

# CRS Report for Congress

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## Ports in Louisiana: New Orleans, South Louisiana, and Baton Rouge

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### Summary

This report provides background information and import/export statistics on the ports of New Orleans, South Louisiana, and Baton Rouge. These ports provide important access to world markets and sources of exported and imported raw materials. The three ports are usually discussed together because of their shared geography, ship traffic, and cargo. When Hurricane Katrina made landfall on August 29, 2005, it stalled the transportation supply lines for imports and exports in the area. Port Fourchon, which is a multi-use port and services offshore oil and gas facilities and the Louisiana Offshore Oil Port will not be covered in this report. For additional information on this topic, see CRS Report RS22257, *Hurricane Katrina: Shipping Disruptions*, by John Frittelli; and CRS Report RL33075, *U.S. Agriculture After Hurricane Katrina: Status and Issues*, by Randy Schnepf and Ralph Chite. This report will be updated as needed.

**Geography.** The ports of New Orleans, South Louisiana, and Baton Rouge cover 172 miles on both banks of the Mississippi River (see **Figure 1**). The Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet extends 67 miles from New Orleans to the Gulf, and the channel up the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Baton Rouge runs at a 48 foot draft. Overall, the navigational depths range from 12 feet to 48 feet along the river, channels, and side canals. The ports allow cargo to move to and from 33 states on the Mississippi River or its tributaries. After Hurricane Katrina, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Office of Coast Survey used boats with sonar and scanners to assess underwater damage to the ports. Port authorities used these surveys to make decisions about when to open or close the ports.

**Exports and Imports.** These three ports are significant to the economy of the nation. The ports of South Louisiana, New Orleans, and Baton Rouge rank third, fourth, and fifteenth, respectively in total trade by port to all world ports (see **Table 1**). This table also provides statistics on the total exports and imports by short tons at these ports. About 6,000 vessels pass through the Port of New Orleans annually.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Port of New Orleans website,

(continued...)

**Table 1. Waterborne — Total Trade by Port to All World Ports**

Weight (1,000 Short Tons) (Revised)

January - December

Rank	Port	2002	2003	2004	% Change	
					2002-2003	2003-2004
0	All U.S. ports	1,252,782.8	1,329,566.3	1,440,526.8	6.1	8.4
3	South Louisiana	75,719.7	58,431.1	82,532.4	-22.8	41.3
4	New Orleans, LA	73,480.5	80,605.6	72,213.9	9.7	-10.4
15	Baton Rouge, LA	27,308.5	27,822.2	30,282.5	1.9	8.8

**Waterborne – Exports – Total by Port to All Countries**

Weight (1,000 Short Tons) (Revised)

January - December

Rank	Port	2002	2003	2004	% Share			% Change
					2002	2003	2004	
0	All U.S. ports	354,147.1	357,983.37	385,394.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	7.7
1	South Louisiana	47,240.4	36,897.32	50,172.2	13.3	10.3	13.0	36.0
3	New Orleans, LA	42,519.9	51,598.60	37,530.6	12.0	14.4	9.7	-27.3
23	Baton Rouge, LA	4,876.8	4,380.01	4,482.1	1.4	1.2	1.2	2.3

**Waterborne – Imports – Total by Port from All Countries**

Weight (1,000 Short Tons) (Revised)

January - December

Rank	Port	2002	2003	2004	% Share			% Change
					2002	2003	2004	
0	All U.S. ports	898,635.7	971,582.9	1,055,132.36	100.0	100.00	100.0	8.60
8	New Orleans, LA	30,960.7	29,007.0	34,683.26	3.5	2.99	3.3	19.57
10	South Louisiana	28,479.3	21,533.8	32,360.16	3.2	2.22	3.1	50.28
16	Baton Rouge, LA	22,431.7	23,442.2	25,800.37	2.5	2.41	2.5	10.06

**Source:** U.S. Maritime Administration via World Trade Atlas. Table prepared by Mike Donnelly, CRS/KSG, Sept. 2005.

In terms of dollar value, total trade by port to all world ports, New Orleans, South Louisiana, and Baton Rouge, rank 12<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, and 27<sup>th</sup>, respectively. **Table 2** provides the dollar value of exports and imports at these ports.

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<sup>1</sup> (...continued)

[[http://www.aapa-ports.org/pressroom/katrina\\_updates.htm#Gulf%20Port%20Facts](http://www.aapa-ports.org/pressroom/katrina_updates.htm#Gulf%20Port%20Facts)].

**Table 2. Waterborne — Total Trade by Port to All World Ports**

(U.S. \$ millions) (Revised)

January - December

Rank	Port	2002	2003	2004	% Change	
					2002-2003	2003-2004
0	All U.S. ports	\$726,102.0	\$807,111.9	\$948,667.4	11.2	17.5
12	New Orleans, LA	\$17,683.3	\$19,608.5	\$22,171.3	10.9	13.1
16	South Louisiana	\$9,579.4	\$8,587.4	\$14,185.0	-10.4	65.2
27	Baton Rouge, LA	\$4,077.0	\$4,604.6	\$6,692.4	12.9	45.3

**Waterborne – Exports – Total by Port to All Countries**

(U.S. \$ millions) (Revised)

January - December

Rank	Port	2002	2003	2004	% Share			% Change
					2002	2003	2004	2003-2004
0	All U.S. ports	\$187,615.1	\$202,480.7	\$229,921.1	100.0	100.0	100.0	13.6
8	New Orleans, LA	\$9,193.6	\$11,434.1	\$9,579.4	4.9	5.7	4.2	-16.2
11	South Louisiana	\$6,045.2	\$5,338.5	\$7,644.1	3.2	2.6	3.3	43.2
29	Baton Rouge, LA	\$3,154.5	\$3,680.9	\$5,418.8	0.6	0.6	0.8	47.2

**Waterborne – Imports – Total by Port from All Countries**

(U.S. \$ millions) (Revised)

January - December

Rank	Port	2002	2003	2004	% Share			% Change
					2002	2003	2004	2003-2004
0	All U.S. ports	\$538,486.9	\$604,631.2	\$718,746.3	100.0	100.0	100.0	18.9
14	New Orleans, LA	\$8,489.7	\$8,174.3	\$12,591.9	1.6	1.4	1.8	54.0
24	South Louisiana	\$3,534.1	\$3,248.9	\$6,540.9	0.7	0.5	0.9	101.3
29	Baton Rouge, LA	\$3,154.5	\$3,680.9	\$5,418.8	0.6	0.6	0.8	47.2

**Source:** U.S. Maritime Administration via World Trade Atlas. Table prepared by Mike Donnelly, CRS/KSG, Sept. 2005.

According to the North American Export Grain Association, as of August 2005, these three ports serve as a gateway for nearly 55 to 70 percent of all U.S. exported corn, soy, and wheat.<sup>2</sup> Barges carry these grains from the Mississippi River to the ports for storage and export. Imports to these ports include steel, rubber, coffee, fruits, and vegetables. **Table 3** provides lists of export and import commodities by port.

<sup>2</sup> North American Export Grain Association, Statement on Hurricane Katrina Assessment, Sept. 6, 2005.

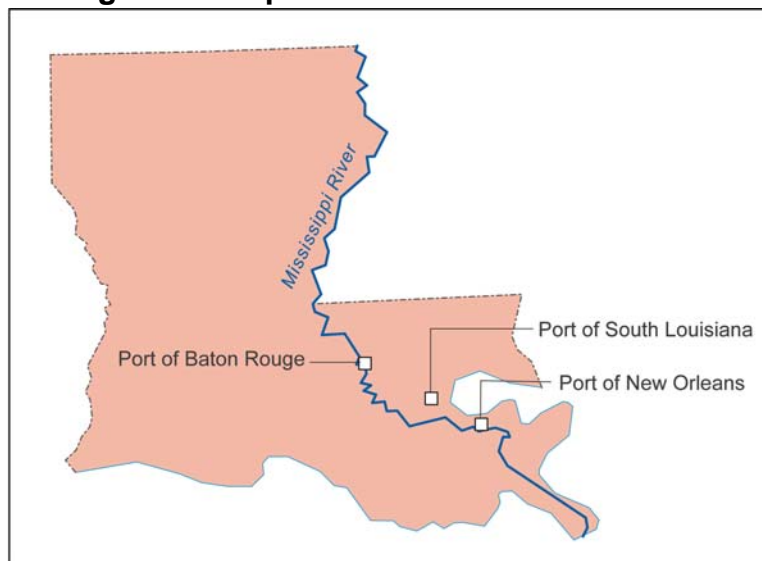
[[http://www.naega.org/images/NGFA\\_NAEGA\\_Statement\\_on\\_Hurricane\\_Katrina\\_9-06-05.pdf](http://www.naega.org/images/NGFA_NAEGA_Statement_on_Hurricane_Katrina_9-06-05.pdf)] visited Sept. 12, 2005.

**Table 3. Louisiana Ports — Imports and Export Commodities**

Port	Imports	Exports
<b>New Orleans</b>	Petroleum products, iron, steel, metal ores, non-metallic minerals, coffee, inorganic chemicals, forest products, vegetable fats and oils, natural rubber, fertilizers, organic chemicals	Cereal grain, soybeans, petroleum, animal feeds, organic chemicals, paper and linear board, vegetable fats and oils, iron, steel, metal ores and scraps, inorganic chemicals
<b>South Louisiana</b>	Crude oil, chemical/fertilizers, steel products, petrochemicals	Maize, soybeans, wheat, animal feed
<b>Baton Rouge</b>	Molasses, petroleum, steel coils, ores, chemicals	Forestry products, petroleum products, grain, coke, pipe, bagged grains, fertilizer

Source: Louisiana Economic Development Office, [<http://www.led.state.la.us/overview/portprofiles.aspx>].

**Figure 1. Map of Selected Louisiana Ports**



Source: Information provided by the Ports Association of Louisiana. Map Resources. Adapted by CRS. (K.Yancey 9/8/05).

**Port Status.** Operations are slowly returning to normal at the ports of New Orleans, South Louisiana, and Baton Rouge, but it will take considerable time before they are fully functioning. Gary LaGrange, port director for the Port of New Orleans, reported “the port would be at 30% to 40% capacity within a month, 70% to 80% within three months, and at 100% in four to six months, much faster than earlier estimates.”<sup>3</sup> The Port of South Louisiana reported only minor damage and the port at Baton Rouge reported no

<sup>3</sup> “New Orleans’ Port, Airport Begin Reopening Process,” TTnews.com, Sept. 12, 2005, [<http://www.ttnews.com/members/topNews/0013807.html>] visited Sept. 12, 2005.

damage according to the American Association of Port Authorities.<sup>4</sup> At present, the ports' headquarters and some terminals are being used for military and law enforcement staging areas as part of the rescue and recovery efforts. The New Orleans port is taking in some cargo as of September 12, 2005. The ports are operating under a number of limitations. Generators are providing most of the electricity for operations and vessels still face daylight-only navigation restrictions because of a lack of functioning aids to navigation (such as signal buoys). A major impediment to reopening is the lack of workers, many of whom fled during the storm and flooding. Exact statistics on the number of employees at these three ports are not readily available. However, according to a study conducted by Dr. Timothy P. Ryan, University of New Orleans, in August 2002, "The industry supports the employment of 269,259 people in the state. Note that not all these jobs are fully dependent on the maritime industry but do rely in whole or in part on the economic activity created by the industry."<sup>5</sup>

Some goods are being moved to other ports in Texas, Florida, North Carolina, and Virginia. The ports in Houston, Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and Tampa will probably see cargo once destined for the ports along the Gulf shipped to their docks. Using alternative ports depends on the port's capacity, storage and distribution functions, and costs.<sup>6</sup>

**Cruise Vessels.** In 2004, 181 vessels docked at the Port of New Orleans with 734,643 cruise passengers.<sup>7</sup> Following the hurricane, Carnival Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line repositioned their ships to Galveston and Houston. Three Carnival Cruise Line ships have been chartered by the Military Sealift Command on behalf of the Federal Emergency Management Agency for six months as part of Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.<sup>8</sup> According to Gary LaGrange, the port will use four maritime administrative vessels for 1,000 of its employees for the next six months.<sup>9</sup>

**Legislation and Funding.** At present, there has been no specific legislation introduced or passed regarding these three ports during the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress. Since the

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<sup>4</sup> The American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) provides status updates at their website for all the ports in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. [[http://www.aapa-ports.org/pressroom/katrina\\_updates.htm#Port%20Updates](http://www.aapa-ports.org/pressroom/katrina_updates.htm#Port%20Updates)] visited Sept. 19, 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Dr. Timothy P. Ryan, *Louisiana Ports Gas Tax Impact, Executive Summary*, University of New Orleans, August 2002. [<http://www.portsoflouisiana.org/StatesPortsGas.pdf>] visited Sept. 16, 2005.

<sup>6</sup> "Smaller Ports Pick Up Gulf Slack," *RedNova News*, Sept. 13, 2005, at [[http://www.rednova.com/news/technology/238784/smaller\\_ports\\_pick\\_up\\_gulf\\_slack\\_\\_damage\\_by\\_katrina/](http://www.rednova.com/news/technology/238784/smaller_ports_pick_up_gulf_slack__damage_by_katrina/)].

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Port Cruise Traffic, American Association of Port Authorities. [[http://www.aapa-ports.org/pressroom/katrina\\_updates.htm#statistics](http://www.aapa-ports.org/pressroom/katrina_updates.htm#statistics)] visited Sept. 11, 2005.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Defense, Armed Forces Information Services, "Sealift Command Charters Cruise Ships to House Evacuees," press release, Sept. 7, 2005. [[http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2005/20050907\\_2638.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Sep2005/20050907_2638.html)] visited Sept. 12, 2005.

<sup>9</sup> Ned Randolf, "Construction Crews, Others Prepare N.O. to do Business," *theAdvocate.com*, Sept. 14, 2005. [[http://www.2theadvocate.com/stories/091405/bus\\_dobusiness001.shtml](http://www.2theadvocate.com/stories/091405/bus_dobusiness001.shtml)] visited Sept. 14, 2005.

ports are operated by public port authorities and equipment and terminals are owned by private companies, their major funding sources come from operating income, retained earnings, and revenue bond proceeds.<sup>10</sup> However, federal grant money has been awarded since the 9/11 attacks for port security programs.<sup>11</sup> On September 13, 2005, the Department of Homeland Security announced more than \$140 million in new grants under its port security program. The Port of New Orleans will receive a \$2 million grant; the South Louisiana Port \$1.1 million; and the port at Baton Rouge \$162,030.00.<sup>12</sup>

**Port Authority Contacts:**

<b>Port of New Orleans</b>	<b>Port of Baton Rouge</b>	<b>Port of South Louisiana</b>
1350 Port of New Orleans Place New Orleans, LA 70130 Office: 504-533-2551 Fax: 504-524-4156 [ <a href="http://www.portno.com">http://www.portno.com</a> ]	2425 Ernest Wilson Dr. P.O.Box 380 Port Allen, LA 70767 Office: 225-342-1660 Fax: 225-342-1666 [ <a href="http://www.portgbr.com">http://www.portgbr.com</a> ]	P.O. Box 909 LaPlace, LA 70609-0909 Office:888-SLA-PORT Fax: 985-562-9518 New Orleans line: 504-568-6269 [ <a href="http://www.portsl.com">http://www.portsl.com</a> ]

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<sup>10</sup> “Financing Port Infrastructure,” Nov. 20, 2003, AAPA.

[<http://www.aapa-ports.org/govrelations/godwin11-20-03.htm>] visited Sept. 11, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion on port security and funding issues, see CRS Report RL31733, *Port and Maritime Security: Background and Issues for Congress*, by John Frittelli.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Homeland Security, “DHS Announces Over \$141 Million in Grants to Secure America’s Ports,” press release, Sept. 13, 2005, [<http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/display?content=4804>] visited Sept. 14, 2005.