Teqplay

2025 Benchmark Report

U.S. Gulf & East Coasts Tanker Ports

A foundation for optimization targets, collaboration, and more resilient ports

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Summary

Do you know where your vessels' port time goes?

This benchmarking report analyzes tanker port performance along the U.S. Gulf and East Coasts in 2025. Using Port Turnaround Time (PTT) as a system-level performance indicator, the report benchmarks operational performance across 9 key ports, providing a comprehensive view of turnaround times, delays, and efficiency patterns over the course of the year.

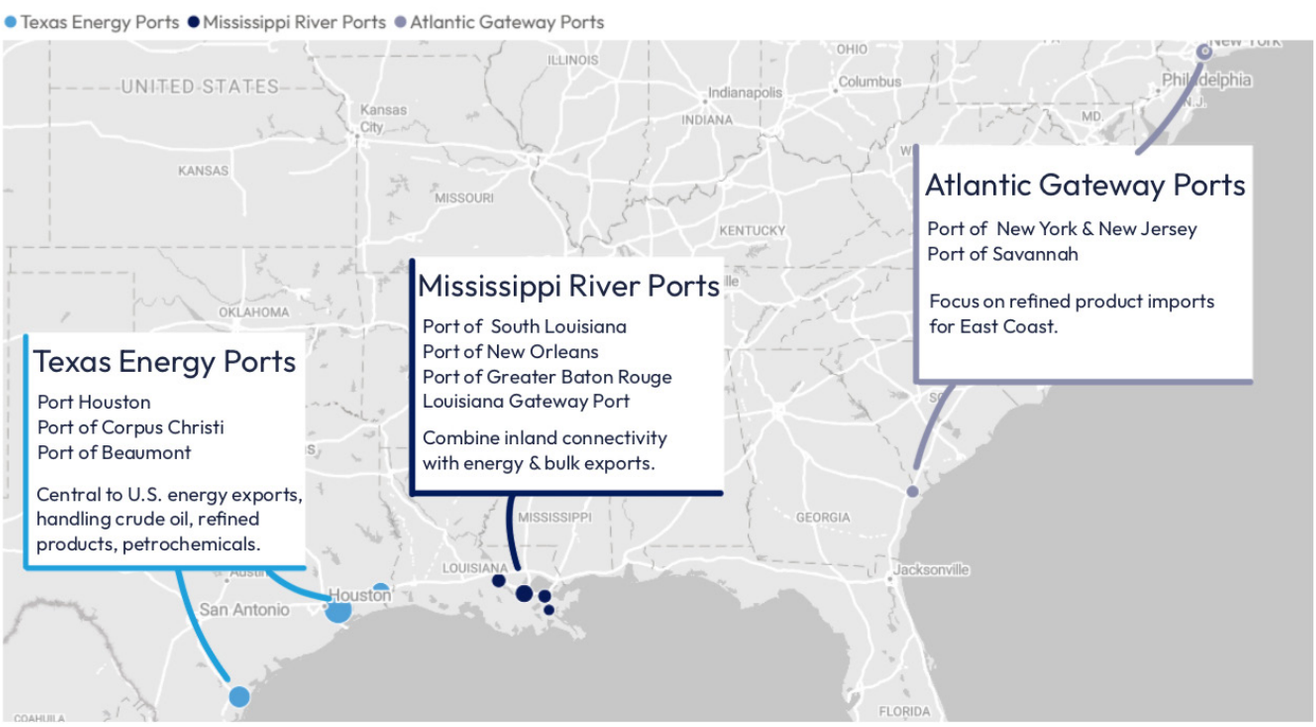
Across the benchmark, average PTT continues to vary by regional operating context and port call complexity. Texas Energy Ports show the longest average turnaround times, with Port Houston at the upper end of the range. Atlantic Gateway Ports and several Mississippi River Ports show shorter and more predictable port calls. Compared to the Q1 2025 report, current averages are consistently lower across all ports, suggesting a broad easing of delays over the full year.

Disaggregating PTT shows that productive berth time typically represents only 45% to 75% of total turnaround time, depending on port. The remaining time is primarily associated with waiting before arrival, waiting during the visit, and intra-port shifting. While not all waiting is "waste" (e.g., safety, weather, traffic management), the analysis highlights systematic patterns consistent with misalignment between vessel arrival and berth readiness, as well as compounding effects from complex port rotations.

Reducing PTT is not only beneficial for vessel operators; for ports and terminals it can improve effective capacity, planning stability, service reliability, and resilience under disruption. For a typical Medium Range tanker, reducing PTT by one day still translates into savings of approximately **$18,000-25,000 in charter costs, 15-20 tonnes of fuel, and 50-65 tonnes of CO2 emissions**, while also reducing demand peaks for pilots, tugs, and other nautical services.

Introduction

Tanker traffic continues to dominate U.S. port activity by tonnage, driven by crude oil, refined products, LNG, and chemical flows. The Gulf Coast remains the backbone of U.S. energy exports, while East Coast and Mississippi River ports play important roles in distribution, imports, and inland connectivity.



With volumes structurally high and operational margins under pressure, the impact of port-call inefficiency is increasingly relevant. Small changes in waiting, shifting, and schedule reliability affect vessel costs, terminal utilization stability, and the availability of constrained nautical services (pilots, tugs, linesmen). In this context, performance management benefits from a metric that captures the full port call cycle, not only time at berth.

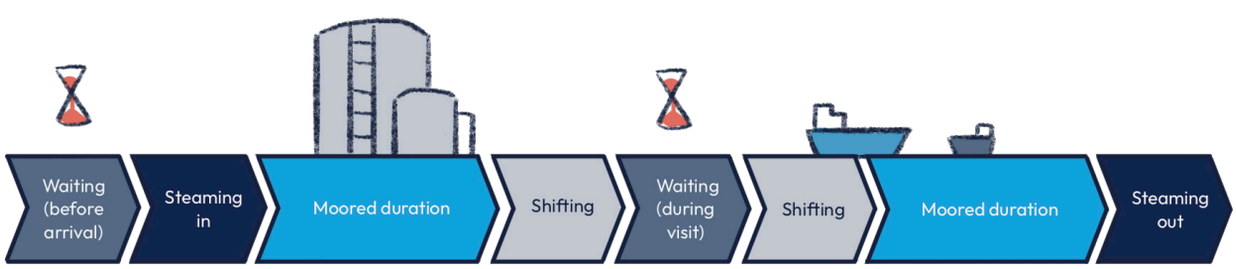
This report serves as a continuation of the benchmarking series, extending the analysis to cover the full year of 2025. By applying the same analytical framework, it allows for direct comparison and discusses the key drivers behind observed performance differences. The focus remains on operational efficiency, identifying where time is lost in the port call chain and how improved coordination, transparency, and planning can unlock tangible gains.

Using AIS-powered data, the analysis covers **10,000+ port calls** and **12,000+ berth visits**, spanning activity at **125 terminals** and **228 berths**, with **2,600+ unique tanker vessels**. Consistent outlier filtering is applied per port using standard deviation-based thresholds to exclude abnormal visits while preserving representative performance patterns.

Seeing the bigger picture of performance through Port Turnaround Time

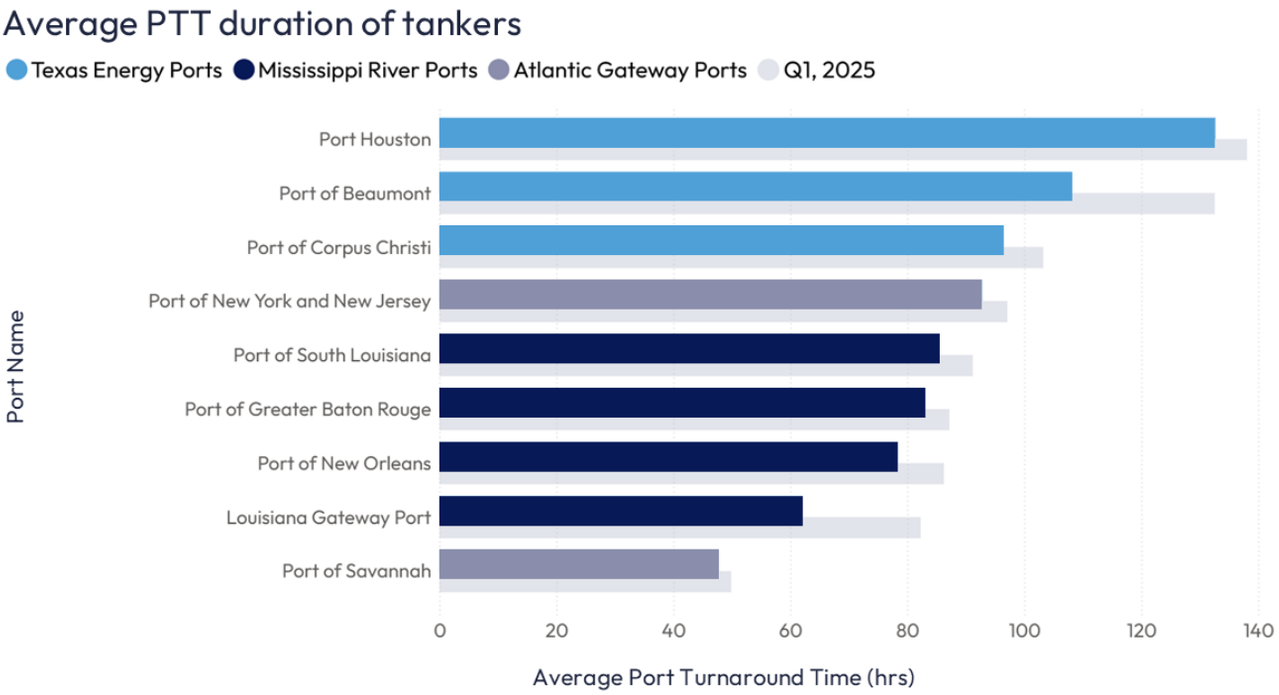
Traditional performance indicators such as berth stay or dwell time provide only a partial view of port efficiency. While berth duration remains a relevant measure of terminal productivity, it fails to capture delays occurring before and between berthing operations.

To address this limitation, this report uses Port Turnaround Time (PTT) as the primary benchmark metric. PTT captures the full port call cycle: waiting before arrival, pilot boarding, steaming in, shifting between berths, time moored at berth, and steaming out. This end-to-end perspective exposes inefficiencies that are otherwise hidden, particularly anchorage delays and intra-port movements that do not add cargo-handling value.



PTT is a measure of system outcomes, not a pure reflection of terminal productivity or a single stakeholder's performance. It is influenced by numerous factors and actors, including terminals, vessel operators, nautical services, traffic management, and external constraints. The purpose of analyzing PTT is to identify patterns and areas for improved alignment and predictability, rather than to assign blame to any single party.

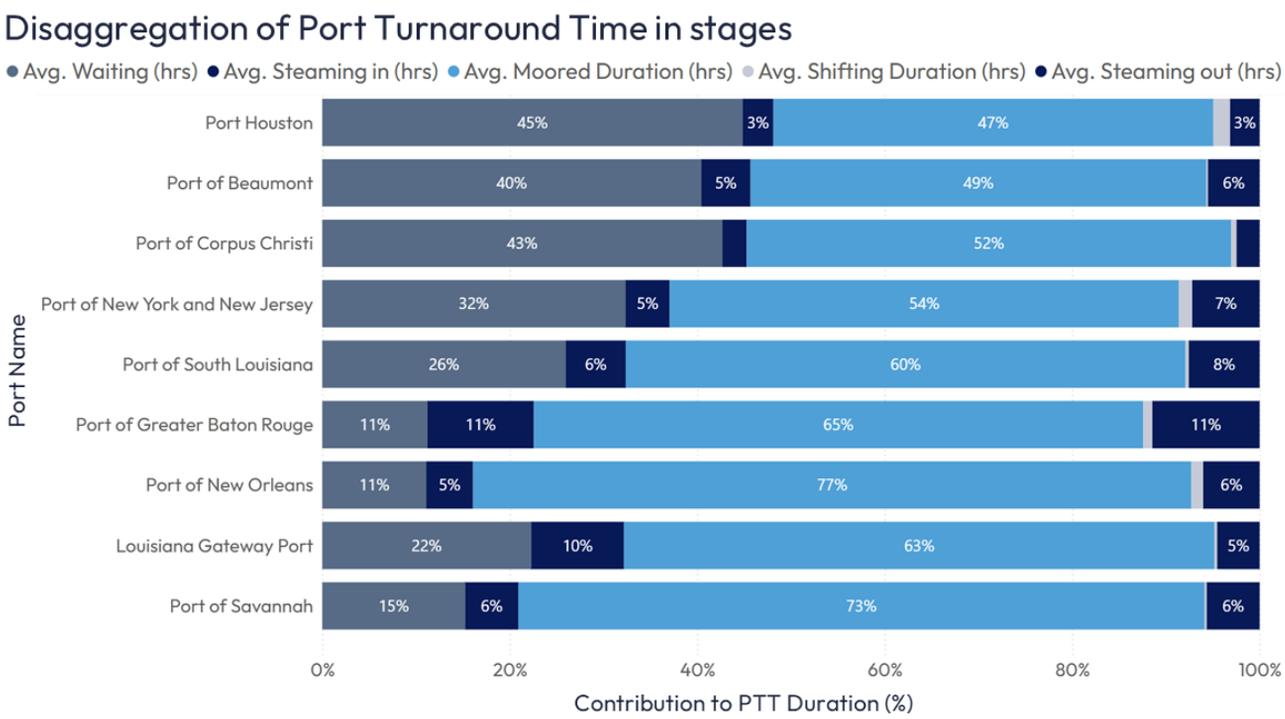
Across the nine ports analyzed, average PTT for tanker calls varies widely. Consistently with the performance patterns identified in the Q1 benchmarking report, The Texas Energy Ports exhibit the longest PTTs. Port Houston records the highest average turnaround times, followed by Beaumont and Corpus Christi. Mississippi River Ports generally fall in the mid-range, while Atlantic Gateway Ports, especially Savannah, show the shortest and most consistent turnaround times.



Notably, the Q1 2025 averages (shown by the gray bars as reference values in the benchmark chart) are consistently higher than the full year figures across all ports. This indicates a general easing of delays following Q1. This observation is consistent particularly with weather-related disruptions, discussed later in this report.

Where time is lost: breaking down PTT

A stage-level breakdown of PTT confirms that productive berth time constitutes only a fraction of the total visit. In Texas Energy Ports, waiting alone accounts for approximately 40-45% of total PTT, with moored time representing less than half. Even in the most efficient ports, more than a quarter of total turnaround time is consumed before the vessel reaches berth.



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Waiting before arrival: the operational cost of misalignment

Waiting before arrival remains one of the most significant contributors to total turnaround time. The benchmark shows a consistent pattern: when a vessel arrives while the relevant berth(s) are occupied, average waiting before arrival is significantly higher than when berth capacity is available. Alignment between berth availability and vessel arrival timing is even more critical than average occupancy.

Across the benchmarked ports, average waiting before arrival is ~30 hours when berths are available at arrival, and rises to ~56 hours when berths are occupied at arrival.

This suggests a systematic association with berth readiness and arrival alignment. It does not imply that all waiting is avoidable, but it indicates meaningful opportunity where improved coordination, predictive berth planning, and arrival management can reduce avoidable queueing.

Avg. Waiting duration (hrs) by availability of berth at arrival

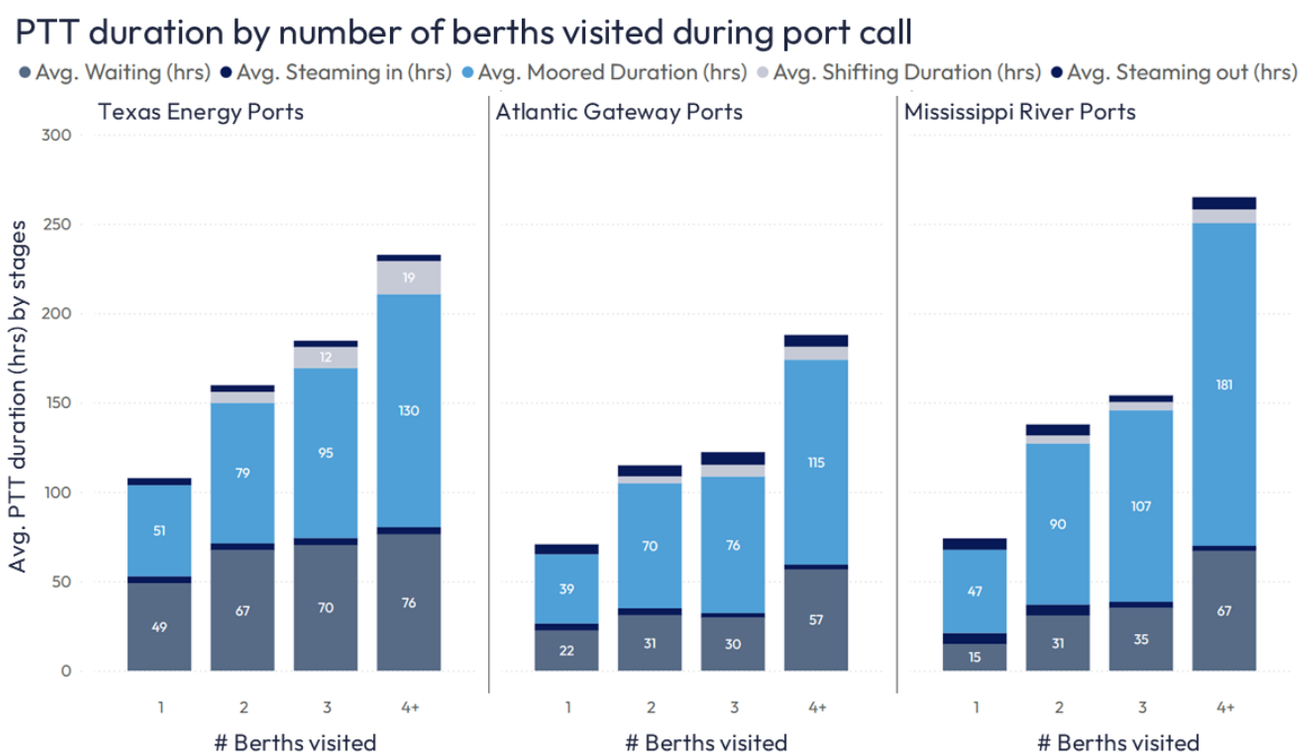
Port Name	Avg. Waiting (hrs) when berth was **available** at time of arrival	Avg. Waiting (hrs) when berth was **occupied** at time of arrival	
Port Houston	40.5	63.6	↗ +23.1
Port of Beaumont	32.1	64.9	↗ **+32.8**
Port of Corpus Christi	32.9	48.0	↗ +15.1
Port of New York and New Jersey	15.4	36.9	↗ +21.5
Port of South Louisiana	13.3	33.7	↗ +20.4
Louisiana Gateway Port	5.9	25.3	↗ +19.4
Port of Savannah	4.7	26.0	↗ +21.3
Port of Greater Baton Rouge	3.3	12.3	↗ +9.0
Port of New Orleans	3.9	5.4	↗ +1.5
Average	**28.8**	**55.7**	

Port Houston and Port of Beaumont stand out with the largest gap between arrivals at occupied versus available berths, indicating a substantial coordination opportunity. Improvement options include predictive berth planning, real-time status sharing across terminals and nautical services, coordinated arrival windows and speed optimization (where feasible) and cross-terminal sequencing to reduce avoidable switching and idle periods.

For ports, these improvements can reduce not only waiting time, but also improve effective berth capacity by smoothing queues and lowering variability.

Complicated port rotations amplify inefficiencies

The analysis shows a clear and consistent relationship between the number of berths visited during a port call and total PTT. Single-berth calls exhibit the shortest turnaround times across all regions. As soon as two or more berths are involved, total PTT increases sharply.



Across all three port groups, PTT rises sharply as soon as vessels move beyond single-berth calls. In Texas Energy Ports, calls involving four or more berths exceed 230 hours on average, while similar multi-berth calls in Mississippi River Ports approach 270 hours. This highlights how compounded coordination requirements and intra-port movements extend vessel time at port.

These findings suggest that complex port rotations are a key driver of inefficiency, and that reducing unnecessary shifting and improving coordination across terminals offers significant potential to shorten turnaround times.

Shifting time is another significant contributor to the inefficiency of complex port rotations. Although it may seem minor in absolute terms, when compounded across multiple movements, repeated shifting between berths or between a berth and anchorage unnecessarily extends the PTT. This process consumes valuable tug and pilot resources, adds to schedule variability, and increases overall costs without contributing to the actual cargo-handling process.

Reducing avoidable shifting is therefore both a vessel-efficiency and a port-capacity strategy: fewer movements can translate into more predictable service demand and reduced congestion peaks.

Case examples: coordination makes the difference

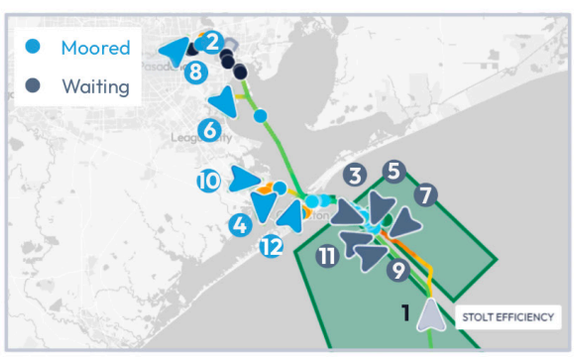
Two real port calls at Port Houston illustrate the impact of coordination on performance. The first case, STOLT EFFICIENCY, involved six berth visits over a 14.5-day port call. Only 55% of this time was spent moored, while 30% was waiting and 10% was shifting. The total cost of this call is estimated at $250,000–300,000 in charter value, with fuel consumption of 155–175 tonnes and emissions of 490–540 tonnes of CO2.

The second case, STOLT LARIX, visited the same number of berths with a similar productive duration but completed its port call in 10.5 days. By anchoring only before entering the port and transitioning smoothly between berths, 85% of its turnaround time was productive. Compared to the first case, this resulted in $70,000–100,000 lower charter costs, 50–75 tonnes less fuel consumption, and 200–230 tonnes fewer CO2 emissions.

STOLT EFFICIENCY
(Mar 9-24, 2025)

109 hrs waiting during visit
31 hrs shifting

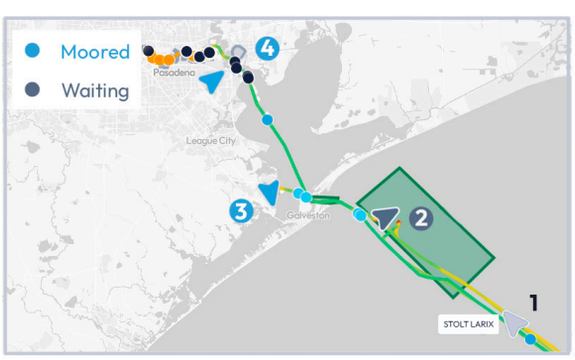
$250-300k in charter
155-175 tonnes fuel
490-540 tonnes CO2



STOLT LARIX
(Feb 17-26, 2025)

33 hrs waiting before arrival
10 hrs shifting

$180-220k in charter
90-100 tonnes fuel
280-310 tonnes CO2



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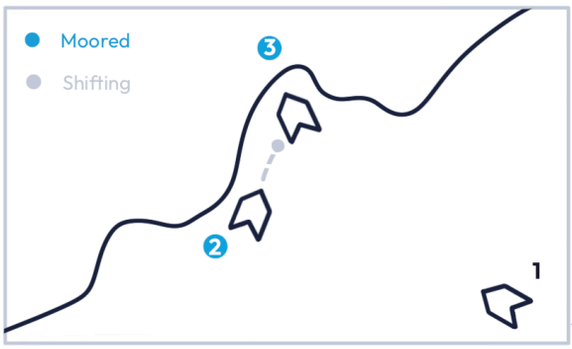
An idealized Just-in-Time scenario shows that eliminating anchorage altogether could further reduce PTT by more than 30 hours, pushing **total savings per call up to $120,000**.

IDEAL PORT CALL

0 hrs waiting
9 hrs shifting

Up to **$120k** saved

$150-180k in charter
75-85 tonnes fuel
230-260 tonnes CO2



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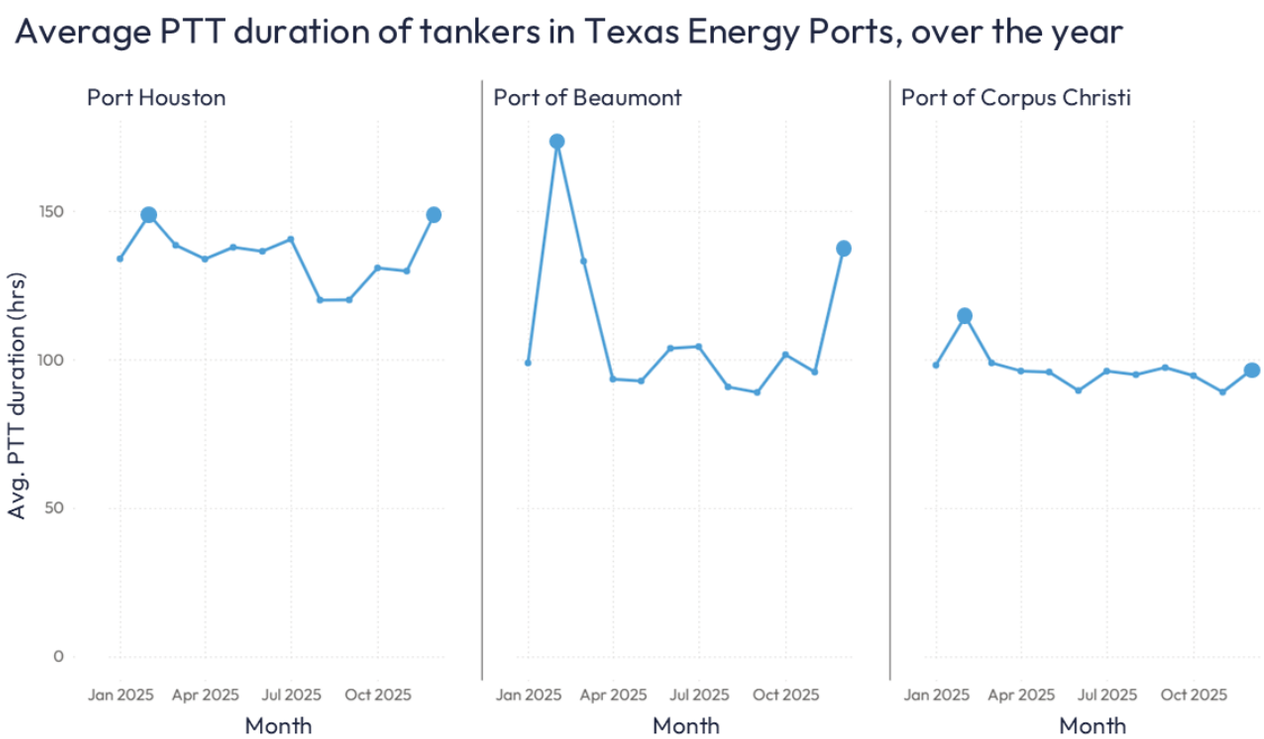
Weather-related disruptions and operational resilience

External factors remain an important driver of variability in port performance. Both in February and December 2025, dense fog significantly disrupted operations at Texas Energy Ports, leading to restricted channel availability and sharp temporary increases in PTT.



While such events cannot be eliminated, their impact can be mitigated. Ports that combine infrastructure investments with digital tools, such as real-time weather analytics, collaborative scheduling platforms, and flexible operating policies, are better positioned to absorb shocks and stabilize performance. Visibility into disruption impacts, measured through PTT levels and variability, is a catalyst for building operational resilience.

Conclusion

This follow-up benchmarking report confirms and reinforces the core findings of the Q1 analysis. Port Turnaround Time (PTT) is used as a powerful lens through which port efficiency can be understood and improved. Across U.S. Gulf and East Coast tanker ports, only 45% to 75% of total turnaround time is spent on productive cargo operations, leaving meaningful room to improve efficiency, predictability, and capacity utilization.

The largest opportunities are associated with patterns that are systemic and coordination-driven. Aligning vessel arrivals with berth availability, optimizing intra-port shifting, and improving transparency across stakeholders offer the largest and fastest gains.

Reducing PTT is not only an operational objective; it supports economic and environmental outcomes while improving port reliability. Single port call improvements can save tens of thousands of dollars, reduce fuel use, and cut CO2 emissions by hundreds of tonnes, while also easing pressure on constrained nautical services and stabilizing service demand.

Ports that measure PTT consistently, share operational status transparently, and coordinate across stakeholders will be positioned to absorb growth, manage disruptions, and strengthen competitiveness in an increasingly capacity-constrained environment.

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