

**TABLE 1**  
**Florida Merchandise Exports 1999 - 2005**

**Florida's Booming International Trade**

Year	Merchandise Exports (billions of \$)	Merchandise Exports as Percent of Gross State Product
1999	\$24.10	5.42
2000	26.5	5.74
2001	27.1	5.43
2002	24.5	4.78
2003	25	4.52
2004	29	4.84
2005	33.4	5.35p

The vital importance of international trade to economic development, whether it is a nation or a state, is a fact that simply cannot be understated. International trade expands and opens new markets for businesses, allowing them increased production and sales, which, in turn, creates new jobs and higher incomes. For consumers, international trade broadens and deepens the range, variety, and choice of goods and services while keeping prices in check.

Sources: Office of Trade and Industry Information, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. p = preliminary estimate. [www.ita.doc.gov/td/industry/otea/](http://www.ita.doc.gov/td/industry/otea/)

Florida is no exception. Our international commerce has risen sharply in recent years and is an important reason for the robust health of the state's economy.

**TABLE 2**  
**Florida Merchandise Exports by Category, 2005**

In 2005, Florida exported \$33.4 billion of goods to the rest of the world, ranking eighth among all states in terms of merchandise exports. Indeed, since 2002 Florida's share of total U.S. merchandise exports has advanced from 3.5% to 3.7%, reflecting stronger growth in Florida's goods exports than those in the rest of the nation. As illustrated in Table 1, Florida's exports of goods have risen by almost \$10 billion since 1999; or at a strong average annual growth rate of about 6.50%. If state-level data were available for the export of services (tourism, education, health care, finance, etc.), Florida's standing would likely rise considerably and the importance of international trade would be even more pronounced.

SIC Code	Product	2005 Exports (millions of \$)	Percent Change 2002-2005	Leading Export Destination
<b>Total =</b>		<b>\$33,377</b>	<b>36%</b>	
334	Computers & Electronic Products	9729	11	Brazil
336	Transportation Equipment	5652	64	Brazil
333	Machinery Manufactures	3588	32	Venezuela
325	Chemical Manufactures	3487	39	China
339	Miscellaneous Manufactures	1736	44	United Kingdom
335	Electrical Equip., Appliances & Parts	1205	6	Mexico
311	Processed Foods	1100	10	Canada
332	Fabricated Metal Products	845	61	Canada
322	Paper Products	806	1	Mexico
111	Agricultural Products	700	23	Canada
990	Special Classification Provisions	638	27	Brazil
326	Plastic & Rubber Products	520	9	Canada
313	Textiles & Fabrics	509	82	Dominican Republic
331	Primary Metal Manufactures	401	0	Canada
920	Used Merchandise	296	66	United Kingdom
323	Printing & Related Products	288	69	Bahamas
910	Waste & Scrap	268	335	China
327	Non-Metallic Minerals Mfg.	226	31	Bahamas
315	Apparel Manufactures	216	-82	Dominican Republic
321	Wood Products	201	20	Bahamas

Exports of goods alone now represent approximately 5.35% of Florida's Gross State Product. Except for a decline during the national recession in 2002, Florida's exports of goods have been rising at close to \$4 billion per year. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, 15% of all manufacturing jobs in Florida are directly tied to the export of goods. Moreover, more than 31,000 Florida firms exported goods abroad in 2003, and over 92% of these firms were small and medium sized ones (those with fewer than 500 employees). These small-to-medium sized firms generated about \$16 billion, or half of Florida's merchandise exports, which is the second highest figure among the 50 states. Exports of goods clearly sustain tens of thousands of Florida businesses and hundreds of thousands of Florida jobs.

Source: Office of Trade and Industry Information, International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce. [www.ita.doc.gov/td/industry/otea/](http://www.ita.doc.gov/td/industry/otea/)

Florida exports a wide array of goods. Table 2 shows the top 20 exports of goods for 2005 in millions of dollars, the percentage change in dollar terms from 2002 to 2005, and the leading country-export destination for the top 20 goods exports. High technology products (including computers and electronic equipment) dominate Florida exports, along with transportation equipment (including aircraft and aerospace parts), chemicals (including phosphate processed into fertilizer and pharmaceuticals), manufactured goods, processed foods, and agricultural products. Since 2002, merchandise export growth has been sharpest in categories such as transportation equipment, waste and scrap products, fabricated metals, textiles, printing products, and used merchandise. The only categories where growth has been less than double digit are electrical equipment, paper products, plastic and rubber products, and printed materials. Apparel is the only category where the volume of trade has contracted since 2002.

Brazil, as has been the case since 2002, is Florida's leading trading partner followed currently by Canada, Venezuela, Mexico,

and Columbia. Free trade agreements such as NAFTA likely explain the importance of Canada and Mexico as trading partners. Geographic proximity and possibly cultural relations, such as language, are likely key causes for the large trade share represented by countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Developed countries such as the United Kingdom, Japan, the Netherlands, and Germany also constitute a non-trivial, combined share of roughly 10% of Florida's goods exports. Interestingly, the dollar volume of Florida exports to the top 15 countries has generally increased since 2002, with the notable exception of the Dominican Republic, yet the proportion of some of these countries in Florida's goods exports has diminished. The implication is that Florida is widening its merchandise exports to other countries. Germany, Australia, Argentina, Chile, the Netherlands, and Paraguay are the countries experiencing the most sizable goods exports trade gains with Florida.

Florida's economy has been the strongest in the nation since about 2002, and growth in the state's merchandise exports has been an important cause of our state's robust expansion. International commerce is firmly embedded as a cornerstone of Florida's economy. Policies that stimulate international trade, such as the Free Trade of the Americas Agreement, hold much potential to sustaining growth in Florida's economy.

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