

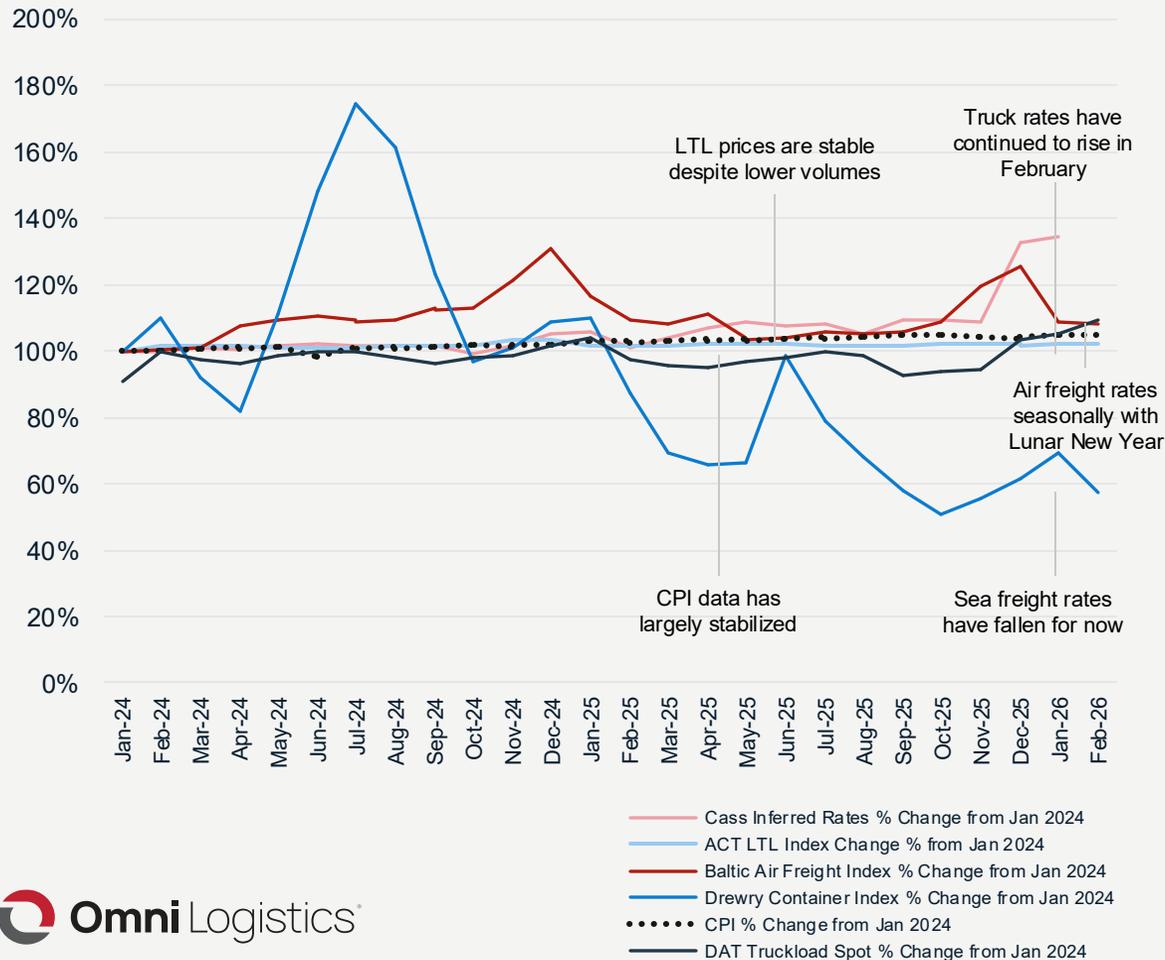


# Omni Logistics Market Insights

March 2026

# Major Macro-Economic Indicators

Last Two Years Major Freight Rates vs. CPI Increase



## Economic Sentiment

- A WSJ poll found that half of voters say the economy has gotten worse in the last year
- U-Mich consumer sentiment increased slightly to 56.6 and the Conference Board's consumer confidence index increased by 2.2 points to 92.2 in February

## Labor Force

- BLS reports 172,000 private sector jobs were added in January, the highest growth in a year, as unemployment dropped to 4.3%
- U.S. manufacturers added net jobs for the first time since November 2024
- A revision to employment data shows that post-pandemic factory job reductions were greater than previously reported

## Inflation vs Rates

- YoY inflation cooled from 2.7% December to 2.4% in January
- Core inflation came in slightly higher at 2.5%
- Some key inflation metrics tracked by the Fed accelerated in December, fueling caution on rate cuts
- Average mortgage rates have fallen to a 3.5-year row

## Inventories vs Sales

- U.S. retail sales in December were flat MoM from November at \$735B
- January retail sales showed 5.72% YoY growth, with the only significant retail drop coming in building and garden supply stores
- A growing shortage of chips for consumer goods is becoming a major factor for producers and retailers

Sources: WSJ, BLS, ACT Research, Drewry, The Conference Board, U-Mich, NRF, CASS, DAT, Baltic Air, Cass

# International Trade & Freight Overview

## Quick Digest

### U.S. Supreme Court Rejects IEEPA Tariff Validity

- **Outlook:** The rejection of broad IEEPA-based fentanyl and reciprocal tariffs signals a partial easing of 2026 cost pressures. Potential exposure to Section 232 and 301 authorities keeps long-term sourcing and investment decisions clouded by tariff uncertainty.

### Global Economy Holds Steady Amid Geopolitical Tensions

- **Outlook:** Steady global economic growth even as geopolitical tensions rise and trade patterns shift toward more regional networks. Signs of smoother logistics, but environment remains uncertain as governments rethink policy and long-term economic strategies.

### U.S. Housing Demand & Construction Activity

- **Outlook:** New single-family home sales surged in November before easing 1.7% in December, while housing starts jumped 6.2% to 1.404 million. Each new home requires multiple truckloads of materials, so firming construction activity continues to support freight demand even as sales remain uneven.

## Geography Spotlights

Americas	Europe	Asia	Middle-East Africa
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- IEEPA duties ordered removed from unliquidated and non-final entries following the CIT's directive, shifting the focus to CBP implementation.</li> <li>- 15% Worldwide Tariff under Section 122, limited to 150 days unless extended by Congress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU–Mercosur trade deal remains delayed with no ratification expected in early 2026.</li> <li>- India–EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations continue.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lunar New Year–related factory shutdowns beginning mid-February are expected to slow export output and tighten freight capacity across much of Asia.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strait of Hormuz disruption in early 2026 sharply constrains ocean freight, extends voyage times, increase delays, and tightens global capacity.</li> </ul>

## Notable Themes



**Reshoring Regret Risk**  
The Supreme Court's IEEPA ruling raises the potential for widespread "reshoring regret," as companies that relocated production to avoid the now-invalidated tariffs may reconsider whether returning to original, lower-cost supply bases could once again be viable.



**Global Capacity Imbalance**  
Global ocean shipping faces structural overcapacity and weakening demand, pushing freight rates lower as congestion eases and disruption-era pricing unwinds, while air freight remains supported by strong cross-border e-commerce.



**IEEPA Ruling Causes Ripple-Effect Trade Uncertainty**  
Pausing or slowing trade moves pending clarity on the new 15% global tariff framework after the Supreme Court's ruling, signaling wider diplomatic caution and potential knock-on delays to other agreements.

## Interesting Reads

- [Tariffs Now Consume Over 6% of Corporate Liquid Assets](#)
- [Awaiting refunds on struck Trump tariffs? Here's what officials, precedent and legal experts say can happen...](#)
- [Tons of goods are stuck around the Middle East amid shipping and air chaos](#)

# North America LTL Freight Overview

## Quick Digest

### Residential Building Product Demand Softens

- **Outlook:** Demand for building products — from insulation to doors and windows — declined in 2025 as consumers paused major remodeling projects. Lower residential spending flows directly into weaker LTL tonnage for construction-related freight.

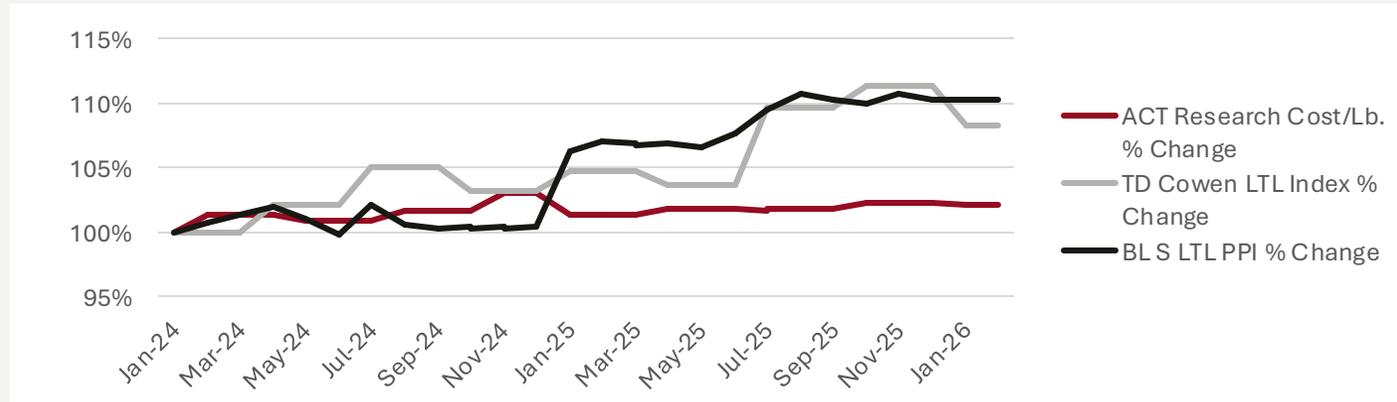
### Durable Goods Orders Decline

- **Outlook:** Durable goods orders fell 1.4% in December after a 5.4% increase in November. Sluggish durable goods activity is expected to continue into 2025, reducing the volume of freight moving through LTL networks.

### New Eligibility Rules for Non-Domiciled CDL Holders

- **Outlook:** The USDOT's new final rule adds stricter requirements for non-domiciled drivers, including status verification, documentation, and expanded reporting. The agency continues to tighten oversight of CDL issuance for drivers without U.S. citizenship, adding compliance pressure to carriers.

## Rate Indices Trends



## Notable Themes

**Shifting Volumes to Truckload**  
Ongoing freight softness has led truckload carriers to reduce minimum weights to 10,000 lbs., shifting freight away from LTL as shippers consolidate to manage costs.

**Market Rates Sustained**  
Despite volume softness, major LTL carriers continue to implement general rate increases, with many major carriers issuing Q4 GRIs to stabilize revenue and offset operational costs.

**Projected Import Decrease**  
The National Retail Federation projects a 2% YoY decline in import volumes for the first half of 2026, reducing inbound container flows and directly affecting LTL shipment demand.

**Geopolitical Tension Driving Fuel Cost Volatility**  
Conflict-driven disruptions near key oil transit lanes are likely to push fuel prices higher, affecting carrier surcharges and projected transportation budgets.

## Interesting Reads

- [FedEx is expected to close more than 475 stations, or about 30% of its facility footprint by the end of 2027](#)
- [UPS is planning to close 22 facilities with teamsters union members across 18 states](#)
- [Report: 47% of Carriers Plan to Delay Fleet Investments Over Tariffs](#)

# North America Freight Overview

## Quick Digest

### EPA Safety-Threat Ruling Repealed

- **Outlook:** The administration has repealed a 2009 finding classifying greenhouse gases as a safety threat. The change alters how the government monitors and reports carbon emissions and fuel consumption, with potential long-term regulatory impacts.

### Weather-Driven Tightness Masking Soft Demand

- **Outlook:** Winter storms temporarily tightened capacity and lifted North American spot rates, even as underlying demand remains weak and the market stays oversupplied. Once disruptions ease, carriers face backlog-related delays as networks reset.

### New CDL Eligibility Rule for Non-Domiciled Drivers

- **Outlook:** The USDOT's final rule adds new status checks, documentation requirements, and centralized reporting for non-domiciled CDL applicants. Increased scrutiny is expected to affect driver availability and contribute to cost pressures.

## Key Figures

**550**

commercial driving schools must close following USDOT findings related to compliance or safety issues.

**47%**

of carriers plan to delay investments in their fleets because of cost pressures from tariffs, according to Breakthrough's State of Transportation.

**\$0.10**

spread in DAT average dry van rates between spot and contract prices, the lowest in years.

## Notable Themes



### Class-8 Truck Sales Decreased

Class-8 truck sales fell 24% YoY in January to 12,287 units, signaling that fleets may be slowing replacement cycles. Potential to tighten long-term capacity and limit network flexibility.



### Cargo Theft Surge

More than half of respondents in a recent IANA survey reported impacts from intermodal container theft, highlighting rising security risks across networks.



### Trailer Orders Rise

Trailer orders increased nearly 10% YoY in January, reflecting stronger carrier investment in equipment. May improve drop-and-hook availability and operational efficiency, supporting better service consistency.

## Interesting Reads

- [Walmart expects capital investments in supply chain to peak this year and next](#)
- [Tesla's Megacharger network to support heavy-duty Semi trucks is being developed with 60 charger locations being developed](#)

# Air Freight Overview

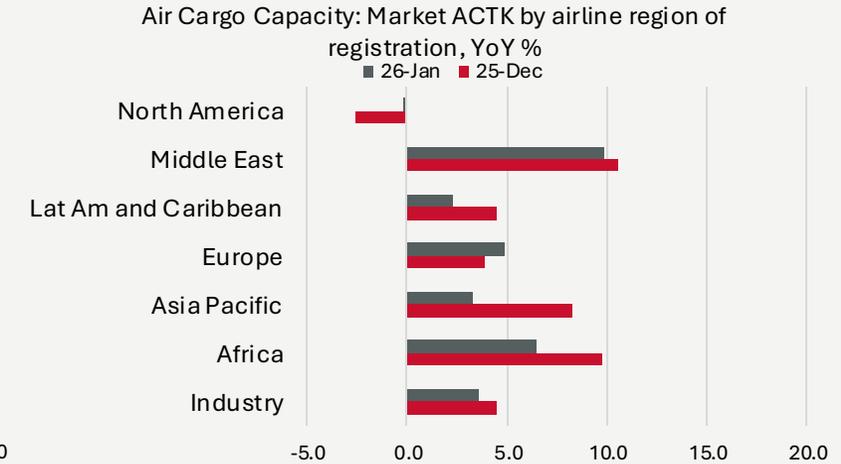
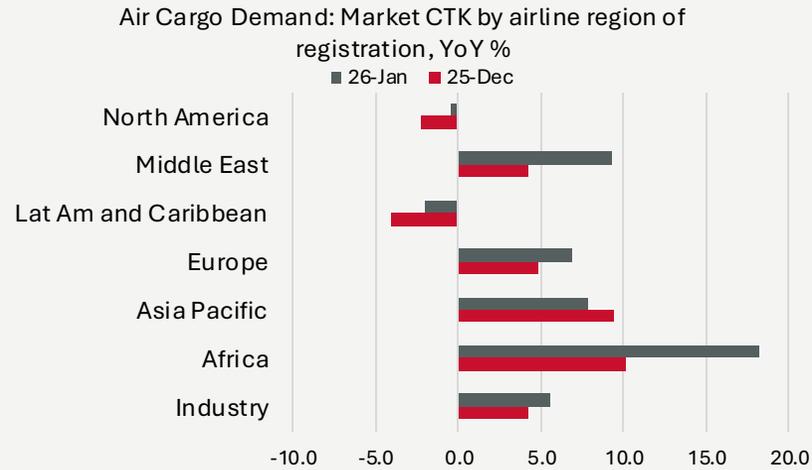
## Quick Digest

Global Air Cargo Demand Rises 5.6% YoY in January

- **Outlook:** Demand rose through January ahead of Chinese New Year, but North American weather disruptions softened late-month momentum. With the holiday on February 17, volumes are expected to rebound in March as factories restart and shippers prepare for quarter-end.

Global Air Cargo Capacity Rises 3.6% YoY in January

- **Outlook:** Capacity growth slowed and continued to lag demand, tightening market conditions. North America faced weather-related constraints, with February further pressured by CNY/LNY seasonality and winter storms. Although March usually brings a rebound, Middle East airspace restrictions may continue to limit capacity on affected lanes.



## Notable Themes

**Severe Winter Weather Reduces Air Cargo Capacity**  
Severe winter storms across Mainland Europe and the U.S. Northeast reduced air cargo capacity in February. Tightening lift and impacting transit reliability.

**Air Cargo Demand Rises Despite Geopolitical Disruption**  
Air cargo demand rose 3.4% in 2025 as companies adapted to geopolitical disruption. Strengthening structural reliance on air freight supports volume growth.

**Middle East Airspace Closures Disrupt Regional Capacity**  
Airspace closures significantly reduced regional capacity, with major carriers experiencing substantial cancellations and routing limits. Shippers moving through DOH, DXB/DWC/AUH, and TLV may face constrained payload availability and longer transit times due to detours.

## Interesting Reads

- [Geopolitics redraws global air cargo routes, says IATA chief](#)
- [Eight in Ten Forwarders See Volume Drops from Tariffs](#)
- [2025 exceeded expectations in the airfreight sector](#)
- [Roses at 35,000 feet: The Valentine's cargo rush](#)
- [Air Canada Surpasses 1 billion in revenue](#)

# Ocean Freight Overview

## Quick Digest

Strait of Hormuz Route Closed, Iran Crisis

**Outlook:** The effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz has trapped containerships and halted major carrier transits, forcing rerouting around the Cape of Good Hope and tightening global capacity. Expect sustained schedule disruption, elevated freight rates, and prolonged volatility.

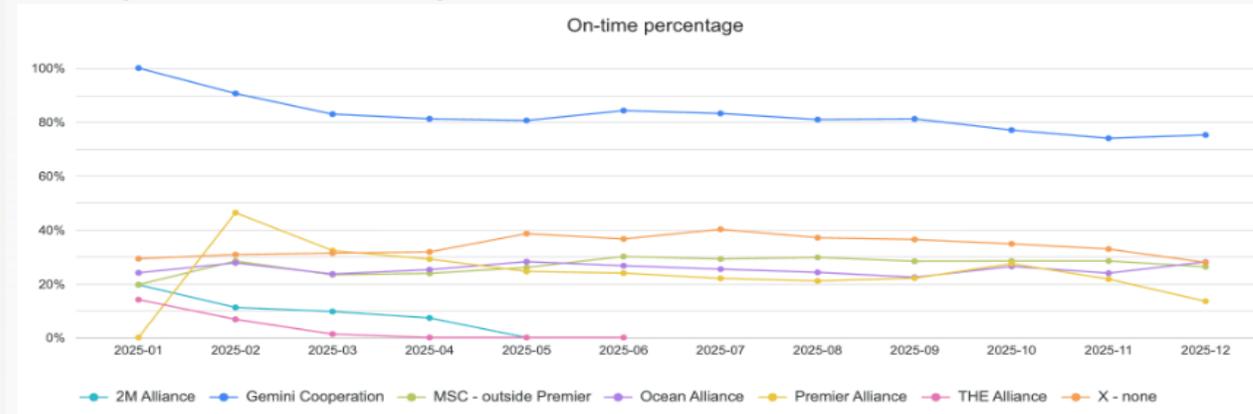
Severe Winter Storm Shuts NY–NJ Port Operations

• **Outlook:** A northeastern winter storm forced all major New York–New Jersey container terminals to suspend operation. Terminals face a multi-day catch-up period that could result in delays. Lingering impacts remain from January severe weather.

U.S. Imports and Far East Rates Soften

• **Outlook:** U.S. containerized imports fell 6.8% YoY in January to 2.32 M TEUs, reflecting both last year's tariff-frontloading and softer demand, while Far East spot rates declined across all major trades through the week ending Feb 19.

Monthly On-Time Arrivals by Alliance, 2025



## Notable Themes



**Ongoing Steamship Line Consolidation**  
Steamship line consolidation is accelerating as Hapag-Lloyd moves to acquire ZIM, a deal aimed at strengthening network connectivity across key trade lanes in Europe, Africa, the Black Sea, and transatlantic routes.



**Carrier Alliances Maintain Strong Performance**  
Ocean alliances continue to lead 2025 schedule performance, with steadily improving on-time reliability and stronger momentum across major trade corridors.



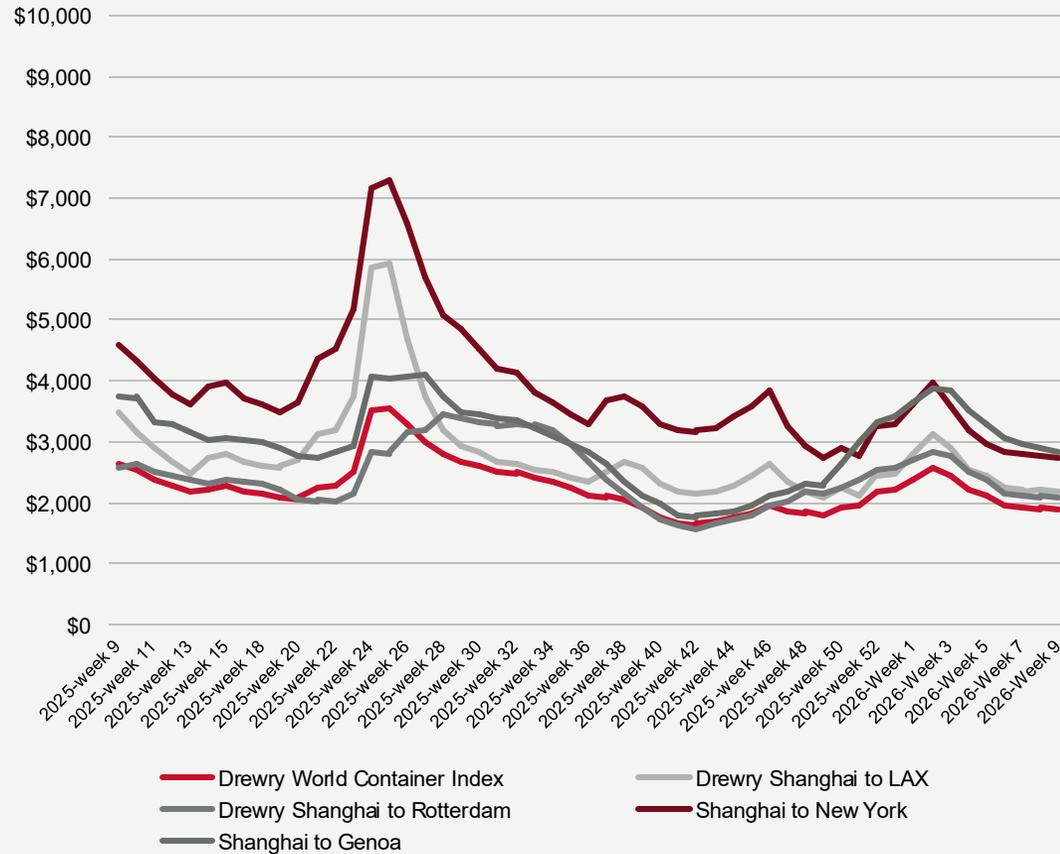
**Shift Toward Leaner Inventory Models**  
The 2026 outlook points to continued depressed rates and soft demand as shippers increasingly adopt leaner inventory strategies, reshaping international trade flows.

## Interesting Reads

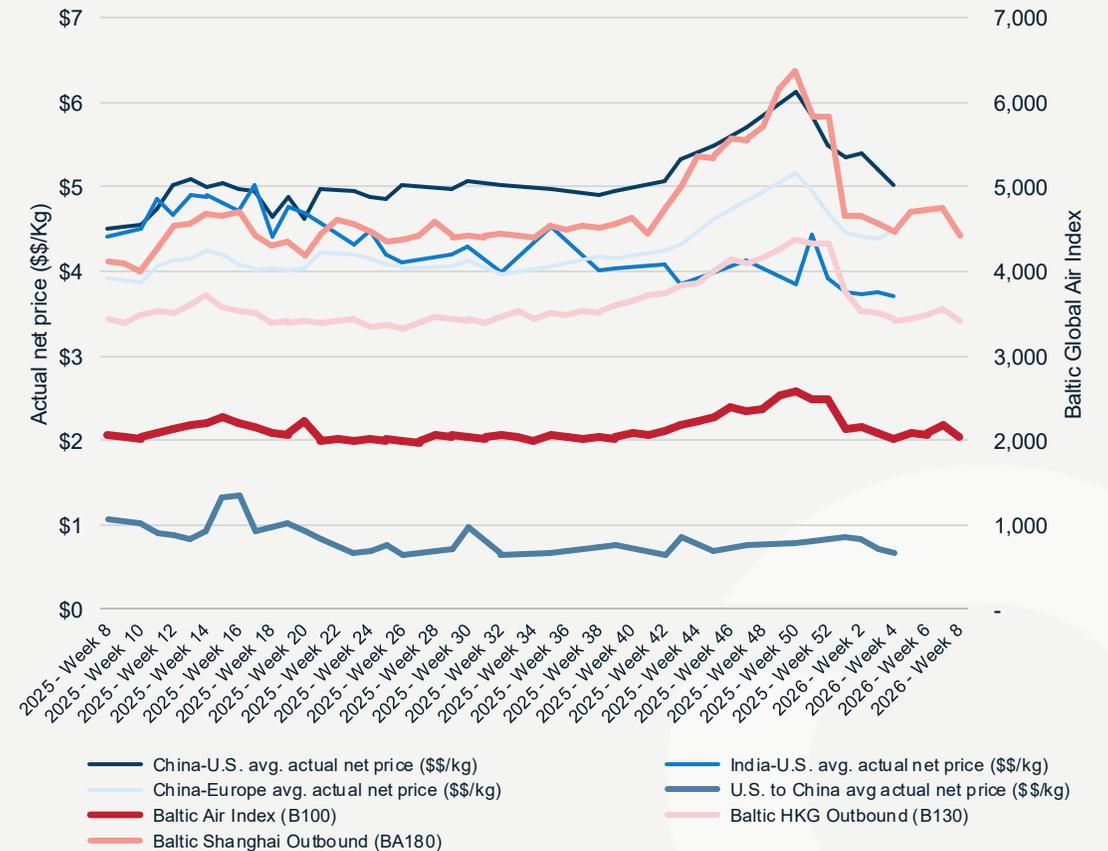
- [Hapag-Lloyd to acquire Zim in \\$4.2B deal](#)
- [Port of Baltimore sets cargo vessel call record in 2025](#)
- [Shipping Lines Cut Mideast Routes Posing Risk to Trade Flows](#)
- [Gemini schedule reliability shows sum greater than its parts](#)

# Market Rates: Ocean & Air

## World Container Market Rates – Last 52 Weeks



## Major Air Freight Market Rates – Last 52 Weeks



# Customs & Trade Compliance Overview

## Quick Digest

### IEEPA Tariff Refund Direction Issued

- **Outlook:** The CIT has now ordered CBP to liquidate all unliquidated IEEPA-duty entries without those duties and to reliquidate any liquidated but non-final entries to remove the duties, shifting the landscape from refund uncertainty to required operational implementation by CBP.

### CBP Halts Collection of IEEPA Tariffs

- **Outlook:** CBP has stopped collecting all IEEPA-based tariffs and deactivated the related codes as of Feb. 24, with its CMS notice offering no guidance on potential refunds. Temporary 15% global tariff under Section 122 introduced.

### USMCA Six-Year Review Underway

- **Outlook:** The mandated 2026 joint review has begun, requiring the U.S., Mexico, and Canada to decide on an extension or initiate a timeline toward potential expiration in 2036. Potential revisions or recurring future reviews could affect long-term investment and stability.

## Regulatory & Tariff Updates

USA	EU / UK	China
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- CBP stops IEEPA tariff collection and deactivates all associated codes.</li> <li>- Duty removal for IEEPA-affected entries is now mandatory</li> <li>- U.S. sets temporary 15% global tariff under Section 122.</li> <li>- Importers face final onboarding deadlines for CBSA's CARM Release 2, April 2026.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- EU freezes ratification of its U.S. trade deal pending clarity on the U.S. 15% global tariff plan.</li> <li>- CBAM declarants must continue quarterly embedded-emissions reporting for covered sectors ahead of the 2027 financial obligation go-live.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- China expands availability of binding rulings (classification, valuation, origin).</li> </ul>
		Mexico
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mexico's comprehensive 2026 Customs Law Reform is active.</li> </ul>

## Notable Themes

 <p><b>IEEPA Refund Status Unknown</b> With CBP stopping collection of all IEEPA-based tariffs and deactivating related codes, importers face unresolved uncertainty as neither the Court nor CBP has indicated whether refunds will occur or how they would be administered.</p>	 <p><b>Tariff Burden Realignment Across Partners</b> U.S. allies (i.e., U.K., EU, Japan, and South Korea) now face higher effective tariff exposure under the 15% global duty, while China and Brazil see decreases, recalibrating competitive positions and compliance priorities.</p>	 <p><b>Trade Deals Pause</b> Trading partners are pausing decisions and delaying agreements—most notably the EU freezing ratification of its U.S. trade deal—pending clarity on the new global tariff framework.</p>	 <p><b>Compliance Safeguards</b> Strong documentation and accurate ACE reports are essential safeguards, ensuring companies can defend their positions and stay compliant amid ongoing IEEPA refund uncertainty.</p>
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## Interesting Reads

- [In Focus: Potential Refunds of Tariffs Imposed Under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act \(IEEPA\)](#)
- [U.S. Tells Partners to Honor Tariff Deals as Trump Regroups](#)
- [Report: Forced Labor Crackdown Likely Coming in 2026](#)

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