Sources for the Economic Impact of Waterways and Ports

Major Data Sources

- Proprietary information collected from a sample of roughly 25 million shipment waybills per year, or Delcan’s Real-Time Freight Intelligence data (RTFI). The data are current up to the most recent month; calendar year 2012 data were used for this analysis. In addition to origin and destination at the street address level, the data include shipment date, cost of shipping, mode, commodity, shipment weight, and length of haul. The value of the shipment is estimated using factors developed primarily on adjusted value per ton from the U.S. Department of Transportation Commodity Flow Survey (CFS).
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Waterborne Commerce Statistics and other data that defines the inland waterway systems and the ports along them were used. The latest data available is from 2011. The dataset contains tons of commodities moved along specific waterway systems and is summarized by state, both inbound and outbound.
- The U.S. Department of Commerce International Trade Administration import and export data were used to measure the flow of goods to and from a state that traveled through a port, whether within the state or across the country from it.

Secondary Sources of Data—used mostly for verification and double checking, or for filling a specific hole in the data.

- The U.S. DOT’s 2007 (the most recent) Commodity Flow Survey and, to some extent, the FAF3 data. FAF3 data were used to substantiate trends since 2007, but they do not get down to the low level commodity information needed for this analysis.
- Individual port annual reports and other studies of ports were used, especially the port impact studies that have been done periodically by Martin and Associates\(^1\). Its widely accepted methodology for the calculation of job and revenue impacts for individual ports was a foundational element for the calculation methodology at the state level.
- Individual state reports were used, including information contained in State Freight Plans.

\(^1\) Martin and Associates uses a much more rigorous approach, enhanced by additional survey and data collection work for each port it evaluates. This analysis made use of the defined categories Martin and Associates and others measure in impact studies. Delcan did not create an impact study for each and every port in a state. Ports with similar sizes and characteristics were grouped and ratios from existing impact reports for similar ports were adapted for use in these calculations. When studies existed, they were used as actual data, cutting down on those that had to be estimated.
• World Port Source (http://www.worldportsource.com/states.php) was used for basic research and background about state and waterways in a state.
• Virtually every website that contains a shred of inland waterway or port data and a large number of new articles.