



Sulfur Wire

Desk Guidebook

Practical primer for newcomers watching Alberta inventory, Vancouver exports, and the three NA hubs.



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HOW TO USE THIS PDF

Read sections 2–6 once. Keep section 8 open while you use the dashboard. Section 9 is the diligence boundary if someone asks whether Sulfur Wire replaces a licensed weekly PRA.

1. Purpose and reading order

This guidebook is a desk primer for people new to North American recovered sulfur. It explains forms, hubs, units, Alberta inventory, the Vancouver export corridor, freight netbacks, and how to read Sulfur Wire provenance tags.

Sulfur Wire publishes open fundamentals with a source tag on every figure. It is **not** a price reporting agency (PRA). Licensed weekly Argus or Platts assessment series are not redistributed here. Open news reprints that mention those agencies are tagged as industry estimates, not as verified public statistics.

Tips and corrections: tips@sulfurwire.com. Live site: sulfurwire.com.

READING ORDER ON FIRST DAY

- ☐ Volumes: /exports annual Vancouver table, then /inventory
- ☐ Form and unit traps: /hubs plus /units
- ☐ Trust path: /methodology, then /sources
- ☐ Weekly public briefs: /outlook (same email list as this PDF opt-in)

Print and mark. Leave blank if UNCERTAIN.

2. Forms: molten vs formed

Elemental sulfur trades in two commercial worlds that share chemistry but not contracts.

Molten sulfur moves hot in heated railcars and barges to consumers who accept liquid product, especially Florida phosphate plants and some industrial sites. Advantages: no forming cost, direct fit for many US term consumers, continuous delivery under contract. Constraints: UN 2448 heated containment, limited ocean molten trade relative to solids, and buyer infrastructure that must accept liquid.

Formed sulfur moves as cool, free-flowing solids (prill, granule, pastille, slate) in hoppers and dry bulk vessel holds. Advantages: stackable storage, standard dry bulk shipping, access to Asia via Vancouver, broader buyer set. Constraints: forming and degassing cost, dust management, and inland rail to a loadport.

Canadian export strategy is overwhelmingly a formed-sulfur Pacific story. Producers also sell molten into domestic and US channels. Midstream formers earn fees because they bridge molten producer output and solid buyer preference. When forming capacity is tight, molten may back up in Alberta even if Pacific solid FOBs look attractive on paper.

Contract language should name form, Incoterm, and hub. A CFR China prill stem is not fungible with a Tampa molten quarterly without explicit conversion assumptions. Price spikes do not hit both books equally: a high Tampa molten contract can coexist with different granular FOB levels at Vancouver or the Gulf. Some US Gulf refiners lack solid-export kit and therefore cannot arbitrage into dry bulk even when FOB granular looks lucrative.

Two commercial books

Same molecule · different contracts, logistics, and hubs

MOLTEN	FORMED SOLID
Heated rail / barge	Prill / granule / pastille
Tampa DEL quarterly (USD/LT)	FOB Vancouver / US Gulf (USD/t)
UN 2448 containment	Dry bulk vessel holds
Florida phosphate / industry	Pacific / Atlantic export

Figure · Molten vs formed commercial books

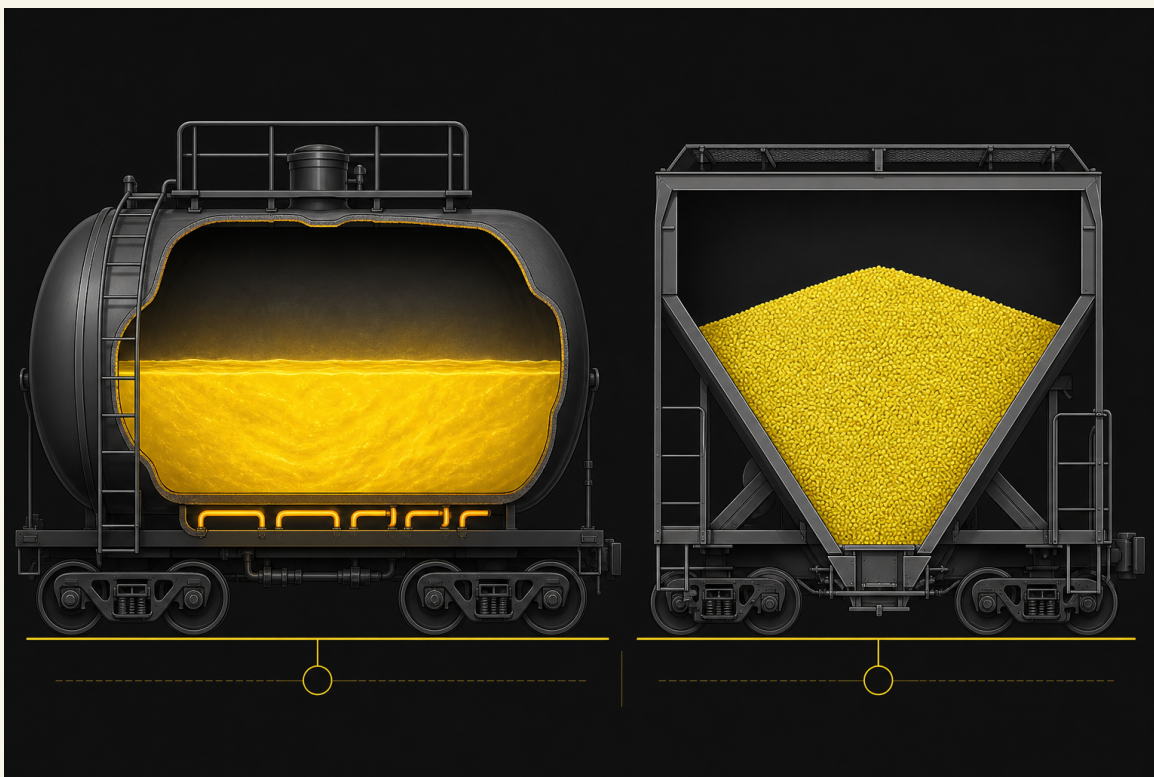


Figure · Heated molten logistics vs formed solid handling · illustrative

DESK CHECK

Ask which book you are in before you compare numbers: molten delivered Tampa, solid FOB Vancouver, or solid FOB US Gulf.

3. Units: long ton vs metric tonne

Unit traps are the fastest way to misread a hub print.

- **Metric tonne (MT / t):** 1,000 kg. Standard for Vancouver and US Gulf dry bulk FOB solid sulfur in USD per tonne.
- **Long ton (LT):** 2,240 lb $\approx$ 1.01605 MT. Common for Tampa molten contracts quoted in USD per long ton delivered.

Rule of thumb: multiply LT by about 1.016 to get MT (or divide MT by 1.016 to get LT). Always name form, Incoterm, and hub in the same sentence as the number.

Customs heading HS 2503 can mix forms depending on routing. Destination United States in trade databases may include molten rail and some Pacific solid. Interpret HS totals with the form and corridor in mind.

Sulfur Wire keeps a units helper at /units for LT $\leftrightarrow$ MT and simple basis math.

UNIT STAMP BEFORE ANY COMPARE

- ☐ Hub named
- ☐ Form named (molten / prill / granule / pastille)
- ☐ Incoterm named (FOB / CFR / CIF / DEL)
- ☐ Unit named (USD/MT or USD/LT)
- ☐ Date / period named

Print and mark. Leave blank if UNCERTAIN.

4. Hubs: Vancouver, US Gulf, Tampa

Three hubs structure most North American conversation. Keep them separate in your notes.

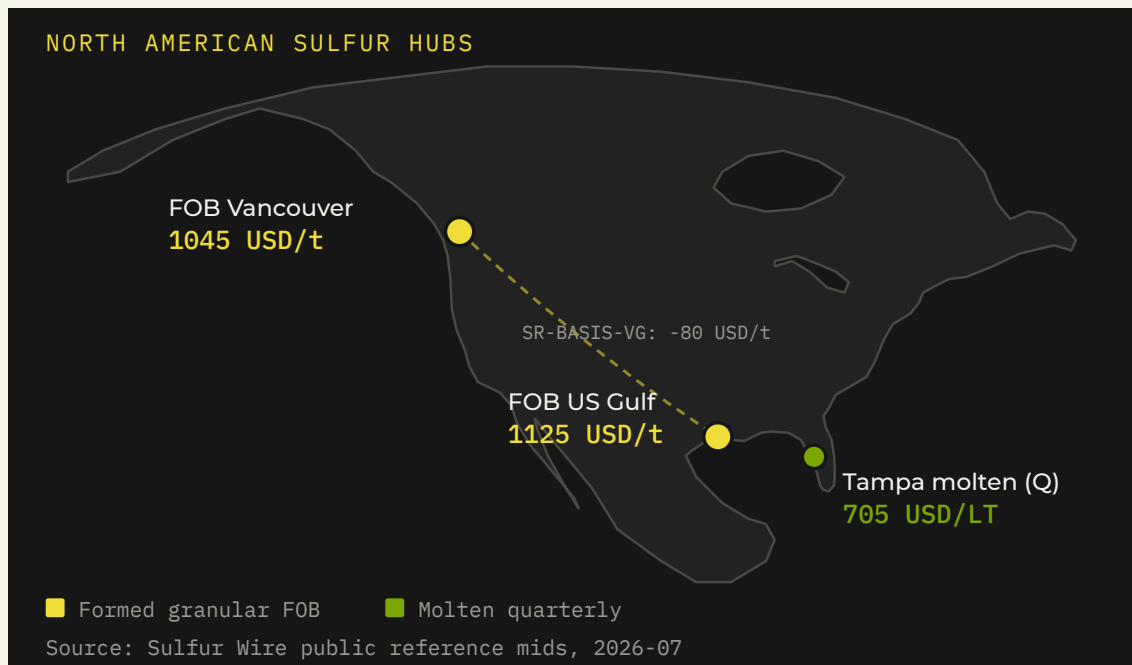


Figure · North American hub map · Sulfur Wire

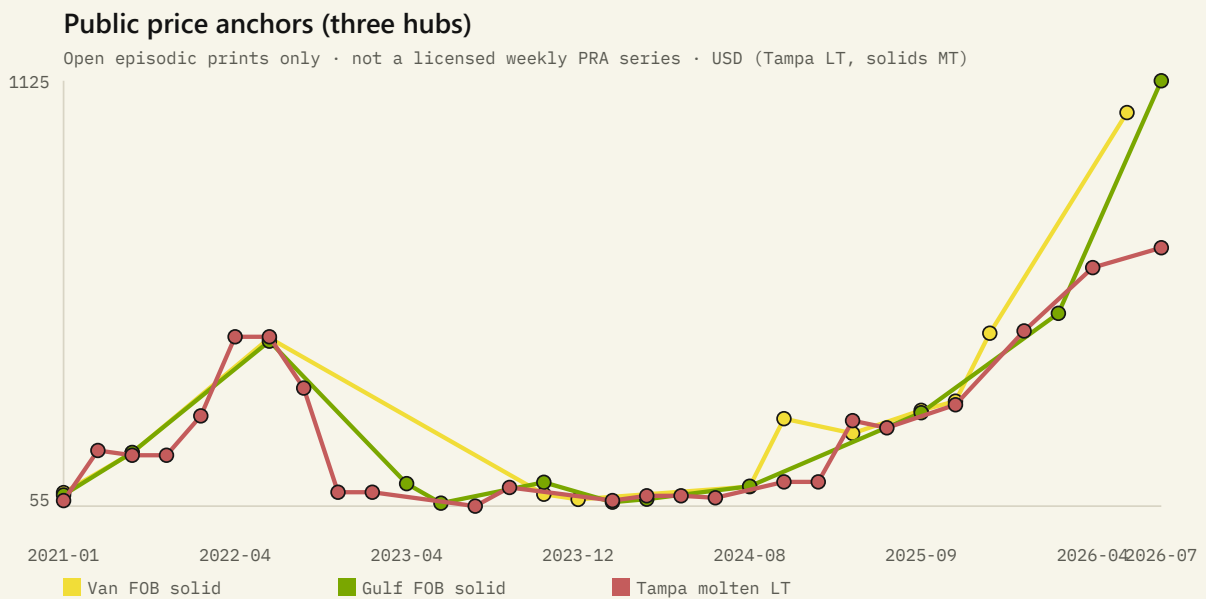


Figure · Public price anchors · episodic only · not a licensed weekly PRA series

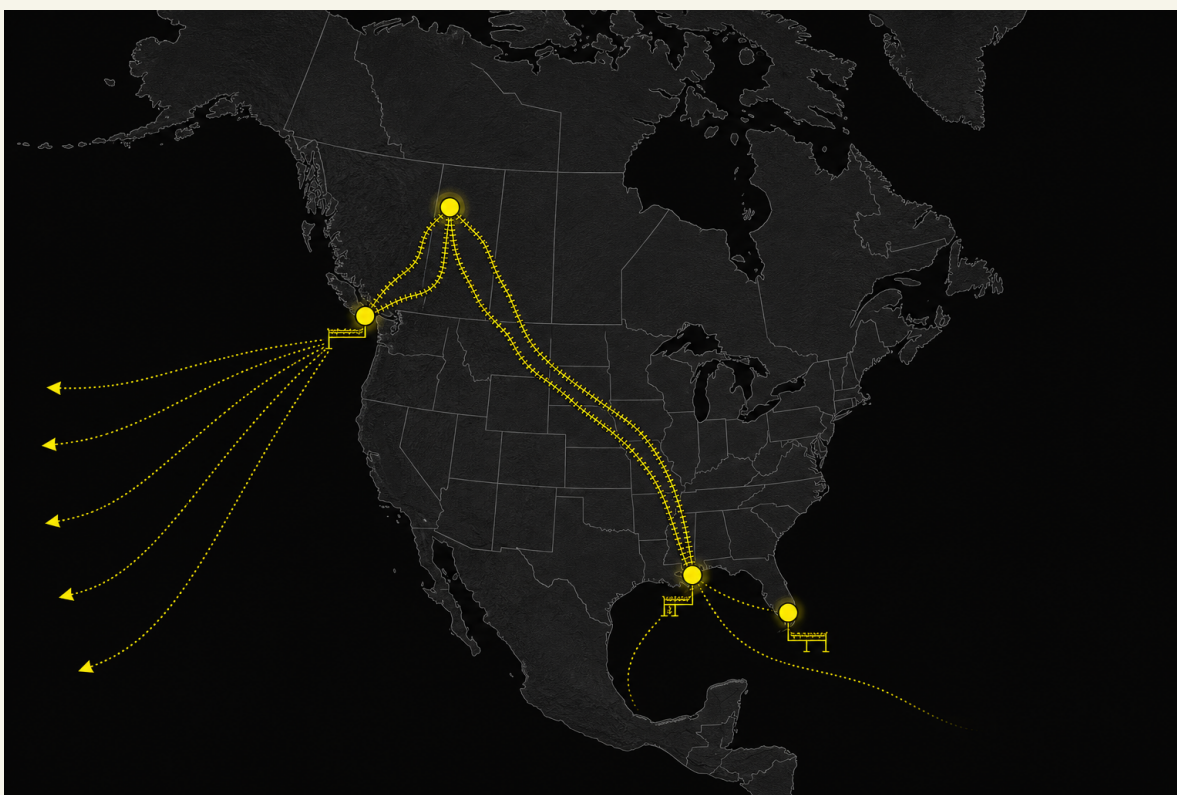


Figure • Alberta • Vancouver • Gulf • Tampa nodes • illustrative

FOB Vancouver

Primary Pacific export hub for formed recovered sulfur. Alberta and British Columbia producers move molten by heated rail to inland formers, then solid product by rail to Lower Mainland terminals (Pacific Coast Terminals in Port Moody; Vancouver Wharves in North Vancouver). Linked series on Sulfur Wire: SR-VAN-FOB-G / SR-VAN-FOB.

Products: formed granular, prill, pastille. The hub clears Canadian surplus into Asia, Oceania, and diversified Americas destinations when Middle East or Atlantic routes tighten.

FOB US Gulf

US Gulf Coast reference for dry bulk / formed granular sulfur exports from Gulf refining and recovery geography, and a basis comparator for Vancouver Pacific FOB. Louisiana and Texas dominate US recovered elemental sulfur production. USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2026 places 2025 US production near **8.1 Mt** (all forms, estimated) with Canada the dominant elemental import source.

Linked series: SR-GULF-FOB-G describes seaborne export spot context, not USGS domestic mine/plant averages (SR-US-DOM-AVG). Some Gulf producers lack solid-export forming and remain tied to molten domestic deliveries into Florida and other industrial buyers.

Tampa molten

Quarterly molten (liquid) sulfur contract hub for delivered product into the Tampa / Florida phosphate complex. Distinct from Pacific or Atlantic dry bulk FOB: Tampa is predominantly molten delivered, priced in USD per long ton, and used by fertilizer procurement desks rather than seaborne granular traders.

Linked indices: SR-TAMPA-Q / SR-TAMPA-MOLTEN. Open USGS MCS narratives publish selected Tampa contract snapshots by year; open Argus news items may quote quarterly settlements. Sulfur Wire tags those open reprints as `industry_estimate` and does not redistribute licensed weekly PRA series tables.

Basis VG

Basis VG on Sulfur Wire (SR-BASIS-VG) is Vancouver solid FOB mid minus Gulf solid export spot mid. Gaps appear where no open public anchor exists. Use it as a Pacific vs Atlantic netback check, not as a PRA weekly print.

5. Alberta inventory

Western Canada recovered sulfur accumulates when production exceeds forming, remelt, domestic offtake, and export. Block and inventory stock act as the swing buffer for the Pacific corridor.

Canonical monthly inventory prefers Alberta Energy Regulator (AER) ST3 Supply and Disposition of Sulphur. Trade-press prints attributed to AER are tagged `industry_estimate` on Sulfur Wire. Public tables and charts end at the last attributed observation; later months are not held flat as if they were current stock.

Open example used on the site: mid-2025 commentary citing AER inventory near **11.66 Mt in July 2025** as Alberta stocks fell while Vancouver exports climbed (AER data via open trade press; see Sources). For anything after the series cut, pull AER ST3 yourself.

Inventory remelt is the incremental supply lever when Pacific FOBs and freight support it. Crushed lump does not load Vancouver without remelt and form. Remelt and forming capacity (producer sites, Keyera / Heartland network, Sultran logistics) sit between Alberta stock and vessel load.

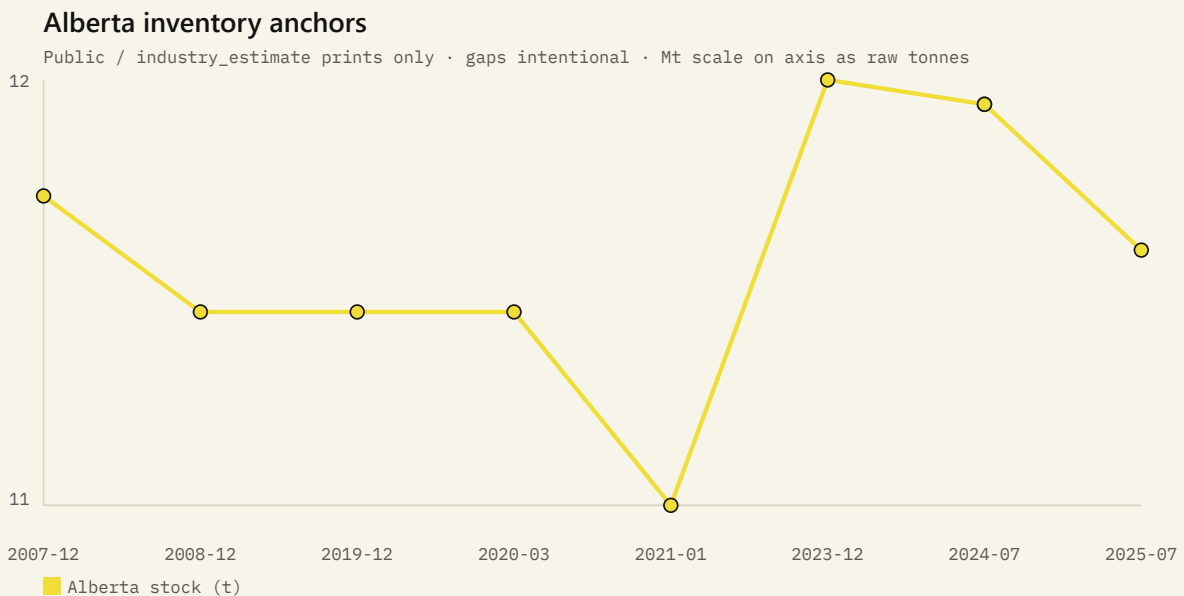


Figure · Alberta inventory anchors · public / industry_estimate prints · gaps intentional

INVENTORY READING CHECKLIST

- ☐ Last tagged observation preferred over visual extrapolation
- ☐ reported / industry_estimate prints distinguished from interpolated densify months
- ☐ Trade-press AER citations treated as industry_estimate until AER table opened
- ☐ No hold-forward of the last print as "current stock"

Print and mark. Leave blank if UNCERTAIN.

6. Vancouver export corridor

The physical chain is inventory and recovery → molten rail → forming / remelt → formed rail to tidewater → bulk vessel load → Pacific destinations.

Alberta → Vancouver export chain

Capability path · not live AIS

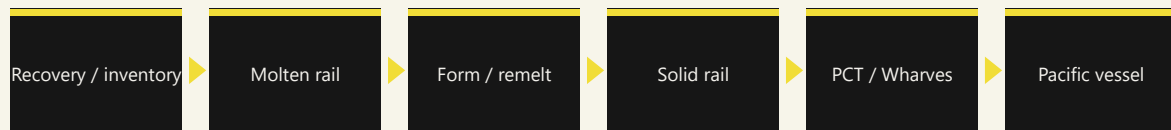


Figure · Alberta → Vancouver export chain · not live AIS

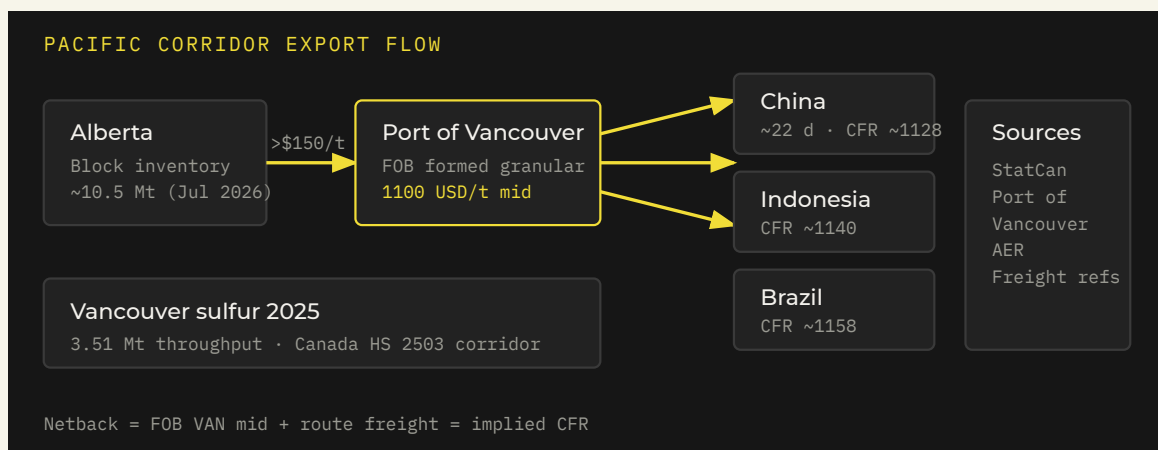


Figure · Pacific corridor diagram · Sulfur Wire

Vancouver solid sulphur exports

VFPA Statistics Overview · verified_public annual totals · Mt

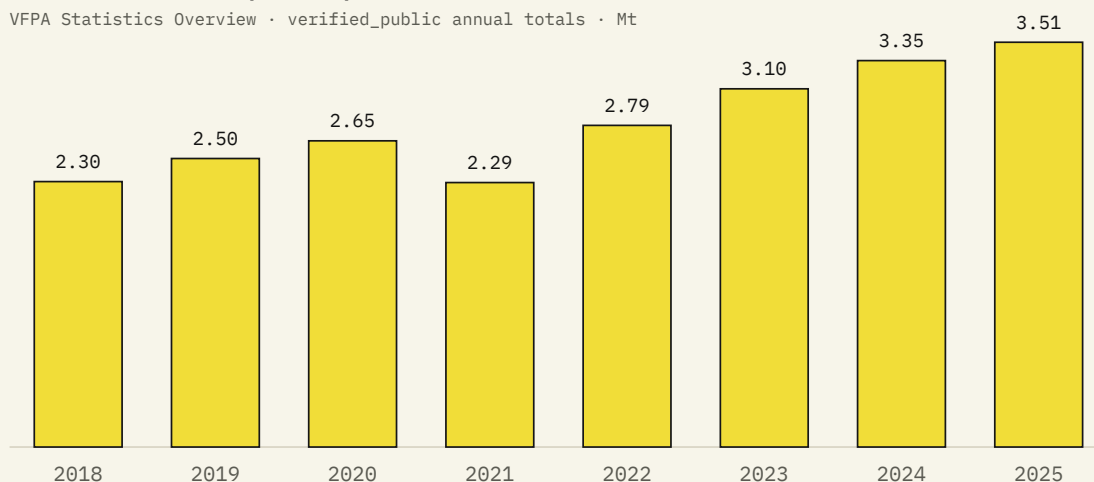


Figure · Vancouver solid sulphur exports · VFPA annual Mt

Vancouver destinations 2025

VFPA trading economies + residual · Mt

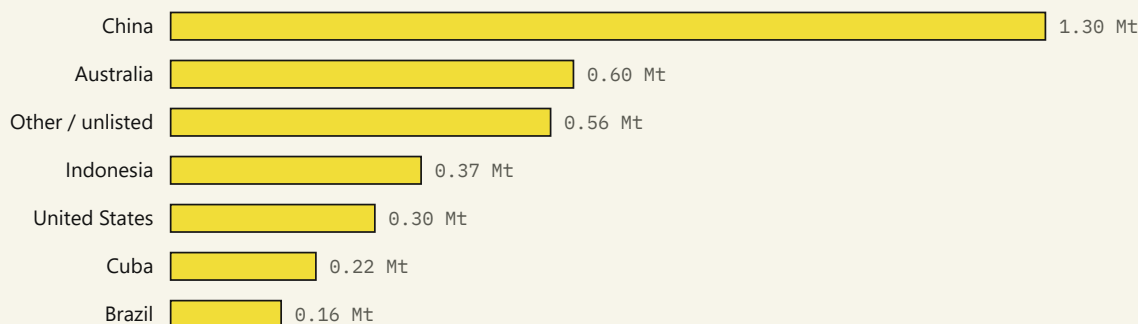


Figure · Vancouver destinations 2025

Vancouver Fraser Port Authority (VFPA) Statistics Overview PDFs are the loadport system of record for fertilizer-category solid sulphur through Port of Vancouver. Recent annual totals reported by VFPA:

- 2021: about **2.29 Mt**
- 2022: about **2.79 Mt**
- 2023: about **3.10 Mt**
- 2024: about **3.35 Mt**
- 2025: about **3.51 Mt** (+5% year on year)

Destination mix in the 2025 overview publicly listed China, Australia, Indonesia, the United States (about **302 kt**, +191% year on year), Cuba, and Brazil among others.

Sulfur Wire annual export tables follow VFPA. Monthly rows use open monthly or year-to-date citations when available; otherwise equal-month calendar fills are tagged `allocated_equal_month` and withheld from the default UI unless you request the full file. Provisional months without a public print are withheld.

Destination tables list VFPA trading economies plus an Other / unlisted residual so shares sum to the annual total.

Berths (capability, not live tracking)

Berth pages list depth, LOA bands, and loader capability for Pacific Coast Terminals and Vancouver Wharves. They are **not** live AIS or vessel tracking. Use them to understand what can physically load, not what is alongside today.

- Pacific Coast Terminals (Port Moody): Berth 2 bulk sulfur context; about 11.9 m depth; single-quadrant loader; Panamax-capable LOA band in site notes.
- Vancouver Wharves (North Vancouver): Berth 4 dual-quadrant context; about 12.8 m depth; large on-dock stockpile capability in site notes.

Details and citations live at </berths>.

7. Freight netbacks (origin-matched)

Netbacks on Sulfur Wire are origin-matched so you do not mix hubs by accident.

- Vancouver routes use Vancouver FOB.
- Gulf routes use Gulf FOB.
- Middle East comparison routes use ME FOB when that anchor is present.

Implied CFR is FOB plus ocean freight for the lane. Transit days are lane estimates, not fixture prints. Freight tables carry their own as-of dates and provenance tags.

Use netbacks to ask: does Pacific solid from Vancouver clear versus Atlantic / Americas solid from the Gulf after freight? Do not treat a netback as a PRA assessment.

8. How to read Sulfur Wire provenance tags

Every figure carries a trust path. Prefer the tag over the headline.

Source hierarchy

1. `verified_public` — government or port authority statistics (AER, StatCan, VFPA, USGS) with URL.
2. `derived` — arithmetic from public inputs (FOB + freight, annual equal-month fill, destination residual).
3. `industry_estimate` — attributed trade-press or analyst figures in open articles.
4. `platform_estimate` — Sulfur Wire interpolation between public anchors, labeled.

Volume observation classes

- `reported` — month or stock print cited as an observation.
- `allocated_bridge` — residual so a known YTD or annual total still reconciles.
- `allocated_equal_month` — calendar fill when only the annual VFPA total is public.
- `interpolated` — densified inventory months between public anchors.

Price charts on the dashboard default to public anchors only, with gaps where densified `platform_estimate` months are withheld. The full densified series can remain available via API for completeness. Open reprints that mention Argus or Platts remain `industry_estimate`. Licensed weekly PRA assessment numbers are not pasted into public pages.

TRUST PATH

Methodology for tags · Sources for pinned PDF editions · Data quality for the automated audit · API for machine-readable series.

9. PRA boundary

Sulfur Wire is an open public-source desk, not a PRA competitor product.

- Outlook briefs publish weekly, with flash updates when the market moves. Commentary, not a licensed assessment feed.
- Hub “mids” on charts are maps of open anchors, not redistributed Argus or Platts weeklies.
- Partnership or reuse diligence starts at /license and /series.
- Facility and berth pages explain physical capability. They do not claim live vessel tracking.

If you need a commercial weekly assessment series, license it from the PRA that publishes it. Sulfur Wire exists so a newcomer can learn the corridor, read public volumes, and interpret open anchors without pretending those anchors replace a licensed weekly book.

10. Where to go on the site

Path	Use
Dashboard /app	Anchors, inventory, exports, netbacks in one shell.
/inventory	Alberta stock series with tags and cut dates.
/exports	VFPA annual table; reported monthly where public.
/netbacks	Origin-matched FOB + freight to implied CFR.
/hubs	Vancouver, US Gulf, Tampa context pages.
/berths	PCT and Wharves capability specs (not live AIS).
/facilities	Canada producers/formers; Gulf and Tampa nodes.
/units	LT / MT and simple basis helpers.
/methodology	Full tag definitions.
/sources	Pinned PDF editions and citations.
/data-quality	Automated audit of public series.
/outlook	Weekly public briefs; email list.
/guidebook	This PDF capture page.
/topics/desk-guide	Short on-site reading order.
/api	Machine-readable JSON series.

11. Suggested first session

FIRST-SESSION DESK CHECKLIST

- ☐ Open /exports — read VFPA annual Vancouver table
- ☐ Open /inventory — note last observation date and provenance tag
- ☐ Open /hubs — keep form and unit labels for Vancouver, US Gulf, Tampa
- ☐ Open /netbacks — confirm origin matching before corridor compares
- ☐ Skim /methodology once so tags stay legible
- ☐ Browse /berths for loadport capability (not AIS)
- ☐ Optional: subscribe to Outlook for weekly public briefs
- ☐ Optional: open /handbook for the longer trading book

Print and mark. Leave blank if UNCERTAIN.

12. Sources cited in this guidebook

- Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, **Statistics Overview** editions (English): fertilizer-category sulfur export totals and destination notes, including 2025 overview figures cited above. portvancouver.com/media/cargo-statistics
- Alberta Energy Regulator ST3, Supply and Disposition of Sulphur: inventory system of record. aer.ca ST3
- USGS Mineral Commodity Summaries 2026, Sulfur chapter: US production, consumption, and Tampa narrative snapshots in the open PDF. USGS MCS 2026 sulfur PDF
- Open trade press citing AER mid-2025 inventory (tagged `industry_estimate` on Sulfur Wire): Argus news cycle on Alberta inventories and exports (July 2025).
- Open Argus news on Tampa Q3 2026 molten contract settlement (tagged `industry_estimate`; not a weekly series redistribution).
- Sulfur Wire methodology, sources, desk guide: sulfurwire.com/methodology, sulfurwire.com/sources, sulfurwire.com/topics/desk-guide

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