market share loss is being postponed indefinitely.

Postscript: This commentary is being written from an apartment in Palma, a city of some 410,000 residents on the Spanish island of Majorca. Since arriving here a few days ago from a village elsewhere on the island, we have been under strict quarantine. Venturing out except to obtain food or medicine is prohibited. For the sin of being in the street, cops will challenge you, albeit politely. All restaurants, bars, and non-essential shops are closed. So too are museums, churches, theaters, parks, and beaches. At the grand old Mercat de l'Olivar where we went this afternoon for food, patrons were told to maintain a distance of at least a meter from each other and staff.

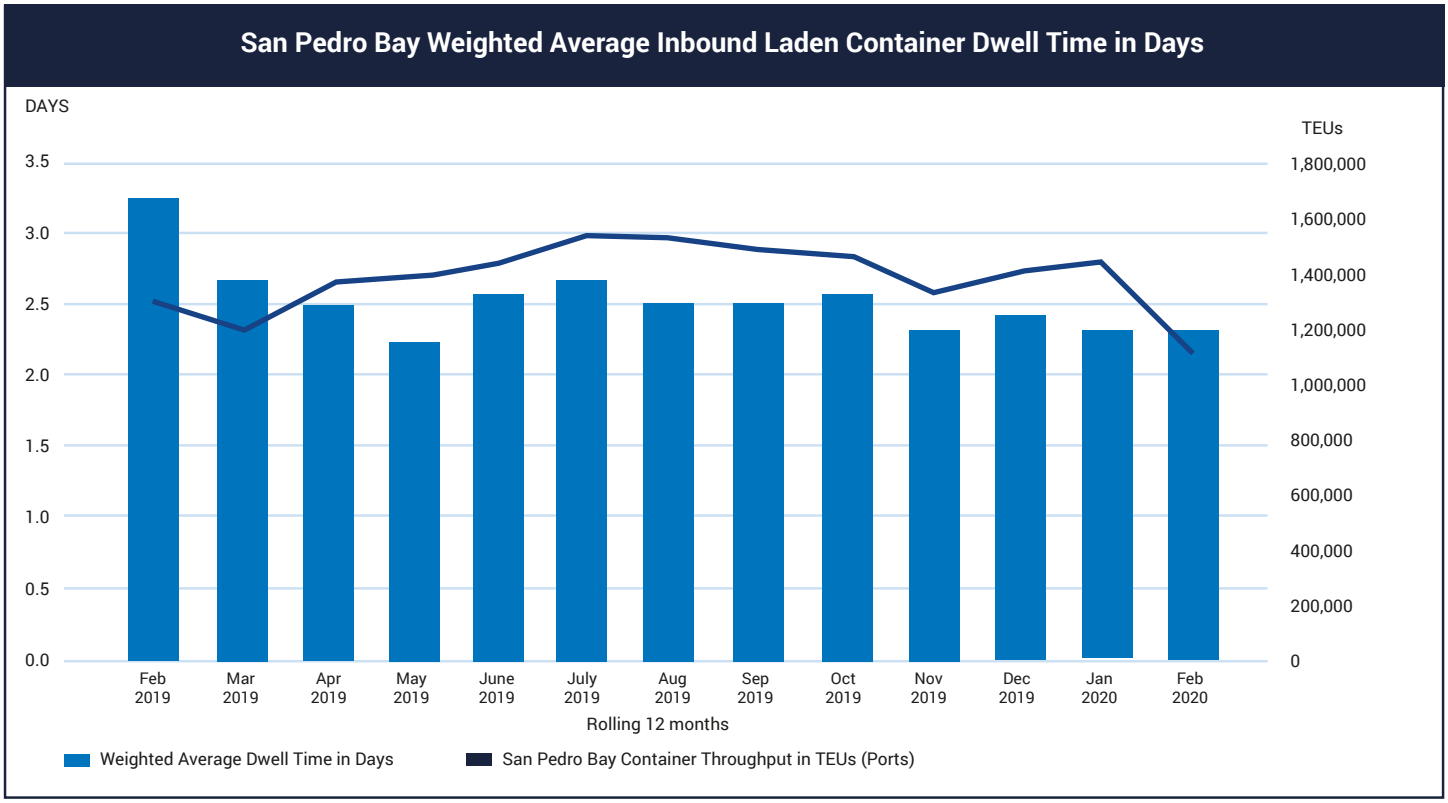
The same measures are being instituted throughout Europe, and borders are being closed. Our plan to fly home to San Francisco from Munich later this month after visiting family in Zurich is no longer viable because Germany has closed its border with Switzerland. That's a micro story.

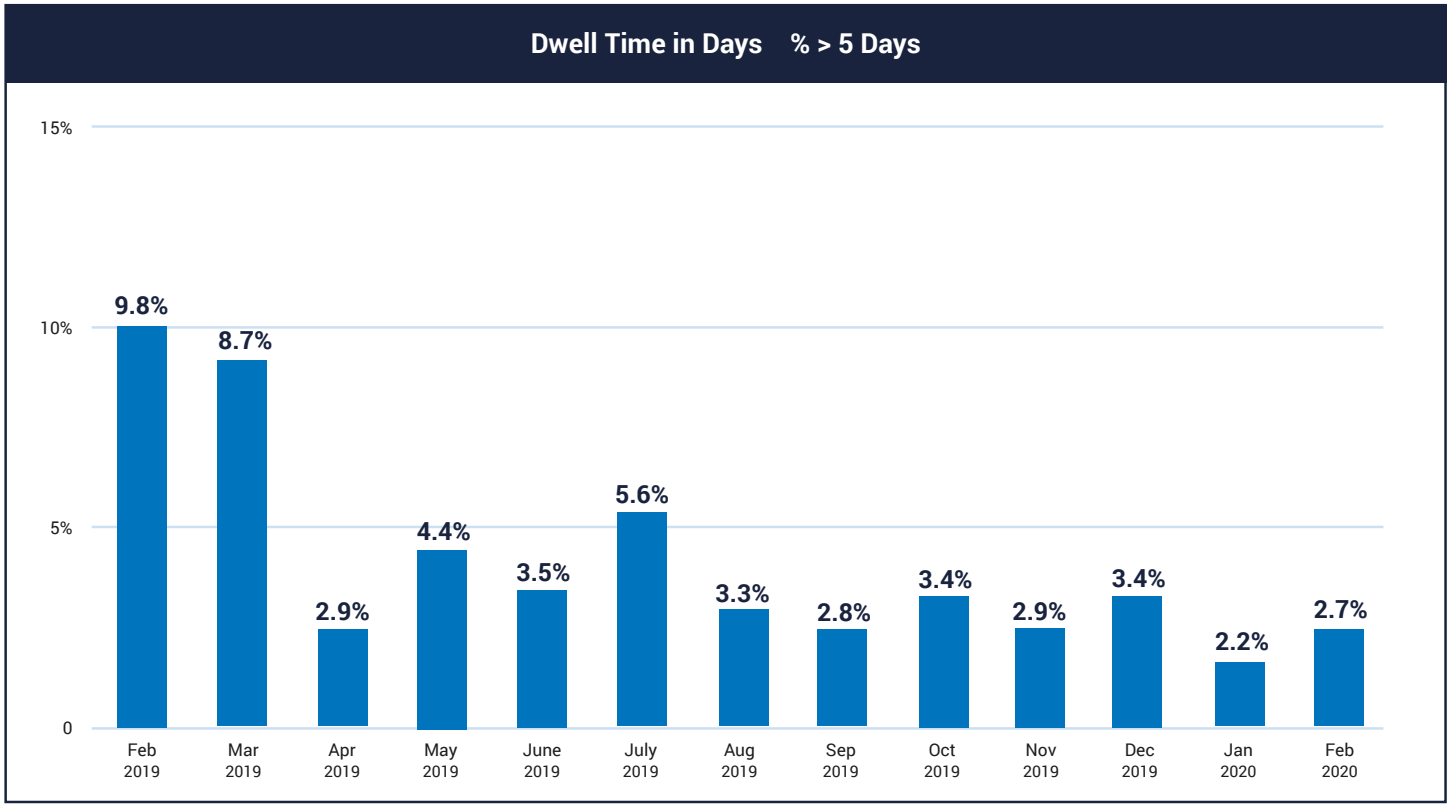
On the macro level, the 1985 Schengen Agreement, which essentially abolished passport controls throughout much of Europe and greatly eased the flow of people and goods, is now in shambles. The moves by several European governments to eschew collective action in favor of individual nationalistic policies aimed at isolating each nation's population and economy from the impact of the virus now presents a threat to the European Union. It's a threat much greater than the one posed by Brexit. The future of one of the world's premier trading blocs is now in serious jeopardy.

How and when we'll get home is a trivial issue. What's clear, though, is that with much of Europe a week to ten days ahead of the United States on the pandemic curve, flying home from Spain will be an adventure in epidemiological time travel.

Disclaimer: *The views expressed in Jock's commentaries are his own and may not reflect the positions of the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association.*

February Dwell Time Numbers Remain Low





By the Numbers

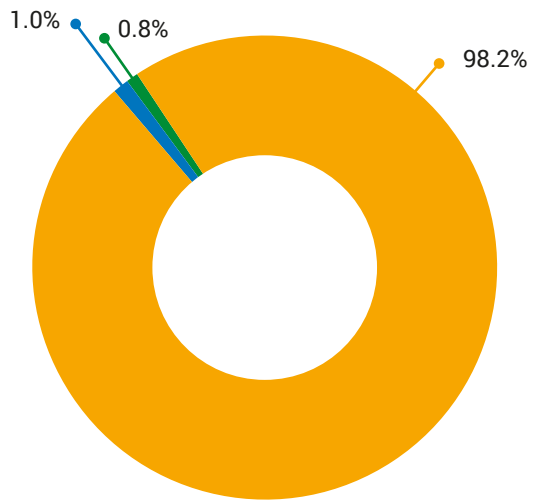
By Thomas Jelenić, Vice President, Pacific Merchant Shipping Association

The ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles recently adopted a Clean Truck Rate as part of their commitment to transition the port drayage fleet to zero emissions, with a goal of completing the transition by 2035. Despite some dissent, the two ports set the Clean Truck Rate at $10/TEU (or $20 for a forty foot container); generating $90 million per year, while kicking the can down the road on providing certainty to exemptions for ultra-low-emission trucks intended to bridge the gap on the path to zero emissions. Unsurprisingly, there was a great deal of fuss about this (including by me), not least because the ports are already served by the cleanest drayage fleet in the nation and the steep price tag to eliminate that fleet.

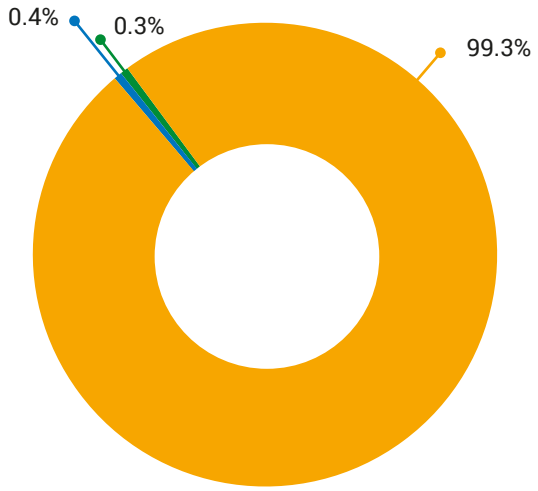
Several commentators discussed the size of port emissions as "the single largest source of emissions in the region." This is nonsense. No other category is measured the same way. What folks refer to as the "ports" are a collection of independently operated freight facilities in San Pedro, Wilmington, and Long Beach. Their connection is that they fall under the jurisdiction of agencies (i.e., Port of Long Beach and Port of Los Angeles), even though those agencies are not air quality regulators and do not own or operate any equipment. By that measure, South Coast Air Quality Management District is the region's single largest polluter based on the number of sources under their area of jurisdiction.

Also nonsensical is how "port pollutants" are measured. One would intuitively understand that to be emissions that occur within the two ports jurisdiction – but you would be wrong. A truck at a warehouse in Perris, a train in Ontario, or a ship off the coast of Malibu are all port emissions. No other "source" is measured in this way. No industrial district, multiple refinery complex, the freeway system, or other collection of independent operations are aggregated in a similar manner. So, to call the ports "the single largest source of emissions in the region" results from being in a universe by itself.

Port Truck NOx as % of South Coast Air Basin



Port Truck DPM as % of South Coast Air Basin



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By the Numbers Continued

Other folks criticized the ports for failing to be bold, or worse, derelict in their duties – despite the fact that the ports are **more aggressive** than the California Air Resources Board (CARB) on the turnover of trucks (CARB hopes to convert the State's truck fleet to zero emissions by 2045 – ten years after the ports' goal), and the ports are dedicating more money to replace the truck fleet (again) than any other stakeholder.

But back to the Clean Truck Rate. Ignoring that the ports are measured by a yardstick used nowhere else, the aggregate emissions from "port-related" trucks must obviously be large enough to make a difference to regional emissions to generate all the excitement we see. Generally, the two pollutants we are most concerned about is diesel particulate matter (DPM) and nitrogen oxides (NOx). DPM is considered a toxic air contaminant, with much focus on its acute impacts. The original Clean Trucks Program did an amazing job in reducing DPM from trucks by 96% - an unqualified success. NOx has been a more challenging pollutant, but truck NOx emissions are down about 77%. As a result, and with federal attainment deadlines looming in 2023, there has been a great deal of focus reducing NOx emissions more quickly. So, how much do port trucks, measured from Southgate to Perris and beyond, contribute to regional inventories? Collectively, the port-related trucking contributes 1.8% of all NOx emissions in the region and 0.7% of all DPM emissions (see the graphs above). You can find these numbers on both ports' websites as part of their annual emissions inventory efforts, a process that includes review from the South Coast Air Quality Management District, California Air Resources Board, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Despite the trivial difference that the updated Clean Trucks Program will make to regional and local air quality, the ports should be acknowledged and praised for the challenging balancing act they have had to perform. Unfortunately, what they will receive instead is blame and ridicule, even from agencies that have not moved as aggressively and are years behind them, while competing ports claim to follow suit, but in name only.

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