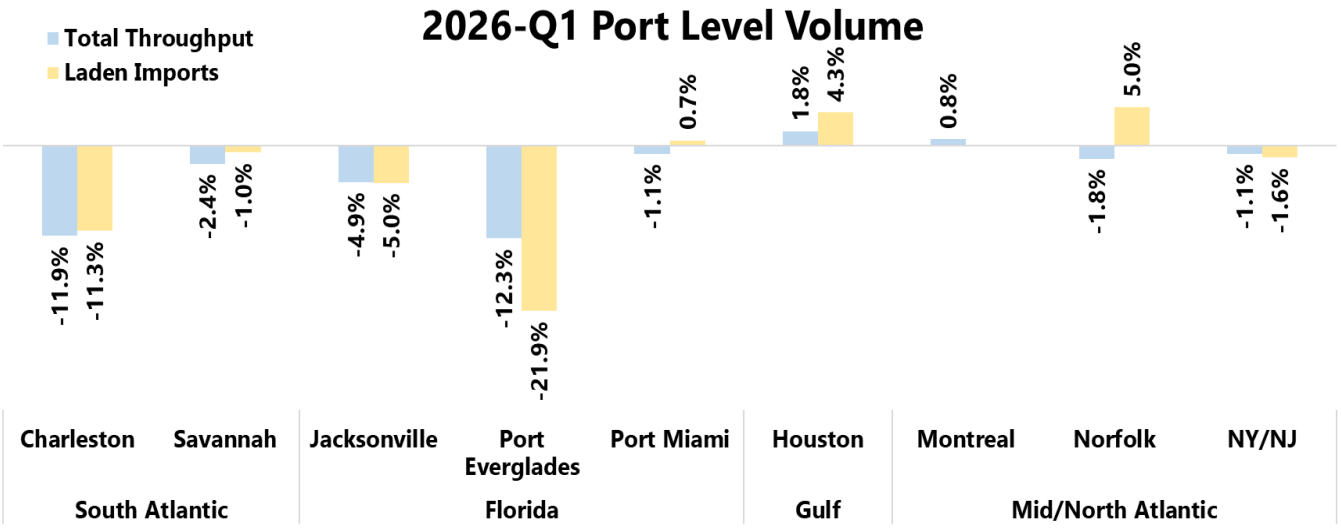
2026-Q1: NAEC Ports Consolidate Market Share

In Issue 767 of the Sea-Intelligence Sunday Spotlight, we analysed 2026-Q1 container volumes at North American East Coast (NAEC) ports. NAEC Total Throughput declined -2.5% Y/Y, and NAEC Laden Imports declined -1.4% Y/Y. Despite this, the NAEC ports gained ground on the West Coast, lifting the region's Laden Import share from 46.0% in 2025-Q1 to 46.8% in 2026-Q1, as West Coast ports saw a deeper -3.9% Y/Y contraction in Laden Imports.



As illustrated in Figure 1, breaking down by ports reveals a sharp divide: Gulf and Mid-Atlantic ports are growing or declining marginally, while South Atlantic and Florida ports are seeing double-digit drops. The Port of Houston recorded the largest Y/Y growth, increasing total volume by 1.8% Y/Y, supported by a 4.3% increase in laden imports. The region's largest port, New York/New Jersey, recorded a limited total volume decline of -1.1% by leveraging a strong 3.9% expansion in laden exports to offset a -1.6% drop in laden imports.

Jacksonville's total volume fell by -4.9%, while Charleston experienced a steep -11.9% Y/Y decline in total throughput, heavily driven by a -11.3% Y/Y drop in laden imports. The most severe downturn on the East Coast was recorded at Port Everglades, where total container volume plunged by -12.3% and laden imports collapsed by -21.9% Y/Y.

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All quotes can be attributed to: Alan Murphy, CEO, Sea-Intelligence.
For more information, please contact: ia@sea-intelligence.com, am@sea-intelligence.com

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