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## **Panama Canal expansion threatens US ports business**

*Thursday, 04 Dec, 2008*

It is reported that the slowdown in international trade has left the docks at the United States' biggest seaport complex quieter than they have been in years. Some workers, particularly non union casuals, at the Los Angeles and Long Beach ports wait for shifts that never come.

As per report, automobiles and other merchandise pile up as consumers dig in for a long economic winter. But the problems at the twin ports, along with smaller West Coast harbors, extend beyond the nation's economic woes, maritime experts say and changes on the horizon could leave the seaports struggling to keep customers.

West Coast ports will see increased competition from the Panama Canal, which is undergoing a bigger than expected expansion due to be completed in 2014. In addition, rising Chinese labor costs will push some manufacturing back to Mexico and South America.

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