

Tariff Refunds Cushion US Importers Amid Sustained Transpacific Spot Rates – TFX Update wk. August 10, 2026

August 12, 2026

The Lead:

Last demonstrated that Washington is actively using Section 232 national security authority to shield high-tech manufacturing, placing [15% tariffs and Minimum Import Prices on foreign polysilicon and solar components](#). This aggressive expansion of the [centralized trade architecture](#) triggered immediate countermeasures, as Beijing restricted [dual-use drone exports to the US](#) while levying duties on American agricultural goods. Meanwhile, updated fiscal reports confirmed that while [CBP has already certified \\$100 billion in IEEPA duty refunds](#), North American supply chains have rapidly reconfigured with a record [83.6% of Canadian and Mexican goods taking shelter under USMCA rules](#) to insulate themselves from escalating baseline tariffs

This Week' s Ocean, Air & Freight Markets

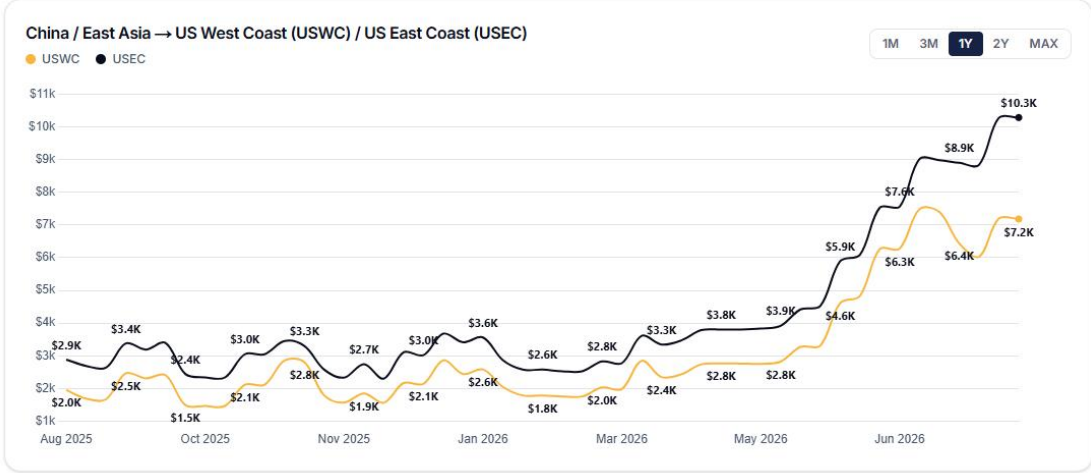
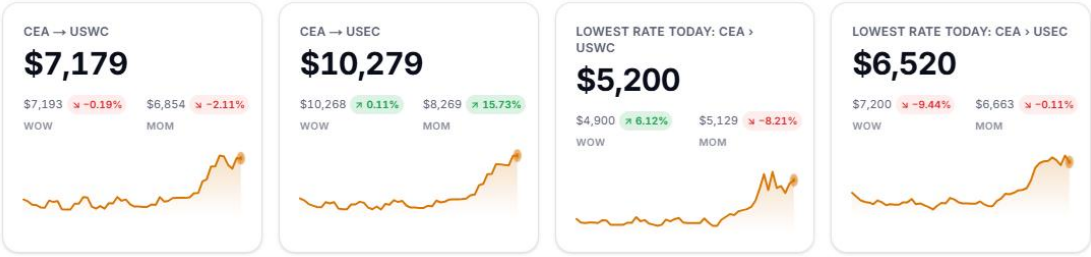
China-US Ocean Freight Market:

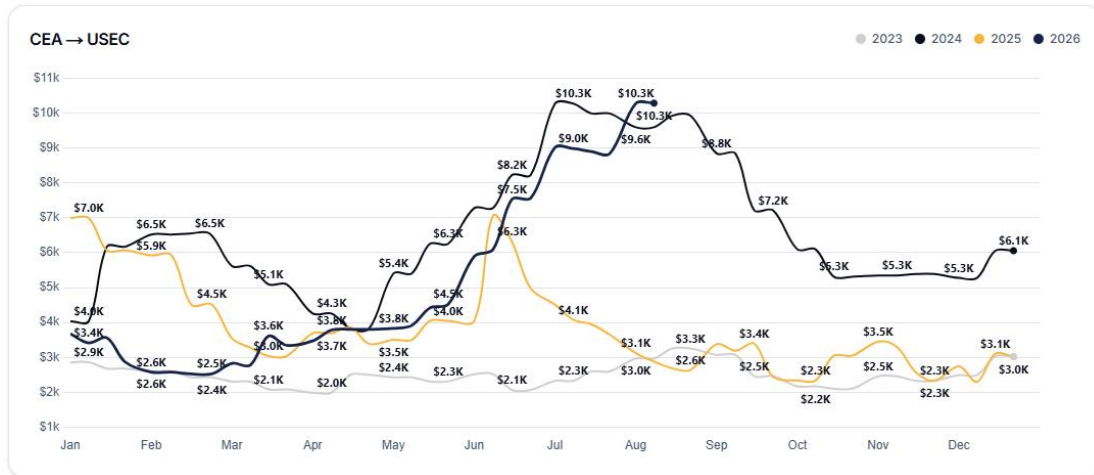
CEA to USWC: Rates remain firm week-over-week, with general pricing still above \$7,000 per FEU to the US West Coast.

While some highly specific promotional or special rates are available, the broader market has not experienced the decline that had been anticipated earlier in August. Expectations that pricing could retreat toward June or July levels have faded, with carriers successfully defending current rate levels.

CEA to USEC: East Coast pricing is similarly stable week-over-week, with even less rate adjustment reported than on the West Coast. Despite some reduction in overall volumes, carriers are actively removing capacity to keep supply aligned with demand and support existing pricing.

Freight Right' s Lowest Rate indicators are finding that importers can find spot rates as low as \$5,200 from China to US West Coast and \$6,520 from China to US East Coast. Talk to your freight forwarder about options available to you.





[Read more about the state of the ocean freight spot market with Freight Right's TrueFreight Index.](#)

What Happened This Past Week

Too Soon to Tell How the Market Will React to the latest Tariffs Tariff: The recent 2.5% tariff increase (stepping up from 10% to 12.5%) has generated little to no downward pressure on import volumes. Importers have largely absorbed the minor adjustment as a standard cost of doing business rather than pausing procurement schedules.

Liquidity Influx from Prior Tariff Refunds: Many US importers are actively receiving cash payouts from historical tariff refund filings. This newly acquired capital buffer is enabling buyers to absorb or subsidize the extra 2.5% duty without reducing order sizes or hiking shelf prices.

Aggressive Capacity Reductions by Ocean Carriers: Ocean liners are taking stringent measures to defend rate floors by executing blank (cancelled) sailings on roughly 25% to 30% of total rotational capacity, withdrawing roughly 40 out of 150 planned sailings.

Pre-Holiday Peak Season Stocking: With major Q4 promotional periods (Halloween, Thanksgiving, and Christmas) approaching in under two months, importers are prioritizing volume preservation and inventory readiness over waiting for speculative rate drops.

Looking Ahead:

Rates are projected to remain firm and range-bound through the remainder of August and into September 2026. With carriers demonstrating strong discipline through capacity management and importers utilizing cash reserves to maintain holiday order flows, a steep downward rate correction appears unlikely in the short term. Unless consumer demand drops sharply enough to force importers to pause purchase orders, or external macro shifts significantly drive down bunker fuel costs, the transpacific market is expected to remain tight with elevated freight pricing through the early autumn peak.