

# FrachtNEWS

Logistics  
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## New U.S. Tariff Policy Effective April 9 Reshapes Global Trade Dynamics

The United States has introduced a comprehensive set of import tariffs aimed at recalibrating international trade dynamics, effective April 9, 2025. The policy institutes a baseline 10% tariff on all imports into the United States, with significantly higher rates for certain countries. According to The Maritime Executive report, “The administration released a table of rates that it has calculated for 50 different foreign nations’ tariffs on American goods, including the equivalent impact of non-tariff trade barriers” (The Maritime Executive, 2025). China faces a 34% tariff, which, combined with previous measures, raises the total tariff on Chinese goods to 54%. Other nations, including Cambodia, Laos, Madagascar, Vietnam, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, are subject to tariffs ranging from 36% to 49%. The European nations face a uniform 20% rate, and a separate 25% tariff applies to foreign-built vehicles, affecting automotive logistics and roll-on/roll-off shipping operations. The policy spares certain commodities—copper, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, lumber, bullion, and select minerals—

offering relief to industries dependent on these materials. Bilateral negotiations may soften the impact, offering hope for supply chain stability as companies adapt to this evolving trade landscape. “The silver lining for investors could be that this is only a starting point for negotiations with other countries and ultimately tariff rates will come down across the board,” said Northlight Asset Management’s chief investment officer Chris Zaccarelli (The Maritime Executive, 2025). These developments mark a pivotal shift in global trade dynamics, prompting businesses and policymakers to reassess international trade strategies and economic policies. As the policy unfolds, industries must assess their sourcing methods to mitigate potential disruptions and costs associated with these new regulations.

**Source:** The Maritime Executive. (2025, April 2). Trump Imposes 34% Tariff on Chinese Goods, 10% Global Minimum. The Maritime Executive. <https://maritime-executive.com/article/trump-imposes-34-tariff-on-chinese-goods-10-global-minimum>

# Industry Reimagines U.S. Maritime Future Amid Chinese Vessel Fee Debate



**Source:** Johnson, E. (2025, March 28). *Plan to tax Chinese ships turned maritime malaise into 'brainstorming session.'* Journal of Commerce. <https://www.joc.com/article/plan-to-tax-chinese-ships-turned-maritime-malaise-into-brainstorming-session-5971753>

The U.S. maritime and logistics sector recently found itself at the center of a dynamic discussion sparked by the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR) proposal to impose substantial fees on Chinese-built and -operated ships calling at U.S. ports. Rather than simply rejecting or endorsing the idea, stakeholders seized the opportunity to propose innovative solutions aimed at bolstering U.S. shipbuilding and maritime operations. As trade attorney Lauren Beagen observed, "This essentially turned into a big brainstorming session" (Johnson, 2025). She noted that the severity of the proposed penalties compelled the industry to engage deeply, offering alternatives that might not have surfaced without such a catalyst. Several organizations provided alternative recommendations to ensure policy effectiveness without disrupting trade. This robust response underscores a unified industry effort to shape policies that enhance U.S. maritime competitiveness. What began as a contentious proposal has evolved into a collaborative push for practical, forward-thinking strategies, ensuring the sector's voice resonates in efforts to revitalize American shipbuilding and logistics.

## Revitalizing U.S. Shipbuilding: A Push for Maritime Strength

Efforts to rejuvenate the U.S. shipbuilding industry are gaining momentum as lawmakers and union representatives advocate for the passage of the Ships for America Act. Introduced by U.S. Representative John Garamendi (D-Fairfield), the proposed legislation aims to rebuild an industry that was once a cornerstone of Vallejo's economy but has significantly declined in recent decades. "Currently, only 80 ships are used to ship goods around the world with American flags, meaning they are registered in the United States. There are about 5,500 that sail with Chinese flags, according to Garamendi's office" (Hughes, 2025). The Ships for America Act comprises five bills designed to provide financial incentives, enhance workforce development, and establish a U.S. Center for Maritime Innovation. This initiative would facilitate research, workforce recruitment, and technological advancement through regional hubs. As discussions continue, industry leaders and policymakers remain focused on ensuring that the U.S. maritime sector can compete globally while reinforcing national security interests.



**Source:** Hughes, T. (2025, April 1). *US Rep. Garamendi, union workers call for passage of bill to revitalize shipbuilding.* Local News Matters Bay Area. <https://localnewsmatters.org/2025/04/01/us-rep-garamendi-union-workers-call-for-passage-of-bill-to-revitalize-shipbuilding/>

# Hutchison Postpones Panama Ports Sale Amid Regulatory and Geopolitical Concerns



**Source:** MundoMaritime. (2025, March 31). CK Hutchison suffers a setback and will not seal the sale of its Panama terminals on April 2 as planned. MundoMaritime. <https://www.mundomaritimo.cl/noticias/ck-hutchison-sufre-traspie-y-no-sellaria-venta-de-terminales-de-panama-este-2-de-abril-como-tenia-previsto>

Originally slated for completion by April 2, the CK Hutchison Holdings handover of Panama Ports Company (PPC), which manages two key facilities along the Panama Canal (Balboa and Cristóbal), to Blackrock-TiL has been postponed due to emerging antitrust investigations. The process has sparked widespread attention, particularly as global regulators scrutinize the deal. China's market regulator has announced a review, stating it aims "to protect fair competition and safeguard the public interest" (MundoMaritimo, 2025) sparking potential examinations in other nations where the ports operate. This delay highlights the challenges of coordinating such a vast divestment, with negotiations ongoing to address the multifaceted aspects of the agreement, which carries a 145-day timeline for completion. As the situation unfolds, the logistics community awaits further clarity on how this high-profile transaction will reshape control over vital trade infrastructure.

# MSC Poised To Reinforce Leading Position In Maritime Industry

Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) is poised to become the world's largest container terminal operator if the acquisition of an 80% stake in Hutchison Ports Holding by a Blackrock-TiL consortium is finalized. The deal, announced by CK Hutchison, would mark a significant shift in global port operations, reinforcing MSC's leading position in the maritime industry. "The proposed deal will see MSC leapfrog other leading GTOs to secure the top spot in the global terminal operator rankings," noted Eleanor Hadland, Drewry's Lead Analyst for Ports and Terminals (Schuler, 2025). Hutchison Ports operates 43 container terminals outside of China and Hong Kong, with a capacity of more than 73 million TEU. The acquisition also includes a 90% interest in the Panama Ports Company, which controls the Balboa and Cristobal ports on either side of the Panama Canal. "This deal appears to be a major win for MSC, which secures additional capacity in several key markets," Hadland concluded (Schuler, 2025). This strategic move would further expand MSC's reach, particularly in key maritime trade routes despite the regulatory challenges ahead.



**Source:** Schuler, M. (2025, March 6). Shipping Giant MSC Set to Become World's Largest Terminal Operator in \$22.8B Hutchison Ports Deal. gCaptain. <https://gcaptain.com/shipping-giant-msc-set-to-become-worlds-largest-terminal-operator-in-22-8b-hutchison-ports-deal/>

# Uncertainty Clouds Suez Canal Shipping Resumption Amid Red Sea Tensions Return



**Source:** van Marle, G. (2025, March 17). *Resumption of Suez transits in doubt after return of Red Sea hostilities*. The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/resumption-of-suez-transits-in-doubt-after-return-of-red-sea-hostilities/>

The prospect of container lines resuming regular transits through the Suez Canal remains uncertain as hostilities in the Red Sea escalate. The instability in the region has directly impacted major shipping lines. The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) is eager to restore traffic. MSC CEO Soren Toft during a discussion at S&P Global's TPM25 conference underscored the severity of the situation stating, "Suez simply isn't safe to transit at the moment, and there's no immediate prospect of a return. Eventually it will reopen, and when it does, we will follow suit" (van Marle, 2025). As companies continue to adapt, alternative routes like the Cape of Good Hope remain in use, though they present their own navigational hurdles. With tensions persisting and security threats unresolved, the timeline for a safe and sustained return to Suez Canal transits remains unclear. Until stability is restored, shippers and carriers must continue to navigate operational uncertainties in one of the world's most critical trade corridors.

# Container Shipping Industry Sees Strong 2024 Earnings Despite Market Challenges

Major shipping lines that have disclosed financial results for 2024 have reported a combined EBIT of \$27.3 billion according to a report by Sea-Intelligence, reflecting sustained profitability despite significant fluctuations in recent years. Because some major shipping companies, including MSC, PIL, and CMA CGM, do not publicly disclose earnings, analysts estimate total industry profitability based on capacity-adjusted averages. Using this approach, total market EBIT is approximated at \$60 billion for last year. Looking ahead, geopolitical developments and disruptions in the Suez Canal are likely to shape industry performance in 2025. Christian Roeloffs, CEO of Container xChange, highlighted the uncertainty surrounding global trade routes, stating, "If the Suez Canal opens up, there will be significant overcapacity and enhanced price war" (Indian Transport & Logistics News, 2025). With ongoing global tensions and fluctuating demand, the container shipping industry is bracing for a period of uncertainty in 2025, making adaptability and strategic decision-making critical for sustained profitability.



**Source:** Indian Transport & Logistics News. (2025, March 19). *Container shipping profitability around \$60 billion in 2024*. Indian Transport & Logistics News. <https://www.itln.in/shipping/container-shipping-profitability-around-60-billion-in-2024-1354783>

# Impact of Tariffs and Changes to De Minimis Exemption on Airfreight

Recent changes to U.S. trade policy have had significant impacts on airfreight demand. The introduction of additional tariffs and the planned end of China's de minimis exemption have raised concerns in the logistics sector. As one expert notes, "The tariffs are lowering the demand for airfreight, especially from regions where the cost of transportation is directly affected" (Brett, 2025).

The policy changes are expected to disrupt global supply chains, requiring businesses to adapt to new tariffs and logistical challenges.

**Source:** Brett, D. (2025, April 3). *Trump tariffs: Lower airfreight demand and China de minimis end date set*. Stat Times. <https://www.aircargonews.net/supply-chains/trump-tariffs-lower-airfreight-demand-and-china-de-minimis-end-date-set/1079904.article>



# Freighter Conversion Activity Declines Despite Strong Demand for Cargo



Despite strong growth in cargo demand, freighter conversions have slowed, with high feedstock prices impacting the market. According to IBA, demand for cargo tonnage increased by 11.3% in 2024, but conversion activity dropped compared to 2023. Jonathan McDonald of IBA explained that A321 conversions, initially highly valued, saw a reduction in prices, largely due to the high feedstock costs in the passenger sector, which "have now settled back" (Mwanalushi, 2025). This shift in conversion dynamics indicates a market adjusting to new economic realities.

**Source:** Mwanalushi, K. (2025, March 4). *Fewer freighter conversions, despite feedstock availability and demand*. The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/fewer-freighter-conversions-despite-feedstock-availability-and-demand/>

## Global Market

Breakbulk

## Geopolitical Tensions Impact Multipurpose Shipping Market

The latest update from Toepfer Transport indicates a slight decline in multipurpose shipping rates, reflecting growing uncertainty in the global market. The company highlighted the increasing unpredictability of the geopolitical landscape, compounded by emerging economic challenges. “Recent developments regarding Russia’s war against Ukraine are adding further uncertainty,” Toepfer stated, “while at the same time appearing to trigger a huge increase in investment in defence and infrastructure in the EU” (Kershaw, 2025). The report underscores the need for stakeholders to monitor international developments closely and adapt their strategies to mitigate risks.

**Source:** Kershaw, D. (2025, March 12). *Toepfer Transport’s monthly multipurpose shipping rate update*. Heavy Lift & Project Forwarding International. <https://www.heavyliftpf.com/sectors/toepfer-transport-monthly-multipurpose-shipping-rate-update/21174.articlez>

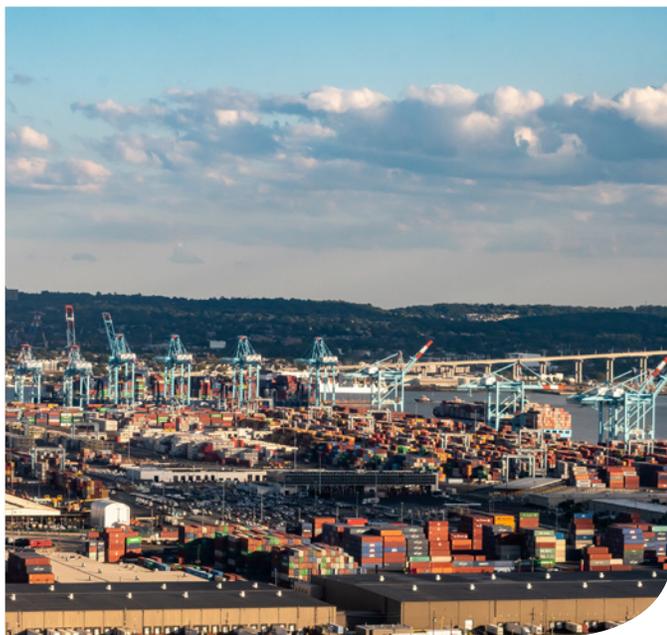


## North America Market

Ocean Freight



## Maersk Extends Lease at APM Terminals Elizabeth Through 2062



A. P. Moller-Maersk and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANYNJ) have agreed to extend their lease agreement for APM Terminals Elizabeth through December 2062. The renewed lease facilitates further infrastructure investments aimed at optimizing terminal operations, including layout adjustments and the electrification of container handling. Henrik Kristensen, Managing Director of APM Terminals Elizabeth, emphasized the importance of the partnership with labor organizations. “Working side-by-side with the ILA, the extension will allow us to continue our investment in the terminal to support jobs and the growth of the local economy for many years to come,” Kristensen remarked (Humpert, 2025). This strategic move reinforces the Port of New York and New Jersey’s position as a key logistics gateway, poised for decades of innovation and expansion.

**Source:** Humpert, M. (2025, March 24). *Maersk and Port of New York and New Jersey Agree on 33-Year Lease Extension*. gCaptain. <https://gCaptain.com/maersk-and-port-of-new-york-and-new-jersey-agree-on-33-year-lease-extension/>

## North America Market

Air Freight

## US CBP Revenue Plunges, Airfreight Faces E-commerce Decline

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>



## U.S Administration's Policies Create Uncertainty for Airfreight Industry



The airfreight industry is bracing for a potential downturn as the current administration's rapid policy shifts impact the global economy, especially the small-dollar shipments from China that have been crucial for air cargo growth. Niall van de Wouw, chief airfreight officer at Xeneta, noted, "If this now takes a significant hit, it will have a profound effect on airfreight rates around the world" (Kulisch, 2025). Air cargo demand growth slowed to just 3%, and concerns over tariffs and regulations are intensifying, with many logistics operators adjusting strategies to cope with the changing landscape.

**Source:** Kulisch, E. (2025, March 11). *Trump policies make airfreight shippers jittery about downturn*. The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/trump-policies-make-airfreight-shippers-jittery-about-downturn>

## North America Market

## Breakbulk

## Breakbulk Industry Concerned Over USTR's Proposed Tonnage Tax on Chinese-Built Vessels

The United States Trade Representative's (USTR) recent proposal to impose fees on Chinese-made and -operated vessels has drawn significant criticism from breakbulk operators and stakeholders. The proposal, which suggests fees ranging from \$1 million to \$1.5 million per U.S. port call, has sparked concerns over increased shipping costs for steel coils, industrial components, and other project cargo. According to BBC Chartering USA president Tim Kopfensteiner and CEO Ulrich Ulrichs, "there are no U.S.-built multipurpose heavy-lift vessels, and multipurpose vessels carry critical industrial cargoes, strategic components, and resources to and from the U.S." (Fields, 2025). As the USTR reviews public comments, industry participants continue to advocate for more equitable measures to mitigate unintended consequences on U.S. trade and shipping operations.



**Source:** Fields, C. (2025, March 21). Breakbulk stakeholders blast USTR's China tonnage tax proposal. Journal of Commerce. <https://www.joc.com/article/breakbulk-stakeholders-blast-ustrs-china-tonnage-tax-proposal-5967564>

## North America Market

## Rail Freight

## Rail Industry Advancements Improve Sustainability



**Source:** Kulisch, E. (2025, March 11). Trump policies make airfreight shippers jittery about downturn. The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/trump-policies-make-airfreight-shippers-jittery-about-downturn>

Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) has launched RailGreen, an initiative aimed at helping shippers assess and reduce their supply chain's environmental impact by utilizing rail transport as a lower-carbon alternative to trucking. Through RailGreen, intermodal customers can obtain environmental attribute certificates (EACs), which serve as verified records of emissions reductions. These certificates can be leveraged in "corporate sustainability reports and filings related to so-called Scope 3 emissions, which are indirect emissions from a company's supply chain" (Ashe, 2025). The rail industry is increasingly adopting greener technologies. CSX Transportation has introduced a hydrogen-powered locomotive, developed in collaboration with Canadian Pacific Kansas City. Concurrently, NS, BNSF Railway, and Union Pacific are piloting hybrid-electric locomotives, akin to hybrid cars, that run primarily on battery power while using a small diesel engine for recharging. These advancements not only improve sustainability but also enhance operational efficiency.



## Latin American Market

Ocean Freight



# Panama Canal Initiative For Sustainable Maritime Transits

The Panama Canal is taking a significant step toward sustainable shipping with the launch of its NetZero Slot, a dedicated transit option for low-emission vessels. This initiative aligns with international efforts to reach net-zero emissions by 2050 and encourages the adoption of cleaner maritime technologies. Beginning October 5, 2025, the first phase of the NetZero Slot will allocate a weekly transit opportunity exclusively for Neopanamax vessels that meet stringent low-emission standards. Other transit slots are typically auctioned, but these will be assigned through a competitive

selection process held 30 days prior to the scheduled passage. Ilya Espino de Marotta, Deputy Administrator and Sustainability Officer of the Panama Canal, underscored the impact of this program, stating, "By motivating investment in vessels capable of using low-carbon fuels and energy-efficient technologies, we are recognizing and rewarding our clients who are leading the transition toward a more sustainable future, while we await the development of regional infrastructure and logistics that will allow us to make steady progress toward global decarbonization goals" (Port Technology Team, 2025).



**Source:** Port Technology Team. (2025, March 28). *Panama Canal introduces low-emission transit option.* Port Technology International. <https://www.porttechnology.org/news/panama-canal-introduces-low-emission-transit-option/#:~:text=The%20Panama%20Canal%20has%20unveiled,contribute%20to%20a%20greener%20future.>

## Asian Market

Ocean Freight



# Trans-Pacific Service Contract Negotiations Ongoing as US Importers Finalize Deals



As the largest US importers finalize their service contracts for 2025–26, the trans-Pacific shipping landscape remains volatile, with pricing and demand projections uncertain. According to sources within the industry, including carriers and non-vessel-operating common carriers (NVOs), large retailers have concluded agreements that set the stage for negotiations with smaller shippers. However, fluctuations in market conditions, including concerns over global trade dynamics and consumer demand, have led to greater variability in pricing this year. "Several NVOs said carriers are also bringing different strategies to contract negotiations this year because of changes in the carrier alliances that took effect in February, with some pricing more aggressively in an effort to build market share (Robb, 2025). Overall, while some importers have successfully locked in their agreements, others are pushing negotiations deeper into April, reflecting the current uncertainty in the trans-Pacific shipping sector.

**Source:** Robb, L. (2025, March 27). *Largest US importers finalizing contracts in 'unsettled' trans-Pacific.* Journal of Commerce. <https://www.joc.com/article/largest-us-importers-finalizing-contracts-in-unsettled-trans-pacific-5971122>



## European Market

Ocean Freight



# Asia-Europe Shipping Rates Stabilize Amid Capacity Shifts

Recent increases in Asia-Europe spot rates have brought some relief to carriers after several weeks of consecutive declines. This recovery is largely attributed to ongoing adjustments in carrier capacity management, which has been impacted by the rollout of new shipping networks. As noted by Lars Jensen from Vespucci Maritime, “Carriers are focused on getting the new networks up and running, which means blank sailings are not as effective as normal, and while this is under way they are also trying to hang on to market share” (van Marle, 2025). As rates to Northern Europe stabilize, carriers will continue to closely monitor their network adjustments.

**Source:** van Marle, G. (2025, March 7). *Asia-Europe Container Spot Rates Find a Floor – For Now*. gCaptain. <https://gcaptain.com/asia-europe-container-spot-rates-find-a-floor-for-now/>



## Mexico Market

Ocean Freight



# Seven Regional Container Lines Unite for New Asia-Mexico Trade Route



Seven regional container lines are collaborating to launch a new service targeting Mexico, capitalizing on the trend of manufacturers shifting operations from China to Central America. The Asia-Mexico Express (AMX) service, set to commence on April 30, will be operated by Sinotrans Container Lines, TS Lines, SeaLead Shipping, Emirates Shipping Line, Regional Container Lines (RCL), KMTCL Line, and Sinokor Merchant Marine. “Each operator will contribute a 2,800 teu ship to the service, which will call at Shanghai, Qingdao, Busan, Manzanillo and Shanghai” (Koo, 2025). The collaborative effort by these seven carriers demonstrates confidence in the long-term potential of the Mexico-Asia trade corridor.

**Source:** Koo, A. (2025, March 17). *Regional carriers dip their toes in growing Mexican box trade*. The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/regional-carriers-dip-their-toes-in-growing-mexican-box-trade/>

## Mexico Market

Ocean Freight

## Mexican Ports Struggle with Larger Ships and Shifting Market Conditions



The Mexican Pacific ports of Manzanillo and Lazaro Cardenas are encountering delays of up to five days as they struggle to accommodate the influx of larger container vessels. The increase in vessel size has created congestion challenges that are impacting supply chain efficiency. These challenges have been further compounded by seasonal demand fluctuations and economic uncertainties. Blank sailings on the Asia to West Coast South America (WCSA) and Central America routes are expected to decline in April, marking early signs of market stabilization. According to the eeSea, “no blanks are forecast on the lane in April, down from 12 blank sailings in March” (Robb, 2025). Looking ahead, industry insiders are closely monitoring discussions about further capacity expansions.

**Source:** Robb, L. (2025, March 31). *Key Mexican container ports facing delays amid calls by larger vessels*. Journal of Commerce. <https://www.joc.com/article/key-mexican-container-ports-facing-delays-amid-calls-by-larger-vessels-5972722>

## ESG Market

Breakbulk

## Unlocking Clean Energy Is Significant Driver of Innovation In Logistics

The transition to cleaner energy is emerging as a significant driver of innovation within the logistics sector. Experts gathered at Breakbulk Middle East underscored the crucial role early collaboration plays in the success of these energy projects. As the global push for greener energy accelerates, industry providers are positioning themselves to address the unique challenges and opportunities that lie ahead. Tim Killen, head of growth for projects at Fracht Group, expressed optimism about the energy transition, stating “logistics providers were ‘excited’ about the opportunities and challenges emerging from the global switch to cleaner energies (West, 2025). In this evolving landscape, early engagement and collaborative partnerships will be key to overcoming the challenges and realizing the potential of the energy transition.

**Source:** West, S. (2025, February 17). *Early Stakeholder Engagement is Crucial, says Panel at Breakbulk Middle East*. Breakbulk. <https://breakbulk.com/articles/energy-transition-spurs-innovation>

