

The Port of Houston is Drawing Increased Carrier Attention

In 2021, the Port of Houston processed 3.5 million TEUs of containerized cargo and officially handled a total cargo tonnage of almost 52 million tons. Both are record-setting for the Gulf Coast Port. That overall performance, as well as Houston's utility in handling spillover from the historically congested West Coast, has made it a US gateway that can add value to any shipper's logistical strategy.

Carriers have quickly acknowledged this shift. Early this year, an established carrier group developed a new service that heavily relies on the port of Houston. The East Coast 6 (EC6) service brought ships from THE Alliance, as well as two vessels from Evergreen Marine, to the Gulf Coast. Under two months later, Maersk followed suit and began a trans-Pacific service that calls Vung Tau, major ports in south China, Houston, and Norfolk. The service, called TP28, is routed through the Panama Canal.

Rail carriers have also taken notice of Houston's newfound processing power. Since April, BNSF Railway has been running test trains between the Barbours Cut Container Terminal in Houston and one of their intermodal hubs in Dallas. These tests were sparked by increased volume headed toward the Gulf Coast, and their purpose is to confirm the practicality of a full-fledged rail service from Houston inland.

"Carriers and shippers are starting to capitalize on Houston's updated standing amongst domestic gateway ports," said Lynn Stacy, Managing Director of OEC LLS. "The team at the Port of Houston is expanding containerized trade, setting bulk tonnage standards, leading the way in bulk liquid processing, and they seem to be signing new contracts with carriers consistently."

As backlogs persist on the East and West Coasts and labor negotiations continue, the Gulf Coast is going to look progressively favorable for carriers and shippers alike. Based on throughput, Houston will likely be the most popular amongst all Gulf Coast ports. To evolve with the market, shippers on all trade lanes will need to consider places like Houston and diversify ports of entry into the United States. In these conditions, proper diversification is the only way to build sufficient inventories on reliable timelines.

[Maersk to debut new Houston, Norfolk trans-Pac service in March \(joc.com\)](#)

[BNSF pilots Houston intermodal service as record volumes tax truckers \(joc.com\)](#)

[Freight shuttle developer eyes Houston port for first roll-out \(joc.com\)](#)