

FrachtNEWS

Logistics
Market
Report

 Global Market

Ocean Freight



U.S. Trade Representative Proposes Significant Port Fees on Chinese-Built Vessels

In a strategic move to counter China's dominance in global shipbuilding, the office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) has proposed substantial fees on Chinese-built vessels entering American ports. This initiative aims to address concerns over China's maritime operations and bolster the U.S. shipbuilding industry. Additionally, incentives are proposed for operators utilizing U.S. built ships. These proposals have elicited varied responses. Labor unions advocate for robust actions to revitalize U.S. shipbuilding and counteract China's market influence. Conversely, industry stakeholders express concerns about potential cost increases and operational disruptions. Analysts note, "The most affected sector is likely containerships given their multiple port calls" (Chambers, 2025). With container ships frequently docking at various U.S. ports, the cumulative costs of these tariffs could

be substantial, potentially altering shipping routes and logistics planning. The proposed fees could lead to higher shipping costs, which may be passed on to businesses and consumers. The proposed fees could necessitate fleet reorganization and elevate freight rates, with operators likely passing on these costs to consumers. A public hearing is scheduled for March 24 to deliberate on these proposals, after which a final decision will be made. The outcome could have profound implications for global shipping practices, international trade relations, and the strategic positioning of the U.S. maritime industry.

Source: Chambers, S. (2025, February 25). *Container sector set to take biggest hit from US plans to charge Chinese-built vessels*. Splash247. <https://splash247.com/container-sector-set-to-take-biggest-hit-from-us-plans-to-charge-chinese-built-vessels/>

Global Market

Ocean Freight

Suez Canal Sees Increased Traffic as Stability Returns to Red Sea



Source: Egypt Today Staff. (2025, February 23). 47 vessels shift to Suez Canal in February 2025. Egypt Today. <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/3/138609/47-vessels-shift-to-Suez-Canal-in-February-2025>

In a notable shift for global maritime logistics, the Suez Canal has welcomed a surge of redirected vessel traffic this month. According to the Suez Canal Authority, 47 ships opted to traverse the canal rather than detour around the Cape of Good Hope since early February 2025. Osama Rabie, Chairman of the Suez Canal Authority, highlighted the factors behind this resurgence during his keynote at the 14th Annual International Maritime and Logistics Conference (MARLOG) in Cairo. As reported by Egypt Today, Rabie stated, “joint consultations with shipping companies and encouraging client feedback, indicating a resurgence of stability in the Red Sea region, have prompted several carriers to choose the canal route over the longer alternative” (Egypt Today Staff, 2025). He expressed optimism that this trend could persist with continued regional calm. As the Suez Canal adapts to evolving industry needs, its focus on service quality and infrastructure development positions it as a cornerstone of maritime logistics in 2025.

Global Market

Air Freight

Evolving Airfreight Trends Amid Ecommerce Shifts

The global airfreight industry is experiencing a modest uptick in rates and volumes, influenced by the dynamic e-commerce sector and evolving regulatory landscapes. WorldACD noted, “The overall increasing trend of ecommerce demand since last year might have contributed to this dynamic, but the trends and underlying factors for air cargo tonnages from China and Hong Kong are rather complex this year and remain difficult to interpret, especially until we are well clear of the effects of lunar new year and recent US de minimis rule changes and reversals” (Lennane, 2025). The evolving strategies of major players indicate that airfreight market dynamics will continue to transform in the coming months. Industry stakeholders are closely monitoring these developments to adapt and strategize effectively in response to the changing market conditions.



Source: Lennane, A. (2025, February 21). Airfreight rates rising gently as ecommerce giants eye new tradelanes. The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/airfreight-rates-rising-gently-as-ecommerce-giants-eye-new-tradelanes/>



Global Market

Breakbulk

Fluctuating Market Conditions Impact Multipurpose Shipping Rates



The latest multipurpose shipping rate index from Toepfer Transport indicates a slight decline in average charter rates for February 2025. The report highlights market fluctuations driven by regional economic activity and broader geopolitical factors, reflecting the sector’s sensitivity to global developments. According to Toepfer, “this movement is related to lower market activity in the Far East due to the Chinese Lunar New Year celebrations and, of course, some uncertainty caused by statements and decisions made by the new US administration” (Kershaw, 2025). As global trade patterns adjust and infrastructure investments progress, the multipurpose shipping segment is expected to maintain steady demand.

Source: Kershaw, D. (2025, February 6). *Toepfer Transport’s monthly multipurpose shipping rate update*. Heavy Lift & Project Forwarding International. <https://www.heavyliftpf.com/sectors/toepfer-transports-monthly-multipurpose-shipping-rate-update/21174.article>

North America Market

Ocean Freight



ILA Ratifies Six-Year Contract with USMX

The International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) has secured labor peace at ports along the East and Gulf Coasts, as its members overwhelmingly approved a new six-year contract with the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX). The newly ratified contract provides significant wage increases, along with enhanced benefits for workers. It also includes provisions allowing terminal operators and ocean carriers to introduce limited automation, with safeguards in place to protect union jobs. ILA President Harold Daggett characterized the agreement as “the greatest contract in ILA history, and maybe the strongest collective bargaining agreement ever negotiated by any union” (Chirls, 2025). With this agreement in place, industry stakeholders anticipate smooth operations at East and Gulf Coast ports for the foreseeable future.



Source: Chirls, S. (2025, February 25). *ILA members overwhelmingly approve new contract covering East, Gulf coast ports*. Freightwaves. https://www.freightwaves.com/news/ila-members-overwhelmingly-approve-new-contract-covering-east-gulf-coast-ports?oly_enc_id=9241H1871612B5T



North America Market

Ocean Freight

Port of Oakland Targets Import Growth Through Infrastructure Modernization

The Port of Oakland has unveiled an ambitious five-year strategic plan aimed at prioritizing infrastructure modernization and transloading capacity enhancements. The initiative seeks to position Oakland as a stronger import gateway in the trans-Pacific trade while maintaining its established role as a key export hub. According to Mike Jacob, president of the Pacific Merchant Shipping Association (PMSA), these upgrades are essential to improving Oakland's competitiveness as an import hub.

"The port needs to be more competitive in the import space," Jacob emphasized, adding that the trans-Pacific trade has historically favored imports over exports (Mongelluzzo, 2025). The port's new plan could help to solidify Oakland's role as a critical entry point for trans-Pacific trade.

Source: Mongelluzzo, B. (2025, February 20). *Oakland pins growth on attracting imports, first-call inbound service*. Journal of Commerce. <https://www.joc.com/article/oakland-pins-growth-on-attracting-imports-first-call-inbound-service-5947705>



North America Market

Air Freight

US Policy Shifts Challenge Air Cargo Operators



Source: Goldstone, C. (2025, February 21). *How US rule-changes are putting air cargo carriers in a "tough spot."* The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/how-us-rule-changes-are-putting-air-cargo-carriers-in-a-tough-spot/>

Recent changes in U.S. trade policy, particularly potential tariff implementations and the removal of the de minimis customs duty exemption, are placing air cargo carriers under pressure. One major concern is whether companies could invoke force majeure to bypass contractual obligations. However, legal perspectives suggest that economic hardship alone may not be sufficient grounds for invoking force majeure. Matthew Gore, a partner at HFW, explained, "Force majeure does not generally operate to excuse a party from their obligations merely because performance has become more expensive" (Goldstone, 2025). As regulatory shifts reshape the air cargo landscape, both carriers and shippers must reassess their contractual agreements and operational strategies. The coming months will reveal whether industry players can successfully adapt or face substantial disruptions.



North America Market

Air Freight

Atlas Air and DHL to End Polar Air Cargo Joint Venture

After 17 years of collaboration, Atlas Air Worldwide and DHL have decided to dissolve their joint venture, Polar Air Cargo. An Atlas Air Worldwide spokesperson stated, "Atlas and DHL have mutually decided that the joint venture no longer aligns with the strategic direction of either shareholder company" (Jeffrey, 2025). The decision aligns with Atlas Air's "One Atlas Strategy," which focuses on serving direct shippers, major e-commerce platforms, express carriers, airlines, freight forwarders, and ocean shipping companies. Although an official closure date has not been confirmed, Atlas Air will maintain its relationship with DHL Express as a contracted carrier. Atlas will continue utilizing some of Polar's freighters for DHL Express flights while redeploying others within its own operations.



Source: Jeffrey, R. (2025, February 23). Polar Air Cargo JV to come to an end. Air Cargo News. <https://www.aircargonews.net/airlines/polar-air-cargo-jv-to-come-to-an-end/1079722.article>

Latin American Market

Ocean Freight



Severe Congestion on Paraguay River Disrupts Logistics Operations

A severe backlog of vessels has developed on the Paraguay River due to sediment buildup at Bermejo Pass, which has been exacerbated by low water levels this season. According to Paraguay Fluvial & Logistics, the widespread congestion "has caused the accumulation of more than 400 barges, 40 tugboats

and several container ships and tankers" from navigating key trade routes. Efforts to address the crisis are underway, with the dredger "Damen 500" deployed to clear the channel. However, these operations necessitate temporary halts in river traffic adding to the congestion. With ongoing dredging efforts and

strategic interventions, stakeholders remain cautiously optimistic. However, authorities anticipate that congestion could persist for several weeks. The Paraguay River serves as a critical artery for regional logistics, and disruptions of this magnitude can have significant ripple effects on supply chains.



Source: MundoMaritimo. (2025, February 27). More than 400 barges and vessels of various types are prevented from navigating the Paraguay River. <https://www.mundomaritimo.cl/noticias/mas-de-400-barcazas-y-naves-de-diverso-tipo-se-ven-impedidas-de-navegar-en-el-rio-paraguay>



Latin American Market

Ocean Freight

Panama Canal Expands Water Security Efforts with Indio River Project

The Panama Canal Authority (ACP) has approved funding for a new lake in the Indio River watershed, marking a significant step in securing water resources for both the canal’s operations and the broader Panamanian population. This initiative is part of the Water Projects Program, which aims to mitigate future water shortages and enhance the sustainability of global trade routes. According to the ACP, the newly approved lake will play a critical role in bolstering water storage capacity, ensuring long-term reliability for the canal and its surrounding communities. “This project is a key component of Panama’s long-term strategy to address water scarcity, significantly increasing storage capacity for this essential resource. It serves as a safeguard against future droughts, such as those experienced in 2023–2024” (WorldCargoNews.com, 2025). The strategic investment underscores the canal’s commitment to resilience in the face of climate variability and growing global trade demands.



Source: World Cargo News. (2025, February 24). Panama Canal approves funding for Indio River lake project. World Cargo News. <https://www.worldcargonews.com/shipping-logistics/2025/02/panama-canal-approves-funding-for-indio-river-lake-project/>

Asian Market

Air Freight



Lunar New Year Drives Airfreight Growth for Asia Pacific Airlines



The Lunar Year holiday provided a significant increase to air cargo volumes for Asia Pacific airlines, with consumer demand driving a surge in freight movement. The AAPA noted that this growth occurred despite a challenging global trade landscape. Looking ahead, industry leaders maintain a cautiously optimistic outlook. While steady global economic activity supports continued growth, potential risks remain. AAPA Director General Subhas Menon emphasized the need for vigilance as airlines navigate evolving market conditions. Menon noted that “ongoing geopolitical and trade tensions pose potential risks to both business sentiment and consumer demand in the months ahead” (Jeffrey, 2025). Asia Pacific airlines continue to monitor market developments and adapt strategies to optimize operational efficiency. With demand trends aligning with seasonal shifts and economic activity, air cargo carriers in the region remain focused on sustaining momentum while mitigating potential risks.

Source: Jeffrey, R. (2025, February 26). Lunar New Year boosts airfreight volumes for Asia Pacific airlines. Air Cargo News. <https://www.aircargonews.net/lunar-new-year-boosts-airfreight-volumes-for-asia-pacific-airlines/1079733.article>

**European Market**

Ocean Freight



New Shipping Routes Accelerate Mediterranean–US East Coast Trade

In response to evolving market demands, steamship lines are “adding services and emphasizing speed between the Mediterranean and the US East Coast amid a reshuffling of southern European port coverage on trans-Atlantic services” (Angell, 2025). Recent adjustments include new service introductions and port usage modifications to optimize transit times. These strategic adjustments highlight the continued emphasis on service efficiency and reliability in the trans-Atlantic market, ensuring streamlined logistics solutions for shippers moving cargo between southern Europe and the U.S. East Coast.

Source: Angell, M. (2025a, February 18). *Mediterranean-US East Coast container services get revamp for 2025*. Journal of Commerce. <https://www.joc.com/article/mediterranean-us-east-coast-container-services-get-revamp-for-2025-5946387>

**European Market**

Intermodal

EU’s Renewed Focus on Intermodal Freight: A Path to Competitive Sustainability



The European Commission is advancing its commitment to sustainable logistics with a revised approach to strengthen intermodal transport through the revision of the Combined Transport Directive (CTD), a key component of its Greening Freight Transport Package. Despite previous efforts, road transport continues to dominate EU freight. By shifting freight from road-dominant transport toward more sustainable rail, waterways, and short-sea shipping, “The EU’s push for intermodal competitiveness is a critical step toward reducing freight emissions and improving efficiency” (Newsdesk, 2025). While regulatory support is intended to ease the transition, the success of intermodal transport will ultimately depend on improved infrastructure, digitalization, and operational efficiency. As the EU refines its policy, industry stakeholders will need to adapt to ensure long-term competitiveness in a greener freight landscape.

Source: Newsdesk. (2025, February 21). [DeepDive] EU’s Push for Intermodal Transport: Strengthening Competitiveness Amid Market Challenges. BBN Breakbulk News. <https://breakbulk.news/deepdive-eus-push-for-intermodal-transport-strengthening-competitiveness-amid-market-challenges/>



Oceania Market

Air Freight

Swissport Expands Air Cargo Operations in Australia and Enters New Zealand

Swissport International, a leading provider of airport ground services and air cargo handling, has announced a major expansion in Australia and its first entry into New Zealand. The company's latest strategic moves aim to strengthen its

logistics capabilities and support the growing air cargo market in the region. Joel Greig, Swissport's General Manager Cargo for Australia and New Zealand, emphasized the strategic value of these expansions: "Swissport is ready to support the rapidly growing air cargo

demand in Australia and New Zealand, enabling businesses to thrive" (Murday, 2025). This growth strengthens Swissport's role as a vital partner in the marketing and logistics industry, delivering tailored solutions to meet evolving supply chain needs in the region.



Source: Murday, H. (2025, February 10). *Swissport grows business in Australia, will enter NZ*. Daily Cargo News. https://www.thedcn.com.au/region/australia/swissport-grows-business-in-australia-will-enter-nz/?utm_source=DCN+Daily+Newswire&utm_campaign=d%E2%80%A6

Oceania Market

Ocean Freight

WA Expands Shipping and Supply Chain Resilience Following Cyclone Zelia

In response to the disruption caused by Cyclone Zelia, Western Australia is reinforcing its logistics and shipping capabilities to enhance resilience during natural disasters. The initiative, led by Premier Roger Cook, includes a newly established Supply Chain Resilience Fund aimed at ensuring continued access to essential goods and industry operations during emergencies. Cook recognizes "Western Australia is prone to natural disasters like floods and cyclones, particularly in the north of the state which had demonstrated that supply chains can be vulnerable by road and rail during an emergency" (Newton, 2025). By bolstering maritime transport capabilities, Western Australia government's investment in shipping infrastructure and workforce development underscores a strategic shift toward diversifying supply chain modalities.



Source: Newton, A. (2025, February 18). *Boost for shipping and supply after WA cyclone*. Daily Cargo News. https://www.thedcn.com.au/sticky/boost-for-shipping-and-supply-after-wa-cyclone/?utm_source=DCN+Daily+Newswire&utm_campaign=f75e2d43%E2%80%A6



IMO Advances Maritime Decarbonization Talks with New Emissions Strategy

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is making progress in its efforts to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from shipping, with recent discussions focusing on regulatory measures to drive the industry toward net-zero emissions. The Intersessional Working Group on Reduction of GHG Emissions from Ships (ISWG-GHG 18) recently reviewed proposals that include both technical and economic strategies to lower the sector's carbon footprint.

Notably, the meeting reaffirmed its commitment to keeping all emissions pricing proposals in consideration, as "one of the key takeaways from the meeting was the agreement to keep all proposals for an emissions pricing mechanism on the table" (Editor, 2025).

Source: Editor. (2025, February 24). *IMO Advances Talks on Greenhouse Gas Reduction in Shipping*. BBN Breakbulk News. <https://breakbulk.news/imo-advances-talks-on-greenhouse-gas-reduction-in-shipping/>

