

Vessel schedule reliability to US West Coast hits two-year high: Sea-Intelligence



A significant decline in cargo volume in the Asia-US trade lane is driving the improvement in vessel schedule reliability to the West Coast. Photo caption: Wayne Via /Shutterstock.com.

Bill Mongelluzzo, Senior Editor | Jun 29, 2023, 4:24 PM EDT

Vessel schedule reliability from Asia to the US West Coast rose marginally in May, but nonetheless hit a two-year high, Sea-Intelligence Maritime Analysis said Thursday.

On-time performance of 52.6% last month was up 2.4 percentage points from April, while East Coast reliability slipped 3.3 percentage points to 42.9%, Sea-Intelligence said in its latest Global Liner Performance report.

The Asia-West Coast schedule reliability was higher by a “massive 30.6 percentage points compared to the 22% recorded at the same time last year,” Sea-Intelligence said. While East Coast reliability fell month on month, it was still significantly higher than the 20.2% recorded in May 2022, it said.

The improved schedule reliability on the part of ocean carriers reflects the significant decline in US imports from Asia compared with last spring when cargo volumes in the eastbound trans-Pacific were increasing and the largest US trade lane was building toward a second-half peak season.

US imports from Asia moving through West Coast ports totaled 793,730 TEUs in May, down 25.9% year over year, according to PIERS, a *Journal of Commerce* sister product within S&P Global. Asia imports through the East Coast fell almost 20% to 474,050 TEUs.

On-time performance in the eastbound trans-Pacific continued to lag global schedule reliability, which increased 2.7 percentage points in May to 66.8%. That is up 30.3 percentage points over May 2022. Schedule reliability improved on 20 of the 34 trade lanes tracked by Sea-Intelligence.

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According to Gnosis Freight, which tracked the average vessel delay times so far in June, reliability is improving to the West Coast amid a decrease in blank sailings, with the average delay for vessels calling West Coast ports at 2.4 days, down from 3.4 days in May. The average vessel delay to the East Coast, however, increased to 5.1 days from 4.5 days in May, according to Gnosis.

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