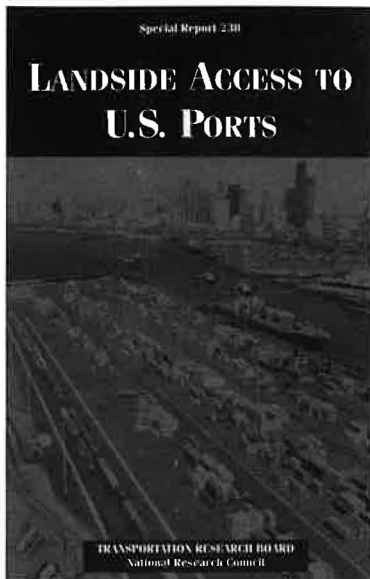


# Landside Access to U.S. Ports



The American economy depends more and more on producers and consumers all over the world. During the past 20 years, imports and exports have increased so that they equal one-fifth of the U.S. gross national product. U.S. seaports handled \$450 billion in international cargo in 1990 and have become critical transfer points in the intermodal network.

## Impediments to Access

The efficiency of this intermodal connection could be threatened, however, by increased bottlenecks in the landside transportation system serving the ports. For some ports the weakest link in the logistics chain is at their back door, where congested roads or inadequate rail linkages to marine terminals, and sometimes both, cause delays and raise transportation costs. Half of the country's ports already face growing congestion on the access routes serving their terminals, and total port commerce is projected to triple over the next three decades. It is unlikely that existing access routes will be able to accommodate the amount of truck traffic generated by this

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increase in freight movements—especially given the growing congestion caused by other commercial and passenger traffic—without substantial increases in delay and cost. The growth in bottlenecks also raises concerns about the future ability of the ports to handle the massive movements of cargo required to support U.S. military forces deployed abroad.

## Committee Study

In October 1990 the U.S. Department of Transportation, acting through the Maritime Administration (MARAD), sought assistance from the Transportation Research Board in identifying landside access problems and potential solutions for U.S. ports. To conduct the study, TRB convened a 19-member committee chosen according to National Research Council procedures, which require that membership include appropriate areas of expertise and a balance of

points of view. Michael S. Bronzini, Director of the Center for Transportation Analysis of Oak Ridge National Laboratory, served as the committee chairman.

## Recommendations

The study committee examined impediments to landside access and recommended a variety of strategies to reduce those problems. The committee recommended public policy responses to (a) provide incentives to state and local governments to ensure that port access needs are fairly and thoroughly considered alongside other competing demands, (b) encourage better long-range planning at the regional or metropolitan level, and (c) allow for a variety of options for ports to pursue that are suited to the unique situations in each port region. The committee's report emphasizes a number of opportunities created by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991.

The report will help state and federal transportation departments, metropolitan planning organizations, port officials, and concerned citizens recognize the importance of, and plan more effectively for the provision of, adequate landside access to U.S. ports.

### Committee for Study on Landside Access to Ports

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