



## **PORT OF OAKLAND**

# **Port of Oakland welcomes return of import cargo surge**

## **Volume up 26 percent last month after January decline**

### **Press Releases, Seaport, Community**

*March 15th, 2021*

*Oakland, Calif.* – March 15, 2021: An unprecedented containerized import surge resumed at the Port of Oakland last month following a January decline. The Port said today that import volume soared 26.2 percent in February compared to the same month in 2020. Oakland welcomed the news after supply chain disruption elsewhere drove its January import totals down nearly 12 percent.

“It’s what we expected,” said Port of Oakland Maritime Director Bryan Brandes. “Oakland continues to benefit from an unrelenting trade boom. We also completed the assembly of three new giant cranes which will further improve efficiency.”

The Port said it handled the equivalent of 80,200 20-foot import containers last month. It was the busiest February for import cargo in its 94-year history, the Port said.

The Port said it loaded 69,588 export containers onto outbound ships. That was an 11 percent decline from February 2020 export totals, the Port said. The Port explained that scarce vessel space hindered exporters attempting to ship cargo overseas.

The Port said import volume has risen dramatically since last summer thanks to increased U.S. consumer spending. It attributed January’s downturn to congestion at Southern California ports that forestalled some Oakland vessel arrivals.

Port and industry analysts forecast continued strong import volume through at least the second quarter of 2021. Asian factories are shipping goods in record numbers to replenish American store shelves and assembly lines. Retailers, manufacturers and e-commerce distributors are driving the surge, the Port said.

The Port said the trade phenomenon is reflected in 2021 vessel loading data. On average, vessels load and unload the equivalent of 2,500 twenty-foot containers in Oakland, the Port reported. That’s a record for Oakland, up from an average of 1,900 containers per ship last year, the Port said.

While cargo volume is growing in Oakland, the number of ships arriving is down 26 percent, the Port said. According to Port data, 156 ships called in Oakland during January and February. In the first two months of

2020, 212 ships visited.

The Port attributed reduced vessel arrivals to two factors:

Shipping lines are consolidating more cargo on fewer vessels to cut operating costs. Disruption at Southern California ports has caused some ships to miss Oakland calls.

The Port said fewer ship arrivals should help ease berth crowding in Oakland. It added that fewer ships would mean less diesel pollution from vessel smoke stacks.

### **About the Port of Oakland**

The Port of Oakland oversees the Oakland Seaport, Oakland International Airport, and nearly 20 miles of waterfront including Jack London Square. The Port's 5-year strategic plan - Growth with Care - pairs business expansion with community benefits, envisioning more jobs and economic stimulus as the Port grows. Together with its business partners, the Port supports more than 84,000 jobs. Connect with the [Port of Oakland](#) and [Oakland International Airport](#) through Facebook, or with the Port on Twitter, YouTube, and at [www.portofoakland.com](http://www.portofoakland.com).

### **Media Contacts**

Robert Bernardo  
Port of Oakland  
Acting Communications Director  
(510) 627-1401  
[rbernardo@portoakland.com](mailto:rbernardo@portoakland.com)

Marilyn Sandifur  
Port of Oakland  
Port Spokesperson  
(510) 627-1193  
[msandifur@portoakland.com](mailto:msandifur@portoakland.com)

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