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## BTS Data

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### Freight Shipments Rose 0.3% in March from February



Source for Recession Dates: National Bureau of Economic Research, [US Business Cycle Expansions and Contractions](#)

The amount of freight carried by the for-hire transportation industry rose 0.3 percent in March from February, rising for the fifth consecutive month, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics' (BTS) Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI) released today. The March 2013 index level (113.7) was 19.9 percent above the April 2009 low during the most recent recession (Tables 1, 2A).

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## TRANSPORTATION SERVICES INDEX RELEASE

### ADD ONE

BTS, a part of the Research and Innovative Technology Administration, reported that the level of freight shipments in March measured by the Freight TSI (113.7) was 1.3 percent below the all-time high level of 115.2 in December 2011 (Table 2A). BTS' TSI records begin in 2000. See historical [TSI data](#).

The Freight TSI measures the month-to-month changes in freight shipments by mode of transportation in tons and ton-miles, which are combined into one index. The index measures the output of the for-hire freight transportation industry and consists of data from for-hire trucking, rail, inland waterways, pipelines and air freight. The TSI is seasonally adjusted so that trends reflect changes beyond normal monthly fluctuations.

Beginning with the April release, BTS improved procedures and refined the TSI methodology. As a result there have been minor changes in monthly numbers released previously. Documentation will be made available in the near future.

**Analysis:** The Freight TSI increased for a fifth consecutive month in March 2013, though more slowly than the average growth of the index in that period. There was growth across most freight modes but seasonally adjusted rail traffic declined. Shipments of coal and grain by rail showed year-to-year declines, not seasonally adjusted.

**Trend:** With the March increase to 113.7, the index has exceeded its 2012 range for three months in a row. With five consecutive monthly increases, the March index was at its second highest level since April 2009 during the recession exceeded only by December 2011. The March increase followed the index reaching the third highest level since April 2009 one month earlier in February. After dipping to 94.8 in April 2009, the index rose 19.9 percent in the succeeding 47 months. For additional historical data, go to [TSI data](#).

**Index highs and lows:** Freight shipments in March 2013 (113.7) were 19.9 percent higher than the all-time low in April 2009 during the recession (94.8). The March 2013 level is down 1.3 percent from the historic peak reached in December 2011 (115.2).

**Long-term trend:** Freight shipments are up 2.9 percent in the five years from the recession level of March 2008 and are up 9.5 percent in the 10 years from March 2003 (Table 5).

**Same month of previous year:** March 2013 freight shipments were up 2.8 percent from March 2012 (Tables 4, 5).

**1st Quarter Changes:** The Freight TSI rose 1.3 percent in the first quarter, the second consecutive quarterly increase. The index rose in 12 of the last 15 quarters since mid-2009 (Tables 3, 10).

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## TRANSPORTATION SERVICES INDEX RELEASE ADD TWO

The TSI has three seasonally adjusted indexes that measure changes from the monthly average of the base year of 2000. The three indexes are freight shipments, passenger travel and a combined measure that merges the freight and passenger indexes. TSI includes data from 2000 to the present. Release of the April 2013 index is scheduled for June 2013.

For a webinar on the TSI, see [Past Webinars](#). For a video explanation of the TSI, see [Overview of the Transportation Services Index](#). A BTS report explaining the TSI, [Transportation Services Index and the Economy](#), is available for download.

**Passenger Index:** The TSI for passengers rose 0.2 percent in March from its February level (Table 6). The Passenger TSI March 2013 level of 116.1 was 0.7 percent below the March 2012 level (Table 7). The index is down 0.9 percent in five years and up 24.4 percent in 10 years (Table 5). The passenger TSI measures the month-to-month changes in travel that involves the services of the for-hire passenger transportation sector. The seasonally adjusted index consists of data from air, local transit and intercity rail.

**Combined Index:** The combined freight and passenger TSI rose 0.3 percent in March from its February level (Table 8). The combined TSI March 2013 level of 114.4 was 1.8 percent above the March 2012 level (Table 9). The combined index is up 1.7 percent in five years and up 13.4 percent in 10 years (Table 5). The combined TSI merges the freight and passenger indexes into a single index.

**Revisions:** Monthly data has changed from previous releases due to the use of concurrent seasonal analysis, which results in seasonal analysis factors changing as each month's data are added.

**Table 1: Freight, Passenger and Combined Transportation Services Indexes since September 2012**

Percent Change from Previous Month  
(Seasonally Adjusted, Monthly Average of 2000 = 100)

	Freight		Passenger		Combined	
	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change
September	111.2	0.2	116.6	0.2	112.7	0.2
October	108.5	-2.4	114.1	-2.1	110.1	-2.3
November	110.9	2.2	114.8	0.6	112.0	1.7
December	112.3	1.2	115.9	1.0	113.3	1.2
January	112.6	0.3	116.0	0.0	113.5	0.2
February	113.3	0.7	115.8	-0.1	114.1	0.5
<b>March</b>	113.7	0.3	116.1	0.2	114.4	0.3

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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TRANSPORTATION SERVICES INDEX RELEASE  
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**Table 2: Freight Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2010-2013**

Percent change from previous month

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
	<b>% Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>	<b>% Change</b>
January	0.6	1.1	-3.5	0.3
February	1.6	-1.7	0.0	0.7
March	0.0	1.5	-0.6	0.3
April	0.5	-0.8	0.2	
May	0.7	-1.9	0.6	
June	-0.3	2.1	0.3	
July	0.6	0.1	-0.2	
August	-0.3	0.7	-0.4	
September	1.1	0.9	0.2	
October	0.5	0.0	-2.4	
November	-0.5	0.1	2.2	
December	2.0	4.0	1.2	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

**Table 2A: Freight Transportation Services Index by Month, 2010-2013**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>
January	102.4	109.7	111.2	112.6
February	104.1	107.8	111.2	113.3
March	104.1	109.4	110.6	113.7
April	104.6	108.5	110.8	
May	105.3	106.4	111.4	
June	105.0	108.7	111.7	
July	105.6	108.9	111.5	
August	105.3	109.6	111.0	
September	106.5	110.6	111.2	
October	107.0	110.7	108.5	
November	106.4	110.8	110.9	
December	108.5	115.2	112.3	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

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**Table 3: Freight, Passenger and Combined Transportation Services Indexes Year-to-Date Change, 2004-2013**

Percent change to March from December of the previous year (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Freight</b>	<b>Passenger</b>	<b>Combined</b>
2004	2.0	1.4	1.8
2005	1.1	1.7	1.3
2006	-0.2	1.7	0.3
2007	1.4	2.5	1.7
2008	-0.3	0.7	-0.1
2009	-4.3	-1.4	-3.5
2010	2.2	0.8	1.8
2011	0.8	0.1	0.6
2012	-4.0	0.6	-2.8
<b>2013</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.9</b>

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

**Table 4: Freight Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year**

Percent Change in the March Freight TSI

(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)

	<b>March Freight TSI</b>	<b>Percent change from same month previous year</b>
2004	110.1	6.0
2005	112.2	1.9
2006	111.9	-0.2
2007	112.0	0.1
2008	110.5	-1.4
2009	96.2	-12.9
2010	104.1	8.1
2011	109.4	5.1
2012	110.6	1.0
<b>2013</b>	<b>113.7</b>	<b>2.8</b>

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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**Table 5: Transportation Services Indexes from Previous Years**

Percent Change to March 2013 from March

Since March ...	Duration in years	Freight TSI Percent change to March 2013	Passenger TSI Percent change to March 2013	Combined TSI Percent change to March 2013
2012	1	2.8	-0.7	1.8
2011	2	3.9	2.5	3.5
2010	3	9.3	4.2	7.8
2009	4	18.1	7.0	14.8
2008	5	2.9	-0.9	1.7
2007	6	1.5	-0.4	0.9
2006	7	1.6	4.6	2.3
2005	8	1.4	6.6	2.6
2004	9	3.3	13.7	6.0
2003	10	9.5	24.4	13.4

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

**Table 6: Passenger Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2010-2013**

Percent change from previous month

	2010 % Change	2011 % Change	2012 % Change	2013 % Change
January	0.3	0.4	-0.9	0.0
February	-2.4	-1.3	1.4	-0.1
March	2.9	1.1	0.1	0.2
April	-0.5	1.4	-0.7	
May	0.6	0.7	0.0	
June	1.0	-0.5	-0.1	
July	0.2	0.8	-0.9	
August	0.6	-1.4	1.1	
September	0.1	1.3	0.2	
October	1.6	0.0	-2.1	
November	-1.1	0.0	0.6	
December	-1.0	0.6	1.0	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

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**Table 7: Passenger Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year**

Percent change in the March Passenger TSI  
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)

	<b>March Passenger TSI</b>	<b>Percent change from same month previous year</b>
2004	102.1	9.5
2005	108.9	6.7
2006	111.0	1.9
2007	116.6	5.0
2008	117.1	0.5
2009	108.4	-7.4
2010	111.4	2.7
2011	113.2	1.6
2012	116.9	3.2
<b>2013</b>	<b>116.1</b>	<b>-0.7</b>

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

**Table 8: Combined Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2010-2013**

Percent change from previous month

	<b>2010 % Change</b>	<b>2011 % Change</b>	<b>2012 % Change</b>	<b>2013 % Change</b>
January	0.5	0.9	-2.8	0.2
February	0.4	-1.6	0.4	0.5
March	0.8	1.4	-0.4	0.3
April	0.2	-0.2	-0.1	
May	0.7	-1.1	0.4	
June	0.1	1.3	0.2	
July	0.5	0.3	-0.4	
August	0.0	0.1	0.0	
September	0.8	1.0	0.2	
October	0.8	0.0	-2.3	
November	-0.7	0.1	1.7	
December	1.1	3.0	1.2	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

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**Table 9: Combined Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year**

Percent change in the March Combined TSI  
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)

	<b>March Combined TSI</b>	<b>Percent change from same month previous year</b>
2004	107.9	7.0
2005	111.5	3.3
2006	111.8	0.3
2007	113.4	1.4
2008	112.4	-0.8
2009	99.7	-11.4
2010	106.1	6.5
2011	110.5	4.1
2012	112.4	1.7
<b>2013</b>	<b>114.4</b>	<b>1.8</b>

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

**Table 10: Freight Transportation Services Index Change by Quarter, 2004-2013**

Percent change from the last month of the previous quarter

<b>Year</b>	<b>1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) % Growth</b>	<b>2nd Quarter (Apr-Jun) % Growth</b>	<b>3rd Quarter (Jul-Sep) % Growth</b>	<b>4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) % Growth</b>
2004	2.0	0.5	-0.1	0.4
2005	1.1	-0.5	0.0	0.5
2006	-0.2	0.9	-0.1	-2.1
2007	1.4	-2.3	-0.1	1.4
2008	-0.3	-0.3	-2.5	-6.3
2009	-4.3	-0.2	3.3	2.6
2010	2.2	0.9	1.4	1.9
2011	0.8	-0.6	1.8	4.1
2012	-4.0	1.1	-0.5	1.0
<b>2013</b>	<b>1.3</b>			

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

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**Table 11: Passenger Transportation Services Index Change by Quarter, 2004-2013**

Percent change from the last month of the previous quarter

Year	1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) % Growth	2nd Quarter (Apr-Jun) % Growth	3rd Quarter (Jul-Sep) % Growth	4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) % Growth
2004	1.4	2.1	-0.3	3.1
2005	1.7	0.0	1.3	-1.1
2006	1.7	0.3	-0.6	2.8
2007	2.5	0.4	1.2	-1.7
2008	0.7	-0.3	-3.2	-2.6
2009	-1.4	0.4	0.4	1.1
2010	0.8	1.1	0.9	-0.5
2011	0.1	1.5	0.6	0.6
2012	0.6	-0.7	0.4	-0.5
<b>2013</b>	<b>0.1</b>			

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

**Table 12: Combined Transportation Services Index Change by Quarter, 2004-2013**

Percent change from the last month of the previous quarter

Year	1st Quarter (Jan-Mar) % Growth	2nd Quarter (Apr-Jun) % Growth	3rd Quarter (Jul-Sep) % Growth	4th Quarter (Oct-Dec) % Growth
2004	1.8	1.0	-0.2	1.2
2005	1.3	-0.4	0.3	0.1
2006	0.3	0.7	-0.3	-0.8
2007	1.7	-1.6	0.3	0.5
2008	-0.1	-0.3	-2.7	-5.3
2009	-3.5	0.0	2.5	2.1
2010	1.8	1.0	1.2	1.2
2011	0.6	0.0	1.4	3.1
2012	-2.8	0.6	-0.2	0.5
<b>2013</b>	<b>0.9</b>			

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

# TRANSPORTATION SERVICES INDEX RELEASE

## ADD EIGHT

### **Brief Explanation of the TSI**

The Transportation Services Index (TSI) is a measure of the month-to-month changes in the output of services provided by the for-hire transportation industries. The freight index measure changes in freight shipments while the passenger index measures changes in passenger travel.

The TSI tells us how the output of transportation services has increased or decreased from month to month. The index can be examined together with other economic indicators to produce a better understanding of the current and future course of the economy. The movement of the index over time can be compared with other economic measures to understand the relationship of changes in transportation output to changes in Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

**The freight transportation index** consists of:

For-hire trucking,  
Railroad freight services (including rail based intermodal shipments such as containers on flat cars),  
Inland waterways transportation,  
Pipeline transportation (including principally petroleum and petroleum products and natural gas), and  
Air freight.

The index does not include international or coastal waterborne movements, private trucking, courier services, or the US Postal Service.

**The passenger transportation index** consists of:

Local transit,  
Intercity passenger rail, and  
Passenger air transportation.

The index does not include intercity bus, sight seeing services, ferry services, taxi service, private automobile usage, or bicycling and other non-motorized transportation.

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