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Trade Lines

Policy Intelligence for Global Business Leaders

*Published by Blake Harden and Evan Gieseemann
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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

EU advances legislation to implement U.S. trade deal commitments

The European Parliament's trade committee voted on March 19 to advance legislation that would implement its trade deal with the U.S. The Parliament will hold a plenary vote on March 26, which if successful, would pave the way for talks between the EU capitals and the European Commission on implementation of the tariff changes. Talks of the enactment of a U.S.-EU trade deal have stalled in European Parliament for months after uncertainties including a geopolitical dispute over Greenland and the Supreme Court's decision overturning tariffs imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA).

US and Ecuador sign reciprocal trade agreement

U.S. Office of the Trade Representative (USTR) Ambassador Jamieson Greer [announced](#) on March 13 that the U.S. and Ecuador signed the *United States-Ecuador Agreement on Reciprocal Trade*. Ambassador Greer said that "Today's agreement will further expand and diversify bilateral trade and investment to advance our shared interests while boosting America's competitiveness in Latin America." According to the joint statement, the agreement expands preferential market access, particularly for agricultural exports and lowers tariff and non-tariff barriers including streamlining regulatory requirements.

See the text of the agreement [here](#).

See the joint statement [here](#).

Policy Pulse

Customs and Border Protection provides update on refund system, begins testing refund capabilities

In a March 19 [declaration to the Court of International Trade](#), Customs and Border Protection (CBP) provided an update on efforts to stand up a system for delivering refunds for tariffs paid under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and subsequently invalidated by the Supreme Court. The filing details progress made related to the development of a “Consolidated Administration and Processing of Entries” (CAPE) system and estimates progress toward completion on key components of the system, including:

- Claims portal - 73% complete
- Processing - 45% complete
- Review and liquidation/reliquidation - 80% complete
- Refund component - 63% complete

The filing did not include an update on timing for completion of the system.

Hill Highlights

Ways & Means Republicans introduce new bill aimed at Canada's Online Streaming Act

On March 19, Rep. Lloyd Smucker (R-PA) and five other House Ways and Means Republicans introduced the *Protecting American Streaming and Innovation Act*, which would require USTR to initiate an investigation under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 “to determine whether Canada’s implementation of its Online Streaming Act (Bill C-11), including the related regulatory actions of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), constitutes an act, policy, or practice that is unreasonable or discriminatory and burdens or restricts United States Commerce.” The bill would require USTR to initiate the Section 301 investigation within 30 days of the bill becoming law and consult with stakeholders during the investigation. If an affirmative determination is made, the bill would require USTR to “consider appropriate action” under Section 301, including “the suspension of trade agreement benefits or imposition of duties commensurate with the burden imposed.”

House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee hearing on WTO 14th Ministerial Conference

The House Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee held a hearing on March 17 on *Advancing America’s Interests at the World Trade Organization’s 14th Ministerial Conference* (MC14) which is to be held March 26-29 in Cameroon. The hearing was largely focused on reform of the WTO including e-commerce and related issues. Subcommittee Chairman Adrian Smith (R-NE) said that the WTO “still has a critical role to play in our global trade relationships,” but the requirement for consensus-based decisions impedes priorities like a stronger agriculture agreement or developing standards for emerging industries. Ranking Member Linda Sánchez (D-CA) said that at the MC14 conference, ministers are likely to confront the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions, which she supports extending permanently “because it strengthens American innovation and helps ensure that U.S. entrepreneurs, especially small businesses, can

compete globally.” Witnesses noted U.S. advocacy of WTO reform over the past decade, including on dispute settlement, “developing country” status, and most-favored nation (MFN) status.

A technology group witness said that U.S. priorities for MC14 include sustaining the WTO e-commerce customs duty moratorium, advancing the WTO Joint Statement Initiative on e-commerce, and continuing to advocate for high-standard global intellectual property rules. Full Committee Chairman Jason Smith (R-MO) said the Trump administration has been breaking down barriers to exports and achieved huge wins, and he expressed support for a permanent moratorium on e-commerce tariffs, which soon expires. “It is critical that we settle this once and for all,” he said. Witnesses suggested it is important for the U.S. to rejoin negotiations on e-commerce. They also signaled support for the opening of an investigation under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 against the European Union over its digital policies, such as the Digital Markets Act (DMA) and digital services taxes (DST), which witnesses said discriminate against U.S. companies.

The President’s 2026 Trade Policy Agenda said that at the MC14 conference, the U.S. will seek permanent extension of the moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions and, at the conference and beyond, encourage a reorientation of the WTO’s negotiating function and urge reassessment of the Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) principle.

For witness testimonies, see [here](#).

House Select Committee on China hearing on pharmaceuticals

The House Select Committee on China held a hearing on *From the Science Lab to the Medicine Cabinet: How China is Cornering the Market on Our Medicines* on March 18. The hearing focused on the supply of generic drugs as well as cutting-edge medicines.

In his opening remarks, Chairman John Moolenaar (R-MI) said, “Decades of Chinese state subsidies, low environmental standards, and other factors drove Western competitors out of the market entirely. ...For heparin, the blood thinner used in surgeries, virtually all global processing occurs in China. According to Washington University in St. Louis, 83 of the top 100 generic drugs used by Americans have no domestic source of key ingredients. We have seen this playbook before – in steel, in solar, and in rare earths. China enters a market with subsidized capacity, prices out competitors, and waits. The difference here is that the product is medicine. If China restricted API exports tomorrow in the same way it has restricted rare earth exports, then American hospitals and pharmacies would begin running short on essential medicines.”

See [here](#) for witness testimony.

Upcoming Deadlines

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

March 26: 14th 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 and requests to testify to USTR on the section 301 investigations into structural excess capacity and production in manufacturing sectors, and on the section 301 investigation into forced labor.

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.

If you have questions, please contact Blake Harden (blake.harden@ey.com) or Evan Giesemann (evan.giesemann@ey.com).

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