

Benesch Partner Jonathan Todd Discusses Supply Chain Impact of Baltimore Bridge Collapse with NBC Cleveland

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Benesch Transportation & Logistics Vice Chair Jonathan Todd spoke with WKYC 3News, the NBC affiliate in Cleveland, regarding the impact of the deadly Key Bridge collapse in Baltimore on the supply chain. Read the full story from 3News below, and watch the news clip [here](#).



Could the collapse of Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge impact the price you pay on certain goods?

According to a legal expert in transportation and logistics, the major products moving through the Port of Baltimore are automotive, sugar, farm equipment and coal.

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CLEVELAND - As crews continue to remove the wreckage left behind in the Port of Baltimore after last week's deadly collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, transportation and logistics experts are monitoring the impact the closure of the port is having on the supply chain.

"It's still of course tragic," says Jonathan Todd, the vice chair of Benesh Law's Transportation and Logistics Group. "There were six individuals who lost their lives."

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, the bodies of two of the six construction workers who fell into the Patapsco River after a cargo ship lost power and crashed into the bridge were recovered the day after the bridge collapse. The others are presumed dead.

A temporary pathway opened in the Port of Baltimore this week for boats assisting with recovery efforts. However, according to NBC News, it remains unclear how long it will take for the port to fully reopen to commercial vessels.

A February message from the Office of Maryland Governor Wes Moore reported a record 52.3 million tons of cargo, worth nearly \$81 billion, moved through the Port of Baltimore in 2023.

According to Moore's office, the port handled 857,158 cars and light trucks in 2023, ranking "first among the nation's ports for volume of autos and light trucks, roll on/roll off heavy farm and construction machinery, imported sugar and imported gypsum."

Todd says companies transporting goods that would have gone through the Port of Baltimore will see specific impacts.

“They'll have longer transit times. They'll have greater cost to move the product,” Todd says. “But what I've heard across our clients, and what I've seen publicly across the industry, is that the impact is expected to be minimal on those supply chains that indeed use that port.”

Todd believes it is too early to tell if companies will pass on their increased transportation cost to consumers, but he is not seeing any indication of that happening so far.

“In terms of moving those products that went through the port, I'm optimistic it will happen quickly and that when we look at our grocery bills we're not going to be ... concerned that a cost of an item that we know increased because of this incident,” Todd said.

Todd, whose work focuses on the movement of goods through the supply chain, says companies learned valuable lessons from supply chain disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Two examples of those (lessons) that some companies use today are to, one, manage inventories so that supply is available, and orders can be filled in the event of interruption, and two, diversify supply chain providers and key regions of the country, or even world, so that no one service, or region becomes a bottleneck,” Todd wrote in an email to 3News.

Representatives from automotive companies Stellantis and GM sent the following statements to 3News.

“Working with our logistics partners, Stellantis has implemented contingency plans to reroute vehicle imports and exports to other ports to mitigate any impact on vehicle deliveries to our customers. We are continuing to carefully monitor this situation.”

-Stellantis

“Our thoughts are with those who were affected and the Baltimore community. We expect the situation to have minimal impact to our operations. We are working to re-route any vehicle shipments to other ports as the recovery work continues.”

-GM