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Plastics Machinery Shipments Up 15.1% Y/Y in Q1 of 2018

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 10, 2018—Plastics machinery shipments in North America rose in the first quarter of 2018 on a year-over-year basis according to the statistics compiled and reported by the [Plastics Industry Association's](#) (PLASTICS) [Committee on Equipment Statistics](#) (CES). This is the fourth consecutive quarterly year-over-year increase in plastics machinery shipments.

The preliminary estimate of shipments of primary plastics equipment (injection molding and extrusion) for reporting companies totaled \$333.7 million in the first quarter. This was 15.1 percent higher than the total \$290.0 million in Q1 of 2017, but 11.7 percent lower than the \$378.0 million from Q4 of 2017.

“Shipments of plastics machinery tend to be lower in the first quarter relative to other quarters due to seasonality,” said PLASTICS Chief Economist Perc Pineda. “Still, the U.S. economy was off to a good start in the first quarter. Business confidence remains high—helped by corporate tax reform enacted last year. Plastics equipment shipments data are in sync with healthy corporate profits in the manufacturing sector, including the plastics industry.”

PLASTICS provides predictive forecasts for machinery shipments ahead of each quarterly report, exclusively for CES members. For the first quarter of 2018, these were very accurate. For example, there were 984 injection molding machines shipped in North America during this period—PLASTICS predicted a total of 992 machines. For twin-screw extrusion machines, PLASTICS forecast a total of 42 units, while the data showed that 41 were shipped.

The shipments value of injection molding machinery increased 22.9 percent in Q1 compared to the fourth quarter of last year, while the shipments value of single-screw extruders declined 14.6 percent during the same period. The shipments value of twin-screw extruders—which includes both co-rotating and counter-rotating machines—decreased 27.1 percent.

The U.S. total export value for plastics machinery in the first quarter was \$404.0 million, a 7.7 percent decrease from the previous quarter (\$437.9 million), but a 6.9 percent increase from a year ago (\$377.7 million). Plastics machinery imports decreased 12.8 percent in the first quarter (\$829.7 million). From the first quarter of last year, machinery imports rose 5.7 percent (\$784.6 million). The U.S. continues to have a trade deficit in plastics machinery, which was \$425.7 million in the first quarter—a 17.0 percent decrease from the fourth quarter last year, but 4.6 percent higher than a year ago (\$406.9 million).

The respondents to the Q1 survey expect that construction, appliances and packaging will be strong end-markets in the next 12 months. Their market outlook remains stable, as more respondents noted that they expected market conditions to be unchanged for the year due to the fact that the U.S. economy is at full employment capacity.

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About Plastics Industry Association

The Plastics Industry Association (PLASTICS), formerly SPI, is the only organization that supports the entire plastics supply chain, representing nearly one million workers in the \$404 billion U.S. industry. Since 1937, PLASTICS has been working to make its members and the industry more globally competitive while advancing recycling and sustainability. To learn more about PLASTICS' education initiatives, industry-leading insights and events, networking opportunities and policy advocacy, and North America's largest plastics trade show, NPE: The Plastics Show, visit plasticsindustry.org. Connect with PLASTICS on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).