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## Decline in Container Volumes Continues; Port Focuses on Efficiency, Service, Safety

*Richmond Barge Volume Strong, Uptick in Vehicle Imports, Cruise Ships at PMT*

**NORFOLK, VA** – The Port of Virginia’s® April cargo volumes were down nearly 16 percent when compared with last year as the port and the shipping industry continue to deal with the effects of the ongoing pandemic on world trade.

“The number of blank sailing continues to increase and that is being reflected in the declining cargo volumes in Virginia and at ports across the nation,” said John F. Reinhart, the CEO and executive director of the Virginia Port Authority. “We are seeing parts of the nation slowly starting to re-emerge from quarantine and we are watching to see what effect this will have on trade, but we are being realistic and do not expect any volume growth in the near-term.”

April’s cargo volumes were down nearly 38,700 TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units), when compared with March 2019. On a calendar- and fiscal-year basis, volumes are off nearly 10 percent, or 92,600 units, and 4 percent, or 93,500 units, respectively. The effect of the ongoing blank sailings is being felt across-the-board, in the movement of imports, exports and empties, Reinhart said.

“When the ships cancel their port call, the imports don’t arrive and on the other side of that is an impact on American-made goods for export, which cannot be loaded and therefore don’t make to their overseas destination,” Reinhart said. “The empty containers on our terminals that are needed for refilling somewhere overseas are not moving out in their normal cycles, so the disruption to the supply chain is significant.”

Reinhart said in the meantime, the port will focus on fiscal responsibility; bringing the expansion at Norfolk International Terminals to a close in early fall; discussing long- and short-term container storage possibilities with cargo owners to help them manage cargo when volume rebounds; keeping the port team safe; and looking for business opportunities.

“On May 4, we closed Portsmouth Marine Terminal to all container traffic, and that same day we had three cruise ships arrive for layberthing at PMT through the end of June,” he said. “We are speaking with other cruise lines about the possibilities at PMT after June. Richmond Marine Terminal continues to perform well so we are looking for additional ways cargo owners can leverage the barge service. We also had a bump-up in vehicle imports at Newport News Marine Terminal.

“We are in constant communication with our customers, partners and stakeholders to better understand their needs and the market. Regardless of the trade environment, The Port of Virginia remains committed to its customers, to maintaining its efficiency, to readiness and to ensuring that the cargo moving across our terminals is treated well.”

#### **April Cargo Snapshot**

- Total TEUs – 207,244, down, 15.7%
- Loaded Export TEUs – 71,158, down 16.7%
- Loaded Import TEUs – 100,310 down, 15.9%
- Total Containers – 116,459, down 16.2%
- Virginia Inland Port Containers – 2,281, down 30.3%
- Total Rail Containers – 36,122, down 30.6%
- Total Truck Containers – 75,776, down 7.6%
- Total Barge Containers – 4,561, down 7%
- Richmond Barge Containers – 3,404, up 15.1%
- Vehicle Imports – 2,431, up 35.3%

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*The Virginia Port Authority (VPA) is a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The VPA owns and through its private operating subsidiary, Virginia International Terminals, LLC (VIT), operates four general cargo facilities: Norfolk*

*International Terminals, Portsmouth Marine Terminal, Newport News Marine Terminal and the Virginia Inland Port in Warren County. The VPA leases Virginia International Gateway and Richmond Marine Terminal. A recent economic impact study from The College of William and Mary shows that The Port of Virginia helps to create more than 400,000 jobs and generates \$92 billion in total economic impact throughout the Commonwealth on an annual basis.*