



13 March 2026

# Trade Lines

## Policy Intelligence for Global Business Leaders

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Washington Council EY*

Welcome to Trade Lines, your view from DC on the evolving landscape of international trade and regulatory policy. Curated for business leaders and decision-makers, this newsletter delivers timely insights into the issues shaping global commerce—from tariff shifts and supply chain disruptions to legislative developments and compliance trends. Our goal is to help you anticipate change, assess impact, and act with confidence in a fast-moving policy environment.

### Global Signals

#### *U.S. and Mexico commence negotiations as part of USMCA review process*

On March 5, the U.S. Trade (USTR) Ambassador Jamieson Greer and the Mexican Secretary of Economy Marcelo Ebrard announced their first round of bilateral discussions ahead of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) Joint Review on July 1. According to the [press release](#), the “ministers instructed negotiators to begin a scoping discussion on the necessary measures to ensure the benefits of the Agreement accrue primarily to the parties, including by reducing dependence on imports from outside the region, strengthening rules of origin, and enhancing the security of North American supply chains.” The press release states that ministers expect to hold the first meeting the week of March 16 and will “meet regularly thereafter as part of the Joint Review.”

### Policy Pulse

#### *USTR initiates new Section 301 investigations relating to forced labor*

On March 12, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) [announced](#) new investigations under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 relating to *Acts, Policies, and Practices of Various Economies Related to the Failure to Impose and Effectively Enforce a Prohibition on the Importation of Goods Produced with Forced Labor*.

The newly initiated Section 301 investigations focus on 60 economies to “determine whether acts, policies, and practices . . . related to the failure to impose and effectively enforce a ban on the importation of goods

produced with forced labor are unreasonable or discriminatory and burden or restrict U.S. commerce.” These include Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, The Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, European Union, Guatemala, Guyana, Honduras, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Mexico, Morocco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Uruguay, Venezuela, and Vietnam.

USTR has opened a public comment period for written comments, which must be submitted in the [USTR portal](#) by April 15, 2026. USTR will hold a public hearing on April 28, 2026. Requests to testify at the public hearing, as well as a summary of the testimony, must be submitted to [USTR](#) by April 15, 2026. Post-hearing rebuttal comments will then be due 7 days after the hearing concludes.

See the Federal Register Notice [here](#).

See the USTR press release [here](#).

### ***USTR initiates new Section 301 investigations on structural excess capacity***

On March 11, the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced new investigations under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 relating to *Acts, Policies, and Practices of Certain Economies Relating to Structural Excess Capacity*. The newly initiated Section 301 investigation states, “Key trading partners have developed production capacity untethered from the incentives of domestic and global demand. This excess capacity leads to, among others, overproduction and large or persistent trade surpluses, as well as underutilized and unused capacity, in manufacturing sectors.” The investigation will “focus on economies that appear to exhibit structural excess capacity and production in various manufacturing sectors, such as through large or persistent trade surpluses or underutilized or unused capacity.” The investigation will include the following jurisdictions: China, the European Union, Singapore, Switzerland, Norway, Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, Bangladesh, Mexico, Japan, and India.

Written comments must be submitted to the USTR portal by April 15, 2026. USTR will hold a public hearing on May 5, 2026. Requests to testify at the hearing and summaries of testimony are due to USTR on April 15, 2026.

See the Federal Register Notice [here](#).

See the USTR press release [here](#).

### ***USTR issues notice requesting membership applications for Industry Trade Advisory Committee***

In a [notice](#) published in the Federal Register on March 12, the Secretary of Commerce and the U.S. Trade Representative announced that they are accepting applications from individuals interested in serving as members of the Industry Trade Advisory Committee (ITAC) for a new four-year charter term. According to the notice, “The ITACs provide policy and technical advice, information, and recommendations regarding negotiation of trade agreements, the operation of existing trade agreements, and other U.S. trade policy matters to the Secretary of Commerce and the Trade Representative.” Applications must be submitted by April 2 to receive consideration.

### ***CIT judge allows CBP more time to process IEEPA tariff refunds***

On March 6, Judge Richard Eaton of the Court of International (CIT) Trade issued an order accepting Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP’s) development of a refund process for tariffs paid under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) and subsequently invalidated by the Supreme Court. In a sworn deposition, a Customs and Border Protection official said the agency will need approximately 45 days to reprogram its Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) system to streamline and consolidate refunds and interest payments on an importer basis. Judge Eaton’s order acknowledged this process and urged CBP to move forward with the “timely development and implementation of the refund process.”

In a March 12 [declaration](#), CBP updated the court that it is actively developing “a new capability within its system of record for imported merchandise . . . to prepare to calculate and provide valid refunds of additional *ad valorem* duties imposed under IEEPA.” This new functionality, which CBP calls “the Consolidated Administration and Processing of Entries (CAPE)” will be web-based. CBP describes the CAPE Claim Portal and how it envisions claims to be filed. CBP said it “estimates that its development of the Claim Portal component is 70% complete.” CBP is also working on a process for reviewing the liquidation and reliquidation of subject entries and will continue to phase in additional functionality.

Considering CBP’s declaration, Judge Eaton issued a new [Order](#) on March 12 stating that CBP “is making satisfactory progress to timely complete the development of a process to issue [IEEPA] refunds”, with interest, and that as such, the Judge was continuing the suspension of his amended Order dated March 5 requiring immediate compliance with refunds. The Judge further Ordered that CBP shall file another report by 2pm on Thursday, March 19, providing an additional update on progress the agency “has made toward the development of a process to issue refunds of IEEPA duties paid with interest.”

## **Hill Highlights**

### ***Democratic Senators introduce legislation to repeal tariffs***

On March 11, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) and Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA) introduced the [Reclaiming Trade Powers Act](#) to repeal Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974, which authorizes the President to enact import restrictions, including tariffs, in response to balance of payment deficits. Sen. Kaine said in a [press release](#), “It was intended for use during times when foreign central banks could potentially rapidly drain U.S. gold

reserves and create a dollar crisis. More than 50 years ago, though, the U.S. moved to a floating exchange rate system, making the problems Section 122 was intended to address functionally moot.”

On March 10, Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA) introduced the [Small Business Liberation 2.0 Act](#) which would exempt Section 122 tariffs on “goods imported by or for the use of a small business concern” and require that a refund is provided within 90 days to small businesses that have paid Section 122 tariffs.

### ***Sen. Cassidy introduces legislation curtailing non-resident importers***

On March 9, Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) introduced the [Securing Accountability in Foreign Entries \(SAFE\) Act](#) to require that importers be a resident of the U.S. or an affiliate of a U.S. entity. The bill would also prevent customs brokers from serving as the importer of record; create new requirements on the types of accounts that can be used to pay duties, taxes, and fees to CBP; and raise the minimum continuous bonding requirement to \$100,000.

In a [press release](#), the SAFE Act is described as ensuring that “only verifiable and accountable parties can serve as importers of record across all entry types, aligning bonding requirements with current trade system while recognizing the significant trading relations with trusted allies and partners. The bill enhances the integrity of the U.S. customs system and levels the playing field for compliant companies.”

### ***Ways and Means schedules hearing on WTO's 14<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference***

The House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee has announced a hearing on *Advancing America's Interests at the World Trade Organization's 14<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference* on March 17. The Ministerial Conference is scheduled to take place March 26-29 in Cameroon. A witness list for the hearing has not yet been provided. Check [here](#) for any updates.

### ***House Select Committee on China schedules hearing on China and pharmaceuticals***

The House Select Committee on China has scheduled a hearing on *From the Science Lab to the Medicine Cabinet: How China is Cornering the Market on Our Medicines* on March 18. The following witnesses have been announced:

- Mr. Patrick Cashman, President, USAntibiotics
- Mr. Francisco Gimenez, Partner, 8VC
- Dr. Marta E. Wosinska, Senior Fellow, Center of Health Policy at Brookings

Check [here](#) for any updates.

### **Upcoming Deadlines**

**March 19:** Deadline to submit comments to USTR on critical minerals agreements.

**March 26:** 14<sup>th</sup> World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference convenes in Cameroon.

**March 27:** Deadline for President to decide whether to act in the section 232 investigation concerning pharmaceuticals and pharmaceutical ingredients.

**March 28:** Commerce Department to send the President its findings on its section 232 investigations into drones and polysilicon and derivative products by this date.

**April 13:** Deadline to submit comments to the ITC in its investigation concerning economic impacts of revoking China's PNTR status.

**April 15:** Deadline to submit comments to USTR on the section 301 investigations into structural excess capacity and production in manufacturing sectors.

**April 26:** Deadline for President to decide whether to act in the section 232 investigation concerning commercial aircraft and jet engines.

**May 10:** Commerce Department to send the President its findings on its section 232 investigation into wind turbines by this date.

**May 11:** Deadline to request to appear at ITC's public hearing in its investigation concerning China's state support and pricing practices in the biotechnology sector.

**May 17:** The ITC holds a public hearing in the ITC's investigation concerning China's state support and pricing practices in the biotechnology sector.

**May 30:** Commerce Department to send the President its findings on its section 232 investigations into robotics and industrial machinery and PPE, medical consumables, and medical equipment, including devices by this date.

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