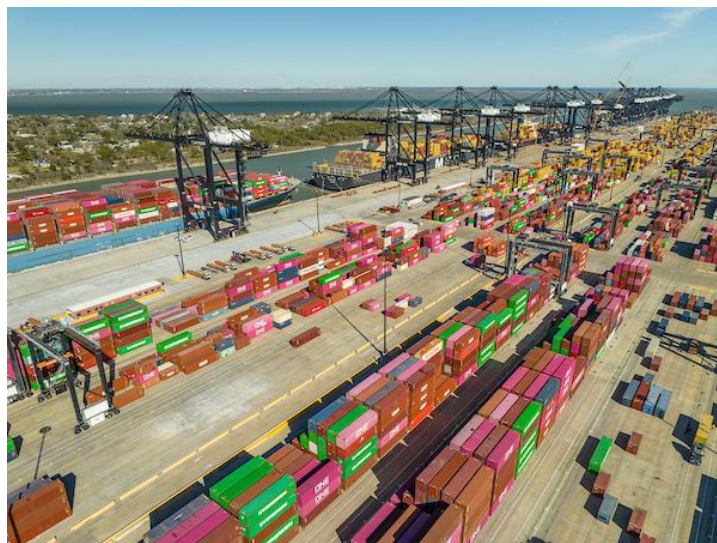




**PORT HOUSTON™**

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## **Houston Ship Channel Tonnage Up 12% in First Quarter Port Houston Container Volumes Dip in April**



*Aerial view of Port Houston's Bayport Container Terminal yard.*

**HOUSTON** — Waterborne tonnage moving in and out of Houston in the first quarter of 2026 reached 65 million short tons, up 12% compared to last year, according to the most recent data. Growth was driven primarily by exports, which at nearly 54 million short tons were up 19% compared to the first quarter of 2025. Imports were down 12% over the same period.

“Houston continues to be a leader for energy exports,” said Charlie Jenkins, CEO of Port Houston. “At our port complex overall, exports of petroleum gases are up 33%, refined products are up 24%, and crude oil is up 19% through the first quarter of this year.”

Houston's port complex includes more than 200 private facilities, in addition to Port Houston's eight public facilities, served by the nation's number one waterway, the Houston Ship Channel. In addition to tonnage, vessel activity along this waterway continues to rise, with more than 2,000 vessel arrivals through the first quarter of this year, up 5% compared to last year. Ship calls in April increased 6% compared to the same month last year, and March and April had the highest level of vessel activity along the channel since 2019.

"We're seeing an increase in vessels, plus today's vessels are larger and carrying more cargo," said Jenkins. "Tonnage in Houston is up nearly 27% since 2019. The expansion we have completed of the Galveston Bay Reach portion of the Houston Ship Channel is providing benefits and helping move more cargo through Houston and to global markets."

Following a strong first quarter, Port Houston's container volume in April was 353,319 TEUs, a decrease of 9% compared to April 2025. Year-to-date container volumes through April are down just 1% compared to the same time last year, which was a record year.

April container volumes reflect a more measured month following a strong start to the year, as shippers continue to adjust inventory and sourcing strategies amid ongoing uncertainty related to transportation costs and global market conditions. The timing of import cargo movements could be impacted, even while consumer demand generally remains steady year-to-date. At Port Houston, loaded imports declined 8% in April compared to the same month last year and loaded exports decreased 5%, while on a year-to-date basis, both loaded imports and loaded exports remain essentially flat. Port officials anticipate a quick bounce back, with mid-May container volumes indicating a return of imports, and the long-term outlook in Houston for containerized imports and exports remains strong.

At Port Houston's multipurpose facilities specifically, general cargo volumes remained strong, increasing 27% in April and 52% year-to-date, driven by machinery and bagged goods. Also, total dry bulk volumes reached 518,136 short tons in April, up 3% for the month and 44% year-to-date. Steel volumes declined 30% in April and are down 28% year-to-date, though forecasts indicate a good May for steel cargo. Total tonnage across Port Houston's eight public facilities reached 4,659,019 short tons in April, down 5% year-over-year. Year-to-date, total tonnage remains up 3%, totaling 18,556,499 short tons.

#### **About Port Houston**

For more than 100 years, Port Houston has owned and operated the eight public wharves and terminals along the Houston Ship Channel, including the area's largest breakbulk facility and two of the most efficient container terminals in the country. Port Houston is the advocate and a strategic leader for the Channel. The Houston Ship Channel complex and its more than 200 private and eight public terminals is the nation's largest port for waterborne tonnage and an essential economic engine for the Houston region, the state of Texas, and the U.S. The Port of Houston supports 1.54 million jobs in Texas and 3.37 million jobs nationwide, and economic activity totaling \$439 billion in Texas – nearly 20 percent of Texas' total gross domestic product (GDP) – and \$906 billion in economic impact across the nation. For more information, visit the website at [PortHouston.com](http://PortHouston.com).

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