Panic? What panic? Port of Los Angeles sees record 1 million containers in July

Importers frontload ahead of tariff deadline

Stuart Chirls of Sonar Magazine

The reset of global trade by the Trump administration helped the Port of Los Angeles to record monthly container volumes. The southern California gateway handled 1,019,837 twenty foot equivalent units in July, up 8.5% from the same month a year ago, and the busiest month since the 117-year old port began handling containers in 1959.

The previous record of 944,232 TEUs was set in July 2024.

“Shippers have been frontloading their cargo for months to get ahead of tariffs and recent activity at America’s top port really tells that story,” said Port of Los Angeles Executive Director Gene Seroka, in a briefing. “Port terminals in July were jam-packed with ships loaded with cargo, processed without any delay – much to the credit of our dedicated longshore workers, terminal and rail operators, truckers, and supply chain partners.”

Shippers were racing against an August deadline when higher U.S. tariffs were set to once again take effect. The White House this week extended the tariff pause on China goods for another 90 days, the latest move in President Trump’s off again-on again tariff gyrations.

July 2025 loaded imports totaled 543,728 TEUs, while loaded exports were 121,507 TEUs, up 6% y/y. The port processed 354,602 empty container units, 10% more than a year ago, and an indicator of pending import traffic.

Year-to-date, Los Angeles has handled 5,975,649 TEUs, 5% more than the same period in 2024.