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Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI): Freight Index Fell 1.2 Percent in April from March

The Freight Transportation Services Index (TSI) fell 1.2 percent in April from its March level, declining for the second consecutive month to the lowest level in seven years, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) reported today (Table 1).

The April decrease was the seventh decline in the Freight TSI in the last nine months (Table 2). The index has declined 10.0 percent in that nine-month period. For additional historical data, go to <http://www.bts.gov/xml/tsi/src/index.xml>.

The 1.2 percent decline in the first four months of 2009 was the second largest in the last decade, exceeded only by a 6.7 percent decline for the first four months of 2000 (Table 3).

The April level of the Freight TSI of 100.2 is at the lowest level since April 2002 when it was 99.3. The Freight TSI is down 11.4 percent from its historic peak of 113.1 reached in November 2005.

The freight TSI measures the month-to-month changes in the output of services provided by the for-hire freight transportation industries. The index consists of data from for-hire trucking, rail, inland waterways, pipelines and air freight.

The 8.5 percent decline in the Freight TSI from April 2008 to April 2009 was the largest April-to-April decline in the 20 years for which the TSI is calculated (Table 4).

The freight index is also down 9.4 percent in the five years from April 2004, the fifth consecutive month in which the index declined for a five-year period. The index is down 1.7 percent in 10 years for the second-ever 10-year decline in the 20-year history of TSI data (Table 5). The first 10-year decline was in March.

The TSI is a seasonally adjusted index that measures changes from the monthly average of the base year of 2000. It includes historic data from 1990 to the present. Release of the May index is scheduled for July 9.

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TRANSPORTATION SERVICES INDEX RELEASE

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BTS has issued a technical report explaining the TSI. *BTS Technical Report: Transportation Services Index and the Economy* is available for download at <https://www.bts.gov/pdc/index.xml> in the BTS bookstore.

Transportation Services Index for Passengers

The TSI for passengers rose 1.4 percent in April from its March level (Table 6). The Passenger TSI April 2009 level of 113.2 was 4.2 percent lower than the April 2008 level, the second largest April-to-April decrease in the 20-year history of the series, and exceeded only by a 7.4 percent decrease in 2002 (Table 7). Despite the recent declines, the passenger index is up 10.1 percent in five years and 21.0 percent in 10 years (Table 5).

The passenger TSI measures the month-to-month changes in the output of services provided by the for-hire passenger transportation industries. The seasonally adjusted index consists of data from air, local transit and intercity rail.

Combined Freight and Passenger Index

The combined freight and passenger TSI fell 0.5 percent in April from its March level (Table 8). The combined TSI April 2009 level of 103.0 was 7.4 percent lower than the April 2008 level, leaving the index at its lowest April level since 2003 (Table 9). The combined index is down 4.8 percent in five years for the third five-year decline in the history of the combined index, but is up 3.8 percent in 10 years (Table 5).

The combined TSI merges the freight and passenger indexes into a single index.

More on TSI

Note: TSI numbers for December (Freight, Passenger and Combined) were revised because of revisions in the output data of the component transportation services. The December Freight TSI is 101.4, revised from the 105.1 reported in last month's release. The December Passenger TSI is 112.0, revised from 113.0. The December Combined TSI is 103.6, revised from 106.7. The TSI for January, February, March and April are preliminary.

TSI revision policy: TSI is updated monthly with the latest four months' index numbers considered preliminary. Each month BTS releases the latest preliminary TSI, and replaces the oldest preliminary TSI with a revised TSI. More information about the monthly revision policy, the comprehensive revision conducted in July 2007 and the TSI index is available at <http://www.bts.gov/xml/tsi/src/index.xml>

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Table 1: Freight, Passenger and Combined Transportation Services Indexes since October 2008

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

	Freight		Passenger		Combined	
	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change	Index	Pct. Change
October	106.7	-0.3	114.9	-1.2	108.3	-0.5
November	104.4	-2.1	112.5	-2.1	106.0	-2.1
December ^R	101.4	-2.8	112.0	-0.5	103.6	-2.2
January ^P	102.7	1.3	112.6	0.6	104.8	1.2
February ^P	104.8	2.0	112.8	0.1	106.4	1.5
March ^P	101.4	-3.3	111.6	-1.0	103.5	-2.7
April^P	100.2	-1.2	113.2	1.4	103.0	-0.5

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

Table 2: Freight Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2006-2009
Percent change from previous month

	2006 % Growth	2007 % Growth	2008 % Growth	2009 % Growth
January	0.4	-0.3	2.8	(P) 1.3
February	-1.4	0.0	0.1	(P) 2.0
March	0.4	1.1	-2.9	(P) -3.3
April	-0.3	-0.4	1.1	(P) -1.2
May	2.4	-0.1	0.4	
June	-0.3	-0.7	-0.2	
July	-0.9	0.1	1.4	
August	-2.5	0.5	-2.3	
September	0.9	-0.9	-1.6	
October	-0.1	1.7	-0.3	
November	-1.4	0.4	-2.1	
December	0.6	-1.7	(R) -2.8	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

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Table 3: Freight, Passenger and Combined Transportation Services Indexes Year-to-Date Change, 2000-2009

Percent change from December of previous year
December to April

Year	Freight	Passenger	Combined
2000	-6.7	3.9	-3.5
2001	0.8	-0.2	0.4
2002	2.0	2.2	2.1
2003	-0.7	-6.8	-2.4
2004	2.3	2.3	2.3
2005	0.6	1.8	0.9
2006	-0.8	2.6	0.0
2007	0.4	0.4	0.4
2008	1.0	0.8	1.0
2009^P	-1.2	1.1	-0.6

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

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

Percent change in the April Freight TSI

(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)

	Freight TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2000	98.0	-3.9
2001	98.6	0.6
2002	99.3	0.6
2003	103.8	4.6
2004	110.5	6.5
2005	111.7	1.0
2006	110.4	-1.2
2007	109.3	-0.9
2008	109.5	0.1
2009^P	100.2	-8.5

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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**Table 5: Transportation Services Indexes from Previous Years
Percent Change to 2009 (April to April)**

Since April ...	Duration in years	Freight TSI Percent change to April 2009	Passenger TSI Percent change to April 2009	Combined TSI Percent change to April 2009
2008	1	-8.5	-4.2	-7.4
2007	2	-8.4	-1.3	-6.6
2006	3	-9.2	1.4	-6.7
2005	4	-10.3	4.6	-6.8
2004	5	-9.4	10.1	-4.8
2003	6	-3.5	24.4	3.0
2002	7	0.9	21.4	5.7
2001	8	1.6	12.4	3.7
2000	9	2.2	14.4	4.8
1999	10	-1.7	21.0	3.8

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

Note: The percent changes to April 2009 are all preliminary.

**Table 6: Passenger Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2006-2009
Percent change from previous month**

	2006 % Growth	2007 % Growth	2008 % Growth	2009 % Growth
January	1.9	-0.1	-0.1	(P) 0.6
February	-0.6	-2.0	-0.5	(P) 0.1
March	1.0	2.2	0.8	(P) -1.0
April	0.3	0.5	0.7	(P) 1.4
May	0.6	1.5	0.1	
June	-1.0	-0.2	-0.1	
July	0.5	-0.1	0.0	
August	0.0	1.1	-1.3	
September	0.9	-0.1	-0.4	
October	0.4	0.7	-1.2	
November	-0.2	-1.5	-2.1	
December	1.1	0.7	(R) -0.5	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

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**Table 7: Passenger Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year
Percent change in the April Passenger TSI
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)**

	Passenger TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2000	99.0	5.7
2001	100.7	1.7
2002	93.3	-7.4
2003	91.0	-2.4
2004	102.8	13.0
2005	108.3	5.3
2006	111.6	3.1
2007	114.7	2.8
2008	118.2	3.1
2009^P	113.2	-4.2

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

**Table 8: Combined Transportation Services Index Monthly Changes, 2006-2009
Percent change from previous month**

	2006 % Growth	2007 % Growth	2008 % Growth	2009 % Growth
January	0.8	-0.3	2.1	(P) 1.2
February	-1.2	-0.5	-0.1	(P) 1.5
March	0.6	1.4	-2.0	(P) -2.7
April	-0.1	-0.2	1.0	(P) -0.5
May	2.0	0.3	0.3	
June	-0.4	-0.6	-0.1	
July	-0.6	0.0	1.0	
August	-1.9	0.7	-2.0	
September	0.9	-0.7	-1.3	
October	0.1	1.4	-0.5	
November	-1.1	-0.1	-2.1	
December	0.7	-1.1	(R) -2.2	

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary; R = revised

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**Table 9: Combined Transportation Services Index from Year-to-Year
Percent change in the April Combined TSI
(Monthly average of 2000 = 100)**

	TSI	Percent change from same month previous year
2000	98.3	-0.9
2001	99.3	1.0
2002	97.4	-1.9
2003	100.0	2.7
2004	108.2	8.2
2005	110.5	2.2
2006	110.4	-0.1
2007	110.3	-0.1
2008	111.2	0.8
2009^P	103.0	-7.4

SOURCE: Bureau of Transportation Statistics

NOTE: P = preliminary

NOTE: Percent changes based on numbers prior to rounding.

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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 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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