



24 April 2026

Trade Lines

Policy Intelligence for Global Business Leaders

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Washington Council EY*

Trade Lines brings you timely updates from DC on global trade and regulatory policy. Curated for business leaders and decision-makers, this newsletter highlights key shifts in trade policy – from tariff shifts and supply chain disruptions to legislative developments and compliance trends. Stay ahead, evaluate impact, and make informed decisions in a rapidly changing environment.

In This Issue

Global Signals

- U.S. and EU announce cooperation on critical minerals
- U.S. and Mexico announce first USMCA joint review negotiating round to be held in May

Policy Pulse

- USTR announces hearing schedule for Section 301 investigations into forced labor import bans
- CBP begins processing IEEPA refunds
- Commerce details duty modification procedures for certain steel and aluminum producers supplying to U.S. auto or medium- and heavy-duty vehicle manufacturers
- USTR Greer says U.S. allies must pay more to source critical minerals from outside China

Hill Highlights

- USTR Greer testifies at House Ways and Means on the 2026 Trade Policy Agenda
- Secretary Lutnick testifies on FY27 Commerce Department budget request
- New bill would require publication of “MFN” deals
- House Select Committee on China releases artificial intelligence report

Global Signals

US and EU officials announce cooperation on critical minerals

On April 22-24, EU Trade Commissioner Maroš Šefčovič met with Trump administration officials and members of Congress in Washington to “take stock of where we stand” on the U.S.-EU trade deal negotiated in 2025, as well discuss how the two sides advance cooperation on critical minerals. During Šefčovič’s visit, U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer announced the *United States-European Union Action Plan for Critical Minerals Supply Chain Resilience* on April 24. In a [statement](#), Greer said the U.S. and EU “share a commitment to addressing the non-market policies and practices that have distorted critical minerals supply chains.” He added that the parties will “explore how trade measures, such as border-adjusted price floors, can strengthen our domestic critical minerals industries and the downstream sectors critical to our industrial competitiveness.” The Action Plan is available [here](#).

Also on April 24, Šefčovič and Secretary of State Marco Rubio signed a *Memorandum of Understanding for the U.S.-EU Strategic Partnership on Critical Minerals*. In his [remarks](#), Rubio said the MOU “shows a growing awareness and commitment throughout the world, particularly with our allies in the West and in Europe, the importance of supply chains and critical minerals to the success of our economies and to our national security for that matter,” adding that “the over-concentration of these resources and the fact that they’re dominated by one or two places is an unacceptable risk.” In his remarks, Šefčovič said cooperation on critical minerals will strengthen the U.S.-EU relationship and allow the parties to deliver “on our goals much faster.” He added that “now the real test will be the execution of this project, how can we transform this agreement which we are signing into the concrete, tangible project to deliver for our business operators.”

US and Mexico announce first USMCA joint review negotiating round to be held in May

In an April 20 [joint statement](#), USTR Greer and Mexican Economy Secretary Marcelo Ebrard announced that the U.S. and Mexico will hold a “first official bilateral negotiating round for the USMCA Review the week of May 25, 2026 in Mexico City.” According to an official statement, “Ambassador Greer and Secretary Ebrard directed their teams to advance important technical discussions this week on economic security and complementary trade actions, strengthened rules of origin for key industrial goods, collaboration on critical minerals, and to resolve outstanding bilateral trade irritants.”

The U.S. and Canada have yet to announce the start of formal negotiations.

Policy Pulse

USTR announces hearing schedule for Section 301 investigations concerning forced labor import bans

On April 28-29, USTR will hold a public hearing in its Section 301 “investigations into 60 economies’ acts, policies, and practices related to the failure to impose and effectively enforce a prohibition on the importation of goods produced with forced labor.” The hearing schedule is available [here](#) and includes 60

witnesses across industries, as well as foreign governments. [According](#) to USTR, the hearings will not be livestreamed, although a “full transcript of the hearings will be posted on ustr.gov after the hearings.”

CBP begins processing IEEPA refunds

On April 20, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) began ‘Phase 1’ of its process to accept claims for IEEPA tariff refunds using the Consolidated Administration and Processing of Entries (CAPE) tool. This phase is limited to certain unliquidated entries and certain entries within 80 days of liquidation. CBP has provided a list of FAQs, guidance, and resources on its website, linked [here](#).

CBP is [required](#) to provide another progress report on the “progress made in Phase 1” to the Court of International Trade (CIT) by 12 p.m. ET on April 28.

Commerce details duty modification procedures for certain steel and aluminum producers operating in Canada and Mexico, and supplying to U.S. auto or medium- and heavy-duty vehicle manufacturers

The Commerce Department published a [notice](#) on *Procedures for Submissions by Certain Steel and Aluminum Producers Committing to New U.S. Steel or Aluminum Production to Obtain Tariff Adjustments Under Proclamation 10984*. The notice follows authority granted to the Secretary of Commerce to allow for adjustments of Section 232 tariffs on steel and aluminum for certain producers operating production facilities in Canada or Mexico and that supply U.S. automobile or medium- and heavy-duty vehicle manufacturers. The notice clarifies that “[s]uch adjustments are to be limited to quantities of aluminum or steel equal to newly committed U.S. production capacity, as determined by the Secretary.” The notice further “establishes procedures for submission and review of documentation substantiating new U.S. production capacity commitments and eligibility for adjusted tariffs by the Department of Commerce.”

Ambassador Greer says U.S. allies must pay more to source critical minerals from outside China

In an interview with the Financial Times on April 22, USTR Greer said that U.S. allies must pay a “national security premium” for critical minerals sourced from outside China. Greer said allies should be prepared to pay more to source minerals from within a proposed trading partner group because “we will all pay a national security premium to have a secure supply chain.”

In February, USTR solicited public comments “on the design of a plurilateral agreement on trade in critical minerals and policy actions to strengthen the resilience of critical mineral supply chains.” USTR received 230 comments, which are available [here](#).

Hill Highlights

Greer testifies at House Ways and Means on the 2026 Trade Policy Agenda

On April 22, USTR Greer testified at the House Ways and Means Committee on the Trump Administration’s 2026 Trade Policy Agenda. The hearing included discussion of the administration’s tariff policies, the

upcoming USMCA Joint Review, and digital services taxes (DSTs). You can read the WCEY alert on the hearing [here](#). You can read Greer's opening statement [here](#) and rewatch the hearing [here](#).

Ambassador Greer was expected to testify on the 2026 Trade Policy Agenda before at the Senate Finance Committee on April 23, but that hearing was postponed.

Lutnick testifies on FY27 Commerce Department Budget Request

On April 22, Department of Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick testified on the Commerce FY27 budget request before the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related agencies. During his testimony, Lutnick highlighted a proposed \$215 million increase for the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) to hire hundreds of additional law-enforcement agents, describing BIS as the "front line" in preventing China and other adversaries from acquiring advanced U.S. semiconductors, software, and other sensitive technologies. Members pressed the Secretary on the Section 232 tariff actions; the use of trade enforcement to drive domestic investment; and oversight of tariff implementation, including refunds of the IEEPA tariffs.

See Lutnick's opening statement [here](#) and rewatch the hearing [here](#).

House Select Committee on China releases artificial intelligence report

On April 16, the House Select Committee on China released a 24-page [report](#) titled, *Buy What It Can, Steal What It Must: China's Campaign to Acquire Frontier AI Capabilities*. The report "examined how Chinese actors continue to acquire the tools, chips, and models needed to accelerate China's AI buildup." The report also recommends that Congress take the following actions: (1) "Increase civil and criminal penalties under the Export Control Reform Act and EAR to reflect the scale and strategic significance of chip export-control violations;" (2) "Appropriately staff and resource DOJ and BIS"; and (3) "Require BIS to condition military end users and other high-risk export licenses on personal certification by the applicant's chief executive officer" and "impose civil and criminal liability for knowing or reckless false certifications."

In addition, the report calls for Congress to pass the *AI OVERWATCH Act*, the *SCALE Act*, the *Remote Access Security Act*, the *MATCH Act*, the *Chip Security Act*, and the *STOP Shells Act*. These bills were [marked up](#) in the House Foreign Affairs Committee on April 22.

New bill introduced that would require publication of "MFN" deals

On April 21, Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR) was joined by 18 Senate Democrats in [introducing](#) the [Drug Deal Disclosure Act](#), which would require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to disclose details of 'Most Favored Nation' (MFN) agreements reached with pharmaceutical manufacturers, "including all documentation associated with the agreements." The bill would also require "the Congressional Budget Office and the Government Accountability Office to co-author and publish a comprehensive analysis of the economic and budgetary impacts of all disclosed agreements" A one-page summary of the bill is available [here](#).

In addition to the bill, Wyden released a new [report](#) that “provides an overview of what is currently known about the four components of Trumps MFN deals” and draws conclusions that the deals will not result in “little to no savings to patients and their families.”

Key Dates

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

April 28-29: USTR holds public hearings in the Section 301 investigations concerning forced labor import bans.

May 5: USTR holds a public hearing in the Section 301 investigations concerning manufacturing overcapacity.

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 14-15: President Trump travels to Beijing to meet with Chinese President Xi.

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.

June 26: President to announce any actions on Section 232 investigations into drones and polysilicon and derivative products, as well as unmanned aircraft systems and their parts and components.

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