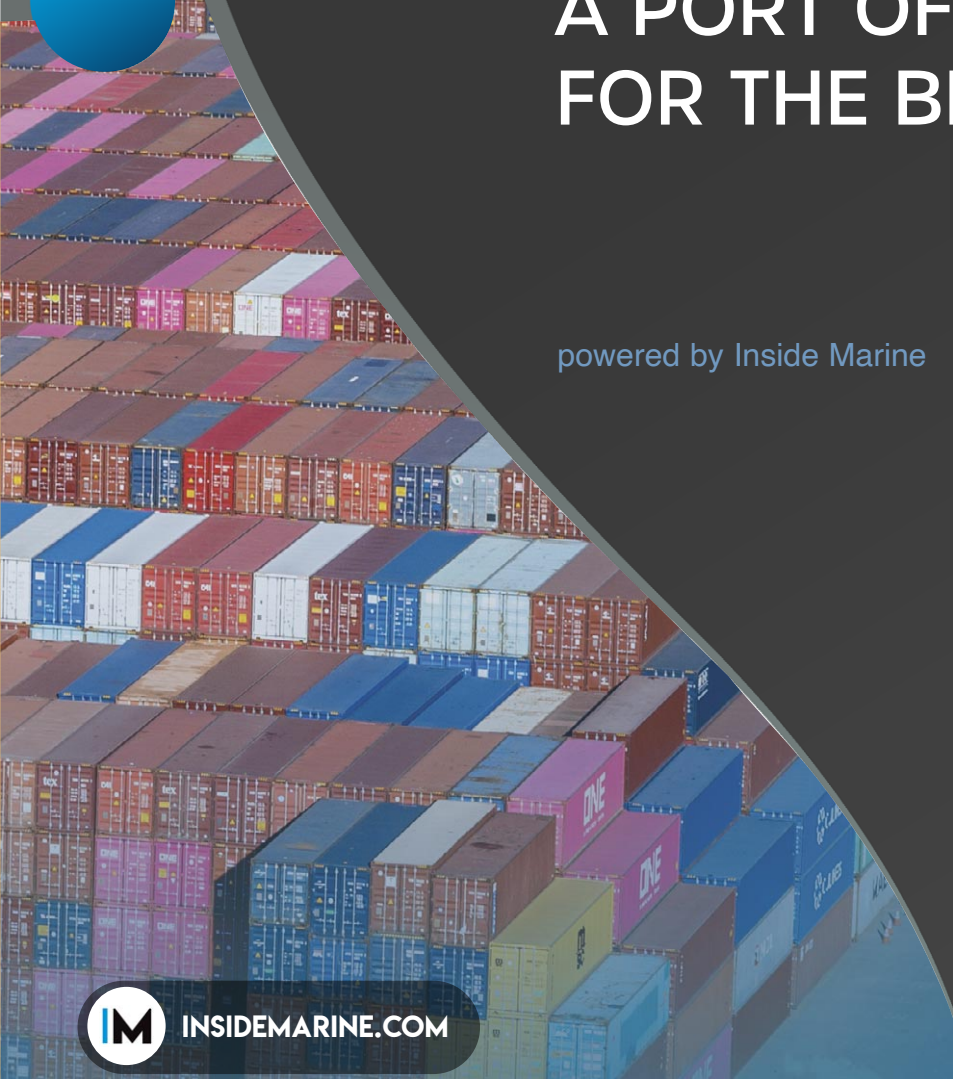




THE PORT OF LONG BEACH

A PORT OF CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

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A PORT OF CHANGE

FOR THE BETTER

The Port of Long Beach has long been the premier US gateway for trans-Pacific trade and a trailblazer in innovative goods movement, safety, environmental stewardship and sustainability. Dr Noel Hacegaba, Deputy Executive Director, spoke to Andy Probert about the port's ambitions, investments and determination to make Southern California a cleaner, healthier place to live and work.



AS the second busiest container seaport in the US, the Port of Long Beach handles trade valued at \$170 billion annually and supports 2.6 million jobs across the nation, over 575,000 in Southern California, and more than 50,000 jobs - or one in five - in Long Beach.

Adjoining the Port of Los Angeles, it is one of the few US ports that can welcome today's largest vessels, serving 175 shipping lines with connections to 217 seaports worldwide. Goods moving through the port originate in or are destined for every US congressional district.

In 2021, the Port of Long Beach handled more than 9.38 million container units, marking its best year on record. And gross revenue grew 9% from 2020 to 2021.

Led by a Board of Harbor Commissioners and Executive Director Mario Cordero, the port is on track for a green future, creating the world's most modern, efficient and sustainable seaport.

Strategic investments

In the 2010s, the port invested \$4 billion in infrastructure, preparing to be 'big ship ready' and meet the challenges for the future. The investment covered terminals, dredging, roads and more.

A \$1.5 billion new bridge replacing the old Gerald Desmond Bridge opened in October 2020, dramatically improving traffic flow around the port complex. Demolition of the old bridge, starting in 2022, will allow larger ships to transit the inner harbour more easily.

The third phase of Long Beach Container Terminal (LBCT), costing \$1.5 billion, was completed in 2021, immediately adding

1 million TEU annual capacity. LBCT is now able to move 3.3 million TEUs annually - twice the cargo with less than half the air pollution of the two terminals it replaces.

As part of an industry-leading \$2.6 billion capital improvement program in the 2020s, the port is building some of the most modern, efficient and sustainable marine facilities in the world to accommodate bigger ships while generating thousands of new jobs.

Deputy Executive Director Dr Noel Hacegaba, said: "These investments will enhance marine terminal productivity, deliver greater efficiency to our customers and improve the sustainability of our operations."

In coming years, the port plans to spend \$1.5 billion on on-dock rail projects to speed cargo movement through the harbour and allow terminals handling the biggest ships to move cargo faster.

He added: "Our biggest investment this decade will be improvements to our rail system to make it possible for a greater share of the cargo moving through this port to go via on-dock rail."

The centrepiece is the Pier B On-Dock Rail Support Facility, with the project scheduled to start construction in 2023. It will increase capacity and sustainability at the port, reduce truck trips, improve efficiency and lessen environmental impacts, even as they handle more cargo.

A digital infrastructure project - the Supply Chain Information Highway - is also being developed to help shippers track their cargo through the supply chain to maximise efficiency and visibility in cargo movement. ▾

“In an era of e-commerce and overnight delivery, consumers and shippers expect shipment visibility,” said Dr Hacegaba. “We aim to enable stakeholders to make scheduling, planning and payment decisions before cargo arrival and speed deliveries through the supply chain.”

The port has partnered with leading tech firm, St Louis-based UNCOMN, to develop the Supply Chain Information Highway, who is collaborating with Amazon Web Services to provide secure cloud-hosting for the data.

“Ultimately, our vision for the Supply Chain Information Highway is end-to-end visibility and coast-to-coast connectivity. The Port of Oakland, Northwest Seaport Alliance, Utah Inland Port Authority, PortMiami and the South Carolina Ports Authority have agreed to join the effort, and we expect additional ports to join in the future,” Dr Hacegaba confirmed.

Sustainability landmarks

After adopting its landmark Green Port Policy in 2005, the Port of Long Beach is more determined than ever to make

Southern California a cleaner, healthier place to live, work and play.

The port’s annual Air Emissions Inventory confirms its ongoing progress. The study, reviewed by regional, state and federal regulatory agencies before release, shows in its most recent update that, years ahead of schedule, the port reached and surpassed its third and final 2023 target for slashing ground-level air pollution from port-related operations.

It set ambitious goals for cutting the top three ground-level pollutants, and all three targets have been hit ahead of schedule. As of 2021, smog-forming nitrogen oxides are down 62%.

Under the Clean Air Action Plan, the port committed to reducing emissions of diesel particulate matter (DPM) by 77%, nitrogen oxides by 59% and sulphur oxides (SOx) by 93% by 2023.

“Working closely with our industry partners, the port met and exceeded its DPM reduction target in 2013 and its SOx reduction target in 2014,” said Dr Hacegaba.

The latest inventory shows the Port of Long Beach has maintained and built on its

track record. DPM and SOx emissions are down a whopping 90% and 97%, respectively, since 2005. The port continues to use every available tool, including green lease provisions and voluntary incentive programmes, to eliminate remaining emissions.

The port’s air quality programmes tackle anything with an engine that enters the harbour district and moves cargo: ships, trains, trucks, small harbour craft, and off-road cargo handling equipment.

Laser-focused on cutting greenhouse gases, the port is moving forward with measures to transition off-road cargo handling equipment to zero-emission vehicles by 2030 and the truck fleet to zero-emission vehicles by 2035.

“This involves accelerating the development, deployment and commercialisation of machines powered by clean energy,” said Dr Hacegaba.

Since April 2022, Long Beach and Los Angeles ports have been collecting \$10 for every loaded twenty-foot container hauled by trucks in and out of their terminals.

Dr Hacegaba explained the money, paid by cargo owners, goes directly into the Clean Truck Fund, an incentive programme to help companies switch to zero-emissions trucks. The fund is projected to raise up to \$90 million in its first year.

In addition to air, water and land are equal priorities under the Port of Long Beach Green Port Policy. Ensuring cleaner soil and sediment is routine, and progress is continuously tracked.

Released in 2021, the latest survey of water quality, aquatic habitat and biological resources in San Pedro Bay shows the harbour’s ecosystem is thriving, with more than 1,000 species of plants, fish, birds, invertebrates and marine mammals. 🐟

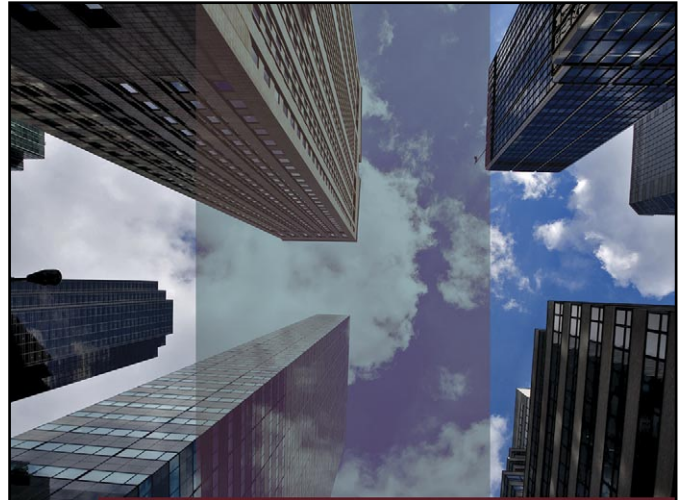


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Moving forward

Dr Hacegaba emphasised the current supply chain surge with record amounts of cargo through the port essentially comes down to a single cause – the Covid-19 pandemic.

“The surge of cargo and high numbers of unscheduled vessel calls met a supply chain workforce impacted by Covid-19 and work-place accommodations that limited capacity. Still, our terminals and dockworkers are moving record amounts of cargo. The port moved a record-setting 9.38 million TEUs in 2021, and we expect another record for 2022,” he said.

Some of the port’s most significant challenges will be to maximise cooperation to build a digital infrastructure to share data safely, continue receiving support from state and federal agencies to fund supply chain infrastructure projects, and build up the flow of US exports to help balance trade.

Dr Hacegaba disclosed: “As the port of choice, Port of Long Beach has a single goal: superior customer service. For our business partners this means moving cargo more efficiently, at a competitive cost.

“The port has been successful with a two-pronged objective of maintaining commercial growth and environmental stewardship by demonstrating a commitment to operational excellence, preparation for future challenges and the strategic management of resources.”

He added: “Our long-term dedication to remaining competitive and environmentally responsible has made the Port of Long Beach an industry leader that shares a common goal with the Biden Administration to enact policies related to climate change and reducing harmful emissions.

“Customers choose the port for the most dependable, cost-effective and fastest delivery of goods in the world, along with the strong relationships it maintains with industry, community, environmental advocates and partner agencies.”

As for the port’s continued cooperation with suppliers and customers, he emphasized: “It’s all about communication. Our partners and stakeholders know exactly who they can contact and how to contact us because we are consistently making ourselves available.

“Our customers know we like to get their input before we launch new initia-

tives, such as the outreach we did before we launched the Supply Chain Information Highway.”

Dr Hacegaba concluded: “Change is the only thing you can count on. A successful supply chain requires cooperation throughout all the links in the chain, and that’s our primary goal. We work closely with our stakeholders to ensure close relationships and open lines of communication at all times.

“The state of the industry is one of transformation and the Port of Long Beach is poised to lead that, given our commitment to operational excellence and environmental sustainability. We have an aggressive capital improvement programme focused on shifting cargo from truck to train, which is more efficient, faster and cleaner. And we are developing a digital infrastructure which could be a gamechanger for goods movement coast to coast.” ■



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