

A Brief History of the Port of Long Beach

The development of the Port of Long Beach (POLB) in San Pedro Bay parallels the founding and growth of the city of Long Beach. The city was incorporated in 1888 with about 600 residents as a little beachside resort town. The port opened in 1911 when Long Beach had grown to about 18,000 residents after visionary developers and government chose Long Beach's natural harbor at the mouth of the Los Angeles River. However, the river wandered around, moved its bed, and occasionally flooded surrounding areas. In the 1920s, the Army Corp of Engineers and government officials agreed on the construction of a cement lined flood control channel instead of a flowing river. This new stability supported port expansion. The port has since been dredged and expanded many times, also increasing capacity and jobs.

Another result of the port has been building and expanding the breakwater, starting in 1899. Greatly expanded in the 1940s, one of the country's best surfing beaches was lost to progress and commerce. But a massive ship building effort and a major Naval base in the port helped the allies win the war against the Axis powers in World War II. All the good paying jobs helped the country, the region, and the city recover from the Great Depression and introduced thousands of soldiers, sailors, workers and their families to the glorious year-round weather in Long Beach.

The Port of Long Beach is now a key economic engine for the city of over 465,000 residents and the region. It is also known as the Harbor Department of the City of Long Beach. In the 1970s, port businesses such as Sealand converted to container operations and the port modernized to accommodate these new operations, becoming a national leader. By 1995, POLB was the number one container port in the country.

In an unusual situation, the Port adjoins the Port of Los Angeles. Together, the twin ports act as a major gateway for the United States-Asian trade. POLB occupies 3,200 acres of land with 25 miles of waterfront. Maritime trade accounts for 80% of world exchange of goods and the POLB accounts for 40% of United States trade.

The POLB is also a major funder of non-profits that also contribute to the vibrancy and health of the City including support for the Hmong New Year Festival.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the Port of Long Beach and encourage people to explore the website.

<https://polb.com>

<https://polb.com/port-info/timeline>

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