

SUPPLY CHAIN MARKET UPDATE

North America and Europe

September 2026

KEY TRENDS AND CHALLENGES IN GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

1

TRANSPACIFIC OCEAN RATES CLIMB BACK TOWARD PEAK ON CARRIER PRICING

- Rate increases and surcharges, not demand, push transpacific rates up: Shanghai–Los Angeles reached \$7,352 per 40-foot container in mid-September
- Typhoon congestion at Shanghai and Ningbo and cancelled sailings before Golden Week keep usable capacity below the nominal level
- Asia–North Europe rates fell through August and early September as Suez capacity returned, though they closed August about 25% above last year

2

AI DEMAND KEEPS AIR FREIGHT RATES 24% ABOVE LAST YEAR

- Global spot rates averaged \$3.13 per kilogram in August, down 2% from July, while jet fuel is up 57% year over year
- Demand grew 3.9% against 1.7% capacity growth; Taiwan and Korea load factors near 90% leave little Asia–U.S. space as AI and holiday shipping overlap
- China–Europe e-commerce demand fell 25% after the EU replaced its €150 duty-free threshold with a €3 per-item duty, and summer belly capacity weighs on transatlantic rates

3

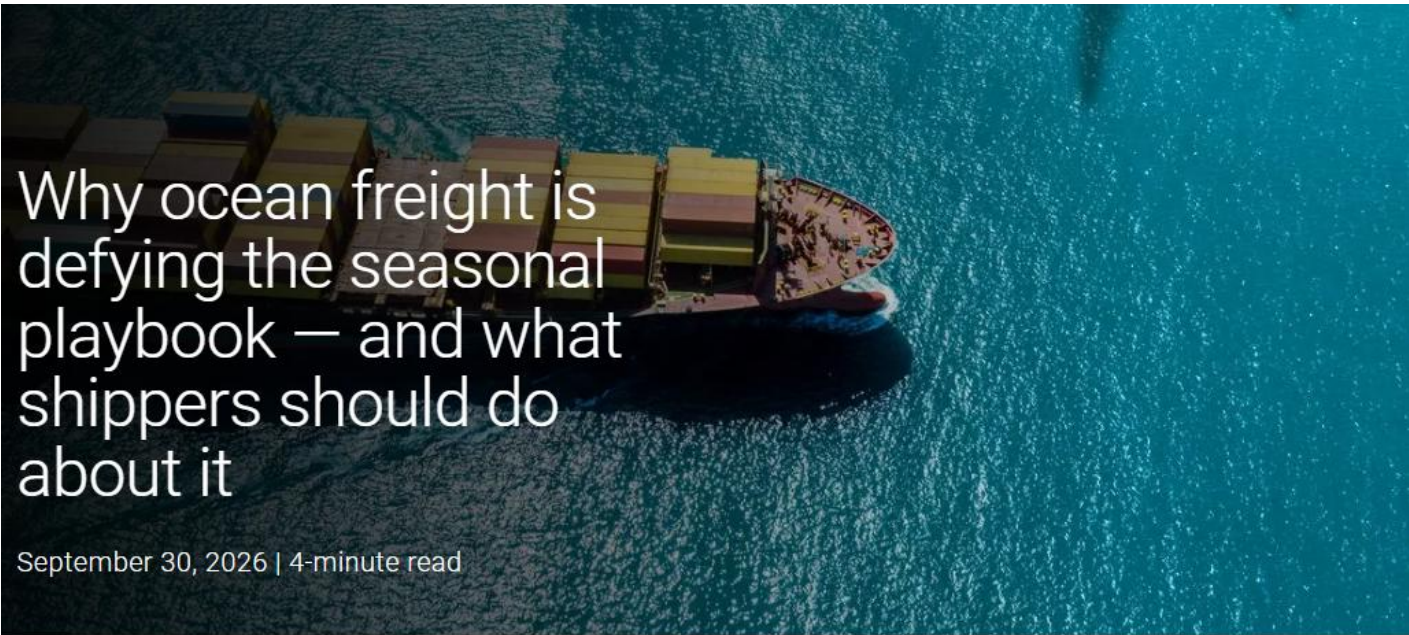
RECORD DIESEL AND TIGHT CAPACITY KEEP TRUCKING COSTS HIGH

- U.S. diesel hit a record \$6.285 per gallon, up about 68% year over year, after the Hormuz disruption and strikes on Russian refineries cut supply
- U.S. capacity remains tight: reefer load rejections run above 20% and van above 12%; rising tractor sales are an early sign of recovery, but driver availability tightened again
- European FTL spot rates rose 9% year over year (Germany 21%) on low Rhine water and about 502,000 unfilled driver posts, while U.S. spot rates fell sharply in August

FEATURED ARTICLE

Transpacific ocean freight rates climbing, while Asia-Europe rates decline

[ACCESS THIS ARTICLE FOR MORE DETAILS HERE](#)



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Ocean freight costs are behaving unusually. Two of the world's largest trade lanes – Transpacific and Asia-Europe – are moving in opposite directions for the first time in over two years. In 2024, the Red Sea crisis acted as a single shock, driving both lanes up and then down together in a unified cycle. Today's divergence signals that separate forces drive the two trades. What are the dynamics behind this current cycle, and how does it affect your near-term supply chain decisions?

Diverging routes – peaks and valleys

The normal autumnal post-peak correction has not arrived on the Transpacific route. At this time of year in 2025, U.S. container demand was trending down, with further softening expected after the Golden Week pause in commercial activity. Instead, China-U.S. rates are still climbing as of mid-September. Shanghai-New York topped \$10,394/40ft, [exceeding \\$10,000](#) for the first time since 2022.

At the same time, Asia-Europe is falling, with Shanghai-Genoa down 5% to \$4,016 and Shanghai-Rotterdam down 9% to \$3,626. The two trades have now diverged for seven consecutive weeks.

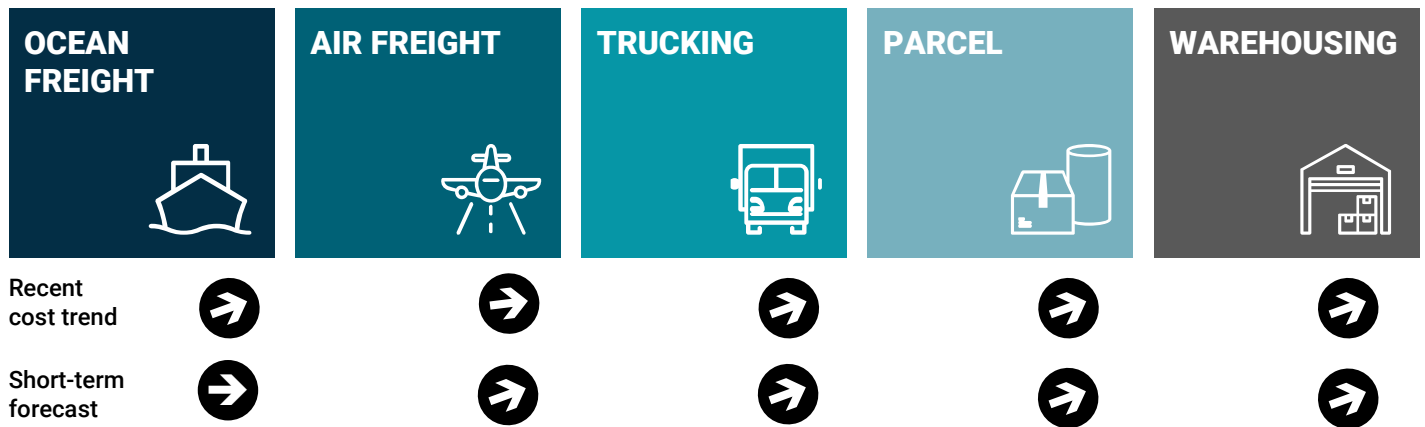
CONTENT SUMMARY



- **Demand:** North American demand remains resilient, with pre-holiday volumes compressed around the China holidays and amplified by port congestion
- **Supply:** Carriers are managing capacity through blank sailings and network adjustments, disproportionately constraining Transpacific capacity
- **Geopolitical:** Panama Canal constraints are tightening U.S.-bound capacity, while Suez volumes are returning to Asia-Europe. The Iran conflict is also keeping fuel costs elevated
- **Outlook:** Transpacific rates are likely to remain elevated into October before seasonal demand begins to moderate; carrier capacity decisions and geopolitical risks will influence the pace of normalization
- **What shippers should do:** Build carrier relationships now, diversify coverage across alliances and smaller carriers, maintain both direct-carrier and forwarder options, and preserve routing and capacity flexibility

FREIGHT COSTS

August freight costs climb as ocean rates rebound and record diesel offsets softer truckload spot rates



WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO KNOW?

- **Ocean: rates rebounded on carrier pricing** – Shanghai–LA rose from \$5,894/40ft on Aug. 6 to \$7,352 by mid-September, with East Coast near \$9,700; GRIs, typhoon congestion and 79 blank sailings before Golden Week keep effective capacity tight
- **Air freight: flat month over month at a high level** – global spot rates were flat MoM but +24% YoY; AI-chip demand offsets softer e-commerce, and Asia–U.S. load factors near 90% signal tighter space as AI and holiday demand overlap
- **Trucking: spot fell, but contract and fuel costs rose** – spot posted DAT's steepest July-to-August decline on record, contract held at \$2.52/mile (+18% YoY), and diesel hit a record \$6.285/gal; LMI transportation prices rose 3.1 points to 90.0
- **Parcel: carriers keep pushing prices into peak** – USPS announced a 6% holiday-season rate increase starting October 4, and USPS parcel revenue rose 7.7% YoY on 3.4% lower volume; Amazon's drone expansion adds last-mile competition
- **Warehousing: labor pressure is easing, but costs stay high** – employment fell 2.6K MoM in August and wage growth slowed to +4.9% YoY (\$26.74/hr); LMI inventory costs at 78.6 and vacancy at 6.9% keep space costs firm as retailers stock for Q4

WHAT ACTIONS CAN WE TAKE?

Lock in capacity and cost certainty ahead of the Q4 peak

- With truckload, air, and warehouse capacity all tightening, secure committed capacity and forward-price key lanes rather than riding the spot market
- Develop and strengthen key internal capabilities along with strategic external carrier/logistics provider relationships to prepare for the next growth period and future uncertainty

Accelerate tariff impact analysis and freight plan optimization

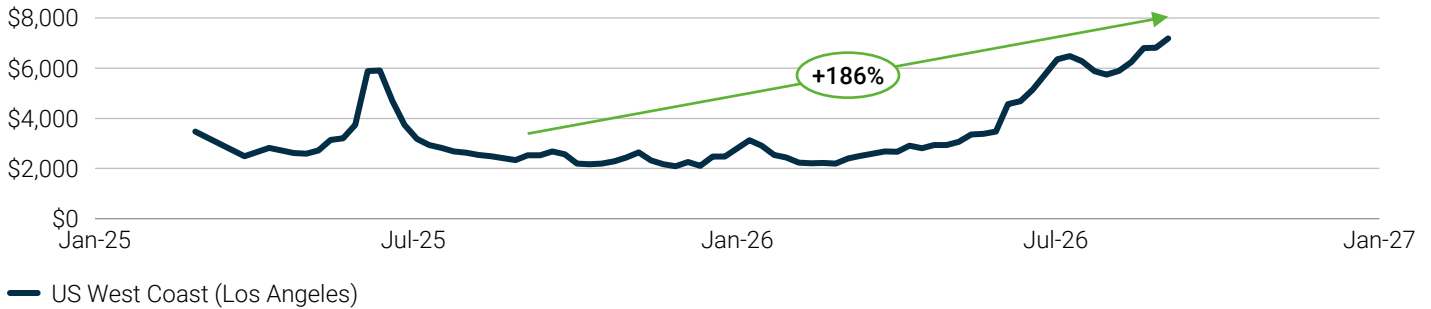
- Develop comprehensive mitigation strategies for trade policy volatility, including dual-sourcing and nearshoring options
- Use tools like AlixPartners [Global Trade Optimizer \(GTO\)](#) to rapidly assess tariff impacts and optimize sourcing in this dynamic environment

Source: AlixPartners analysis

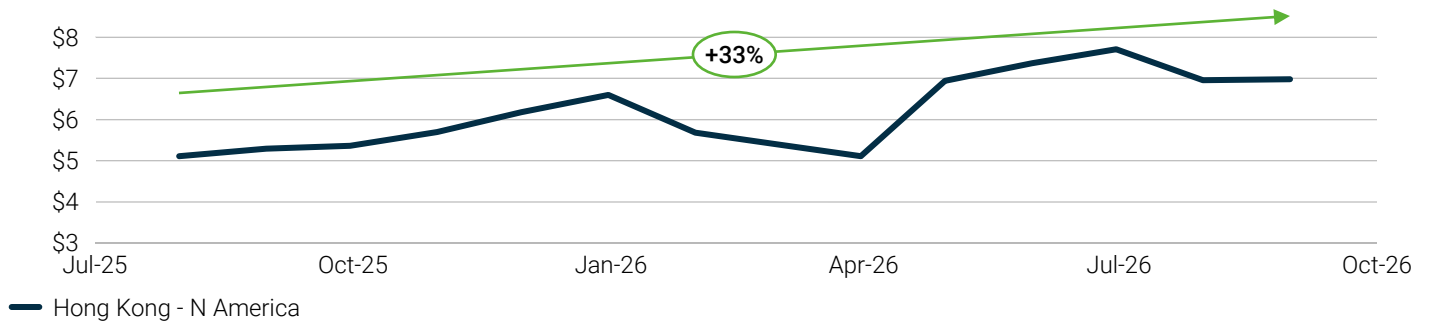
FREIGHT TRENDS

China–U.S. ocean rates remain near peak levels, with limited signs of easing; softer frontloading is creating downward pressure

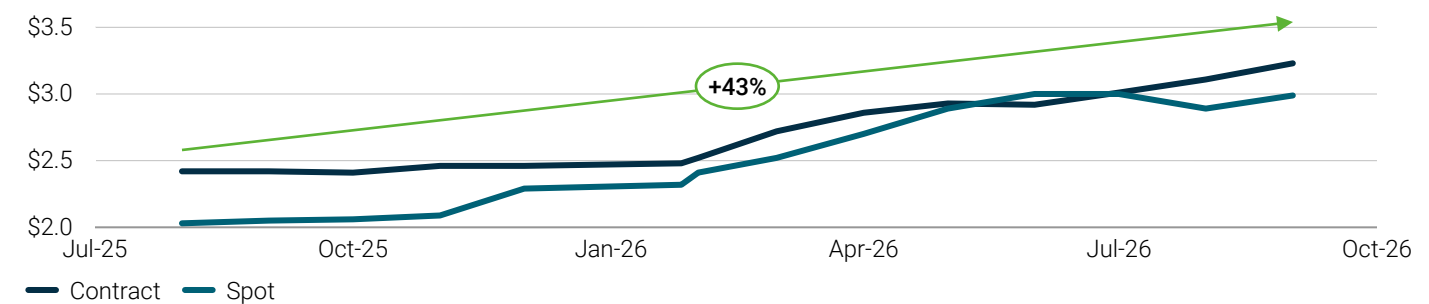
OCEAN FREIGHT – SHANGHAI TO U.S. (\$/40FT)



AIR FREIGHT – HONG KONG TO U.S. (\$/KG)



TRUCKING – DRY VAN (\$/MILE, INCL. FUEL)



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



Key drivers causing rate changes are:

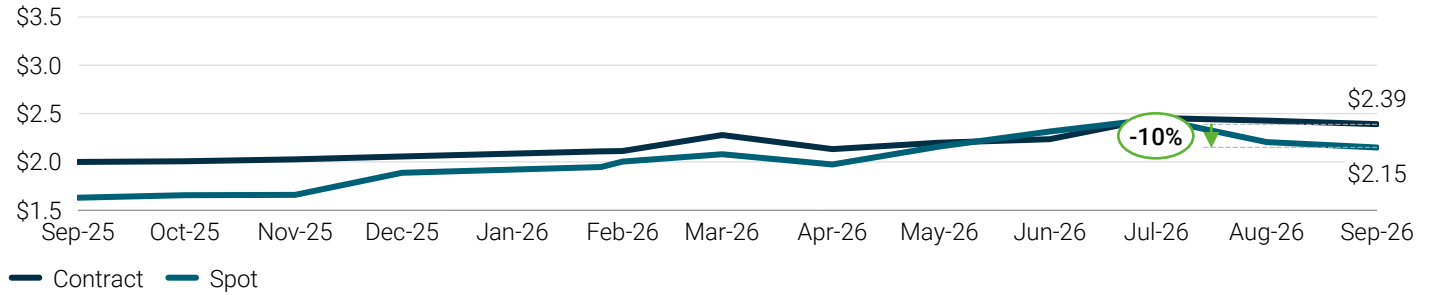
- Asia–U.S. ocean rates remain near peak-season highs, with West Coast rates at ~\$7,600/FEU and East Coast at ~\$9,500/FEU in early September despite a modest 1–3% weekly decline
- Global air spot rates stayed flat MoM, but up 24% YoY, with demand for AI chips offsetting declines in e-commerce, and additional summer capacity on Transatlantic lanes offsetting higher rates on the Transpacific lane
- Truckload rates split by market in the last month, with spot posting its steepest July-to-August linehaul declines in DAT's history, while contract kept re-pricing higher, pulling van and reefer spot back below contract

Source: DAT, Drewry, Baltic Exchange Index, AlixPartners analysis

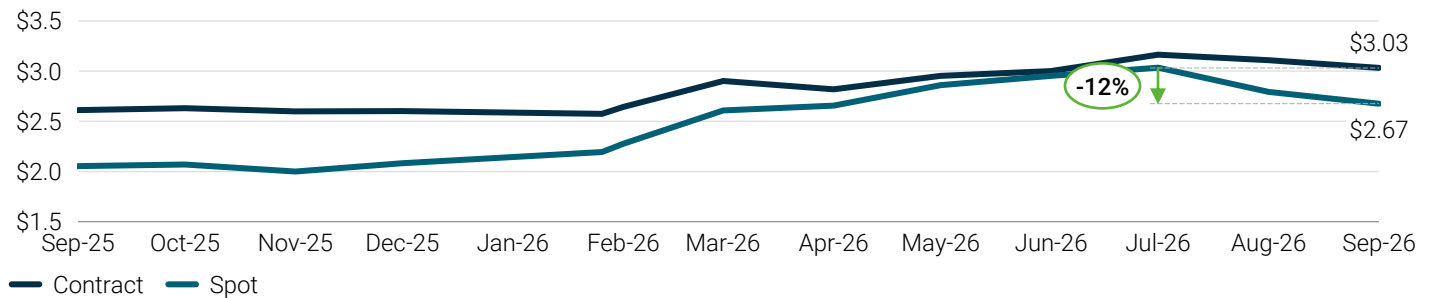
TRUCKING FREIGHT

Rate cycle has returned to contract: spot cooled sharply on seasonality, contract re-priced upwards, and reefer replaced flatbed as the tight segment

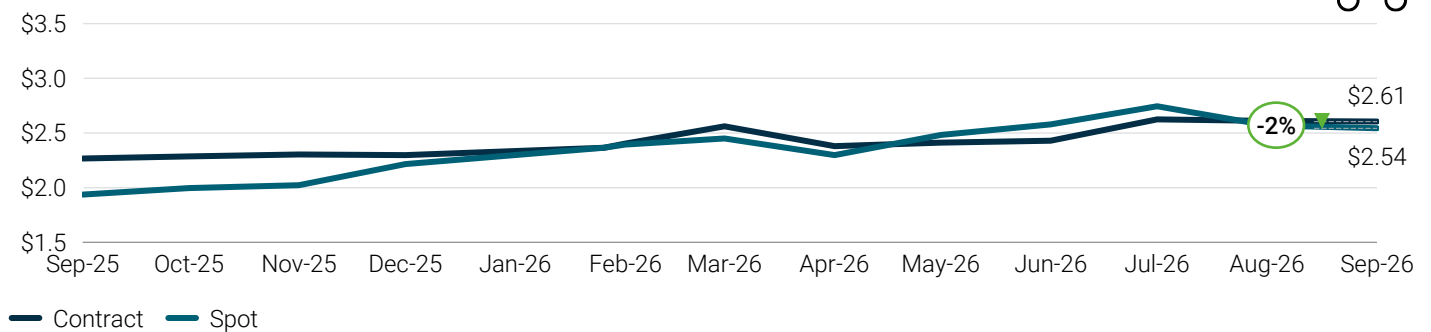
DRY VAN – U.S. DOMESTIC FREIGHT RATES, EXCL. FUEL (UNIT:\$ PER MILE)¹



FLATBED – U.S. DOMESTIC FREIGHT RATES, EXCL. FUEL (UNIT:\$ PER MILE)¹



REEFER – U.S. DOMESTIC FREIGHT RATES, EXCL. FUEL (UNIT:\$ PER MILE)¹



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



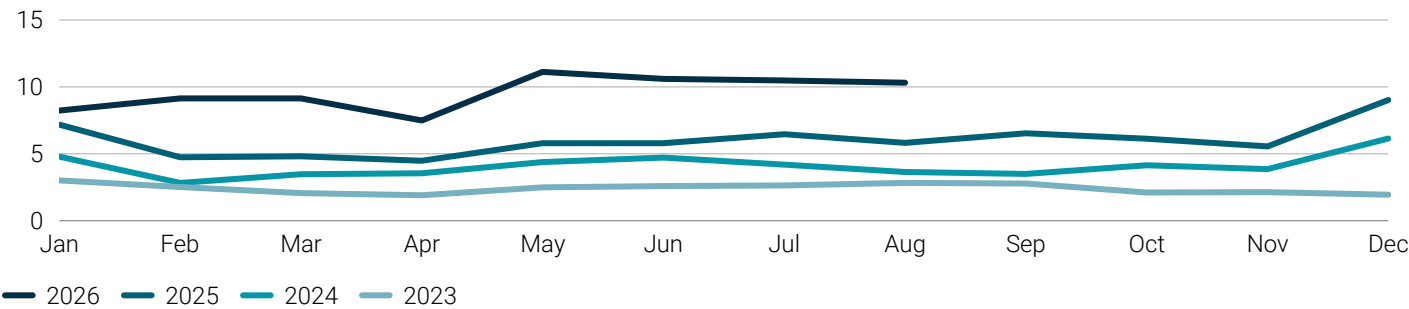
- Contract re-pricing has replaced spot as the rate engine, with Cass truckload linehaul up 11.3% year-over-year in August – a 20th straight gain and the largest since June 2022 – and aggregate contract rates flat month-over-month at \$2.52/mile, up 18% ([Cass, ACT Research](#)).
- Spot corrected hard on seasonality, posting the steepest July-to-August declines in DAT's 16-year history and pushing van and reefer back below contract after exceeding it in June and July ([DAT](#)).
- Flatbed rates saw a large decline, while reefer is now the tight segment with rejections above 20% versus van at 12.35% ([Truckstop/FTR, SONAR](#)).

Note: 1. Assumptions: Baseline fuel price of \$1.25/gal; Van: 6.0mpg, Reefer: 5.5mpg, Flatbed: 5.0mpg
Sources: DAT, FreightWaves, ACT Research, Transportation Insight, AlixPartners analysis

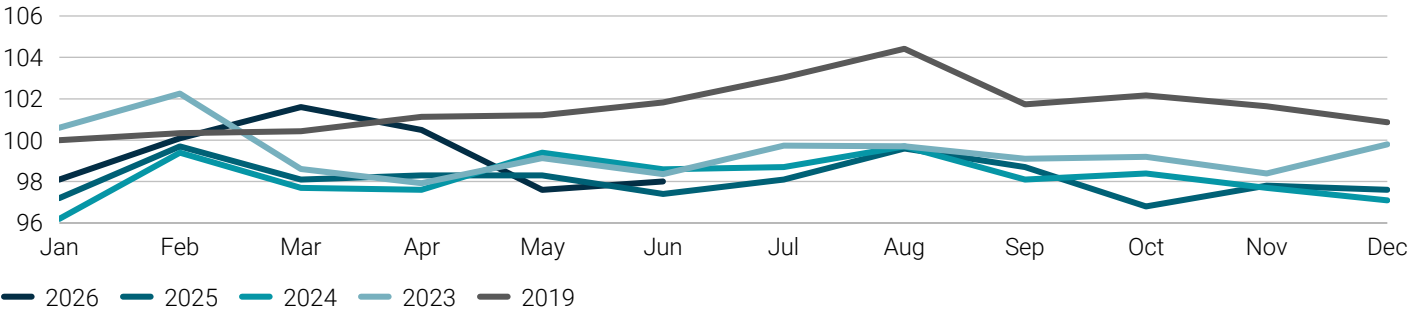
TRUCKING FREIGHT

Record diesel and tight driver supply keep carriers' cost floor high; capacity shows only early signs of recovery

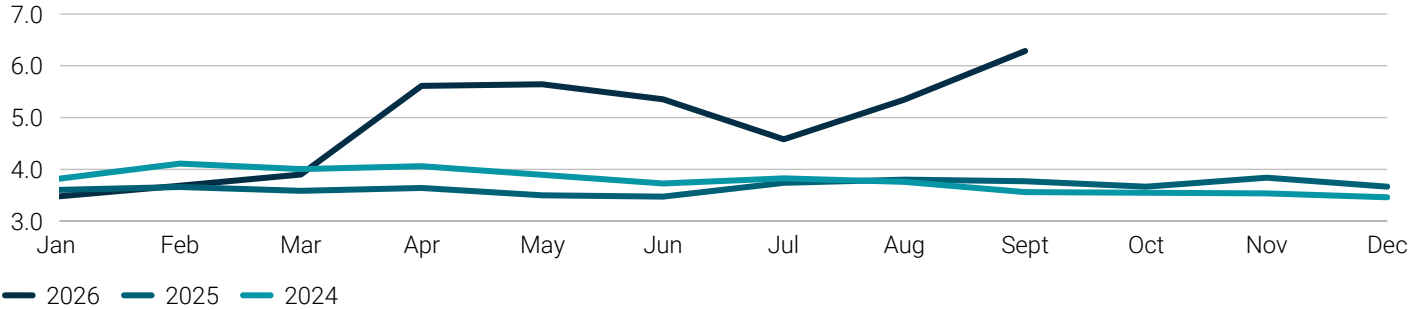
VAN LOAD-TO-TRUCK RATIO – YEAR OVER YEAR



TRUCK DEMAND – TONNAGE, YEAR OVER YEAR, INDEX (100) = JAN 2019



DIESEL – \$ PER GALLON



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS

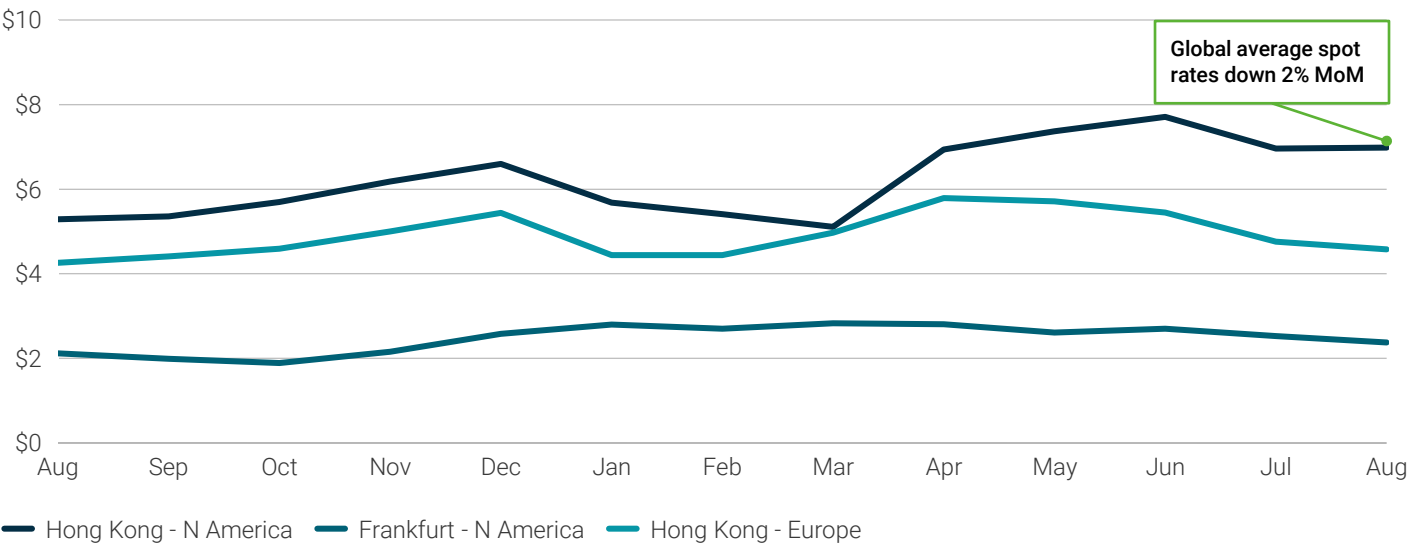
- Record diesel is the new driver of cost: national average hit \$6.285/gallon, up 32¢ in a week and ~68% year-over-year, as Hormuz disruption and strikes on Russian refineries removed significant global diesel supply (EIA, [Fleet Maintenance](#)).
- Capacity shows early signs of recovery, not a turnaround – Class 8 tractor sales ran above replacement in July and August and ACT's Capacity Index reached 56.2, its first above-neutral reading in three years – but driver availability tightened again to 35.9, so capacity remains tight ([ACT Research](#)).

Sources: DAT, Freight Waves, FRED, AlixPartners analysis

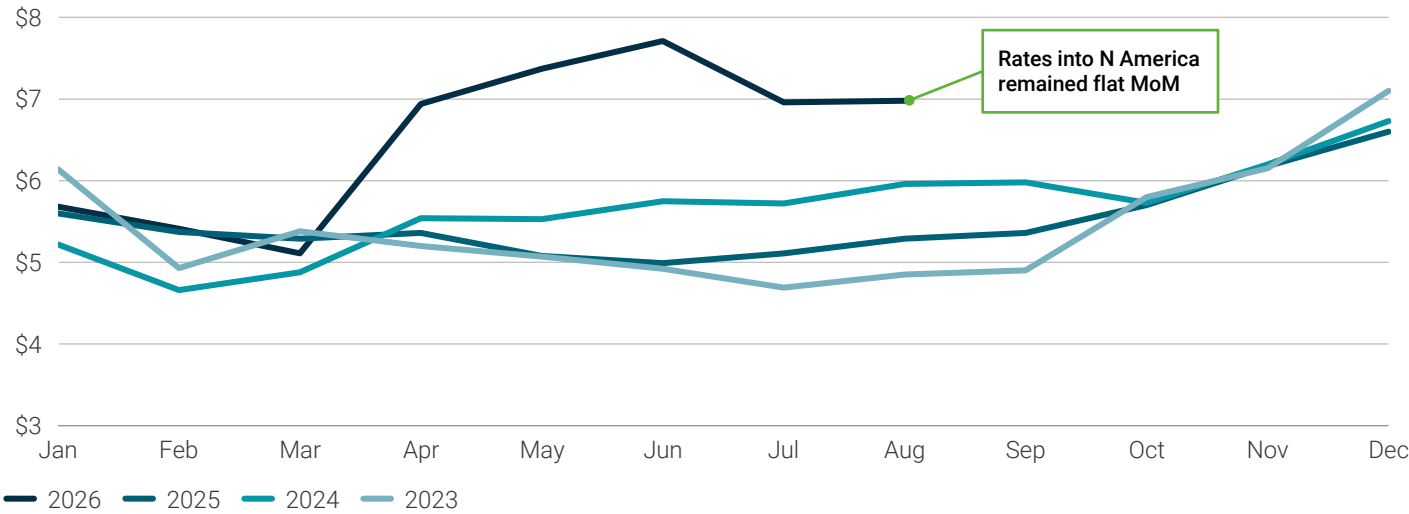
AIR FREIGHT

Global air freight average spot rate decreased to \$3.13/kg in August, down 2% MoM, but up 24% year over year

KEY INTERNATIONAL ROUTES (UNIT:\$ PER KG)



HONG KONG TO NORTH AMERICA HISTORY (UNIT:\$ PER KG)



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



- Jet fuel prices continue to jump, up 56.9%YoY, driving increased costs for carriers; however, prices are not all being passed on as EU-US rates continue to drop ([IATA](#))
- Capacity in available cargo-tonne-miles (ATCK) continues to lag demand growth, up 1.7% YoY ATCK Growth vs. 3.9% demand, continuing to add pressure to overall rates ([AirCargoNews](#))

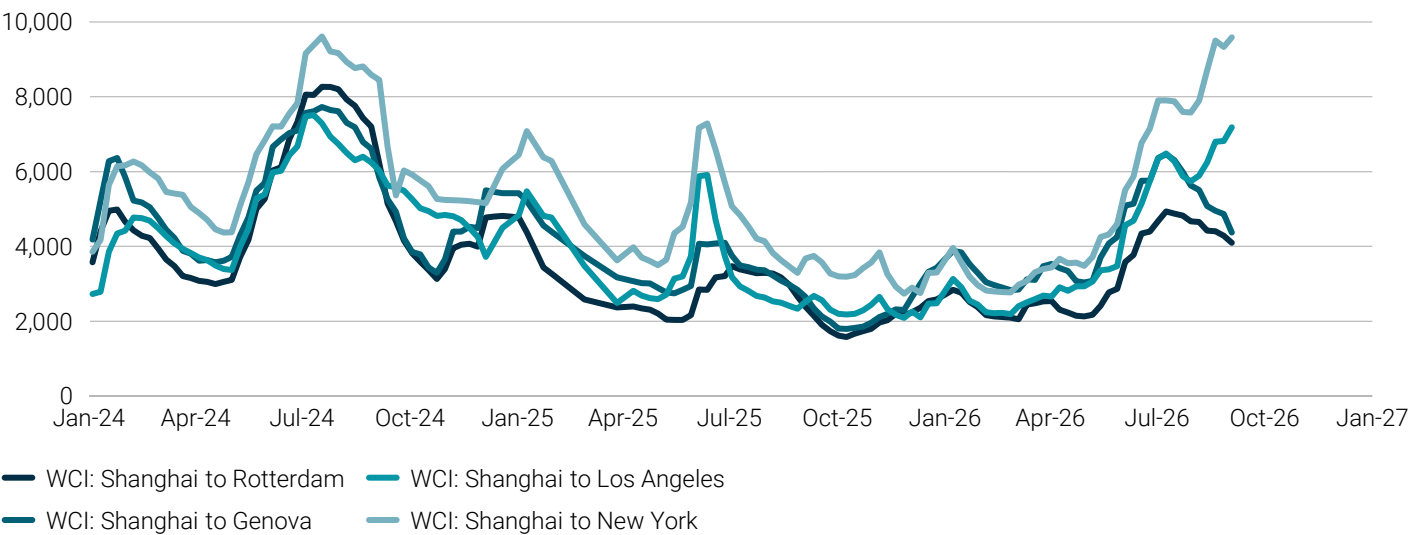
Source: Baltic Exchange Air Freight Index - TAC database, Air Cargo News, Xeneta, Supply Chain Dive, AlixPartners analysis

OCEAN FREIGHT

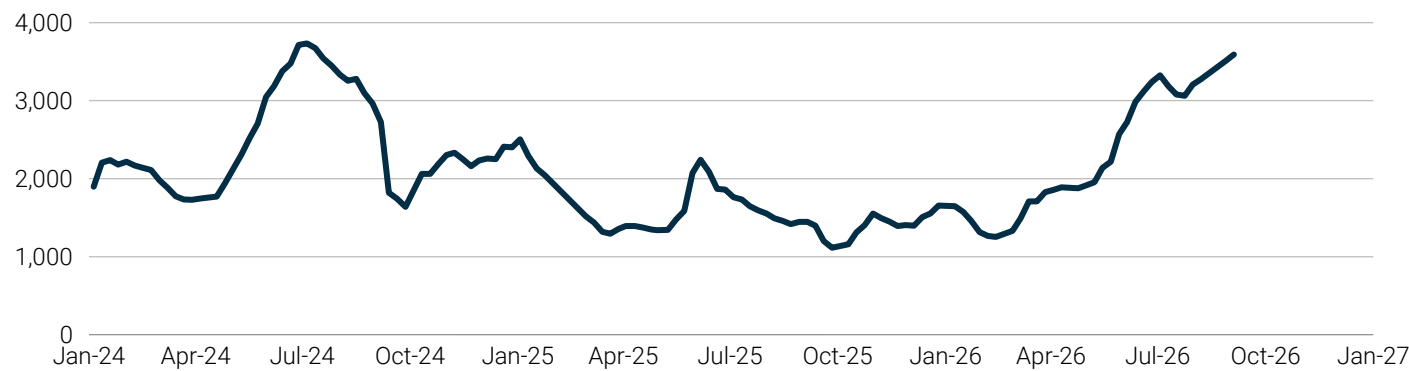
China–U.S. rates surged again and remain near peak-season highs, supported more by constrained effective capacity and carrier pricing actions than by a major demand surge

TRANSPACIFIC: CENTRAL CHINA (SHANGHAI) TO U.S. MONTHLY SHIPPING RATE FOR 40FT CONTAINER EVOLUTION (UNIT: \$)

Drewry: Trade Routes from Shanghai (U.S. \$/40ft)



Shanghai Container Freight Index (U.S. \$/40ft)



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



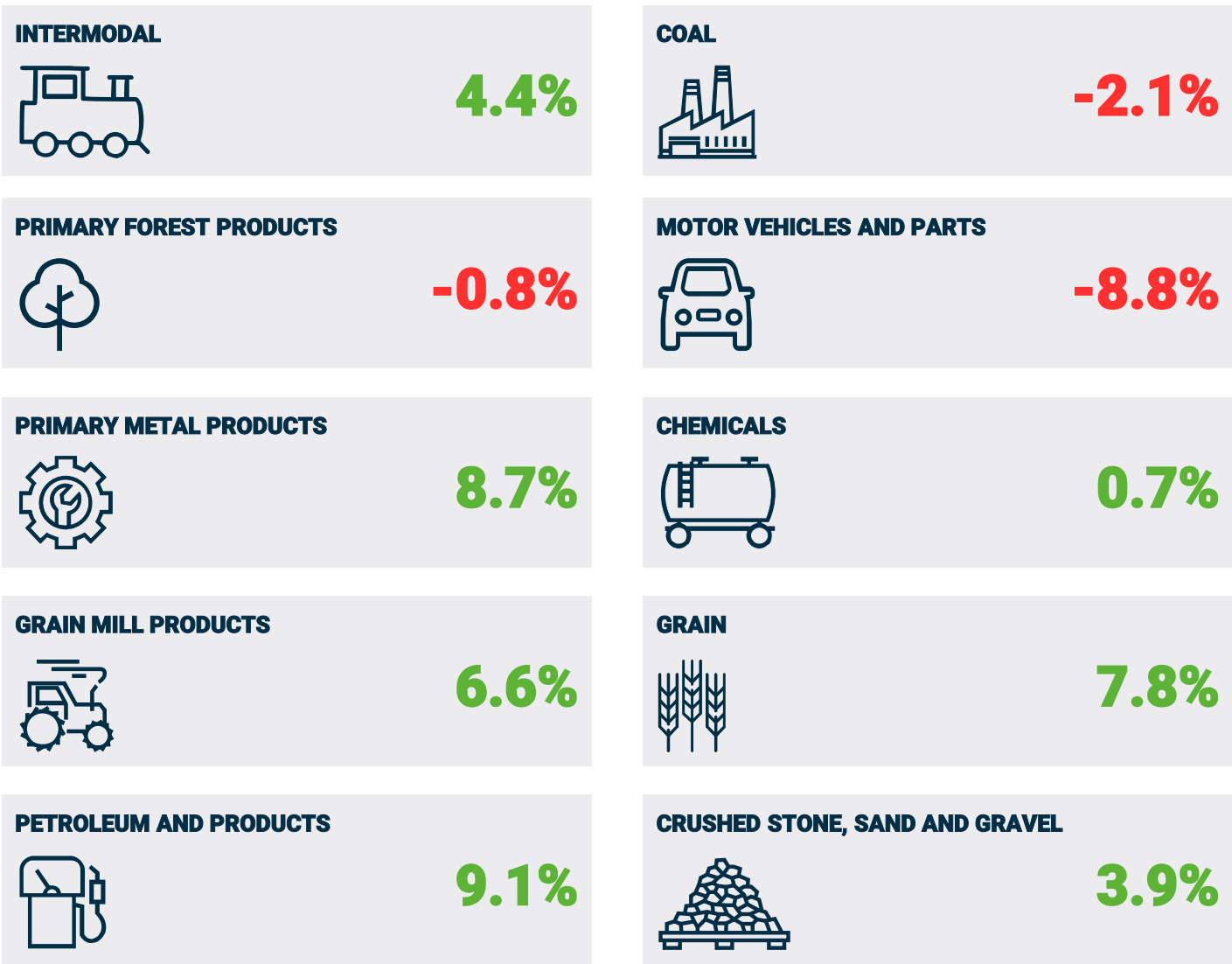
- Transpacific rates continued to rise into mid-September, with Shanghai–Los Angeles reaching \$7,352/40ft (+2% WoW) and Shanghai–New York \$9,726 (+1%), even as the global WCI stayed flat. ([FreightWaves](#))
- GRIs and trade-specific surcharges are helping carriers hold Transpacific pricing, with rate increases continuing into September even as overall U.S. demand remains relatively stable. ([Drewry](#))
- The divergence from Asia–Europe is widening, with Shanghai–U.S. rates still rising while Genoa and Rotterdam rates fall, indicating a Transpacific-specific pricing environment rather than a broad global freight upcycle ([FreightWaves](#))

Sources: Drewry Ocean report, Freightos, Xeneta, Reuters, AlixPartners analysis

RAIL FREIGHT

Carloads in August were up 2.3% YoY across 15 of the 20 commodity groups; intermodal was up 4.4 YoY and set a new monthly record (previous high being June '26)

U.S. RAIL VOLUME BY COMMODITY – AUGUST 2026 VS AUGUST 2025



Source: Association of American Railroads

KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



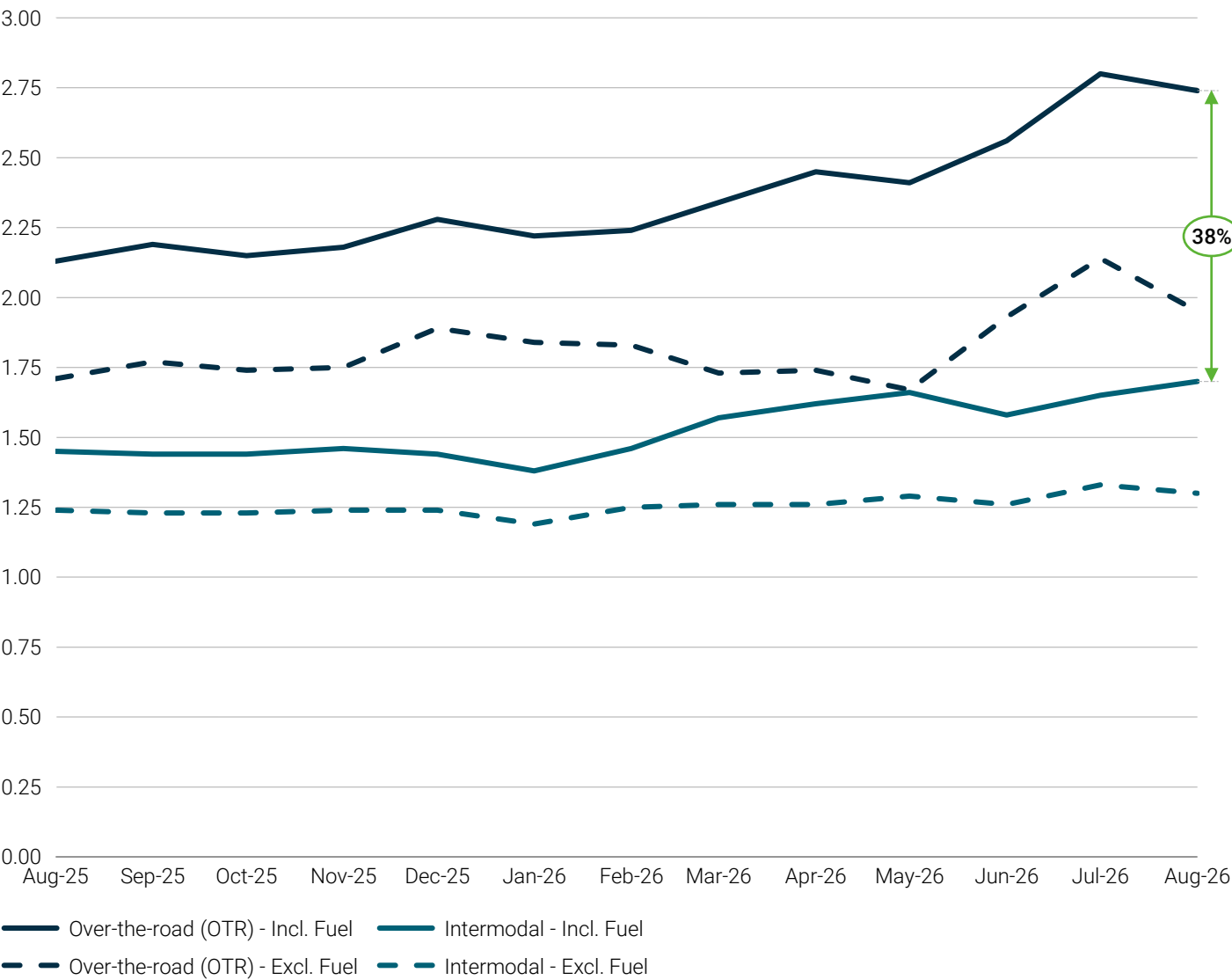
- Traffic is growing faster than GDP as a manufacturing recovery and a costlier trucking market pull volume onto the rails and push 2026 toward a record intermodal year.
- UP-NS remains the biggest open question in U.S. rail: the STB set a procedural schedule on August 18 moving the deal into merits review, with briefing running into Q2 2027 and a final decision expected in late 2027, amid contested scrutiny over competition, gateways, and shipper impacts.

Note: Carloads are traffic classified into 20 major commodity categories. Rail intermodal units are shipping containers and truck trailers moved on railcars
Source: AAR, STB, Progressive Railroading, IANA, ACT News

INTERMODAL

As diesel and over-the-road (OTR) linehaul rates have increased, Intermodal has become significantly more attractive for shippers to help off set OTR increases

DRY VAN LINEHAUL-ONLY RATE – LOS ANGELES TO CHICAGO (\$/MILE)



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



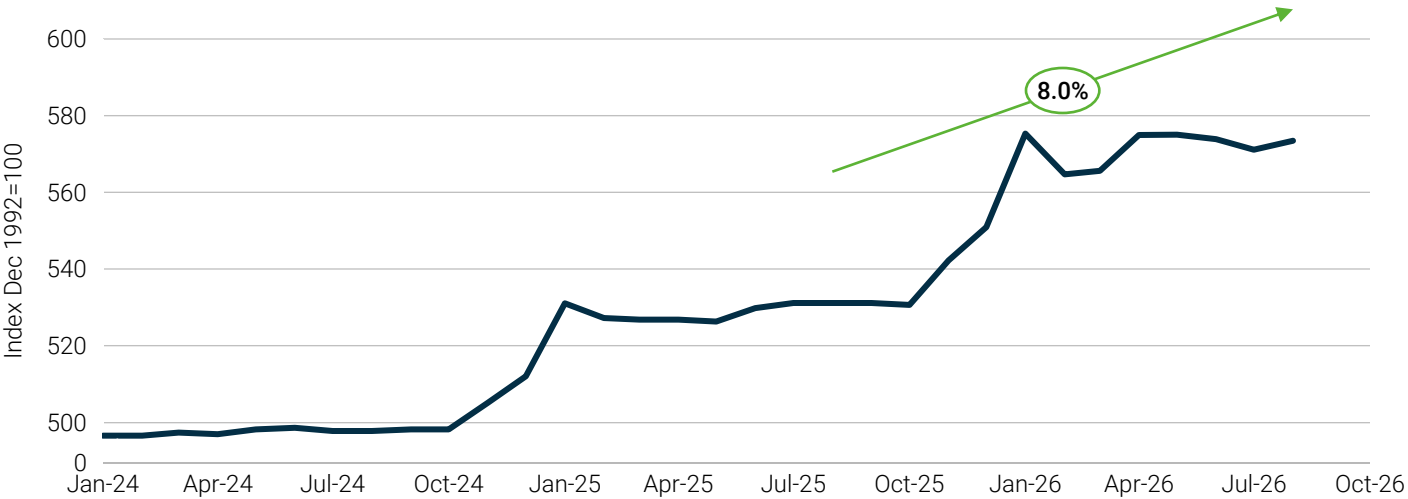
- For this month of August, the LA-Chicago lane intermodal lane is 38% less expensive as over-the-road shipping. Shippers are moving to intermodal ahead of peak partly for its roughly 70% fuel-efficiency advantage over truckload
- Standard intermodal on the LA-Chicago lane adds roughly 2-4 days versus OTR, but faster, truck-competitive service tiers are available (premium within about 1 day of truck) for time-sensitive freight. Peak season (Sep-Dec) can stretch these times as holiday volume builds
- Intermodal set an all-time monthly record in August 2026, up 4.4% year over year, with U.S. railroads averaging nearly 297,000 loads per week, the seventh straight YoY gain. Year-to-date volume is also the highest ever

Sources: DAT, Trains, NTG Freight

USA PARCEL

USPS narrows Q3 FY2026 net loss to \$2.5 billion as revenue grows 6.1%, but the liquidity crisis persists

PRODUCER PRICE INDEX – STANDARD COURIER SERVICES INDEX¹



Note: 1. Measures the average change over time in the selling prices received by domestic producers for their output. For e.g.: If a 1 kg package average parcel selling price in U.S. was \$5 in Dec 1992, today it is about $5 \times 565 / 100 = \$28.25$.

UPS FINANCIAL RESULTS Q2 FY2026

METRIC	USPS Q3 FY26	USPS Q3 FY25
Revenue	\$19.9B (+6.1%)	\$18.8B
Parcel Revenue	\$8.3B (+7.7%)	\$7.7B
Parcel Volume	1.55B (-3.4%)	1.61B
Net Income	(\$2.5B)	(\$3.1B)
Strategic focus	Pursuing legislative and administrative reform alongside cost control amid an ongoing liquidity crisis	

Source: [USPS 3Q 2026 Earnings](#)

KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



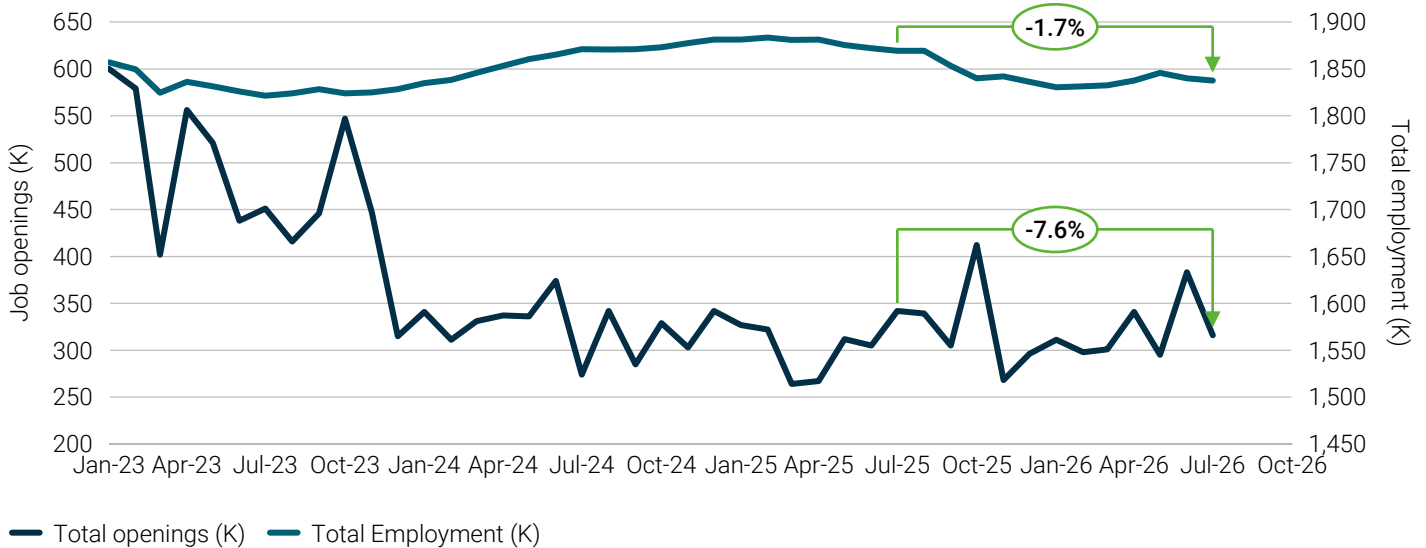
- USPS announces 6% rate increase for 2026 Holiday Season rates starting October 4th ([SCD](#))
- USPS unveiled a legislative package seeking retirement-benefit reform and expanded Treasury borrowing authority to address its liquidity crisis ([USPS](#))
- Marketing Mail revenue grew 12.3% on a 4.3% volume increase in Q3, while First-Class Mail revenue rose 4.3% despite a 3.5% volume decline ([USPS](#))
- USPS cut 4 million work hours in Q3 as part of its cost-control push under the Delivering for America plan ([USPS](#))

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics; [USPS 3Q 2026 Earnings](#); [SCD](#); [USPS PMG Comments](#)

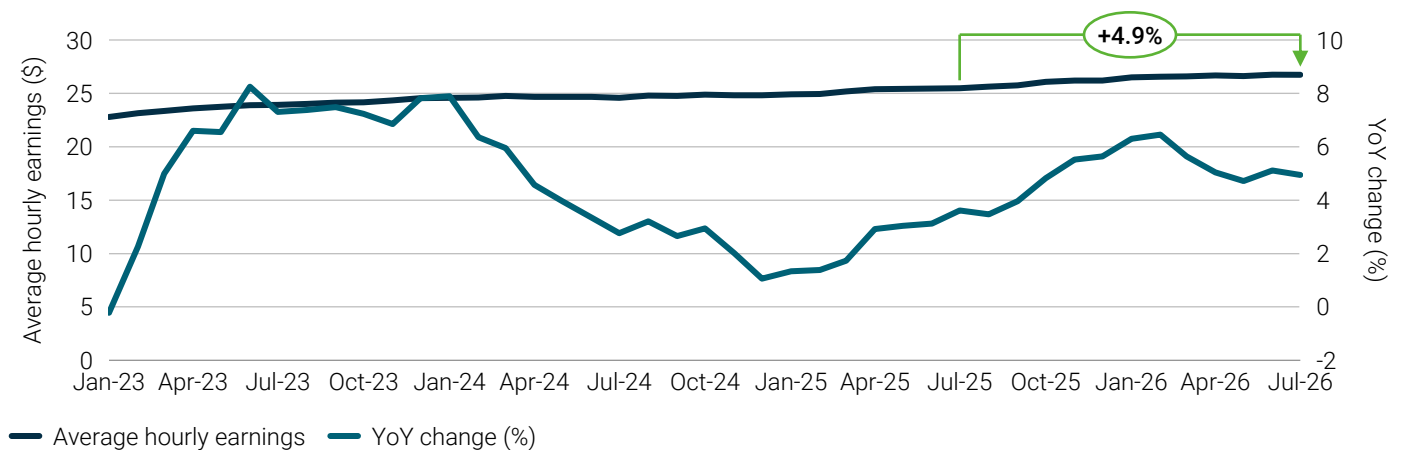
LABOR

Warehousing employment fell to 1,837K in August – down 32K (-1.7%) YoY, second consecutive month of MoM contraction as sector correction extends

JOB OPENINGS AND TOTAL EMPLOYMENT¹



AVERAGE HOURLY EARNINGS¹



Note: 1. Job Openings and Labor Turnover Survey used the Transportation, warehousing, and utilities industry group. Total Employment and Earnings used warehousing and storage industry group from the Current Employment Statistics survey. Data is seasonally adjusted.

KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



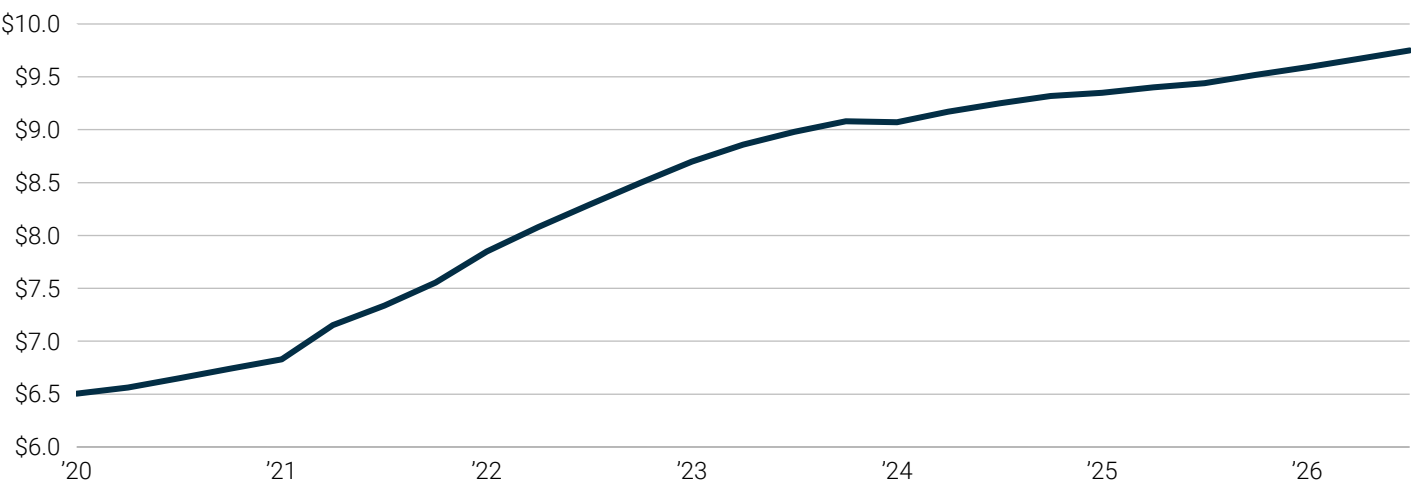
- Warehousing employment fell to 1,837K in August, down 2.6K MoM and 32K (-1.7%) YoY – now 46K below its February 2025 peak; a second consecutive month of MoM decline signals the low-hire, low-fire pattern has tipped into net contraction ([BLS](#))
- Warehousing hourly wages at \$26.74 in July (+4.9% YoY, SA) – wage growth moderating from June's +5.1% but still outpacing the broader economy as tight labor supply and freight inflation sustain pressure on skilled logistics roles ([BLS](#))
- Job openings in transportation, warehousing & utilities fell sharply to 316K in July (-7.6% YoY, -17% MoM) – a dramatic reversal from June's 383K post-pull-forward hiring spike, as operators recalibrated staffing after freight demand normalized ([BLS](#))

Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics seasonally adjusted data, MMH, Freight Waves

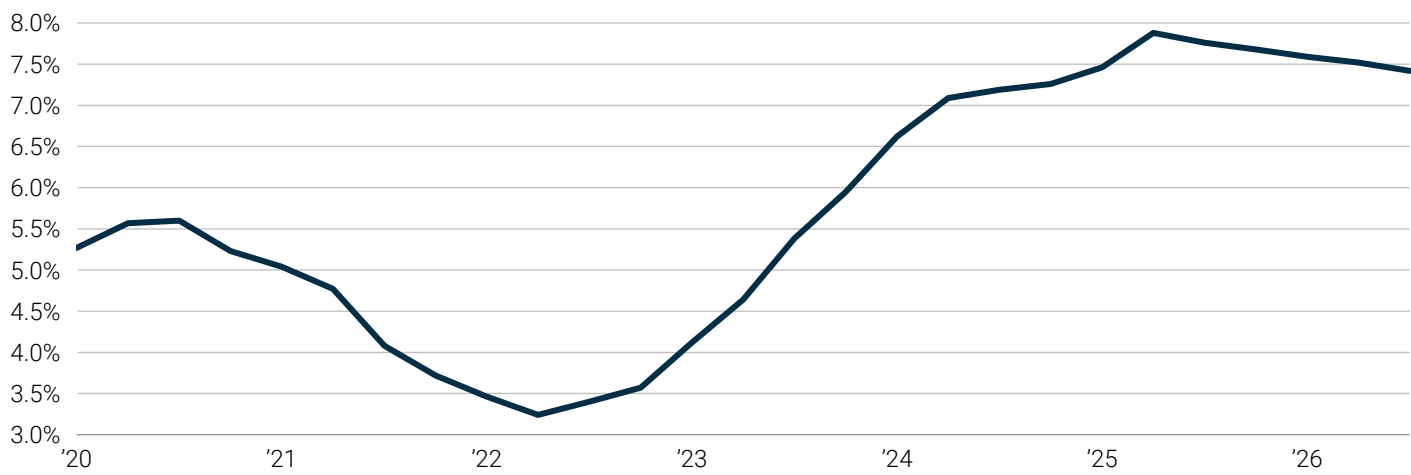
WAREHOUSING TRENDS

Industrial market moves into balance in Q2 as vacancy edges below 7%, but the 500K+ SF segment tightens sharply while data centers absorb prime land

NATIONAL AVERAGE MARKET RENT/SQ FT (\$)



NATIONAL AVERAGE VACANCY RATE (%)



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



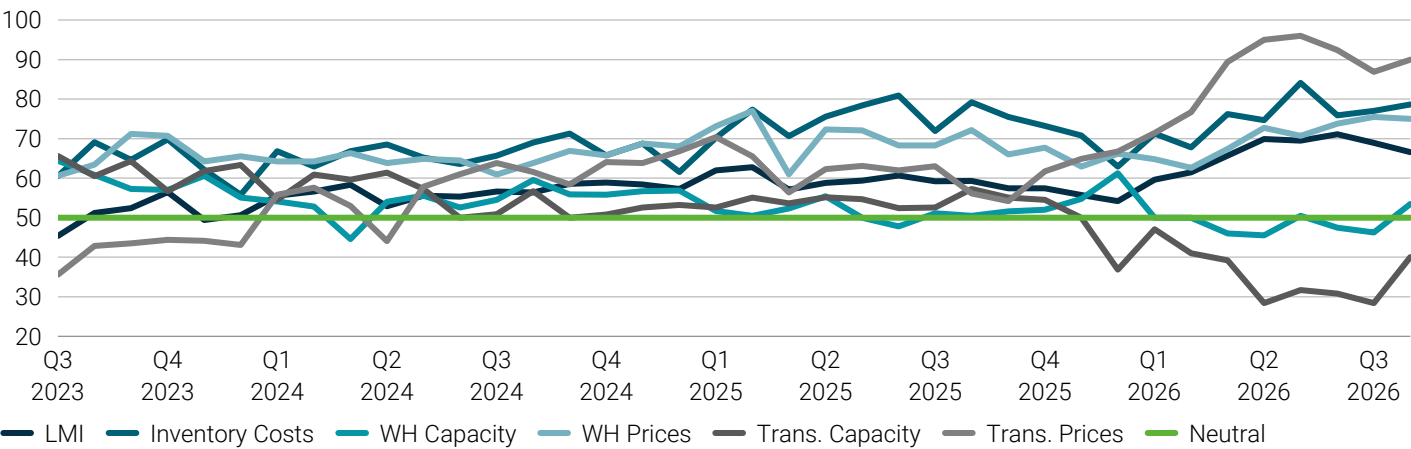
- Industrial vacancy edged below 7.0% to 6.9% in Q2 2026 – the second consecutive quarterly decline – as net absorption (62.1M sq ft) matched completions; 500K+ sq ft segment vacancy dropped 300 bps from its late-2024 peak to 8.1% while shallow-bay stayed exceptionally tight at 4.8% ([Cushman and Wakefield](#))
- Warehouses built since 2020 captured 137M sq ft of H1 absorption – 62.4M sq ft in 500K+ sq ft facilities alone – as occupiers prioritize clear heights and power for automation ([Cushman and Wakefield](#))
- Existing warehouses in high-power-capacity markets increasingly being acquired for data center conversion – shrinking the pool of modern logistics space in Northern Virginia, Dallas, and Phoenix even as demand grows ([CBRE](#))

Sources: AlixPartners & Mohr Partners, AlixPartners analysis

WAREHOUSING TRENDS

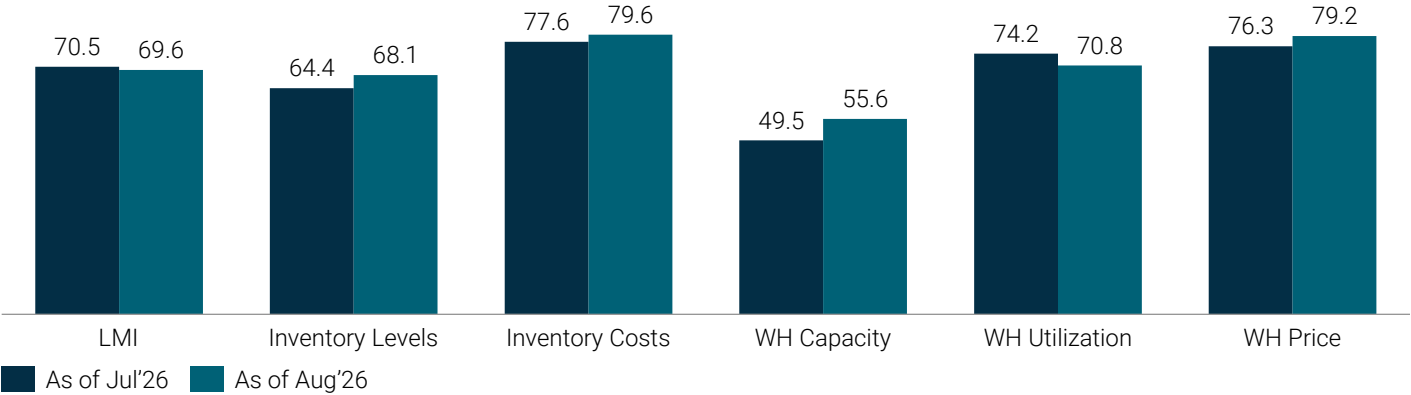
LMI at 66.6 in August (-2.2 from July) – second consecutive month of slowing growth as inventory buildup pauses but logistics costs remain elevated across the board

FLUCTUATION OF LMI INDICES



Logistics Manager Index (LMI) Legend: +50 = Increasing -50 = Decreasing

LMI SURVEY – NEXT 12-MONTH PREDICTION¹



Note: 1. LMI respondents' predictions for movement in LMI metrics 12 months from now

KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



- LMI at 66.6 in August (-2.2), second consecutive month of slowing growth after June's 71.1 peak; Inventory Levels stalled at 52.8 as Upstream firms contracted (49.0) while Downstream retailers rebuilt for Q4 (61.9) – a complete reversal of July's pattern ([LMI](#))
- Aggregate logistics costs at 241.9 average since March – statistically significant step-up post-Iran conflict – as Inventory Costs (78.6) run 25.8 points above Inventory Levels, more than double the pre-tariff historical delta of 11.9, reflecting per-unit cost inflation ([LMI](#))
- Transportation Prices back to 90.0 (+3.1) as diesel hit \$5.652/gallon in late August (+23.5% from July lows); Transportation Capacity eased sharply (+11.6 to 40.0) – biggest monthly rebound in over a year – but remains in contraction for the ninth straight month ([LMI](#))

Sources: Logistics Managers' Index, August 2026, AlixPartners analysis

WAREHOUSING TRENDS

Warehouse AI moves toward lights-out operations as Physical AI deployments extend to the last remaining manual touchpoints

COMPANY DEVELOPMENTS



Symbiotic

Targeting 'lights-out' facilities via next-gen SymBots and AI-driven maintenance orchestration.

Purpose: Symbiotic is deploying next-gen SymBots equipped with LiDAR, enhanced cameras, and advanced batteries to enable near-continuous autonomous operation. Integration of newly-acquired ARMS Innovations software adds real-time maintenance orchestration – AI locates a failed component in a million-sq-ft facility, pre-checks parts inventory, and directs a technician to the exact repair with photos and estimated completion time.



Ocado

On-Grid Robotic Pick automating the last human touchpoint in grid-based grocery fulfilment.

Purpose: Ocado's On-Grid Robotic Pick (OGRP) automates the pick station itself, historically the last remaining manual step in Ocado's grid model. With 17,000+ cumulative robots deployed globally, OGRP is now live in 14 Customer Fulfillment Centers, marking the transition from single-site validation to production rollout across the international grocery network. Signals that autonomous manipulation of variable grocery SKUs – is now a scaling capability.



GXO

20,000 AMRs planned across the network in 2026 –humanoids remain in R&D despite 45 active pilots.

Purpose: GXO is deploying 20,000 AMRs across its facilities in 2026 while explicitly stating humanoid production deployments remain roughly two years out despite 45 active pilots. Digit (Agility), Reflex, and Apollo (Apptроник) all remain in pilot status. Rare public marker from a Tier-1 3PL that AMRs are the operational reality now, while humanoids are still solving reliability, safety standards, and integration challenges before production readiness.

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

- Amazon secured permits Aug 21 for eight new ARSAW (Amazon Robotic Storage and Retrieval Aggregate Warehouse) stations at its Jacksonville JAX2 site – continuing the vertical integration of proprietary robotic storage rather than outsourcing to vendors
- Physical AI is extending into legacy equipment retrofits (Hyster-Yale/NTT DATA, Comau/Invent Smart) rather than only greenfield deployments – a lower-capex path that broadens the addressable warehouse footprint from ~10% (modern automated) to the full installed base
- AMRs continue to capture the largest share of new deployment budgets in 2026 – operational winners near-term are AMR vendors and orchestration platforms, not humanoid startups still years from production readiness
- Ocado, Symbiotic, and GXO are converging on the same architecture – hardware + orchestration software + maintenance AI as a single platform – signaling that point-solution robotics vendors face structural pressure to integrate or be acquired

DEMAND VS. CAPACITY

European freight costs remain elevated YoY: ocean rates are easing as capacity returns, trucking stays tight on diesel and driver shortages, and air is softening

OCEAN FREIGHT



Year over year
trend – Demand



Year over year
trend – Capacity



- Asia-North Europe spot rates ended **Asia-North Europe spot rates ended Aug'26 at ~+25% vs. Aug'25**: Shanghai–Rotterdam eased steadily through the month (–1% to –3% w/w in the second half) as frontloaded volumes cleared and post-peak demand normalised
- **Capacity was the swing factor**: returning Suez transits added tonnage while blank sailings rose only marginally; easing continued in early Sep'26 (–5% then –2% w/w), while Emergency Fuel Surcharges, EU ETS and CBAM add cost

AIR FREIGHT



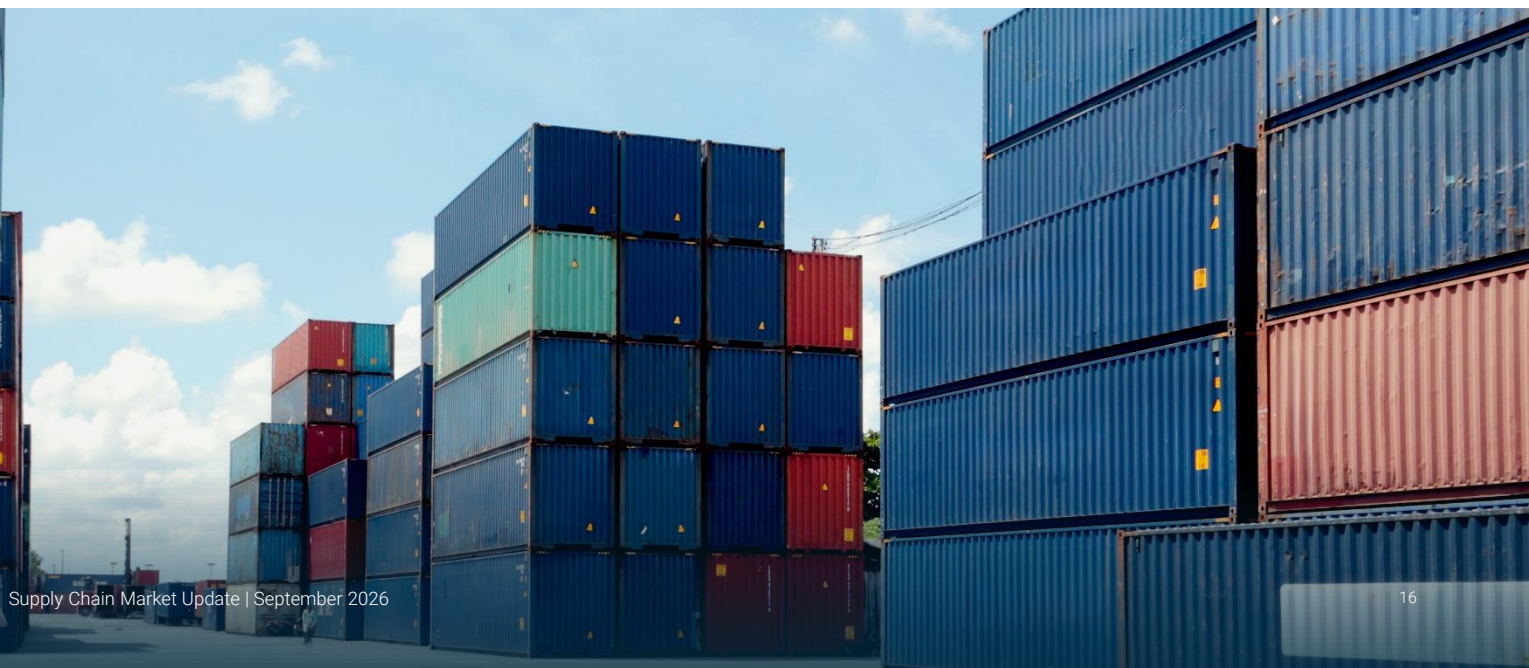
- **Global air spot rates cooled to \$3.12/kg**, +28% YoY but down 6% MoM (vs. +38% YoY in June), as Middle East rate premiums unwind rather than build into peak season
- China–Western Europe fell **22% MoM to \$4.15/kg**, Northeast Asia–Europe –13% and Southeast Asia–Europe –9%, after the 1 July removal of the EU's €150 duty-free threshold

TRUCKING



- **Rates up across all corridors**: European FTL spot rates are up 9% YoY and contract 7%; Domestic Germany runs far hotter at 21% spot and 16% contract, and the widening spot-to-contract spread shows capacity tightening faster than demand
- **Diesel and the Rhine both bite**: pre-tax EU diesel at €1.27/l, +69% YoY and 32% above the July trough; Kaub at ~25 cm against a 77 cm reference keeps bulk on trucks, while IRU counts ~502,000 unfilled driver posts, 13% of all positions

Source: Drewry Ocean report; Logistics Insider; DC Velocity; The Loadstar; Freightos; JOC; Maritime News; Xeneta; eeSea; Logfret; Upfly; Ti; IRU; Eurostat; European Commission; EIA; Baltic Exchange Air Freight Index – TAC database; IATA; AJOT; AlixPartners analysis

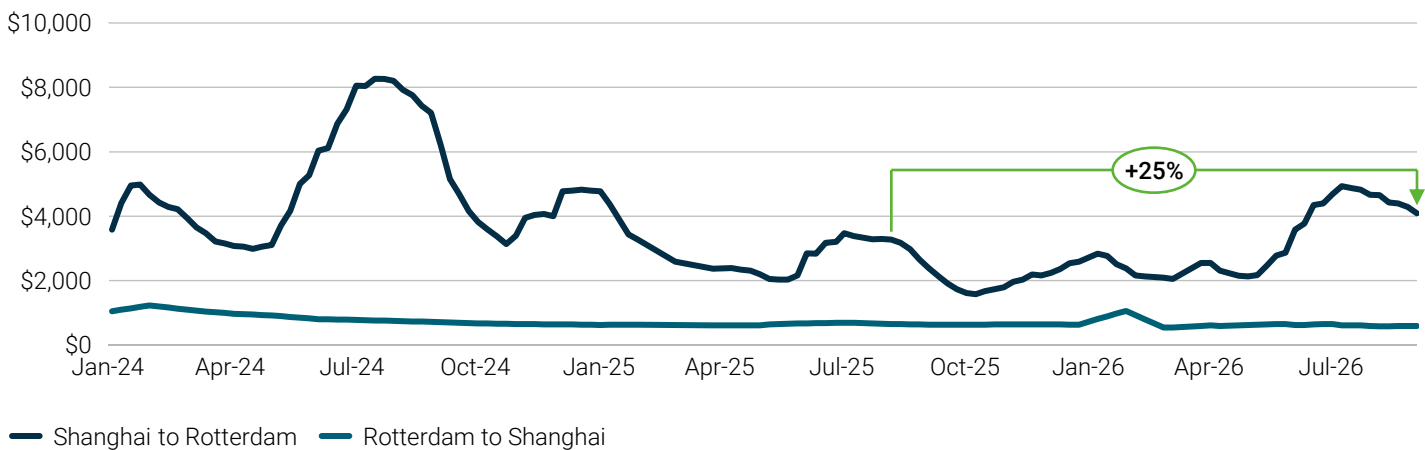


EUROPE OCEAN FREIGHT

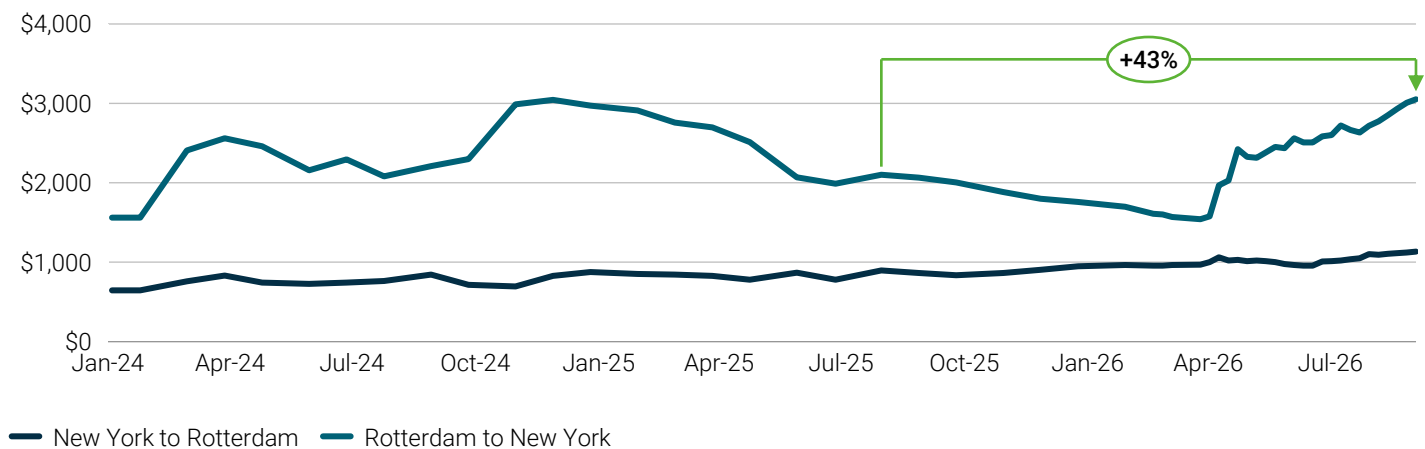
Asia-North Europe rates ended August +25% Year-over-year, but eased through Aug and early Sep'26 as post-peak demand softened and Suez capacity returned

CENTRAL CHINA (SHANGHAI) AND USA (NEW YORK) TO EUROPE MONTHLY SHIPPING RATE FOR 40FT CONTAINER EVOLUTION (UNIT: \$)

Shanghai – Rotterdam (U.S. \$/40ft)



New York – Rotterdam (U.S. \$/40ft)



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



- During Aug'26, Asia–North Europe drifted steadily lower (–1% to –3% w/w in the second half) as demand normalised once frontloaded volumes cleared – yet closed ~+25% above Aug'25
- Capacity was the swing factor: carriers returned tonnage and blank sailings rose only marginally, so east–west rates fell for several consecutive weeks against easing demand
- Costs moved against shippers: carriers introduced Emergency Fuel Surcharges effective Aug'26 on Hormuz/Iran–US tensions, while EU ETS and CBAM add structural cost to Europe-bound routes
- Early Sep'26: easing continued (–5% then –2% w/w) with the composite index flat for two weeks – returning Suez transits add capacity, while Asian port congestion and Panama draft limits are counterweights

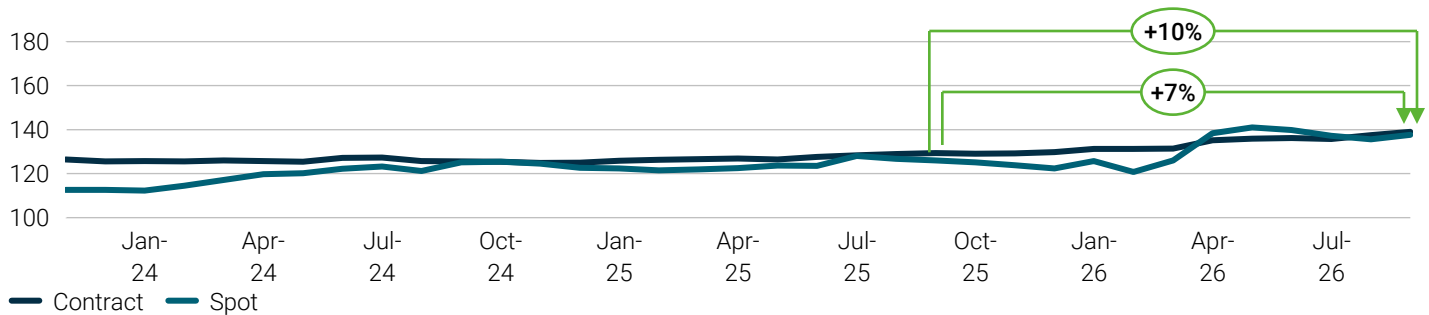
Sources: Drewry Ocean report; Logistics Insider; DC Velocity; The Loadstar; Freightos; JOC; AlixPartners analysis, Maritime News, Xeneta eeSea, Logfret

EUROPE ROAD FREIGHT

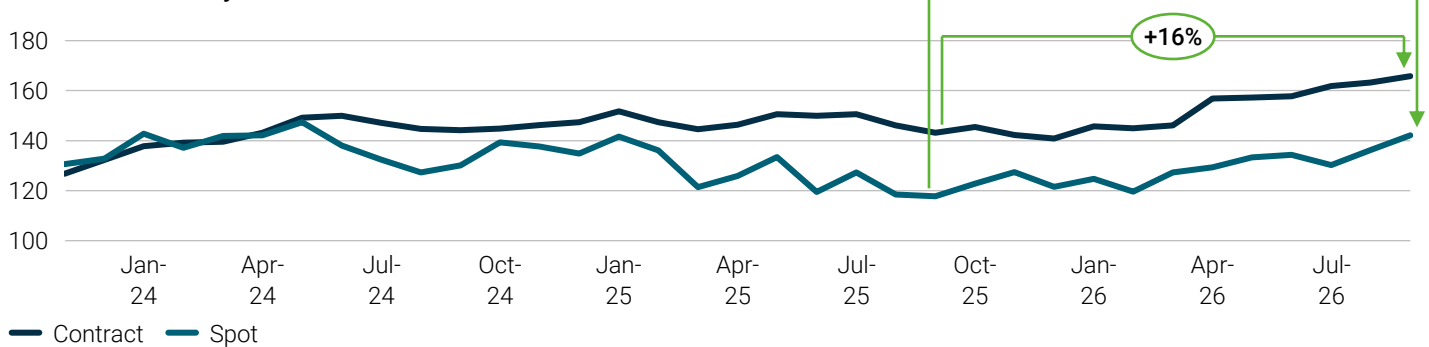
European FTL spot rates rose 9% year over year and contract rates 7%. Germany is well above, with spot up 21% and contract up 16%.

EUROPE FTL FREIGHT INDEX, INCL. FUEL (JAN-17 AS 100 BASE)

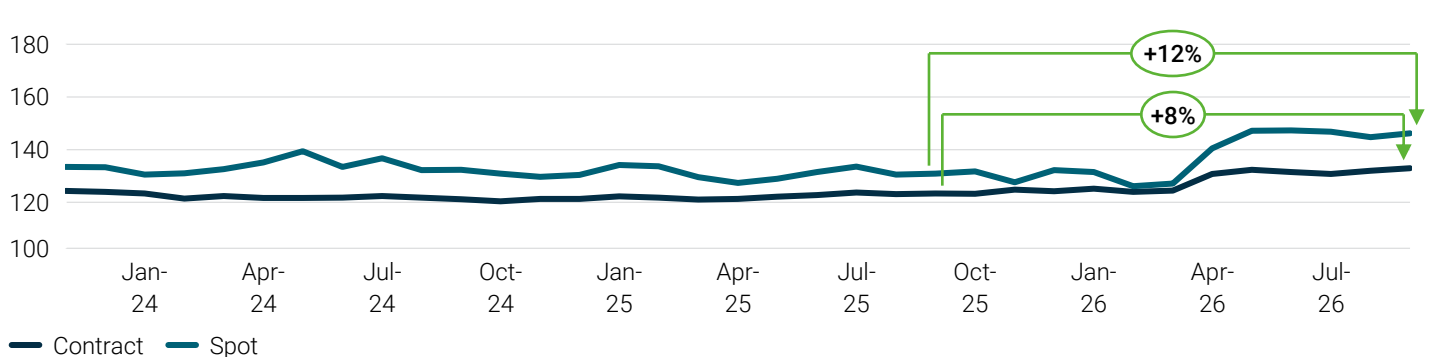
Overall Europe



Domestic Germany¹



Domestic France¹



+/- x% YoY index change

KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



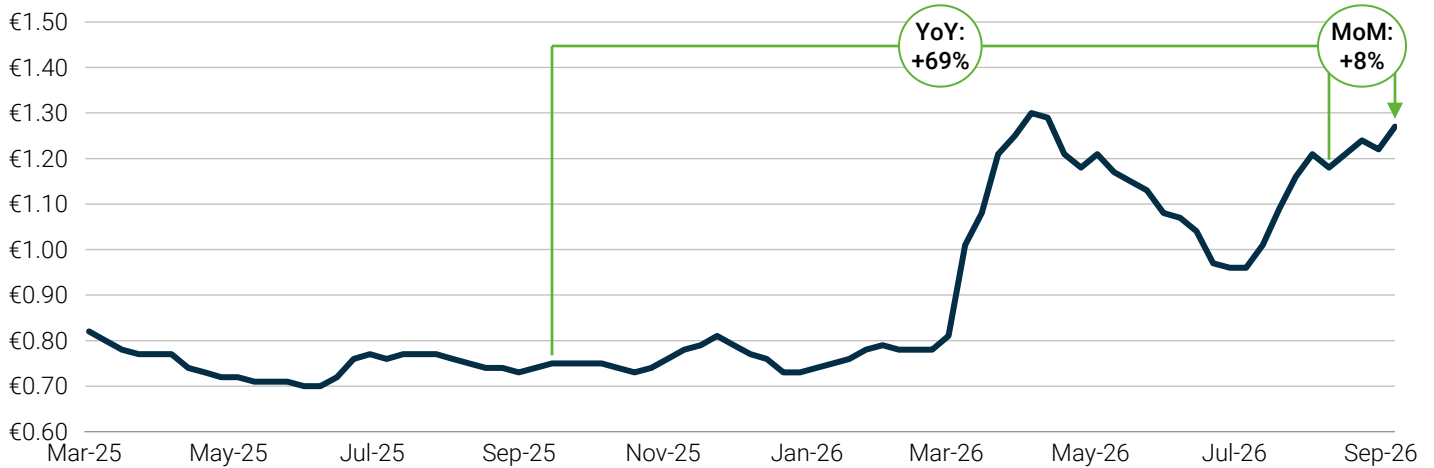
- FTL rates rose in all three corridors year over year, but the spread is widening: Overall Europe gained 9% on spot and 7% on contract, France 12% and 8%, while Domestic Germany ran far hotter at 21% and 16%
- Two forces keep capacity tight: the Rhine bottleneck has improved but not cleared, with Kaub at about 25 cm in mid-September against a 77 cm reference level, pushing bulk volume onto trucks, while structurally IRU counts about 502,000 unfilled truck driver posts in Europe, 13% of all positions
- IAA Transportation opened in Hannover on 15 September with more than 150 world debuts, autonomy among them: retail major Lidl now runs a cab-less autonomous electric truck between its Edermünde/Germany warehouse and a nearby store

Note: 1. These corridors were selected as representative examples with high freight volumes. Additional corridors are available.
Source: Uply, Ti, IRU, Eurostat, AlixPartners analysis. Historic freight index values can still be subject to change

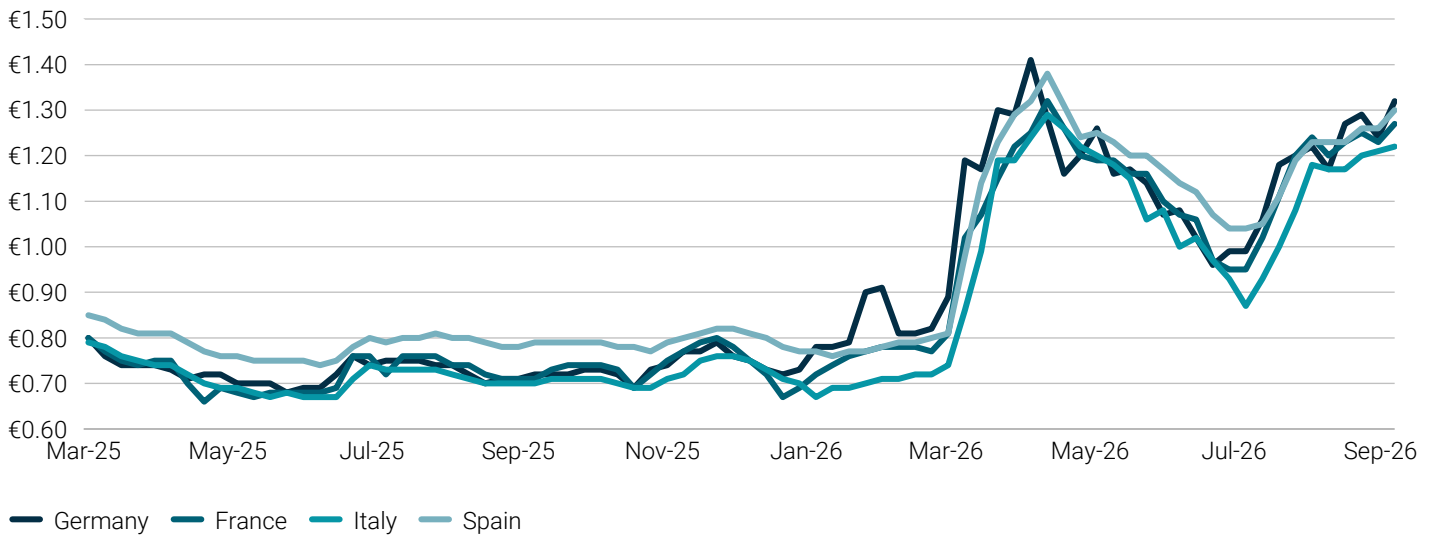
EUROPE DIESEL

Pre-tax EU diesel rose 69% year over year to €1.27 per litre, peaking as the Hormuz war cut supply. Red Sea disruption adds new uncertainty

EU AVERAGE PRE-TAX DIESEL PRICE (€)



EUROPEAN PRE-TAX DIESEL PRICE PER LITER BY COUNTRY (€)



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



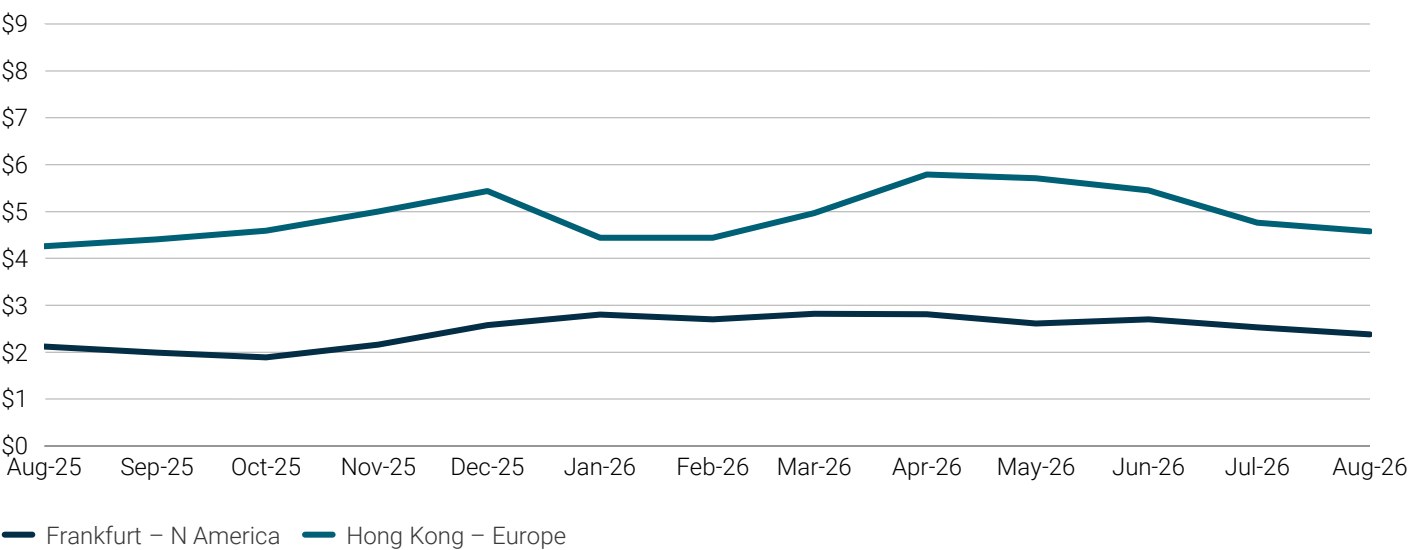
- **Price at a fresh high:** Pre-tax EU average diesel reached EUR 1.27 per liter in September, up 69% year over year and 8% in the month, and 32% above the July trough of EUR 0.96
- **Distillate margin, not crude:** Lower international refinery output of distillate lifted gasoil cracks, while Middle East crude stays partly shut in. Germany is dearest at EUR 1.32 per liter against Italy at 1.22; tax changes fall outside this pre-tax basis
- **National relief lapsed, Red Sea adds risk:** Germany's 14 cent net duty cut lapsed on 30 June. Strikes on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline on 10 September and Houthi control of Yemen's Red Sea coast now threaten diesel outbound flows

Source: European Commission; EIA; TI/Upply/IRU; AlixPartners Analysis

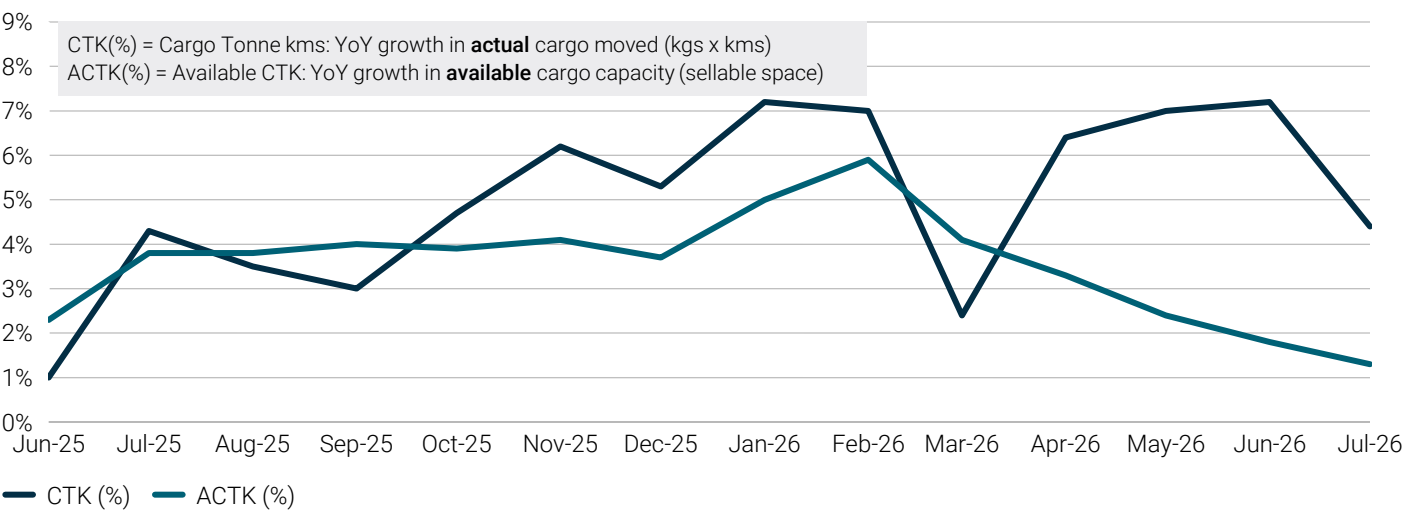
EUROPE AIR FREIGHT

Europe air freight softened slightly in August as Asia e-commerce volumes fell after new EU import rules, while transatlantic rates remained pressured by summer belly capacity

KEY EUROPEAN ROUTES (UNIT:\$ PER KG)



EUROPE: CTK% VS. ACTK%



KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



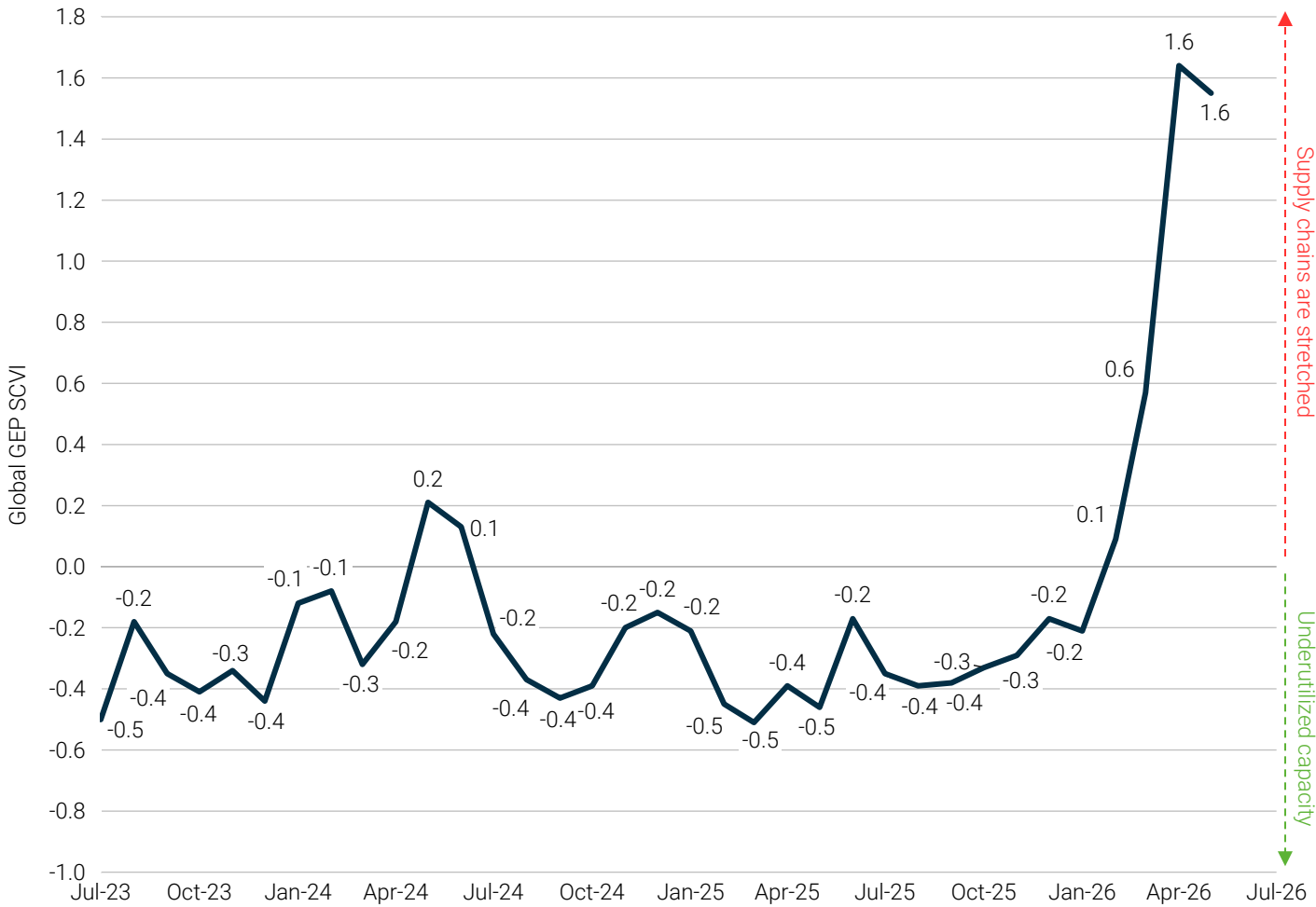
- Global air cargo spot rates increased to \$3.13/kg in July, +24% YoY, versus +28% YoY in July and a +38% YoY peak in June, signaling that Middle East-driven rate premiums are continuing to unwind even with continued increases in jet fuel prices ([Xeneta](#))
- The July 1 removal of the EU's €150 duty-free threshold and replacement with a €3 flat duty per item coincided with a 25% reduction YoY of China-Europe e-commerce demand ([Xeneta](#))

Sources: Baltic Exchange Air Freight Index - TAC database, [IATA](#), [Xeneta](#), [AJOT](#), AlixPartners analysis

GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN VOLATILITY INDEX

Global Supply Chain Volatility index¹ at 1.55 in May 2026; Supply chains are stretched in recent months due to safety stockpiling to protect against inflation and shortages

SUPPLY CHAIN VOLATILITY INDEX (GEP)



Note: 1. Global Supply Chain Volatility Index May 2026.
 Note on definition: The GEP Global Supply Chain Volatility Index is produced by S&P Global and GEP. The GEP Global Supply Chain Volatility Index is derived from S&P Global's PMI™ surveys, sent to companies in over 40 countries, totalling around 27,000 companies. The headline figure is the GEP Global Supply Chain Volatility Index. This a weighted sum of six sub-indices derived from PMI data, PMI Comments Trackers and PMI Commodity Price & Supply Indicators compiled by S&P Global.

KEY TRENDS AND FACTS



- Index at 1,55 – with very differing utilization levels by region:
 - Asia: Highly stretched supply chain with Index of 2.96 (May 2026)
 - North America: Stretched supply chain with Index of 1.69 (May 2026)
 - Europe: Stretched supply chain with Index of 1.43 (May 2026)

IMPORT TRENDS

China had been a go-to hub for U.S. manufacturers, but US/China relations and tariffs have been pushing trade towards other countries (Vietnam, India, Mexico, Canada gained most)

CATEGORIES				COUNTRY WISE CHANGES (2018 VS. LTM JUN 2026)				
	TOTAL U.S. IMPORTS							
	2018 (\$B)	LTM JUN 2026 (\$B)	CHANGE (%)	CHG. %	CHG. %	CHG. %	CHG. %	CHG. %
Apparel & Textiles	\$116	\$104	(10%) ▼	(60%) ▼	41% ▲	8% ▲	(7%) ▼	(27%) ▼
Automotive & Transportation Parts	\$340	\$359	5% ▲	(40%) ▼	290% ▲	(15%) ▼	29% ▲	(12%) ▼
Chemicals & Allied Industries	\$233	\$302	29% ▲	(6%) ▼	259% ▲	70% ▲	48% ▲	7% ▲
Computer & Electronics	\$363	\$538	48% ▲	(59%) ▼	553% ▲	1966% ▲	54% ▲	49% ▲
Food & Beverage	\$151	\$220	45% ▲	(36%) ▼	35% ▲	4% ▲	60% ▲	64% ▲
Footwear, Headgear & Others	\$32	\$31	(3%) ▼	(57%) ▼	68% ▲	5% ▲	85% ▲	(15%) ▼
Furniture	\$67	\$58	(13%) ▼	(70%) ▼	159% ▲	26% ▲	13% ▲	2% ▲
Leather Goods	\$15	\$14	(7%) ▼	(78%) ▼	56% ▲	27% ▲	40% ▲	24% ▲
Mechanical & Electricals	\$379	\$767	102% ▲	(69%) ▼	2472% ▲	125% ▲	182% ▲	27% ▲
Metals, Parts and Products	\$139	\$149	7% ▲	(43%) ▼	158% ▲	84% ▲	21% ▲	(3%) ▼
Misc. Goods & Manf. Products	\$476	\$510	7% ▲	(38%) ▼	515% ▲	(53%) ▼	24% ▲	44% ▲
Plastics & Rubber Products	\$86	\$101	17% ▲	(36%) ▼	463% ▲	77% ▲	65% ▲	7% ▲
Special Classification Provision	\$85	\$125	46% ▲	134% ▲	1358% ▲	351% ▲	73% ▲	18% ▲
Temporary Legislation	\$18	\$35	92% ▲	214% ▲	1079% ▲	118% ▲	10% ▲	8% ▲
Wood & Pulp Products	\$47	\$47	(1%) ▼	(53%) ▼	369% ▲	132% ▲	64% ▲	(9%) ▼
Total	\$2548	\$3357	32%	(52%)	360%	76%	64%	20%
LTM Jun 2026 U.S. imports (\$B)				£259	\$235	\$96	\$566	\$384

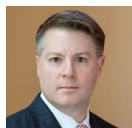
Key nearshoring trends:

- Over the past seven years (2018 to Last Twelve Months ending June 2026), overall imports into the U.S. increased by 32%. However, imports from China decreased by 52% from \$543B to \$259B
- Vietnam, India, Mexico and Canada** have been the biggest gainers
 - Vietnam has seen 360% increase to reach \$235B; All categories have grown in imports from Vietnam
 - Imports from Mexico increased by 64% to \$566B (which is now more than China); 'Mechanical & Electricals' have seen biggest increase in Mexico.
 - Imports from India have seen a consistent growth across all industries except 'Automotive & Transportation Parts' and 'Misc. Goods & Manf. Products', overall increase of 76% in imports into U.S. to \$96B
 - Imports from Canada have seen a steady growth across industries except for 'Apparel & Textile', 'Automotive & Transportation Parts', 'Footwear, Headgear & Others', 'Metals, Parts and Products' and 'Wood and Pulp Products'. Overall increase of 20% in imports into U.S. to \$384B



Mexico is now the biggest vendor base for U.S. based corporation; Vietnam and India have seen the fastest growth since 2018

ALIXPARTNERS SUPPLY CHAIN EXPERTS – REACH OUT TO LEARN MORE



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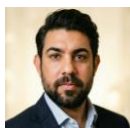
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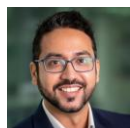
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Jan-Nicla Rüter

Vice
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Vice
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