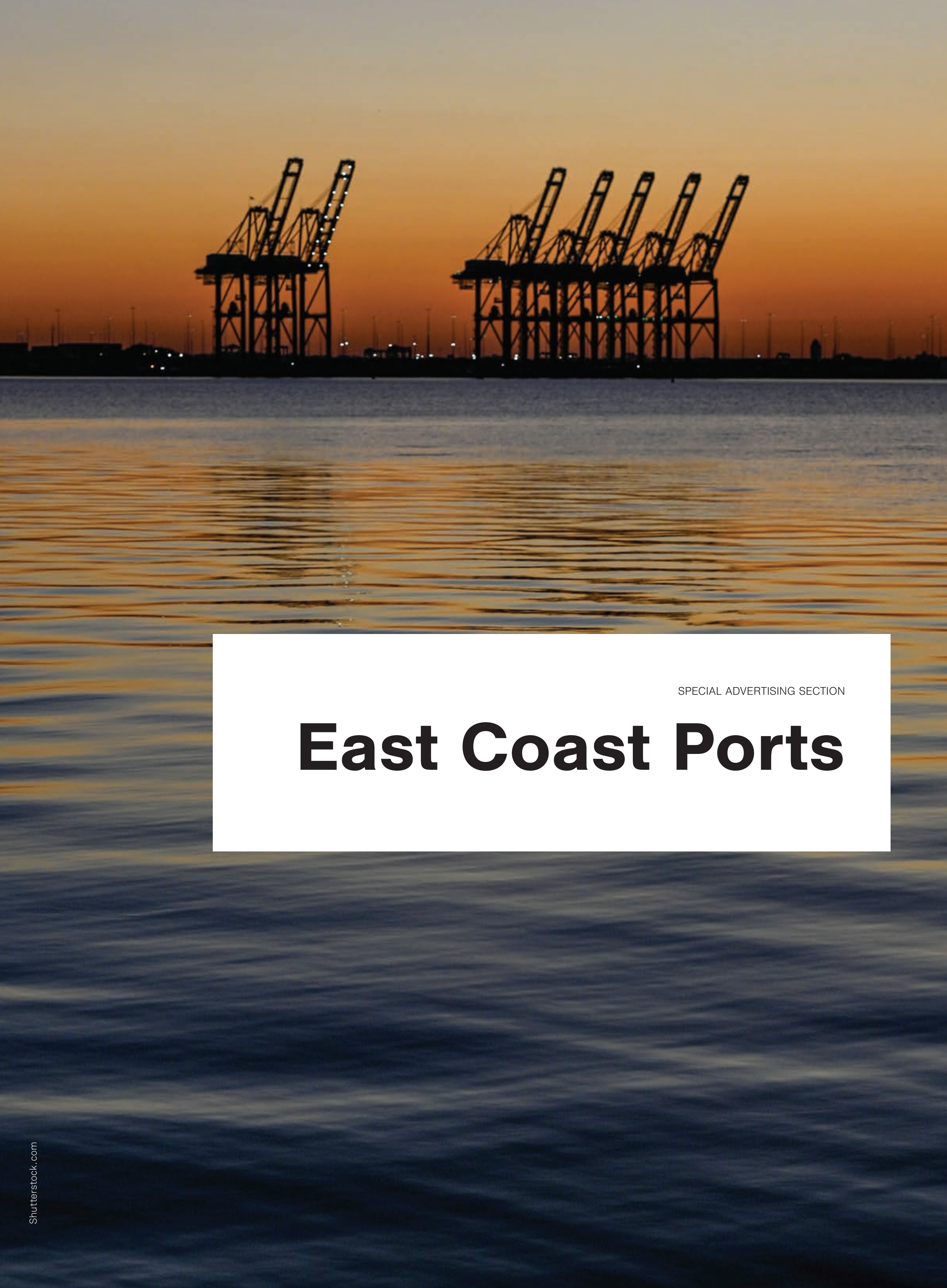
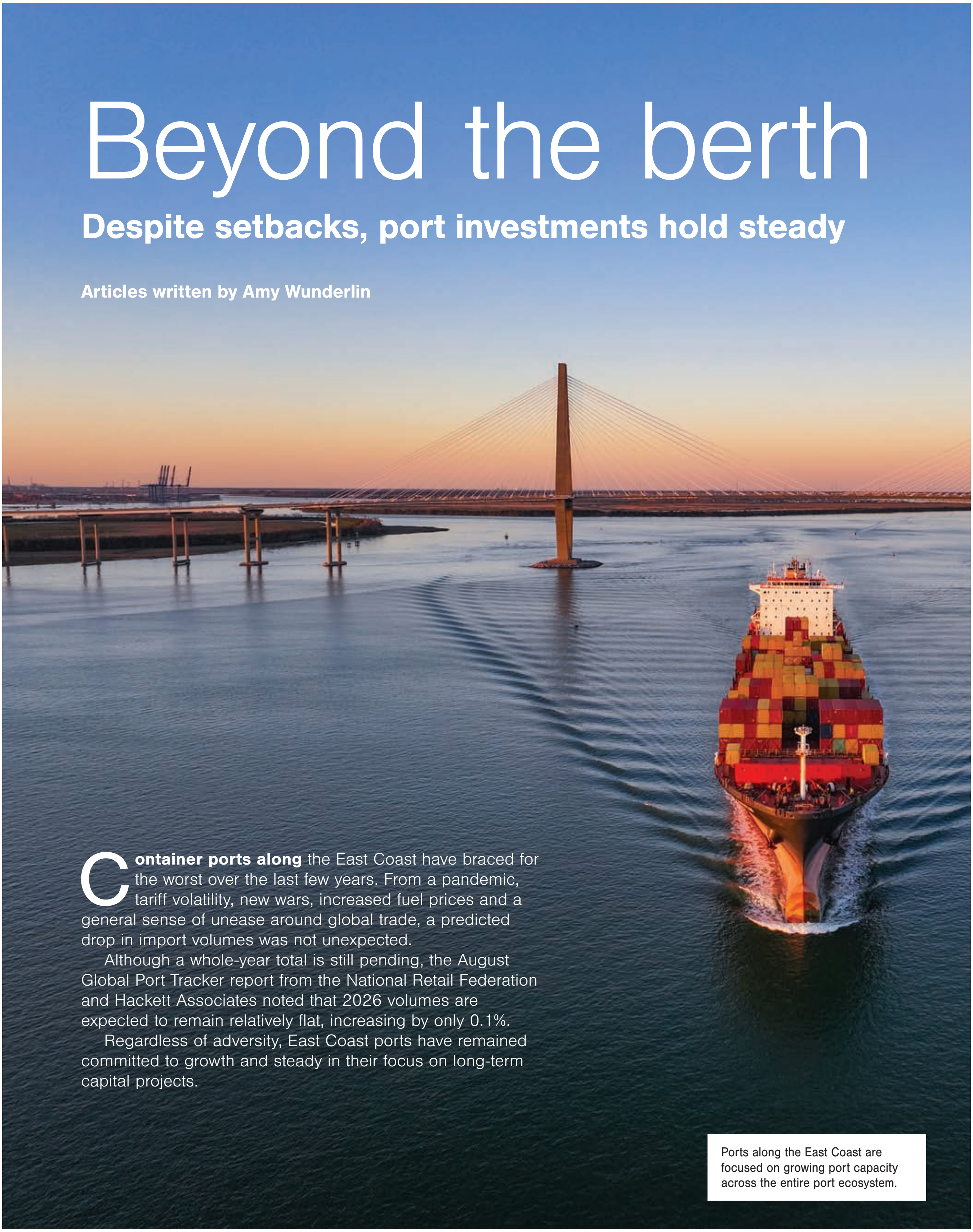


SPECIAL ADVERTISING SECTION

East Coast Ports

Shutterstock.com



Beyond the berth

Despite setbacks, port investments hold steady

Articles written by Amy Wunderlin

Container ports along the East Coast have braced for the worst over the last few years. From a pandemic, tariff volatility, new wars, increased fuel prices and a general sense of unease around global trade, a predicted drop in import volumes was not unexpected.

Although a whole-year total is still pending, the August Global Port Tracker report from the National Retail Federation and Hackett Associates noted that 2026 volumes are expected to remain relatively flat, increasing by only 0.1%.

Regardless of adversity, East Coast ports have remained committed to growth and steady in their focus on long-term capital projects.

Ports along the East Coast are focused on growing port capacity across the entire port ecosystem.

SC Ports / Matthew Peacock

In some cases, the so-called lull in volume compared with years prior has presented an opportunity for ports and their partners or tenants to make progress in large-scale projects. Key areas receiving investment include container terminal expansion; larger cargo-handling equipment; on-dock rail and intermodal connections; roads, gates and truck-flow infrastructure; and berth and channel expansion.

"Last year and this year — and probably going back to 2020 — the word of the year has been 'uncertainty,'" said Bethann Rooney, port director at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ).

"What we expected for 2026 was that we would be flat with 2025 or even slightly below, and through July that's exactly where we are," she added.

"But across the board for the terminal operators, the lull is giving folks the opportunity to push up some investments that they were going to make. Some construction projects, realignment in the terminals, moving things around that they may not have done until later. They're able to take advantage of the quieter periods."

What makes these investments notable is the increased focus on growing port capacity across the entire port ecosystem. While adding berth space to accommodate larger vessels has long been — and still is — a priority for ports, a secondary focus has emerged around improving movement across all sectors: ships, terminals, trucks, rail and gates.

"Ports can no longer look at development only inside their fence lines; they need to look at a comprehensive, integrated transportation network that includes dock to rail and rail to truck — a seamless logistics system that removes bottlenecks," said Richard Scher, director of communications at the Maryland Port Administration. "Ports that can achieve this will be ahead of the game."

As customers take a broader view of intermodal than they have in the past, Norfolk Southern is evaluating how the mode can help improve the performance of their entire supply chain.

"The future of port growth will be defined by how well ports, railroads and inland logistics networks work together," said Alexander Luc, group vice president, international and automotive, at Norfolk Southern. "Ports are part of a broader ecosystem that connects global trade to inland markets, and rail is the

Port of NY & NJ: Connecting further, faster

As the busiest gateway on the US East Coast, the Port of New York and New Jersey's network of terminals, railroads, highways, warehouses and distribution centers give shippers unprecedented access to one of the world's most concentrated consumer markets in the Northeast and Midwest, reaching millions of local consumers and millions more inland.

The Port of New York and New Jersey is focused on serving local, regional and national markets by welcoming larger ships; accommodating increased cargo volumes; and moving cargo reliably, efficiently and sustainably.

Road

The Port of New York and New Jersey's $220-million Port Street Corridor Improvement Project focuses on modernizing Port Newark's northern roadway entrance. The project will create a more efficient roadway configuration, allowing for safer trucking operations to and from the port complex. A major milestone was achieved in July 2026 with the opening of the completed Corbin Street Ramp, modernizing a critical link to accommodate larger, heavier trucks.

Rail

The port's extensive on- and near-dock ExpressRail system has a 1.5 million annual lift capacity and can handle a growing discretionary cargo business with service to over 50 destinations in the Midwest, New England and Canada.

Improvement projects such as the Southbound Connector Project will increase capacity and improve freight train movement into and out of ExpressRail Elizabeth by adding a direct southbound rail connection to Conrail's Garden State Secondary.

Waterways

The 55-foot Harbor Deepening and Channel Improvements Project — currently in the development phase — would deepen New York Harbor from 50 feet to 55 feet and provide additional navigational improvements to accommodate larger commercial vessels.

The Howland Hook Navigation Improvements Study seeks to reevaluate potential harbor deepening and navigational improvements along the Arthur Kill strait from the Kill Van Kull to Howland Hook Marine Terminal.

The 6-year, $180-million Wharf Rehabilitation Program is rehabilitating critical waterside infrastructure, including piles, wharf decks and bulkheads.

Sustainability

All of the Port of New York and New Jersey improvement initiatives are in line with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey's goal to achieve net zero by 2050. ■

Port of New York & New Jersey

connective tissue that helps make that system work."

According to Paul Anderson, CEO of Port Tampa Bay, this means building for the future before demand hits.

"Successful ports are [utilizing] strategic planning," Anderson said. "Their capital investment is working to grow their infrastructure and their capacity. They're working on workforce development and operational flexibility, as well."

Looking ahead, ports must continue investing in themselves, noted Brian Clark, executive director at the North Carolina State Ports Authority (NC Ports). NC Ports operates the Port of Wilmington, the Port of Morehead City and the Charlotte Inland Port.

"If you look back over a much longer time period than just the last couple years, there's continual growth, and there's an expectation that there will be continued growth going forward," Clark said. "It's been a challenging couple of years, but we continue to plan for the future, and with that comes infrastructure improvements and upgrades."

Terminals and cargo-handling equipment

Investments at the container terminal are among the most important projects impacting East Coast ports' capacity and competitiveness.

The Maryland Port Administration points to its upcoming container terminal at Tradepoint Atlantic, which Scher noted will be a significant addition to the Port of Baltimore's overall container capacity.

"It will lift us from sixth to third among East Coast ports for total container capacity and [the port will] also benefit from our new double-stack capabilities," he said.

The Port of Baltimore also continues to invest in its roll-on/roll-off (ro/ro) business, handling more high-and-heavy ro/ro than any other US port. It has also steadily expanded to meet the demands of the global automotive market.

"We are reconstructing and rehabilitating our ro/ro berths at the Dundalk Marine Terminal to better accommodate the larger types of farm and construction machinery that we are seeing," Scher added.

Similarly, South Carolina's Port of Charleston recently approved the expansion of ro/ro operations at its North Charleston Terminal, with a long-term goal of creating additional TEU capacity in the Charleston Harbor. The project will convert an adjacent former paper mill site into a ro/ro facility, as well as add rail upgrades and new ro/ro capabilities.

"What this does, in addition to expanding our capacity for ro/ro operations, is give us some extra space at our Columbus Street Terminal to take on more breakbulk cargo," said Laura Clifton, manager of public relations at the South Carolina Ports Authority.

Port Tampa Bay is investing in port heavy-lift cranes, berth improvements and ro/ro infrastructure — a relatively new cargo lane for the port, now in its third year. Other notable investments include the expansion of the port's container terminal to approximately 100 acres, including a third deepwater berth and additional storage capacity.

"It positions Port Tampa Bay to scale toward 1 million TEUs annually," Anderson said. "That was almost unthinkable 8 to 10 years ago."

Another port expanding its capacity through land acquisition, the Port of Philadelphia (PhilaPort) recently closed on a strategic purchase of over 150 acres of land adjacent to its SouthPort Marine Terminal from Norfolk Southern, part of a larger project to build an additional terminal. A project more than a decade in the making, the purchase expands cargo handling, adds intermodal rail access and supports the port's long-term growth plan.

"You've got the highway connection, the rail connection and the deep water. To find what I call a unique nexus on the East Coast, you have to take advantage of it," said Sean Mahoney, senior director of marketing at PhilaPort. "This is really an ideal site for expansion for those three reasons."

To achieve the port's long-term goal to triple its container capacity — to grow the record 880,000 TEUs moved last year to approximately 3 million TEUs by 2040 — PhilaPort will need more space.

At Fort Lauderdale, Fla.'s Port Everglades, the completion of the SouthPort Turning Notch project lengthened the port's deepwater cargo ship turnaround area from 900 feet to 2,400 feet, creating five new container berths and the need for six super post-Panamax gantry cranes.

"SouthPort Turning Notch was a game changer for the cargo side," said Joseph Morris, CEO and port director at Port Everglades. "Being able to offer more modern cranes that could service larger ships — not the biggest in the network, but larger ships — is a huge win for the port and our users."

As Port Everglades continues to prioritize the densification of its marine terminals on the cargo side, the project also included a newly established container yard for marine terminal operators to use adjacent to the new berth space.

"We need to get into a larger capacity on the same footprint, and those projects are underway in three of our facilities today," Morris said. "We're grateful to have partners that are willing to invest here to get that done."

On-dock rail and intermodal connections

Expanding rail capacity and improving connections to regional freight networks allows for more efficient transport of materials in and out of ports while also reducing truck congestion and emissions, making it a significant priority for several East Coast ports.

The Maryland Port Administration is currently working with its container terminal partner, Ports America Chesapeake, to make upgrades and improvements to the port's intermodal transfer facility, including the addition of full double-stack operations.

"With double stack, Baltimore is now the quickest and most efficient route into Chicago and the Midwest," Scher said.

Ports America Chesapeake also recently opened a new transload agriculture facility with on-dock silos at the port's container terminal, which will allow farmers to bring grains directly into the Port of Baltimore for export operations instead of at an offsite unloading location.

Intermodal is a large part of NC Ports' operations as well, with easy access from two deepwater ports to North Carolina's inland port. The port authority recently completed a $24 million intermodal yard expansion project that added 5,000 feet of new working track. The on-dock rail, located near the container berths, provides consistent daily service to the Charlotte Inland Port through a partnership with CSX.

"That's a significant increase in our capacity on the port to handle our intermodal volumes, not just to the Charlotte market, but also to the Midwest markets," Clark said.

Moving forward, NC Ports plans to invest in approximately 8,000 feet of storage track to support the significant growth in overall rail volume, not just intermodal rail volume, into the ports.

This increase in rail volume can be attributed to new services — including daily overnight rail service into the Charlotte market and service into the Chicago market — that the port authority has introduced with CSX.

"It's based on the capability and the ability to expand the reach into that market, eliminate the truck move [and] essentially bring our gate closer to the destination," Clark said. "Service has been very steady ... it's been consistent from a performance standpoint and very cost competitive."

Rail has become an integral part of building supply chain resiliency.

"Resilient supply chains are not built around one mode, one gateway or one routing option," said Andrew Lynch, group vice president, domestic intermodal, at Norfolk Southern (NS). "They are built around flexibility. When customers can combine rail, truck, ports, inland terminals and first- and final-mile solutions, they have more ways to adapt to market changes, capacity constraints or disruptions."

Norfolk Southern sees manufacturers and large shippers increasingly consider rail a strategic part of their network design, and in some cases, move freight from truck to rail because they want a more consistent flow to final destinations. Lynch noted that NS is also using rail to connect East Coast gateways to inland production or distribution centers.

"Across those examples, the common theme is trust," he added. "Customers grow with transportation partners they believe can deliver safely, reliably and consistently."

Roads, gates and truck-flow infrastructure

Roadway improvements, gate relocation and upgraded truck queuing areas are at the top of many East Coast ports' to-do lists, including the Port of New York and New Jersey.

"We are a truck port predominantly — 85% of our volume moves out by truck. The ability of the state highway system, the federal highway system, to keep up with maintaining the roads [and] the bridges is a risk that we look at," Rooney said.

The Port Street Corridor Improvement project, the port authority's latest venture, aims to modernize the northern roadway access point to New Jersey's Port Newark and Elizabeth Port Authority Marine Terminal.

Set to be completed in spring 2028, the project will create a safer entrance to the port complex, a more efficient configuration of the port's roadway network and will enhance freight movement regionally by connecting multimodal transportation of goods to rural areas and local communities.

"Port Newark was originally a US Navy facility, back in the days of World War I and World War II, and the original

Port of Baltimore

After many decades, earlier this year the Port of Baltimore leaped over a longtime hurdle and began operating double-stacked containers on rail following an expansion of the city's 131-year-old Howard Street Tunnel. With the ability to double stack, Baltimore becomes the quickest, most efficient route to Chicago and the Midwest.

Double stacking will increase the Port of Baltimore's container volumes, add approximately 13,000 new jobs, and complement the expansion of the Seagirt Marine Terminal, operated by Ports America Chesapeake. Since 2010, Ports America has invested over $600 million in infrastructure, equipment and technology improvements that have helped to make Seagirt one of the most efficient container ports in the nation.

The double-stack news follows a record year for container handling at the Port of Baltimore. In 2025, the port handled 1.1 million TEUs and increased its weekly container ship calls to 15, up from 12 in 2024. In August, Baltimore welcomed its newest container business, MSC's Dragon service, opening another Asia and Mediterranean string for the port.

In September, Ports America Chesapeake will open a new, on-dock grain transload facility at Seagirt to allow farmers to bring their grains directly into the Port of Baltimore for export.

Baltimore is known in the maritime shipping industry as being one of the most cargo-diverse ports in the US, and roll-on/roll-off high-and-heavy cargo is another key focus for the port. In 2025, Baltimore again finished first among all US ports for that commodity and was tracking ahead of last year's volumes in the first half of 2026.

Another key targeted commodity in Baltimore's profile is autos. Last year, the port finished second among all US ports in auto handling with over 726,000 cars and light trucks. With six on-dock auto processors, experienced and skilled labor, and Baltimore's geographic location as the closest East Coast port to the Midwest, there is no better port for handling autos.

Breakbulk and project cargo is another specialty for Baltimore. From power generation machinery to subway cars to military equipment, Baltimore's direct-to-rail capabilities make it the best choice for any breakbulk cargo.

No matter the cargo, Baltimore can handle it! ■

roads were built to standards of trucks that were much smaller in length and in weight," Rooney said. "So, we were overdue for replacing the ramp, making it more suitable for trucks that are 55 feet long or longer and 30 to 40 tons."

PhilaPort is similarly focused on streamlining truck processing and reducing terminal congestion, beginning with the modernization of the main gate complex at Tioga Marine Terminal. The project also includes the construction of a new 100,000 square-foot warehouse.

NC Ports has several road projects kicking off, the largest of which is a new general cargo gate at the Port of Wilmington. The project, which Clark noted is significant in size and value, will relocate the port's current North Gate. Upgrades include new security, new cargo interchange operations, and a new security and badging office.

The project will align with additional highway work being done by the North Carolina Department of Transportation, which will minimize traffic disruption.

Berth and channel expansion

Deepening and widening projects at East Coast ports have become more common, especially as the ships that call these ports continue to grow larger.

"Economies of scale have dictated that the ships [can carry more than] 20,000 TEUs each," Mahoney said. "They have the ships and they go to the ports and say, 'Hey, if you can dredge deeper, you'll get these,' so it's pressure on the ports to keep up."

And not keeping up is simply not an option, Mahoney added, noting that there is risk in remaining complacent.

"The ships are changing; ports have to change with them," he said.

This fact is something Port Everglades considers hugely important as it works with the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to deepen and widen the port's navigational channels to allow for larger ships.

However, environmental concerns regarding the port's unique landscape, which sits near a protected coral reef tract, make this project particularly challenging.

"The deepening and widening project is more than 30 years old, it has been held up for years because of environmental concerns," Morris said.

While Morris acknowledged the concerns and the importance of environmental stewardship (the port recently enhanced and restored over 81 acres of nearby wetlands), he also emphasized the importance of a deeper channel for the port's future.

"We have some very passionate folks around protecting the environment, and we're in that same group, but we have to balance the reality of meeting market needs. Getting that deepening and widening project done is extremely important to our users, our tenants, and to global trade," he said.

The Port of New York and New Jersey has several expansion projects underway, including a $180 million wharf rehabilitation, replacement of another berth that serves the port's bulk and breakbulk commodities, and reconstruction of the berths that serve its automobile trade.

On the waterway side, PANYNJ is working with the USACE to expand and deepen the Gravesend Anchorage, as well as advancing the work of the Harbor Deepening and Channel Improvement Project. The project will further deepen


20 HOURS FROM SHIP TO TRAIN.
This is what supply chain velocity looks like.
At the Port of Savannah, speed is backed by scale: 40 vessel services and 42 double-stack trains each week, 15,000 daily truck moves and one of the Southeast's most extensive distribution ecosystems.
The result? More routing options. Greater flexibility. Faster inventory replenishment. And potential inland transportation savings of up to $1,000 per container to key Southeast markets.
Now, a $5 billion investment plan is building even more capacity for what comes next.
GEORGIA PORTS
gaports.com

28 miles of channels to 55-foot depth and create meeting and passing zones in the Kill Van Kull waterway.

PANYNJ has also received authorization from Congress to move forward with the preliminary engineering design for what is being called the pathway to Staten Island's Howland Hook Marine Terminal.

In April 2026, Port Tampa Bay was awarded a $24 million grant from the US Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration Port Infrastructure Development Program to support its Berth 300 Extension Project at Port Redwing. The project will extend Berth 300 by 800 feet and create a 1,300-foot berth.

Combined with adjacent berths, Port Redwing will offer nearly half a mile of berth space, expanding the port's ability to accommodate multiple vessels at one time.

Anderson noted that this represents another strategic investment that gives the port long-term flexibility with new customers, in addition to a larger multigenerational growth opportunity known as the Tampa Harbor Navigation Improvement Project.

This project will deepen over 50 miles of federal channel at Port Tampa Bay from 43 to 47 feet, which Anderson added will improve vessel access, allow larger vessels to call on the port and support future cargo growth.

Long-term plans to expand container operations at South Carolina ports also include deepening projects, Clifton noted, including the dredging of the North Charleston Terminal to match the port's harbor depth of 52 feet, the deepest harbor in the Southeast. There are also plans to raise the bridge so larger ships can access the terminal.

"We have this acreage, we have this capacity — this is the port being strategic and looking at how we can use this acreage to grow and diversify our cargo base in the meantime. Decades down the road, that will be a fully modernized container operation," Clifton said.

Investing in the future

Ports that continue to invest in the ability to be agile and to adapt will be the most successful long term, Morris noted.

"It's all about meeting the needs of the market now and into the future," he said. "How do you do that? You use data [and] you need to make sure you have real conversations with your stakeholders."

"Most importantly, as it relates back to agility, is having the courage to change course. If you see that something that you had decided before is not going to work, have the courage to stop it and do the right thing."

Maryland's Scher added that ports must also understand their niche strengths and invest in and build on those.

The Port of Baltimore is proof of those words as a leading port for high-

Port Everglades is designed to meet global demands

Broward County's Port Everglades sits at the center of one of the world's largest and most dynamic consumer markets, providing global ocean carriers, beneficial cargo owners and logistics providers with a strategic gateway to South Florida and beyond. Approximately 80% of the cargo moving through the port is handled within 80 miles, positioning Port Everglades as a key player for distribution networks and end markets.

On the cargo side, Port Everglades handles over 1.16 million TEUs annually and connects South Florida with 150 ports in 70 countries. Its established strength in the north-south trade lane continues to expand as it deepens its east-west connectivity and develops additional opportunities with Far East markets. Port Everglades is Florida's No. 1 port for perishables and ranks among the nation's busiest container ports, underscoring its role as a critical link in time-sensitive global supply chains.

Speed to market

For cargo owners and logistics partners, Port Everglades offers a combination of location, intermodal connectivity and terminal capacity designed to move cargo efficiently from vessel to market.

The port has direct access to the interstate highway system and is home to Florida East Coast Railway's near-dock, 43-acre intermodal container transfer facility. This connectivity creates an efficient maritime-to-rail and maritime-to-highway interface, helping shippers reduce inland transportation distances and improve supply chain velocity.

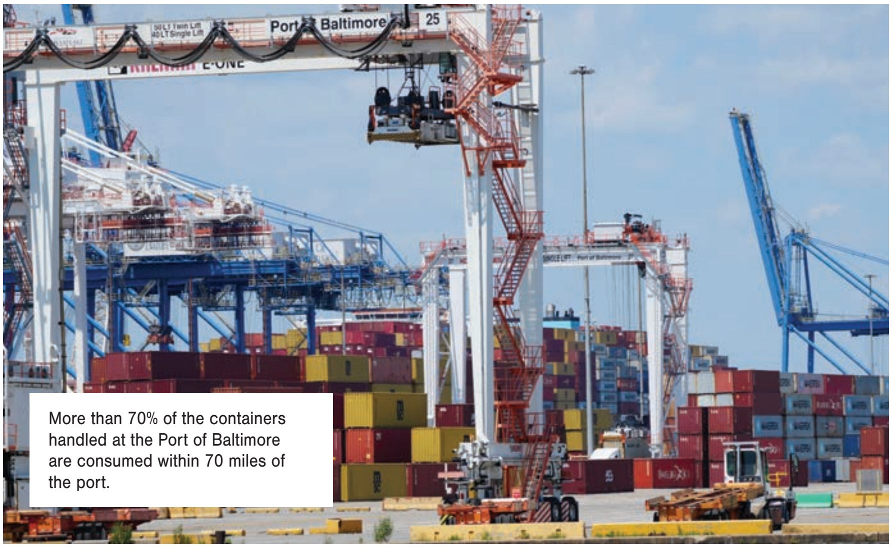
Infrastructure built for the future

Port Everglades, operational since 1928, is taking a long-term approach to maintaining its competitive position and supporting customers' growth strategies. Its Master/Vision Plan calls for over $3.8 billion in capital investments over the next 20 years across the port's cargo, cruise and energy sectors.

Among the most significant is the Port Everglades Navigation Improvements Project, which is being advanced by the US Army Corps of Engineers. Designed to deepen and widen the port's navigation channels, the project supports the safe and efficient movement of larger, more capable and increasingly fuel-efficient vessels.

A strategic location, multimodal connections, expanding berth and crane capacity, strong trade relationships, and sustained investment in maritime infrastructure perfectly positions Port Everglades for the next 100 years as a reliable gateway to the Americas and global trade lanes. ■

PORT EVERGLADES
BROWARD COUNTY • FLORIDA



More than 70% of the containers handled at the Port of Baltimore are consumed within 70 miles of the port.

Shutterstock.com / Andrew Leyden

and-heavy ro/ro and automotive cargo and the second-busiest coal port in the nation. Investments made over the last few years have focused on those markets, with six on-dock auto processors, the Tradepoint Atlantic terminal expansion, and two on-dock coal facilities within close proximity to the source market.

"The Port of Baltimore has a very strong local consumption market," Scher said. "More than 70% of the containers we handle are consumed within 70 miles of our port. With our double-stack operations now underway, this will begin to broaden our reach."

Tampa Bay's Anderson noted that ports must remain closely in tune with market changes and their customers, and their infrastructure investments should reflect that.

"We're one of the most diverse cargo ports, certainly in the South, and I think that's a key to our success," he said. "Successful ports are always going to be in the market, sensing what the future is, working with their customers, and investing in the infrastructure that supports." ■

email: amywunderlin@gmail.com

PORT TAMPA BAY™

EXPANDING PORT CAPACITY FOR

FLORIDA'S

DISTRIBUTION

HUB

- Strategically located at the crossroads of the growing Tampa/Orlando Corridor
- More than 550 million square feet of distribution center space along I-4 and I-75
- E-commerce, consumer goods, perishables and building materials
- The fastest growing region in the fastest growing state
- Recently expanded terminal capacity and plenty of room for growth
- Capable of multiple round-trip truck deliveries per day from Port to distribution centers
- Weekly direct sailings from Asia and Latin America including Mexico

REROUTE YOUR THINKING®

WWW.PORTTB.COM

Continuous advancement

Technology creates efficiencies, boosts supply chain resiliency

Whether at terminals, gates or across port operations, technology is creating more productive ports and greater visibility across the supply chain.

"The premier port of the future is not going to be just one that is focusing on the physical infrastructure and the physical capacity; it is going to be the one that is building transparency and efficiency throughout the supply chain," said Bethann Rooney, port director at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

Digitization is at the crux of the Port of New York and New Jersey's long-term goals of building a more resilient supply chain.

"We are moving toward making data actionable so it's not data for the sake of having information, but data that can be used to support decision making," Rooney said.

While she acknowledged the importance of infrastructure investments, Rooney noted that what sets the Port of New York and New Jersey apart is its focus on uniting those investments with the overall supply chain.

"You can build out the infrastructure, and you can build out all of the capacity. But if that capacity is not working together, that investment is for naught," she said.

The digitization of internal systems through a geographic information system (GIS) is the first step in achieving that goal. This system works as the

Six decades of shipping excellence

Composed of the six shipping companies of the Evergreen Group, Evergreen Line is one of the world's largest container carriers, with a fleet capacity of approximately 1,840,000 TEUs. Established to meet the evolving needs of global customers, Evergreen services more than 150 trade lanes weekly, with 228 vessels calling at more than 300 terminals worldwide. As a member of the East/West Trade OCEAN Alliance, approximately 390 container vessels are deployed with an estimated total nominal capacity of nearly 5 million TEUs across 41 weekly service loops and more than 520 direct port pairs, providing one of the industry's most comprehensive service networks.

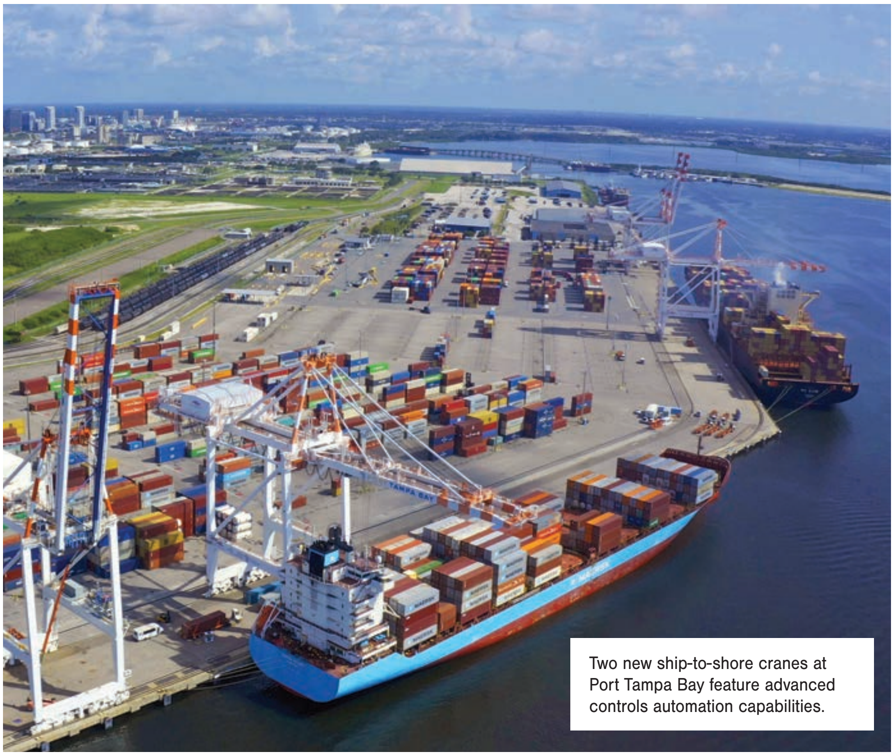
Evergreen has been certified by the Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) since 2002. Since May 2004, all Evergreen-operated vessels have been certified under the International Ship and Port Security Code. Evergreen's e-commerce capabilities, recognized among the industry's most advanced, have earned Log-Net excellence honors for five consecutive years based on customer evaluations.

To enhance service quality and competitiveness, Evergreen continues its fleet renewal program, deploying vessels where they are most effective. The company currently has 50 vessels on order, representing more than 756,053 TEUs of additional capacity.

Evergreen recognizes its responsibility as a global corporate citizen and maintains a comprehensive Safety, Quality and Environmental Protection Management System for both its fleet and shore-based personnel. Its S-type "Green Ships" incorporate advanced technologies specifically designed to protect the environment. Evergreen Marine Corp. also launched its first Green Bonds initiative, directing proceeds toward improving energy efficiency, preventing pollution and advancing sustainable environmental strategies worldwide.

Evergreen works closely with customers and partners to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting alternative fuels and pursuing its goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. Recognizing that decarbonization requires collaboration across the entire shipping value chain, the company began using International Sustainability and Carbon Certification-certified biofuels in 2025 to reduce fleet emissions. In addition, all new vessels are designed to operate on methanol as an alternative fuel, supporting compliance with European environmental regulations while further reducing carbon emissions. ■

EVERGREEN LINE



Two new ship-to-shore cranes at Port Tampa Bay feature advanced controls automation capabilities.

Port Tampa Bay

port authority's day-to-day operational platform, integrating real-time data with spatial analytics and imagery — such as a 3D study of the water and its depth — into a single operating picture.

The GIS also enables remote decision making by layering information about the port authority's electric system, water distribution system, sewer system, fire protection and life safety systems.

"It is the building block and the foundation for external visibility and transparency," Rooney said. "That GIS platform is transformative in what it is that we're doing to manage our internal assets and data and decisions, and then we will build upon that for external decision making."

Norfolk Southern is seeing similar trends and is investing in digital tools to meet customer expectations around reliable service, capacity, visibility, responsiveness and ease of doing business.

Customers want to know that their freight will move safely and predictably, noted Alexander Luc, group vice president, international and automotive, and Andrew Lynch, group vice president, domestic intermodal, at Norfolk Southern. When challenges arise, customers want timely information, clear communication and a partner who is accountable.

At the same time, customers are asking Norfolk Southern to solve bigger problems than transportation, Luc added.

"They want help evaluating gateway strategies, reducing truck miles, simplifying complex routing patterns and identifying where rail can create more value in their supply chains," he said.

Improving data and analytics is a key component to delivering on these opportunities.

"Ultimately, customers want confidence," Lynch said. "They want a railroad that delivers consistently and a team that communicates clearly. That is how trust is built, and trust is what creates the opportunity for long-term growth."

Technology on a smaller scale

Ports across the East Coast are also implementing technological upgrades across their operations in smaller ways. Port Tampa Bay's two new post-Panamax ship-to-shore cranes, for example, incorporate advanced controls automation capabilities, and sustainability and productivity benefits.

"These complement our broader terminal improvements that allow us to increase our lift capacity on the cranes, improving the actual berth productivity, and allow our port to serve multiple large vessels simultaneously — a capability we didn't have just a few years ago," said Paul Anderson, CEO of Port Tampa Bay.

Tampa has also invested in new gates and new gate operating systems with Ports America, its terminal operating partner.

"All of these things combined allow us to keep up with what our customers demand — improved efficiency, safety and sustainability, as well as customer service," Anderson said.

Port Everglades is also working alongside its tenants as they invest in their own technology needs. According to Joseph Morris, CEO and port director at Port Everglades, investments include the introduction of truck appointment systems to manage the port's surging volumes for its marine terminal operators.

Although not new to the industry, Morris said the appointment systems have been extremely impactful in managing port traffic. As the No. 1 port in Florida for energy products, No. 2 in Florida on the containerized cargo side, and No. 3 in both Florida and in the world for cruise home port activity, Morris noted that technology is helping to solve the challenges around Port Everglades' portfolio.

"Balancing all those within our footprint, we need efficiency within our infrastructure," he said.

The South Carolina Ports Authority (SC Ports) is focusing on technological improvements in its intermodal yard. Upcoming projects include the installation of rail optical character recognition at its North Charleston rail yard, as well as plans for additional automation at its general cargo facility.

"We definitely feel we're on the leading edge of technology with regard to general cargo operations," said Laura Clifton, manager of public relations at SC Ports.

By connecting infrastructure with actionable data, ports and rail operators are building more efficient, resilient and responsive supply chains while strengthening the confidence customers need to plan for long-term growth. ■

email: amywunderlin@gmail.com

Bending, not breaking

Geopolitical uncertainty leads to lane shifts, diversification

As shippers chase the ever-ebbing geopolitical tide, ports across the East Coast have become no strangers to cargo lane volatility.

First, the pandemic pushed suppliers away from China, then came the tariffs and a war with Iran. Those who hadn't already shifted to a China-plus-one strategy following the pandemic began moving further into markets in Southeast Asia and Northern Europe.

For better or for worse, the impact of uncertainty on global trade has driven companies to adopt increasingly diversified manufacturing and procurement bases.

"The interesting thing is folks are diversified enough where they're not so scared of it anymore," said Joseph Morris, CEO and port director at Port Everglades. He added that the greater challenge is being able to react to rapidly changing trade circumstances.

"Over the last couple years, we've seen folks diversify their manufacturing base and diversify offshoring vs. nearshoring. It's less of a disruption today," he said.

Historically less dependent on China than West Coast ports, East Coast ports have fared slightly better, noted Bethann Rooney, port director at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

"The words to describe this business and this whole industry are flexible, nimble and resilient," she said. "Our industry will figure out a way to deal with whatever issue is thrown at us. The

geopolitical stuff that our industry is dealing with now ... is the latest blip on the radar screen."

However, representatives at the Maryland Port Administration emphasized that East Coast ports cannot deny that the tariff whiplash has had consequences.

"The impact of geopolitical situations on overall trade flows are real and being felt in our industry," said Richard Scher, director of communications at the Maryland Port Administration. "Manufacturing decisions are being made as a result of what we're seeing now around the world, but carriers are also making trade lane and supply chain decisions. Geopolitical occurrences can always cause delays and increase costs for our industry."

Scher added that ports that are more dependent on large automotive and high-and-heavy equipment, such as the Port of Baltimore, continue to see flattening and softening in those markets and are still dealing with tariff uncertainties. In response, Baltimore has increased its weekly service counts from 12 to 16, but this has not led to a significant increase in TEUs.

"Our industry will figure out a way to deal with whatever issue is thrown at us."

Diversification offers protection

The South Carolina Ports Authority (SC Ports) is seeing similar trends as the Port of Baltimore and other East Coast ports with more tempered volumes and slightly less volatility, noted Micah Mallace, president and CEO of SC Ports. He attributed this to SC Ports' strong advanced manufacturing base and cargo diversity.

"Macro drivers of demand also favor SC Ports as the Southeast remains competitive and South Carolina continues to outpace national GDP and population growth trends," Mallace said. "We continue to see strength from Southeast Asia and other places where manufacturing previously done in China is moving to."

Similarly, Port Tampa Bay credits its diversified cargo mix for its ability to provide resilience despite changing market dynamics.

"There's a lot that's gone on in the world, [and] tariffs have really impacted global trade flows, but our diversification is number one. Our recent performance reflects the strength across multiple sectors," said Paul Anderson, CEO of Port Tampa Bay.

Those sectors include growth in dry bulk commodities such as phosphate, sulfur, granite and other industrial materials that support road building. Port Tampa Bay is also a major energy gateway as one of two ports in Florida that supply 90% of the petroleum products in the state and approximately 43% of the state's fuel.

The North Carolina State Ports

Delivering the Southeast's most trusted gateway

Guided by its 2031 Strategic Plan, North Carolina Ports is working toward a winning aspiration to become the Southeast's most trusted, preferred, efficient, customer-centric gateway. With deepwater terminals in Wilmington and Morehead City, an inland port in Charlotte, and intermodal rail connectivity across the state and into the Midwest, the NC Ports team is focused on creating diversified, cost-advantaged solutions that help customers compete in an increasingly dynamic global marketplace.

This winning aspiration is grounded in every investment, operational improvement and customer engagement and anchored by four strategic priorities: (1) Win Serving North Carolina; (2) Become the Cold Gateway of the Mid-Atlantic; (3) Drive Integrated Bulk Solutions; (4) Seize Breakbulk Opportunities.

Over the next five years, the NC Ports team will focus on becoming the preferred port for North Carolina businesses by delivering simple, reliable, end-to-end solutions anchored in high-demand metros. These efforts will be scaled statewide through tailored customer and industry-specific value propositions.

To strengthen its position as the cold gateway of the Mid-Atlantic, the Port of Wilmington continues to grow its refrigerated business through expanded cold chain capabilities, enhanced carrier connectivity, and value-added services designed to improve supply chain performance for importers and exporters.

Finally, North Carolina Ports is also expanding integrated bulk solutions through strategic partnerships and modernized facilities at both deepwater ports while remaining agile in capturing breakbulk opportunities that support the industries fueling North Carolina's growth.

Whether you're moving breakbulk, bulk, project cargo, containers, roll-on/roll-off or refrigerated cargo, North Carolina Ports continues to offer tailored solutions, top-notch expertise and a personalized shipping experience that ensures consistency amid constant change.

Visit ncports.com to learn how the North Carolina Ports team can simplify your business, streamline your logistical challenges and serve as your solutions partner. ■

NORTH CAROLINA PORTS®

Authority (NC Ports), which operates the Port of Wilmington, Port of Morehead City and Charlotte Inland Port, also boasts a diversified line of business.

Varied in terms of breakbulk and bulk cargo, NC Ports offers a lot of value-added services with consolidation of cargo stripping between container and breakbulk operations.

"You can look at it as one-stop shopping," said Brian Clark, executive director at NC Ports.

Despite an array of services, Clark noted that ports across North Carolina are not immune to the impacts of global uncertainty.

"The largest impact has really been on the trans-Pacific containerized trade," he said. "The benefit is the fact that we are as diversified as we are. We've seen other markets continue to grow on the container side — both our north-south trade to Central and South America and our European trade have continued to perform well."

These changing cargo lanes, plus additional growth in some of its bulk and breakbulk commodities, have allowed NC Ports to balance out the impact of tariffs, having both positive and negative impacts on North Carolina's ports.

"We're seeing significant growth on our refrigerated trade," Clark said. "This is cargo — more so on the import side — that traditionally would move through other ports. As we've made investments in our infrastructure and expanded our capabilities, we've seen new commodities moving through our port."

Exports offer insulation

For other ports along the East Coast, exporting is an opportunity for both future growth and protection from foreign tariffs.

Exports are not new for Port Everglades, which is considered a trade surplus port, meaning it exports more goods than it imports. While this is an advantage over East Coast ports that rely on foreign imports, Morris noted that he considers the port insulated from — but not immune to — geopolitical uncertainties.

Accounting for 11% of total US trade with Latin America, Morris said that this trade lane insulated Port Everglades from the initial wild fluctuations of the tariff announcements, but it does not leave the port impervious to the impact on global trade overall.

"We are involved in global trade, and to that respect, we were very cognizant of what was happening," he said. He noted the port paid special attention to raw commodities such as steel and how tariffs would shift some of the trade moving through Port Everglades.

The Port of Philadelphia (PhilaPort), already known for its dominance in refrigerated products, is working to expand its exports of American foods into global markets and is growing its market share in the medical sector.

"We're optimistic about the medical sector; we're optimistic about exports," said Dominic O'Brien, senior marketing manager at PhilaPort. "We do all these perishables. There's now more interest in getting American foods to global markets, and with some of these new trade deals, we'll have better access with our foods and ag, so there are export possibilities."

With a wealth of cold storage warehouses at and near the port, as well as the infrastructure and knowledge base around perishable goods, PhilaPort is in a prime position to take on additional cold chain trade lanes.

"I personally have been working more on the exports because you want that balanced trade, looking at markets and commodities that don't have the higher tariffs," O'Brien said. "Long term, we're optimists; trade is going to take place." ■

email: amywunderlin@gmail.com

SC Ports: More than a port; a partner

As the eighth-largest US container port, South Carolina Ports provides reliable, highly productive port service for companies' supply chains. With 25 weekly services at the Port of Charleston, including first-in calls from key markets in Asia and Europe, imports and exports flow swiftly between the US Southeast and international markets.

SC Ports has the deepest harbor in the US Southeast at 52 feet, allowing for big-ship capabilities and berth fluidity, with ample cargo capacity and efficient operations to speed goods from dock to market. Two rail-served inland ports provide quick access to key inland markets, ensuring goods rapidly move to and from the Port of Charleston. Just-in-time manufacturers, retailers and refrigerated cargo shippers alike benefit from SC Ports' productive, capable operations.

"SC Ports provides the reliability and adaptability that shippers depend on as global trade continues to evolve," said Micah Mallace, president and CEO of SC Ports. "We remain committed to providing efficient port service and customized solutions while continuing to deliver short-term projects to meet customer needs, and sustaining the Port of Charleston's long-term growth plan."

As South Carolina continues to outpace the US in real GDP and population growth, SC Ports remains a preferred port for shippers looking to move more imports and exports through the thriving Southeast market.

"We remain committed to delivering best-in-class service as a high-performing port," Mallace said. "We are adept at meeting challenges head-on and working hand-in-hand with customers to ensure their supply chains remain competitive." ■

SOUTH CAROLINA PORTS

One unified network

Customer demand leading to reimagined inland markets

As importers, retailers and other shippers seek routing options that reduce complexity and offer more flexibility, a trend has emerged in how East Coast ports and inland markets are being used.

"East Coast ports and inland transportation networks are increasingly being viewed as one integrated supply chain system," said Alexander Luc, group vice president, international and automotive, at Norfolk Southern (NS). "Customers are not looking at port decisions in isolation anymore. They are asking how efficiently that port connects to inland markets, distribution centers, manufacturing facilities and final destinations."

This is especially important across the Southeast and broader East Coast, where population growth, manufacturing investment and import demand are increasing the need for efficient inland movement.

"Customers are evaluating East Coast gateways not only for vessel access or port fluidity, but for the strength of the inland network behind them," Luc added. "In many cases, inland connectivity is becoming the differentiator."

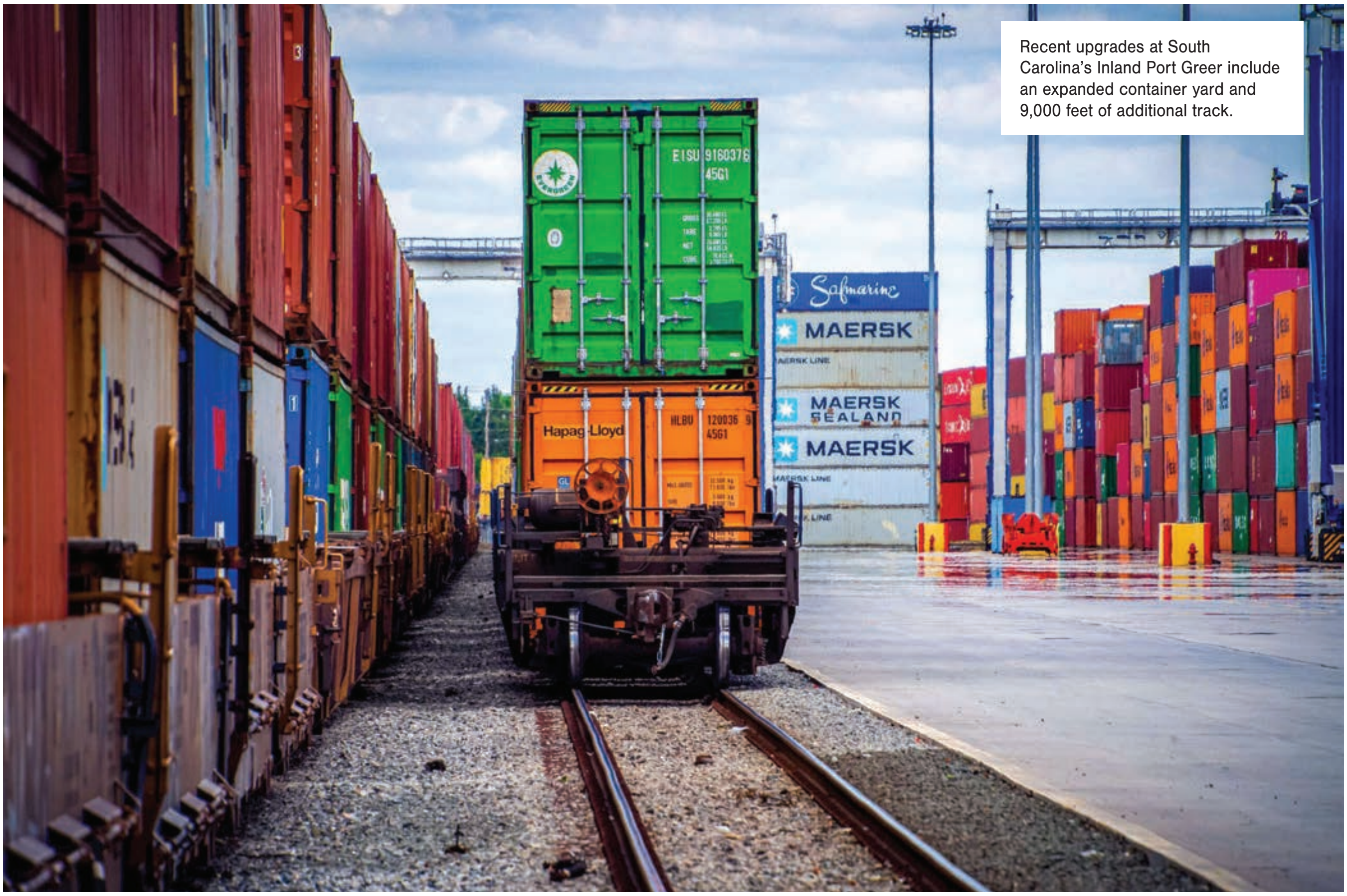
Norfolk Southern is seeing increased interest in inland ports, inland rail terminals and rail-served logistics strategies because they give shippers more options, reduce truck dependence and create more flexibility in their networks.

"The greatest opportunities are in freight flows where customers are looking to improve resiliency, manage capacity exposure or simplify their networks," said Andrew Lynch, group vice president, domestic intermodal, at Norfolk Southern.

As customers diversify gateway and global manufacturing strategies and build more flexible supply chains, investments in inland rail connectivity at East Coast ports and inland terminals offer an opportunity to replace long-haul or regional truck moves with more efficient intermodal solutions.

New services at Northeast Georgia's Gainesville Inland Port, for example, build on what NS has accomplished with port partners at Virginia Inland Port and South Carolina's Inland Port Greer.

"We are seeing customers shift routings, test new gateway strategies and use inland terminals to improve reliability,



Recent upgrades at South Carolina's Inland Port Greer include an expanded container yard and 9,000 feet of additional track.

SC Ports / Craig Lee

reduce transportation complexity and support sustainability goals," Lynch said.

The South Carolina Ports Authority (SC Ports) operates two rail-served inland ports that connect to the Port of Charleston, which is unique among East Coast ports, said Laura Clifton, public relations manager at SC Ports.

SC Ports recently completed a $55 million expansion project at its Inland Port Greer. Upgrades include an expanded container yard capable of handling 300,000 rail lifts annually (a 50% year-over-year increase); 9,000 feet of additional track to swiftly handle longer trains; an expanded chassis lot; and new terminal operations and maintenance facilities.

With these enhancements, SC Ports can meet projected customer demand through 2040.

"That was a customer- and demand-driven expansion … that allows us to extend the Port of Charleston's reach about 212 miles inland [to Inland Port Greer]," Clifton said. "In addition to having more containerized or reefer operations, we're able to support the big manufacturing base in the US Southeast."

South Carolina Ports also operates Inland Port Dillon, which primarily supports soybeans and other agriculture in the Eastern Carolinas.

Inland ports enhance the value that rail provides in supply chain solutions as shippers continue to create resiliency.

"They effectively extend the reach of maritime gateways and create new access points for customers," Lynch said. "When paired with first- and final-mile solutions, they can help reduce truck miles, improve economics and give customers more routing flexibility."

He added that advances in first- and final-mile solutions are helping to further expand the reach of freight rail, with transloading, door-to-door offerings and integrated logistics making rail more accessible.

"We are seeing customers shift routings, test new gateway strategies and use inland terminals to improve reliability."

"They help customers simplify the handoffs between ports, terminals, distribution centers and final destinations," Lynch said. "They allow customers to use rail even when their facility is not on the rail network." ■

email: amywunderlin@gmail.com


Ranked #1 Most Productive U.S. Port Three Years in a Row
This recognition reflects the dedication of everyone who keeps the port moving — from the men and women on the front lines at PhilaPort's Packer Avenue Marine Terminal to our carriers, logistics teams and partners across the region.
Thank you to our entire port community for helping Philadelphia lead the way once again.
PhilaPort
Ship Philly First.
www.philaport.com
*According to the 2025 Container Port Performance Index (CPPI) released by the World Bank Group and S&P Global Market Intelligence.