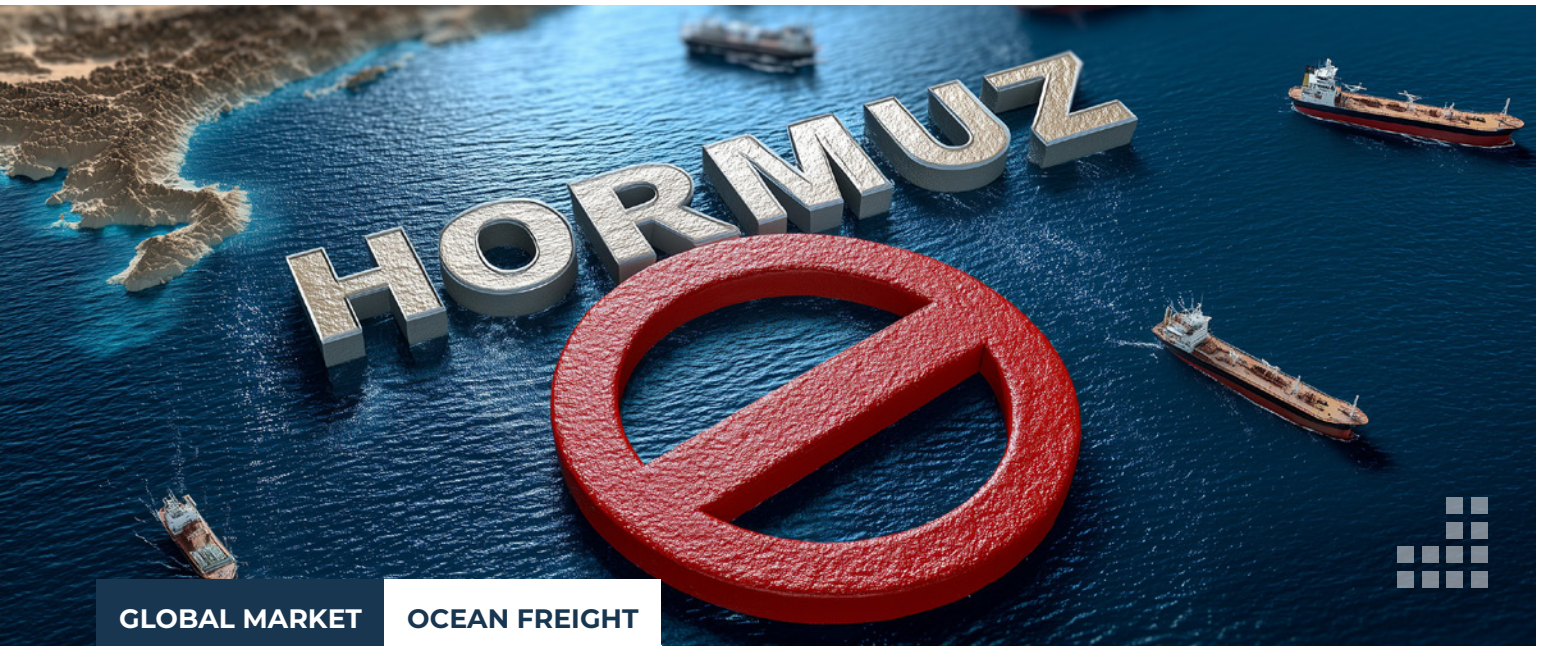


FrachtNEWS

LOGISTICS MARKET REPORT



GLOBAL MARKET

OCEAN FREIGHT

STRAIT OF HORMUZ DISRUPTION TRIGGERS NETWORK-WIDE SHIPPING DELAYS AND STRATEGIC REROUTING

The de facto shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz following escalating tensions in the Middle East at the end of February 2026 has triggered widespread disruption across global container shipping networks. For logistics professionals, the immediate impact has included cargo displacement, rerouted services, and declining schedule reliability—requiring rapid, coordinated responses across supply chain functions. Congestion has intensified across key regional gateways. Xeneta notes that “the chaos caused by an effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz means ports at the gateway to the Gulf are in a critical state due to the rapid increase in containers being offloaded” (Ozuygur, 2026). The disruption is not limited to Gulf-bound cargo. Services across Asia–Europe and other major trade lanes are also being affected due to their reliance on ports within the broader region. This interconnected exposure means delays and routing changes can cascade across entire service models, impacting cargo flows far beyond the immediate conflict zone.

For shippers, the current environment requires a more proactive and data-driven approach. Establishing consistent monitoring practices, increasing the frequency of schedule tracking, and mapping exposure across entire service networks are essential steps. Additionally, organizations should prioritize transparency in carrier surcharges and revisit internal planning assumptions, as prior expectations around transit times and performance stability may no longer hold. As global container flows adjust to evolving geopolitical conditions, the ability to quickly analyze and adjust will be critical to maintaining service consistency and minimizing disruption across supply chains.

Source: Ozuygur, D. (2026, March 16). *Strait of Hormuz shutdown: How port congestion and schedule chaos are hitting shippers – and what to do about it*. Xeneta. https://www.xeneta.com/blog/strait-of-hormuz-shutdown-how-port-congestion-and-schedule-chaos-are-hitting-shippers-and-what-to-do-about-it?_gl=1*1e87pwa*up*MQ..*_gs*MQ..&gclid=Cj0KCQjwj470BhCmARIsAF5wUEEyGuqPbhaJTd

GLOBAL BUNKER FUEL CONSTRAINTS SIGNAL POTENTIAL SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS

The worldwide container shipping industry is beginning to feel mounting pressure as bunker fuel availability tightens across key Asian hubs, raising concerns about broader logistics network implications. Supply chain leaders caution that prolonged closure of the Strait of Hormuz could result in worldwide oil supply shortages. According to Xeneta, the potential implications of prolonged fuel constraints could extend beyond cost pressures and directly impact service capacity. Efforts to stabilize the market are underway. The International Energy Agency has coordinated the release of emergency reserves to offset distribution disruptions. However, logistical timelines mean these volumes will take time to reach Asian markets, limiting their immediate impact and will continue to affect other regions. "Carriers are deploying a range of strategic operational and financial measures to mitigate the potential fuel shortages and the rising prices that will result" (Knowler, 2026).

Industry stakeholders indicate that shipping lines are proactively adapting to evolving conditions by implementing fuel conservation strategies and optimizing bunker fuel procurement across multiple regions. These adjustments include slower vessel speeds, alternative fueling locations, and increased onboard reserves to maintain service continuity. The evolving bunker fuel landscape highlights the importance of agile planning, diversified sourcing strategies, and close monitoring of geopolitical developments. As conditions unfold, maintaining flexibility in routing and procurement decisions will be essential to navigating potential disruptions and sustaining service reliability.

Source: Knowler, G. (2026, March 25). *Bunker fuel shortages in Asia at tipping point as war disruption continues*. Journal of Commerce. <https://www.joc.com/article/bunker-fuel-shortages-in-asia-at-tipping-point-as-war-disruption-continues-6192939>



GLOBAL STAKEHOLDERS SIGNALS SUPPORT FOR MARITIME SECURITY IN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ

Growing instability in the Strait of Hormuz is prompting coordinated responses from major global economies, as maritime disruptions continue to challenge the reliability of this critical trade corridor. In a joint statement, countries including United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, and Japan condemned recent attacks on commercial shipping and emphasized their willingness to act aimed at ensuring safe passage through the waterway. Despite ongoing challenges, the waterway has not experienced a complete closure. “Analysts say the strait is now operating on a selective basis, with some vessels allowed through while others face higher risks,” often influenced by geopolitical relationships or negotiated passage terms (Elashi, 2026). As international discussions around maritime security continue, the degree and form of external involvement will be a key factor shaping near-term conditions in this strategically vital region.

Source: Elashi, M. (2026, March 20). *Five European nations and Japan ready to ‘contribute’ to securing Hormuz.* Euronews. https://www.euronews.com/business/2026/03/20/europe-and-japan-signal-readiness-to-secure-hormuz-as-tanker-traffic-resumes-selectively?utm_source=chatgpt.com



GLOBAL MARKET

OCEAN FREIGHT

AIR CARGO CAPACITY GRADUALLY RECOVERS FOLLOWING MIDDLE EAST DISRUPTIONS



Global air cargo capacity is slowly stabilizing after recent disruptions linked to conflict in the Middle East. Reduced operations by several major regional carriers have temporarily limited available capacity on key trade lanes. Statistics indicate that “international widebody air cargo capacity over the past week is down 11% compared with pre-Chinese New Year levels” (Brett, 2026). Despite the constraints, airlines are adapting by expanding direct routes between Asia and Europe and slightly increasing connections to North America, helping maintain supply chain continuity during a typically slower shipping period.

Source: Brett, D. (2026, March 19). *Cargo capacity still in recovery mode.* Air Cargo News. <https://www.aircargonews.net/airlines/2026/03/cargo-capacity-still-in-recovery-mode/>

GLOBAL MARKET

AIR FREIGHT

MIDDLE EAST REFINERY DISRUPTIONS COULD RESHAPE GLOBAL AVIATION FUEL SUPPLY

Damage to major refineries in the Middle East is raising concerns about the stability of global aviation fuel supply chains. Disruptions to refining capacity and tanker routes are creating uncertainty for airlines that depend on reliable fuel access to maintain operations. Industry analysis warns that “global supplies of crude and fuel are... greatly reduced by the risks for oil tankers in the Gulf and through the Strait of Hormuz” (Watson & Williams, 2026). As the situation evolves, airlines may need to adjust flight planning and fuel strategies while the aviation sector assesses the broader impact on long-term operational resilience.

Source: Watson Farley & Williams. (2026, March 12). *The impact of damage to refineries in the Middle East on jet fuel supplies may have far-reaching effects.* Watson Farley & Williams. <https://www.wfw.com/articles/the-impact-of-damage-to-refineries-in-the-middle-east-on-jet-fuel-supplies-may-have-far-reaching-effects/>



HEAVY LIFT SHIPPING SHOWS RESILIENCE DESPITE ONGOING MARKET PRESSURES



Toepfer’s monthly index indicates a slight increase in average daily time charter rates for 12,500 dwt F-type heavy lift vessels at the beginning of March. The report highlights that “after a modest dip in January and February, MPP rates began to recover following the Chinese New Year period” (Kershaw, 2026). This trend aligns with typical seasonal patterns but may also indicate underlying resilience within the breakbulk and heavy lift segments. At the same time, ongoing geopolitical tensions continue to introduce uncertainty into global shipping networks, particularly in strategically significant regions. The market remains sensitive to both seasonal shifts and external pressures. Industry participants should continue to monitor evolving conditions closely as 2026 progresses.

Source: Kershaw, D. (2026, March 10). *Toepfer Transport’s monthly multipurpose shipping rate update.* Heavy Lift & Project Forwarding International. <https://www.heavyliftptfi.com/shipping/2026/03/10/toepfer-transport-s-monthly-multipurpose-shipping-rate-update/>

RISING FUEL COSTS AND LABOR PRESSURES CHALLENGE GLOBAL FORWARDING STABILITY

Freight forwarders are navigating heightened uncertainty as rising diesel prices and potential labor disruptions place additional strain on global trucking networks. Recent fuel market volatility, linked to geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, is creating downstream challenges for logistics providers, particularly in regions heavily dependent on imported fuel. “Part of the problem for haulers is that while their costs are rising dramatically, freight rates have struggled to follow suit, with truckers and haulage firms left to absorb the damage” (Whiteman, 2026). Governments in affected regions have begun implementing mitigation measures, such as tax adjustments and increased refinery utilization, in an effort to stabilize domestic fuel markets. However, the effectiveness of these interventions remains uncertain as global energy conditions continue to fluctuate. Supply chain operators must balance cost management with service reliability, while preparing for potential disruptions linked to both fuel instability and labor actions.

Source: Whiteman, A. (2026, March 24). *Forwarders brace for strikes as diesel surge hits trucking and margins*. The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/forwarders-brace-for-strikes-as-diesel-surge-hits-truck-and-margins/>



EARLY RETAILER COMMITMENTS SIGNAL MOMENTUM IN TRANS-PACIFIC CONTRACT SEASON



The recent finalization of 2026–27 contracts by Walmart, widely recognized as the largest U.S. importer, has created a ripple effect across the market, prompting other large retailers, followed by smaller importers and non-vessel operating common carriers, to accelerate their own Trans-Pacific service agreements ahead of the typical May 1 implementation timeline. “Carriers, and some forwarders, are urging customers to move expeditiously in their contract negotiations, rather than allowing uncertainties in global trade to deter them” (Mongelluzzo, 2026). Delaying negotiations in anticipation of more favorable conditions may prove counterproductive in a market increasingly shaped by external disruptions and shifting carrier dynamics. In this environment, proactive planning and early commitment are emerging as critical tools for mitigating risk and maintaining supply chain continuity.

Source: Mongelluzzo, B. (2026, March 16). *Trans-Pacific contract talks accelerating after Walmart signs*. Journal of Commerce. <https://www.joc.com/article/trans-pacific-contract-talks-accelerating-after-walmart-signs-6187023>

HAINAN'S YANGPU PORT ACCELERATES TOWARD GLOBAL HUB STATUS THROUGH POLICY AND INFRASTRUCTURE GAINS

China's Yangpu Port is rapidly advancing its position within global shipping networks, supported by targeted policy initiatives and expanding infrastructure under the Hainan Free Trade Port (FTP) framework. Increased vessel traffic and overall port utilization highlight the port's growing importance as a strategic maritime hub connecting Asia with international trade lanes. Operational flexibility has further improved through updated customs and clearance processes. New models are helping companies manage cargo movement more efficiently, with one industry representative noting that "goods can be shipped out in batches first and then their declaration can be made within a month after that" (Xia, 2026). This adjustment highlights how procedural changes are supporting faster cargo flow and improved supply chain responsiveness.

Source: Yuanyuan, X. (2026, March 3). *A Deep-Water Harbor on Track to Become International Hub*. China Today. http://www.chinatoday.com.cn/ctenglish/2018/ln/202603/t20260303_800431557.html



ASIA MARKET

OCEAN FREIGHT

AIRLINE NETWORK ADJUSTMENTS TIGHTEN AIR CARGO CAPACITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



ASIA MARKET

AIR FREIGHT

Air cargo networks continue to shift as airlines adapt to operational disruptions in the Middle East. Cathay Pacific has extended its suspension of flights to key regional hubs, highlighting a divide between international carriers and Gulf airlines that are gradually restoring services. As the report notes, "Cathay Pacific has extended its suspension of passenger and cargo flights to key Middle East hubs" (Lennane, 2026). Meanwhile, some regional operators are resuming limited operations while others remain constrained by airspace restrictions, forcing airlines to adjust routes and capacity strategies across global trade lanes.

Source: Alex Lennane. (2026, March 18). *Cathay extends Middle East cancellations as Gulf carriers rebuild cargo capacity*. The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/cathay-extends-middle-east-cancellations-as-gulf-carriers-rebuild-cargo-capacity/>

U.S. IMPLEMENTS 60-DAY JONES ACT PAUSE TO ENHANCE DOMESTIC SUPPLY CHAIN FLUIDITY

The U.S. administration has implemented a 60-day waiver of the Jones Act, a longstanding regulation governing domestic maritime transport, in response to mounting pressure linked to fuel market volatility. The Jones Act requires vessels operating in U.S. coastwise trade to be built domestically, crewed by U.S. mariners, and owned by U.S. entities—criteria that have historically shaped the structure of domestic shipping networks. According to White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt, the waiver “will allow vital resources like oil, natural gas, fertiliser, and coal to flow freely to US ports for 60 days” (Parker, 2026). The temporary waiver underscores the balancing act between regulatory frameworks and operational agility within U.S. logistics networks. As market conditions continue to evolve, stakeholders will be closely monitoring how such policy adjustments influence both short-term distribution efficiency and longer-term maritime strategy.

Source: Parker, B. (2026, March 19). *US waives Jones Act for 60 days amid fuel price pressure*. Seatrade Maritime. <https://www.seatrade-maritime.com/regulations/us-waives-jones-act-for-60-days-amid-fuel-price-pressure>



FMC MAINTAINS 30-DAY NOTICE RULE AMID CARRIER REQUESTS FOR FLEXIBILITY



The Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) has denied a request from major ocean carriers seeking to shorten the mandated notice period for rate increases, reinforcing regulatory stability within global shipping markets. “The Shipping Act and commission regulations requires 30 days’ notice before an increase in rates and charges become effective” (Chirls, 2026). The proposal, submitted by leading global carriers including CMA CGM, Hapag-Lloyd, Maersk, and ZIM, was tied to operational disruptions linked to geopolitical instability in the Middle East, particularly around the Strait of Hormuz. The Commission ultimately concluded that the carriers did not provide sufficient data outlining cost impacts, duration, or mitigation efforts to justify a deviation from standard requirements. While geopolitical events continue to influence global logistics networks, governing authorities are prioritizing structured processes and data-backed justifications over expedited measures. This approach is likely to support long-term confidence among shippers while encouraging carriers to adopt more robust cost-reporting practices when navigating volatile market conditions.

Source: Chirls, S. (2026, March 24). *FMC rejects carrier request for shorter notice on ocean rate hikes*. FreightWaves. <https://www.freightwaves.com/news/fmc-rejects-carrier-request-for-shorter-notice-on-ocean-rate-hikes>

NORTH AMERICA MARKET

OCEAN FREIGHT

LEGAL CHALLENGE RAISES NEW QUESTIONS OVER U.S. DE MINIMIS POLICY

U.S. trade policy affecting cross-border e-commerce shipments is facing renewed legal scrutiny after a recent court ruling on tariffs. The decision has opened the door to a challenge against the government’s attempt to end the de minimis exemption, which allows low-value imports to enter the country duty-free. As a report states, “parcel experts are not expecting a front-loading surge if the lawsuit prevails” (Putzger, 2026). Industry analysts say the outcome could have significant implications for parcel flows and logistics providers managing the surge of international e-commerce shipments into the U.S.

Source: Putzger, I. (2026, March 18). *No last hurrah expected for US de minimis as legal challenge advances*. The Loadstar. <https://theloadstar.com/no-last-hurrah-expected-for-us-de-minimis-as-legal-challenge-advances/>



NORTH AMERICA MARKET

AIR FREIGHT

CHANGING SOURCING PATTERNS RESHAPE U.S. AIR CARGO TRADE LANES



NORTH AMERICA MARKET

AIR FREIGHT

The U.S. air cargo market is entering a period of adjustment as global sourcing strategies and trade policies reshape traditional freight corridors. After years of volatility driven by pandemic-era demand and e-commerce growth, cargo volumes are stabilizing while supply chains diversify across Asia. Industry observers note that “demand is becoming more dynamic, with more freight originating in Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent” (Sebastian, N, 2026). These shifts reflect broader changes in manufacturing and technology supply chains, with new production hubs gaining importance and altering established transpacific cargo flows.

Source: Sebastian, N. (2026, March 19). *U.S. air cargo market adjusts as sourcing shifts reshape trade flows*. The STAT Trade Times. <https://www.stattimes.com/air-cargo/us-air-cargo-market-adjusts-as-sourcing-shifts-reshape-trade-flows-1358469>

PROGRESS REPORTED IN INDIA-CHILE DISCUSSIONS ON COMPREHENSIVE TRADE DEAL

India and Chile have taken a constructive step forward in advancing negotiations toward a comprehensive trade agreement, signaling a shared intent to strengthen bilateral commerce and long-term economic alignment. Recent discussions between senior trade officials, held on the sidelines of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, focused on accelerating progress and broadening the scope of engagement between the two economies. According to the Department of Commerce, officials “discussed progress in India-Chile CEPA negotiations, its early conclusion, and explored ways to further strengthen bilateral economic cooperation and trade” (TOI Business Desk, 2026). This reflects a mutual emphasis on

Source: TOI Business Desk. (2026, March 25). *India, Chile review progress in proposed trade pact talks ahead of WTO meet.* MSN. <https://www.msn.com/en-in/news/india/india-chile-review-progress-in-proposed-trade-pact-talks-ahead-of-wto-meet/ar-AA1ZnZfy?apiversion=v2&domshim=1&noservercache=1&noservertelemetry=1&batchservertelemetry=1&renderwebcomponents=1&wcseo=1>



LATAM MARKET

OCEAN FREIGHT

FUEL SHORTAGE IN CUBA FORCES AIRLINES TO ADJUST FLIGHT OPERATIONS



Airlines operating in the Caribbean are facing operational disruptions after Cuba announced it can no longer supply jet fuel to international carriers. The shortage comes amid heightened geopolitical pressure affecting the island’s energy imports. According to reports, “international airlines can no longer refuel in the island nation due to fuel shortages” (Meredith, 2026). The situation is expected to impact multiple airports across the country and could force airlines to adjust routes or schedule refueling stops in nearby destinations while the aviation fuel shortage persists

Source: Meredith, S. (2026, February 9). *Cuba says international airlines can no longer refuel there as Trump turns up the pressure.* CNBC. <https://www.cnbc.com/2026/02/09/cuba-airlines-fuel-energy-oil-us-trump-pressure.html>

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LATAM MARKET

AIR FREIGHT

PANAMA-COSTA RICA RAIL AGREEMENT SIGNALS NEW ERA FOR REGIONAL LOGISTICS INTEGRATION

Panama and Costa Rica have taken a significant step toward strengthening regional connectivity through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Panama’s National Railway Secretariat (SNDP) and the Costa Rican Railway Institute (INCOFER). “This document lays the foundation for a technical and institutional collaboration framework that allows for the sharing of specialized knowledge, the alignment of operational standards, the coordination of engineering studies, and joint progress towards regional logistics integration” (Ministry of the Presidency, 2026). Stakeholders anticipate that sustained joint efforts across Central America could unlock new efficiencies in cargo movement while fostering economic integration across multiple markets. Initiatives such as this Central American Railway Logistics Corridor signal a broader trend toward infrastructure modernization and regional collaboration.

Source: Ministry of the Presidency. (2026, March 18). *Panama and Costa Rica sign memorandum with the vision of a Central American Railway Logistics Corridor.* Ministry of the Presidency. <https://www.presidencia.gob.pa/publicacion/panama-y-costa-rica-firman-memorado-con-la-vision-de-un-corredor-logistico-ferroviario-centroamericano>



LATAM MARKET

RAIL FREIGHT

TRANSATLANTIC TRADE DEAL GAINS MOMENTUM SUPPORTED BY STRUCTURED SAFEGUARDS



EUROPE MARKET

OCEAN FREIGHT

The European Parliament has taken a significant step toward formalizing a transatlantic trade agreement with the United States, signaling renewed momentum in one of the world’s most critical commercial relationships. Following months of uncertainty tied to tariff policy and geopolitical rhetoric, lawmakers approved legislation to implement the deal, while introducing a series of conditions aimed at safeguarding regional economic interests. “The legislation would set tariffs at 15% for most EU goods - down from the 30% initially threatened - in exchange for European investment in the US and the removal of EU import duties on US industrial goods” (Rawnsley, 2026). As the framework moves toward final approval by EU member states, industry participants should closely monitor implementation timelines and compliance benchmarks. The outcome will play a key role in shaping transatlantic cargo flows, procurement strategies, and long-term network planning.

Source: Rawnsley, J. (2026, March 26). *European Parliament gives conditional approval to EU-US trade deal.* BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c3314e6vdrvo>

TRADE INTEGRATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PROPEL WEST AFRICA LOGISTICS GROWTH

West Africa’s logistics market is entering a phase of sustained development, supported by infrastructure upgrades, regional trade alignment, and increasing digital adoption. As economic activity accelerates across key markets, supply chain networks are evolving to accommodate rising consumer demand and expanding industrial output. “The economic integration driven by regional trade agreements, notably the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), has enhanced intra-regional trade flows” (Fatimah, 2026). Overall, West Africa’s logistics landscape is transitioning from a fragmented network to a more structured and technology-enabled ecosystem. As investment flows continue and regional coordination strengthens, the sector is positioned for continued evolution, offering new opportunities for global and regional supply chain stakeholders.

Source: Fatimah. (2026, March 24). *West Africa Logistics Market: Infrastructure Development, Trade Expansion & Growth Outlook*. Futurism. <https://vocal.media/futurism/west-africa-logistics-market-infrastructure-development-trade-expansion-and-growth-outlook>



AFRICA MARKET

OCEAN FREIGHT

INDUSTRY VOICES RAISE QUESTIONS ON FEASIBILITY OF IMO NET ZERO PLAN



ESG MARKET

OCEAN FREIGHT

As global shipping interests continue to navigate the path toward emissions reduction, divisions are emerging within the International Maritime Organization (IMO) over the proposed Net Zero Framework (NZF). Recent discussions at the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) highlight growing concerns among several member states regarding both the structure and feasibility of the framework. Stakeholders have emphasized that “concerns further include the risk that the system functions more as a penalty mechanism than an innovation incentive,” highlighting apprehension that regulatory design may hinder technological advancement rather than promote it (Savvides, 2026). Achieving alignment across diverse industry participants remains essential to ensuring that environmental objectives are balanced with commercial viability and global trade continuity.

Source: Savvides, N. (2026, March 20). *US calls for abandonment of IMO’s Net Zero Framework*. Seatrade Maritime. <https://www.seatrade-maritime.com/regulations/us-calls-for-abandonment-of-imo-s-net-zero-framework>