



IGP Grain Transportation Report

Wheat, Corn, Grain Sorghum, and Soybean Complex

27th February 2026

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News and information noted below are articles of interest and gathered from numerous sources. This news and information do not reflect the opinions of KSU-IGP but are provided as a matter of interest.

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KSU Agriculture Today Podcast Link: <https://agtodayksu.libsyn.com/timeliness-of-corn-and-soybean-plantingworld-grain-supply-and-demand>

KSU Ag Manager Link: <https://www.agmanager.info/grain-marketing/publications/us-grain-exports-and-trade>

USDA Transportation Report: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/services/transportation-analysis/gtr>

USDA FAS Historical Grain Shipments: <https://apps.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/wkHistData.htm>,
<https://apps.fas.usda.gov/export-sales/complete.htm>

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OCEAN FREIGHT

➤ **Baltic Dry Freight Index – Daily = 1762**



Source: <https://www.tradingview.com/chart/?symbol=INDEX%3ABDI>

The Baltic Dry Index is reported daily by the Baltic Exchange in London. The index provides a benchmark for the price of moving the major raw materials by sea. The index is a composite of three sub-indices that measure different sizes of dry bulk carriers: Capesize, which typically transport iron ore or coal cargoes of about 150,000 tonnes; Panamax, which usually carry coal or grain cargoes of about 60,000 to 70,000 tonnes; and Supramax, with a carrying capacity between 48,000 and 60,000 tonnes.

Not restricted to Baltic Sea countries, the index provides "an assessment of the price of moving the major raw materials by sea. Taking in 23 shipping routes measured on a time-charter basis, for dry bulk carriers carrying a range of commodities including coal, iron ore, grain, and other commodities.

Because dry bulk primarily consists of materials that function as raw material inputs to the production of intermediate or finished goods, the index is also seen as an efficient economic indicator of future economic growth and production.

➤ **A weekly round-up of tanker and dry bulk market**

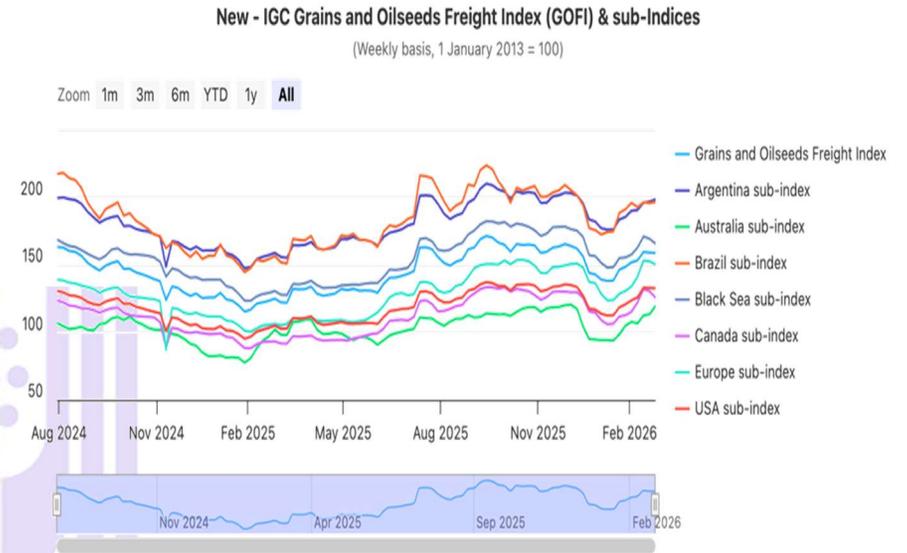
26 February 2026 Baltic Exchange - This report is produced by the Baltic Exchange - Source: <https://www.balticexchange.com/en/data-services/WeeklyRoundup.html>.

Capesize: The week began with renewed optimism, led by a firmer Pacific market as all three major miners returned to the market and operator cargo volumes appeared healthy. Early strength in the Pacific, supported by fixtures above \$10.00 on C5, set a constructive tone, while the Atlantic also edged higher despite a noticeable bid-offer gap. As the week progressed, momentum gradually faded. Despite consistent miner activity and steady operator demand, fixing levels edged lower. C5 slipped back below \$10.00 during softer midweek trading, while C3 for March dates eased from the mid-\$25s to the mid-\$23s region, reflecting a market struggling to sustain its initial push. The forward market, however, showed relative resilience, with April C3 stems continuing to command a premium. By week’s end, sentiment found firmer footing. With three miners again active in the Pacific, C5 nudged back into the low \$10s, offering some late support. Overall, the week can be characterised as one of early promise, a midweek pullback, and a modest late recovery, leaving the market steadier but still lacking decisive upward momentum.

Panamax: The week was marked by a widening divergence between the Atlantic and Pacific basins. In the Atlantic, mounting prompt tonnage and limited fresh cargo enquiry weighed heavily on sentiment. With vessel supply consistently outpacing demand, owners were forced to compete aggressively, driving the P1A index down sharply over the course of the week. Despite sporadic transatlantic fixtures, rates struggled to find support and the overall tone remained cautious. Conversely, the Pacific basin strengthened steadily. Tight prompt availability and robust cargo flows from Indonesia, Australia, and the North Pacific underpinned firm utilisation and rising rate ideas. The P3A and P4 indices posted significant gains, reflecting strength in both the Pacific and backhaul market along with an active period market, lifting the P5TC average to close the week at \$17,481.

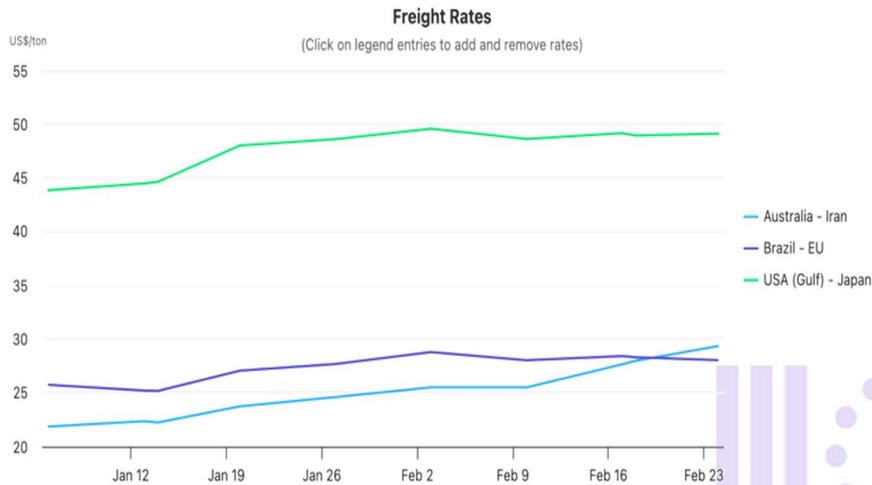
Ultramax/Supramax: The market showed consistent improvement throughout the week, supported by strengthening demand across both the Atlantic and Pacific basins. The US Gulf regained momentum following earlier positional pressure, aided by fresh cargo enquiry, with a 63,000-dwt fixed for a trip via the US Gulf to Spain at \$28,000. The South Atlantic remained firm during the week, while the Continent and Mediterranean markets began to show rate improvement toward the end of the period, largely driven by scrap demand. Notably, a 64,000-dwt open Bremen 23–27 February fixed a trip to the East Mediterranean with scrap at \$22,750. Asia proved to be the main driver of the week’s upward movement. Market activity strengthened progressively, led by the North Pacific trade, which continued to push rate levels higher as the week progressed. Cargo flow from Southeast Asia and Australia remained steady, while Indonesian coal movements to India also improved. Several fixtures were concluded above previous benchmarks, highlighting stronger regional momentum, including a 64,000-dwt open Ciwandan 2 March fixed via Indonesia to Pakistan at \$19,000. Period activity remained robust, with several short and medium-term fixtures concluded at healthy levels. Among them, a 64,000-dwt open Bahodopi 26–28 February secured a 6–7 months charter at \$19,000.

➤ **IGC Grains Freight Index – 26th February 2026**



Source: IGC <https://www.igc.int/en/markets/marketinfo-freight.aspx>

	24 Feb	Weekly Change	Annual Change	52 Week Low	52 Week High
IGC Grains and Oilseeds Freight Index	159	-	26 %	122	171
Argentina sub-Index	198	+2	24 %	155	210
Australia sub-Index	120	+8	17 %	91	120
Brazil sub-Index	196	-	25 %	151	223
Black Sea sub-Index	166	-5	27 %	128	182
Canada sub-Index	126	-6	34 %	92	133
Europe sub-Index	150	-3	41 %	105	154
USA sub-Index	133	-	26 %	103	137

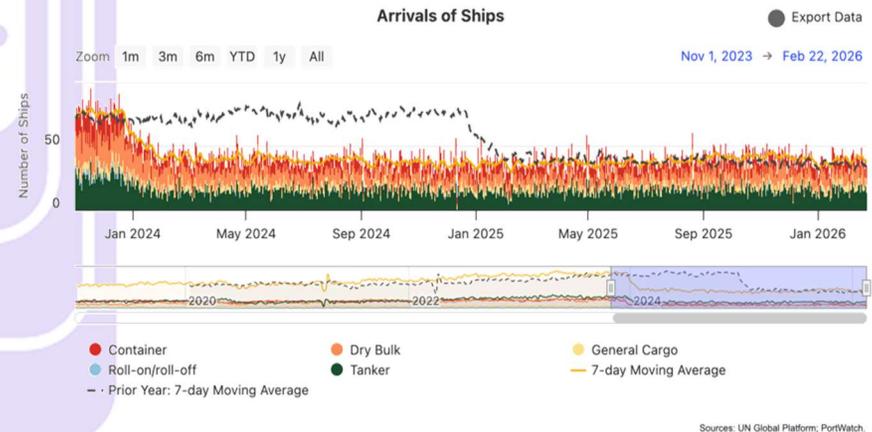


Source: IGC <https://www.igc.int/en/markets/marketinfo-freight.aspx>

	24 Feb	Weekly Change	Annual Change	52 Week Low	52 Week High
Australia - Iran	\$29	+2	6 %	\$21	\$29
Brazil - EU	\$28	.	35 %	\$20	\$35
USA (Gulf) - Japan	\$49	.	20 %	\$40	\$56

stressing that a return of growth in grain trade (and growth in all major dry bulk commodity trade) has been needed considering that the dry bulk fleet continues to grow by a moderate amount (we are expecting a net addition of at least another 375 vessels) this year. The growth in global grain trade should not be taken for granted. In the 2024/25 season, a year-on-year contraction of 5.5 million tons (-1%) occurred. The USDA is forecasting that global coarse grain exports in 2025/26 will total 252.1 million tons. This would mark a year-on-year increase of 24.8 million tons (11%) from the 2024/25 season. Coarse grain exports will remain the global grain market's largest cargo by volume. A large year-on-year increase in coarse grain exports is expected from the United States. A moderate year-on-year increase is expected from Argentina. Small year-on-year increases are expected from Ukraine and Brazil.

Suez Canal – Daily Transit Calls



22 February 2026 Source: IMF PortWatch

Source: <https://portwatch.imf.org/pages/c57c79bf612b4372b08a9c6ea9c97ef0>

LOGISTICS

➤ Warehouse and Logistics

- Integration with Dry Ports: The government is accelerating a plan for 33 dry ports and logistics zones nationwide. A new 100-feddan logistics zone near Safaga Port is headed for international tender in H1 2026 to facilitate road-to-rail goods movement.

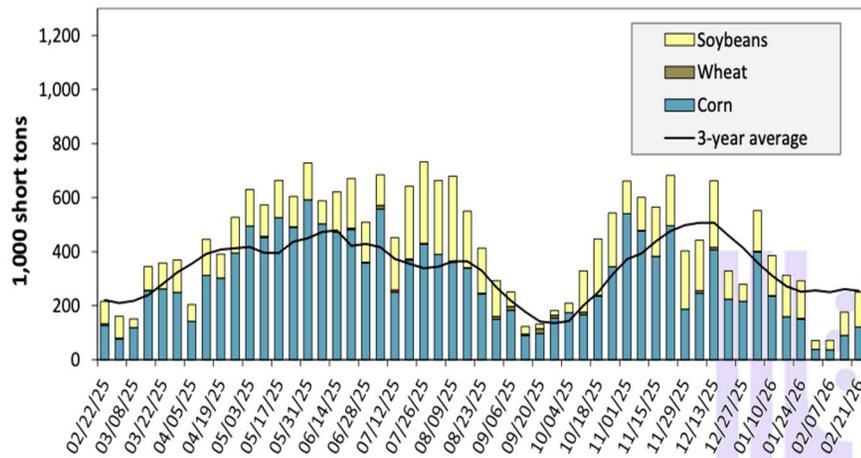
➤ Global Grain Export Forecast Raised Again

24 February 2026 By: Jeffrey Landsberg - The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has released its latest forecast for the current 2025/26 season and is now predicting that global coarse grain, wheat, soybean, and soymeal exports will total 745.7 million tons. This is 6 million tons (1%) more than was predicted in January and would mark a year-on-year increase of 40.8 million tons (6%). Significant is that the forecast has been raised yet again. As we have discussed often, we have been

- In February 2026, ocean freight in the Middle East Gulf is navigating a volatile transition as major carriers begin a cautious return to the Suez Canal, leading to a decline in container spot rates and shifting operational patterns.
- Maritime Security & Red Sea Recovery
- Selective Re-entry: Carriers including Maersk and CMA CGM have begun testing Suez transits for specific services, such as the MECL (India to US East Coast).
- Strait of Hormuz Drills: Iran conducted brief naval exercises in the Strait of Hormuz on 17 February 2026, causing minor delays but no major trade disruption.
- High-Risk Status: Despite a reduction in attacks since late 2025, the region remains classified as high-risk. New war-risk insurance premiums for the Persian Gulf and Red Sea took effect on 20 February 2026.

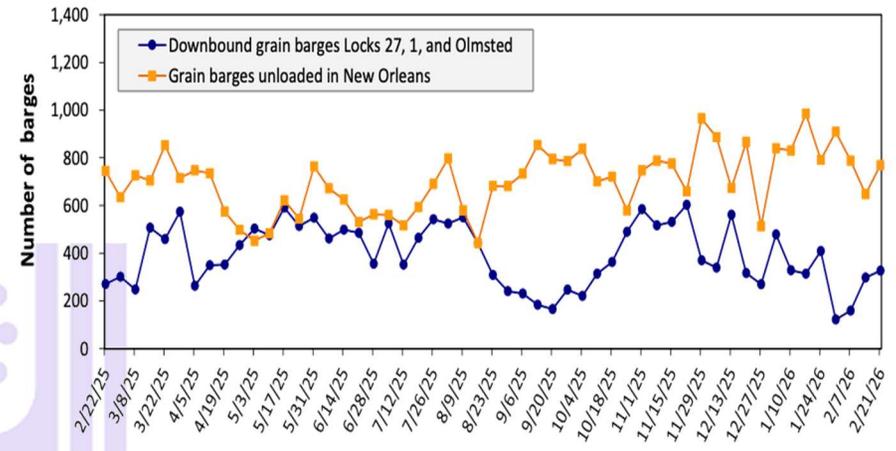
BARGE MOVEMENTS

Figure 12. Barge movements on the Mississippi River (Locks 27-Granite City, IL)



Note: The 3-year average is a 4-week moving average.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Figure 14. Grain barges for export in New Orleans region



Note: Olmsted = Olmsted Locks and Dam.
Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

For the week ending February 21: 16 percent higher than last year and 2 percent lower than the 3-year average.

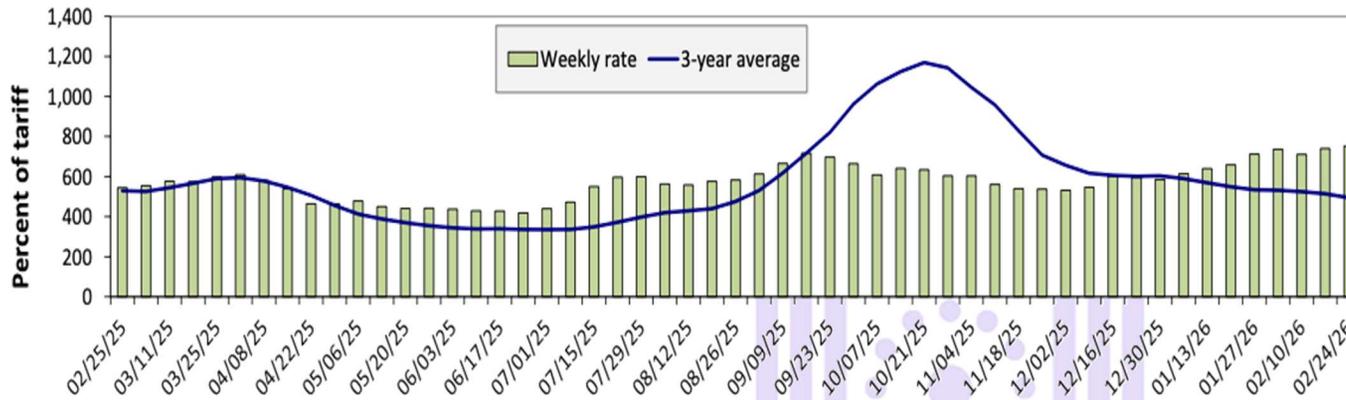
Table 10. Barged grain movements (1,000 tons)

For the week ending 02/21/2026	Corn	Wheat	Soybeans	Other	Total
Mississippi River (Rock Island, IL (L15))	0	0	0	0	0
Mississippi River (Winfield, MO (L25))	13	0	9	0	22
Mississippi River (Alton, IL (L26))	148	0	128	0	276
Mississippi River (Granite City, IL (L27))	121	0	129	0	250
Illinois River (La Grange)	131	0	128	0	258
Ohio River (Olmsted)	135	8	69	0	212
Arkansas River (L1)	3	11	24	0	38
Weekly total - 2026	259	19	222	0	500
Weekly total - 2025	227	15	168	0	410
2026 YTD	1,491	95	1,378	8	2,972
2025 YTD	2,339	120	2,076	20	4,556
2026 as % of 2025 YTD	64	79	66	42	65
Last 4 weeks as % of 2025	54	51	74	80	62
Total 2025	20,015	1,259	11,322	166	32,761

Note: "Other" refers to oats, barley, sorghum, and rye. Total may not add up due to rounding. YTD = year to date. Weekly total, YTD, and calendar year total include Mississippi River lock 27, Ohio River Olmsted lock, and Arkansas Lock 1. "L" (as in "L15") refers to a lock, locks, or lock and dam facility.

Source: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Figure 10. Illinois River barge freight rate



Note: Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); 3-year avg. = 4-week moving average of the 3-year average.
Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Table 9. Weekly barge freight rates: southbound only

Measure	Date	Twin Cities	Mid-Mississippi	Illinois River	St. Louis	Ohio River	Cairo-Memphis
Rate	2/24/2026	n/a	765	753	620	704	561
	2/17/2026	n/a	750	739	624	650	531
\$/ton	2/24/2026	n/a	40.70	34.94	24.74	33.02	17.62
	2/17/2026	n/a	39.90	34.29	24.90	30.49	16.67
Measure	Time Period	Twin Cities	Mid-Mississippi	Illinois River	St. Louis	Ohio River	Cairo-Memphis
Current week % change from the same week	Last year	n/a	n/a	38	34	45	56
	3-year avg.	n/a	n/a	52	58	60	76
Rate	March	n/a	721	697	583	650	506
	May	634	603	568	459	506	421

Note: Rate = percent of 1976 tariff benchmark index (1976 = 100 percent); 3-year avg. = 4-week moving average of the 3-year avg.; ton = 2,000 pounds; "n/a" = data not available. The per ton rate for Twin Cities assumes a base rate of \$6.19 (Minneapolis, MN, to LaCrosse, WI). The per ton rate at Mid-Mississippi assumes a base rate of \$5.32 (Savanna, IL, to Keithsburg, IL). The per ton rate on the Illinois River assumes a base rate of \$4.64 (Havana, IL, to Hardin, IL). The per ton rate at St. Louis assumes a base rate of \$3.99 (Grafton, IL, to Cape Girardeau, MO). The per ton rate on the Ohio River assumes a base rate of \$4.69 (Silver Grove, KY, to Madison, IN). The per ton rate at Memphis-Cairo assumes a base rate of \$3.14 (West Memphis, AR, to Memphis, TN). For more on base rate values along the various segments of the Mississippi River System, see [AgTransport](#).

Source: USDA, Agricultural Marketing Service.

Figure 11. Benchmark tariff rates



For the week ending the 21th of February, 327 grain barges moved down river—29 more than last week. There were 770 grain barges unloaded in the New Orleans region, 19 percent fewer than last week.

Benchmark Tariff Rate

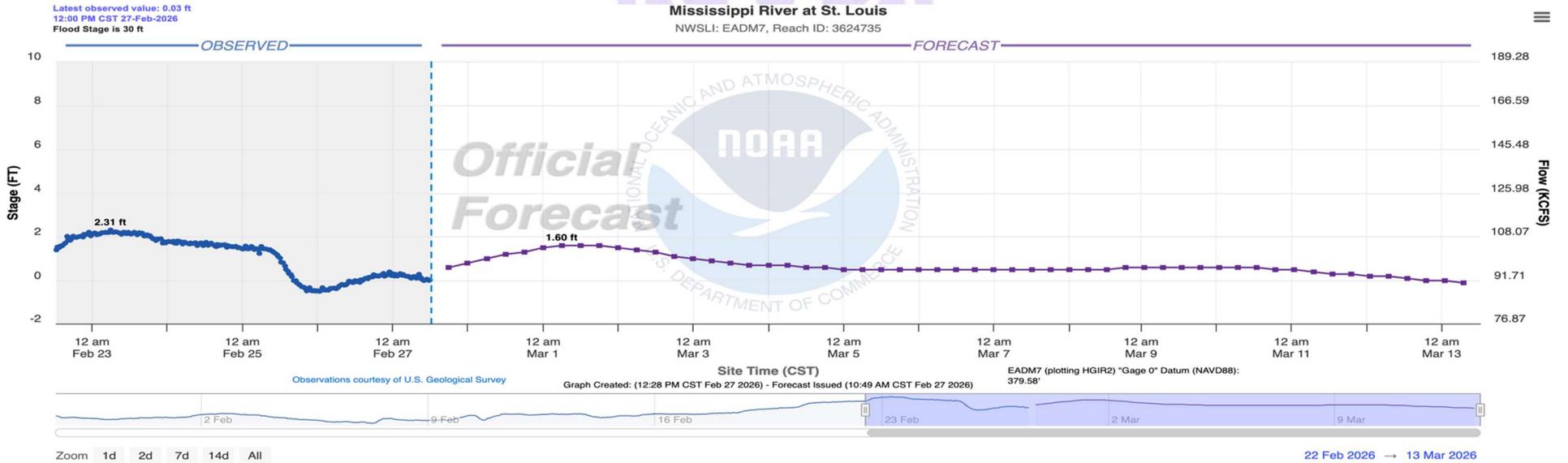
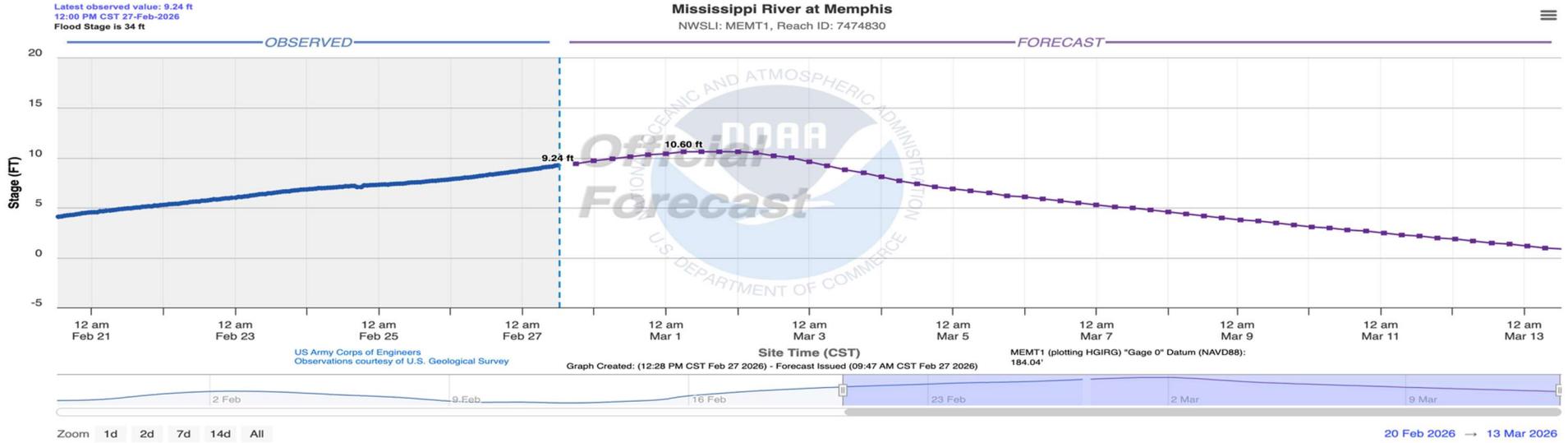
Calculating barge rate per ton:

Select applicable index from market quotes are included in tables on this page.

The 1976 benchmark rates per ton are provided in map.

(Rate * 1976 tariff benchmark rate per ton)/100

➤ **Current Critical Water Levels on the Mississippi River**



February 2026 Source: NOAA – NWPS: <https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/memt1>

19 February 2026 Source: NOAA – NWPS: [Mississippi River at St. Louis ; https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/EADM7](https://water.noaa.gov/gauges/EADM7)

River forecasts for this location take into account past precipitation and the precipitation amounts expected approximately 48 hours into the future from the forecast issuance time.

For the latest navigation status update from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-St. Louis District: <https://www.mvs.usace.army.mil/Missions/Navigation/Status-Reports/>

Controlling Depths:

- St. Louis-Herculaneum (RM 185-152); Mile 1713.0: Nagel Street 173.0 UMR, (LWRP -3.2 @ STL); 9-ft at St. Louis gage of -4.0.
- Herculaneum-Grand Tower (RM152-80); Mile 96.7: Wagner/Roman Landing (LWRP -0.4 @ Chester); 9-ft at Chester gage of -2.8.
- Grand Tower-Cairo (RM 80-0) Mile 38.5: Commerce (LWRP 5.4 @ Cape Girardeau); 9-ft at Cape Girardeau gage of 3.1.

➤ **Barge Markets remain Volatile as Export Demand Builds**

26 February 2026 By: Tony St. James (RFD TV) - Grain barge movement on the Mississippi River System is entering 2026 with strong export demand but continued weather-driven volatility that could keep freight markets unsettled in the months ahead.

In 2025, total grain volumes moving through the Mississippi River System rose 11 percent from 2024 — the largest since 2022 — supported by record corn exports.

Wheat exports through the Columbia-Snake River System climbed 23 percent, driven by stronger soft white wheat demand. However, soybean volumes on the Mississippi fell to their lowest level since 2021, and wheat volumes were the weakest since 2010.

Weather disruptions shaped much of the year. High water, flooding, low water, and ice accumulation created draft and tow restrictions during harvest. Spot freight rates reflected that volatility. St. Louis barge rates averaged \$19.26 per ton in the fourth quarter. More recently, winter ice pushed rates near \$25 per ton — more than 60 percent above the five-year average — while volumes temporarily dropped sharply.

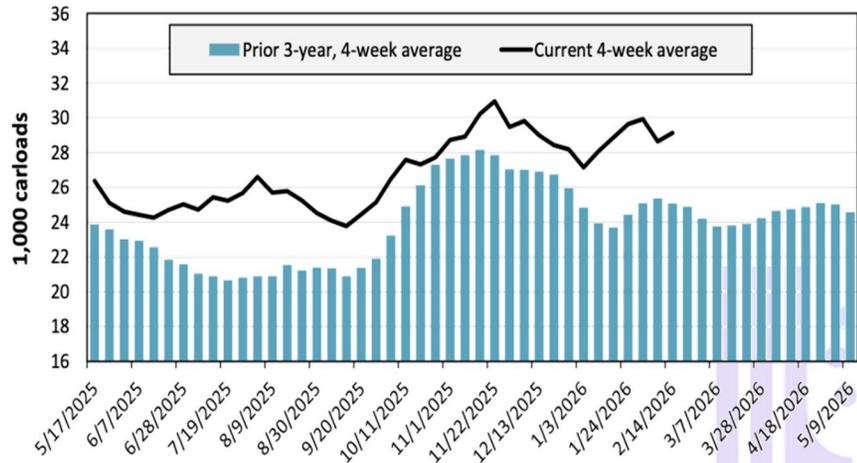
Looking ahead, USDA projects 2025/26 corn exports up 15 percent and wheat exports up 9 percent year over year. Unshipped export balances are 20 percent higher than a year ago, signaling strong forward demand for river transportation once navigation normalizes.

Current Barge Freight Rates

IL RIVER FREIGHT				MID MISSISSIPPI				LOWER OHIO RIVER			
	2/25/2026	2/26/2026		McGregor	2/25/2026	2/26/2026			2/25/2026	2/26/2026	
WK 2/22	725/750	725/750	UNC	Mar	700/750	700/750	UNC	WK 2/22	675/700	675/725	
WK 3/1	700/750	700/750	UNC	WK 3/22	675/725	675/725	UNC	WK 3/1	650/675	675/700	
WK 3/8	700/725	700/750		WK 3/29	650/700	650/700	UNC	WK 3/8	625/650	650/675	
Mar	675/700	675/725		April	625/650	625/650	UNC	Mar	625/650	625/650	UNC
WK 3/22	650/675	650/700		May	575/625	575/625	UNC	WK 3/22	600/625	600/625	UNC
WK 3/29	625/650	625/675		AMJJ	575/600	575/600	UNC	WK 3/29	550/600	550/600	UNC
April	550/600	575/625		JJ	550/575	550/575	UNC	April	475/500	475/500	UNC
May	550/575	550/575	UNC	AUG	600/650	600/650	UNC	May	450/475	450/475	UNC
AMJJ	525/550	525/550	UNC	SEP	725/775	725/775	UNC	AMJJ	450/475	450/475	UNC
JJ	500/525	500/525	UNC	OCT	750/800	750/800	UNC	JJ	425/450	425/450	UNC
AUG	575/625	575/625	UNC	ST LOUIS BARGE				AUG	550/600	550/600	UNC
SEP	725/775	725/775	UNC	FREIGHT 14'				SEP	700/750	700/750	UNC
OCT	750/800	750/800	UNC	WK 2/22	625/650	625/650	UNC	OCT	725/775	725/775	UNC
UPPER MISSISSIPPI ST PAUL/SAVAGE				WK 2/22	625/650	625/650	UNC	MEMPHIS CAIRO			
April	650/700	650/700	UNC	WK 2/22	625/650	625/650	UNC	WK 2/22	550/575	550/575	UNC
May	600/650	600/650	UNC	WK 3/1	600/625	600/625	UNC	WK 3/1	525/550	525/550	UNC
AMJJ	600/650	600/650	UNC	WK 3/8	575/600	575/600	UNC	WK 3/8	525/550	525/550	UNC
JJ	600/625	600/625	UNC	Mar	525/575	525/575	UNC	Mar	500/525	500/525	UNC
AUG	650/700	650/700	UNC	WK 3/22	500/550	500/550	UNC	WK 3/22	475/500	475/500	UNC
SEP	775/825	775/825	UNC	WK 3/29	500/525	500/525	UNC	WK 3/29	450/475	450/475	UNC
OCT	800/850	800/850	UNC	April	475/500	475/500	UNC	April	425/450	425/450	UNC
				May	450/475	450/475	UNC	May	375/400	375/400	UNC
				AMJJ	425/450	425/450	UNC	AMJJ	375/400	375/400	UNC
				JJ	400/425	400/425	UNC	JJ	375/425	375/425	UNC
				AUG	500/550	500/550	UNC	AUG	490/500	490/500	UNC
				SEP	700/750	700/750	UNC	SEP	675/700	675/700	UNC
				OCT	700/750	700/750	UNC	OCT	675/700	675/700	UNC

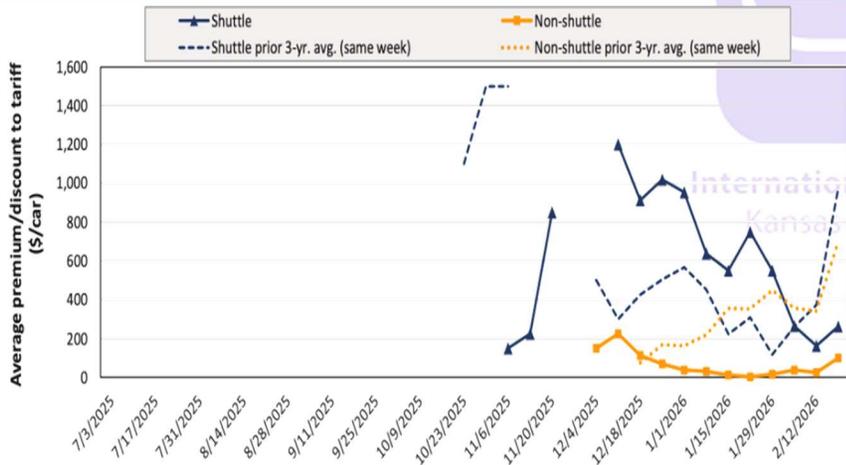
RAIL MOVEMENTS

Figure 3. Total weekly U.S. Class I railroad grain carloads



Source: Surface Transportation Board.

Figure 6. Secondary market bids/offers for railcars to be delivered in February 2026



- U.S. Class I railroads originated 33,838 grain carloads during the week ending the 14th of February. This was a 25% increase from the previous week, 46% more than last year, and 41% more than the 3-year average.
- Average February shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers (per car) were \$263 above tariff for the week ending February 19. This was \$100 more than last week and \$838 lower than this week last year.
- Average non-shuttle secondary railcar bids/offers per car were \$100 above tariff. This was \$75 more than last week and \$400 lower than this week last year.

➤ Current Secondary Rail Car Market

BN SHUTTLE	Bid/Ask/Last	Bid/Ask/Last	
Return Trip	- / -	150 / 250	
March	0 / 250	150 / 200	
April	100 / 200	100 / 200	UNC
April May	50 / -20	50 / 200	
May	0 / -18	0 / -20	
June	0 / 100	0 / -18	
June July	- / -	0 / 100	
Jul, Aug, Sept	-150 / 0	-150 / 0	UNC
August, September	- / 0	- / 0	UNC
Oct, Nov, Dec	500 / 1000	500 / 1000	UNC

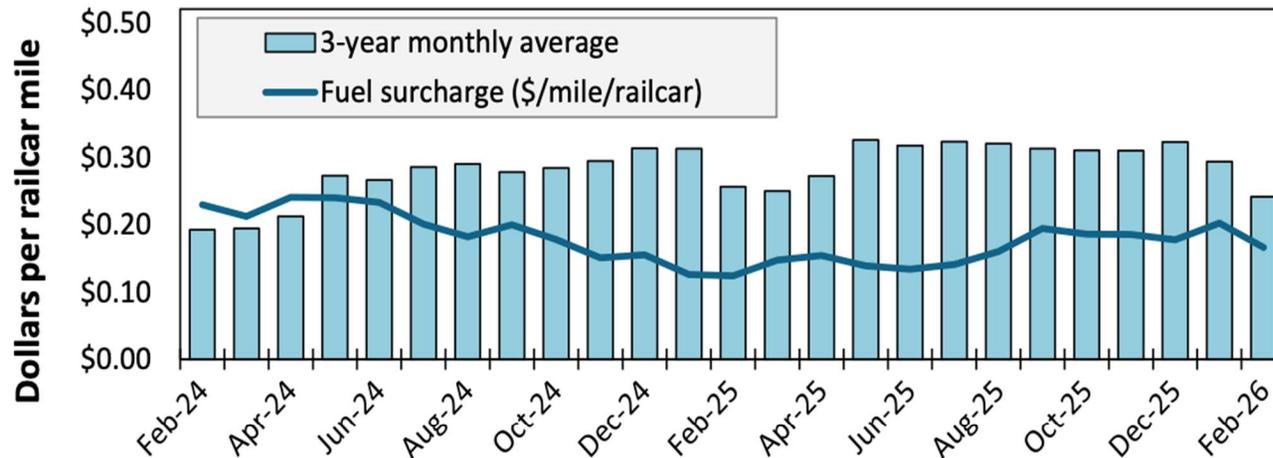
UP SHUTTLE	Bid/Ask/Last	Bid/Ask/Last	
Return Trip	200 / -	400 / -	
March	150 / -	300 / 500	
April May	-100 / 0	- / 0	
April - July	-150 / 0	- / 0	
Aug Sept	- / 0	- / 0	UNC
Oct, Nov, Dec	150 / 500	150 / 500	UNC

Table 8. Rail tariff rates for U.S. bulk grain shipments to Mexico, February 2026

Commodity	US origin	US border city	US railroad	Train type	US Tariff Rate per car (USD)	US Fuel Surcharge per car (USD)	US Rate Plus Fuel Surcharge per car (USD)	US Tariff Rate + Fuel Surcharge per bushel (USD)	US Tariff Rate + Fuel Surcharge per metric ton (USD)	Percent Y/Y
Corn	Adair, IL	El Paso, TX	BNSF	Shuttle	\$4,641	\$103	\$4,744	\$1.19	\$46.69	2.0%
	Atchison, KS	Laredo, TX	CPKC	Non-shuttle	\$5,080	\$475	\$5,555	\$1.39	\$54.67	0.7%
	Council Bluffs, IA	Laredo, TX	CPKC	Non-shuttle	\$5,550	\$526	\$6,076	\$1.52	\$59.80	0.7%
	Kansas City, MO	Laredo, TX	CPKC	Non-shuttle	\$5,005	\$454	\$5,459	\$1.36	\$53.73	0.7%
	Marshall, MO	Laredo, TX	CPKC	Non-shuttle	\$5,190	\$482	\$5,672	\$1.42	\$55.82	0.7%
	Pontiac, IL	Eagle Pass, TX	UP	Shuttle	\$4,535	\$396	\$4,931	\$1.23	\$48.53	-2.2%
	Sterling, IL	Eagle Pass, TX	UP	Shuttle	\$4,655	\$411	\$5,066	\$1.27	\$49.86	-2.1%
Soybeans	Superior, NE	El Paso, TX	BNSF	Shuttle	\$4,622	\$81	\$4,703	\$1.18	\$46.29	-7.3%
	Atchison, KS	Laredo, TX	CPKC	Non-shuttle	\$5,080	\$475	\$5,555	\$1.49	\$54.67	0.7%
	Brunswick, MO	El Paso, TX	BNSF	Shuttle	\$4,325	\$87	\$4,412	\$1.18	\$43.42	-18.3%
	Grand Island, NE	Eagle Pass, TX	UP	Shuttle	\$4,950	\$377	\$5,327	\$1.43	\$52.43	-19.2%
	Hardin, MO	Eagle Pass, TX	BNSF	Shuttle	\$4,325	\$87	\$4,412	\$1.18	\$43.42	-18.3%
	Kansas City, MO	Laredo, TX	CPKC	Non-shuttle	\$5,005	\$454	\$5,459	\$1.46	\$53.73	0.7%
	Roelyn, IA	Eagle Pass, TX	UP	Shuttle	\$5,035	\$395	\$5,430	\$1.45	\$53.44	-18.8%
Wheat	FT Worth, TX	El Paso, TX	BNSF	DET	\$3,000	\$63	\$3,063	\$0.82	\$30.15	-25.1%
	FT Worth, TX	El Paso, TX	BNSF	Shuttle	\$2,800	\$63	\$2,863	\$0.77	\$28.18	-21.7%
	Great Bend, KS	Laredo, TX	UP	Shuttle	\$4,099	\$283	\$4,382	\$1.17	\$43.13	-8.3%
	Kansas City, MO	Laredo, TX	CPKC	Non-shuttle	\$5,005	\$454	\$5,459	\$1.46	\$53.73	0.7%
	Wichita, KS	Laredo, TX	UP	Shuttle	\$4,024	\$249	\$4,273	\$1.14	\$42.06	-6.5%

Note: After December 2021, U.S. railroads stopped reporting "through rates" from the U.S. origin to the Mexican destination. Thus, the table shows "Rule 11 rates," which cover only the portion of the shipment from a U.S. origin to locations on the U.S.-Mexico border. The Rule 11 rates apply only to shipments that continue into Mexico, and the total cost of the shipment would include a separate rate obtained from a Mexican railroad. The rates apply to jumbo covered hopper ("C114") cars. The "shuttle" train type applies to qualified shipments (typically, 110 cars) that meet railroad efficiency requirements. The "non-shuttle" train type applies to Kansas City Southern (KCS) (now CPKC) shipments and is made up of 75 cars or more (except the Marshall, MO, rate is for a 50-74 car train). BNSF Railway's domestic efficiency trains (DET) are shuttle-length trains (typically 110 cars) that can be split en route for unloading at multiple destinations. Percentage change month to month (M/M) and year to year (Y/Y) are calculated using the tariff rate plus fuel surcharge. For a larger list of to-the-border rates, see [AgTransport](#). Source: BNSF Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, and CPKC (formerly, Kansas City Southern Railway).

Figure 9. Railroad fuel surcharges, North American weighted average



February 2026: \$0.17/mile, down 3 cents from last month's surcharge of \$0.2/mile; up 5 cents from the February 2025 surcharge of \$0.12/mile; and down 7 cents from the February prior 3-year average of \$0.24/mile.

Note: Weighted by each Class I railroad's proportion of grain traffic for the prior year.

Source: BNSF Railway, Canadian National Railway, CSX Transportation, Canadian Pacific Railway, Union Pacific Railroad, Kansas City Southern Railway, Norfolk Southern Corporation.

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➤ **Proposed Rail Merger Could Reshape Grain Transportation Markets**

25 February 2026 By: Tony St. James (RFD TV) - A proposed \$85 billion merger between Union Pacific and Norfolk Southern could significantly alter rail competition, shipping costs, and service reliability for agricultural shippers if approved by federal regulators.

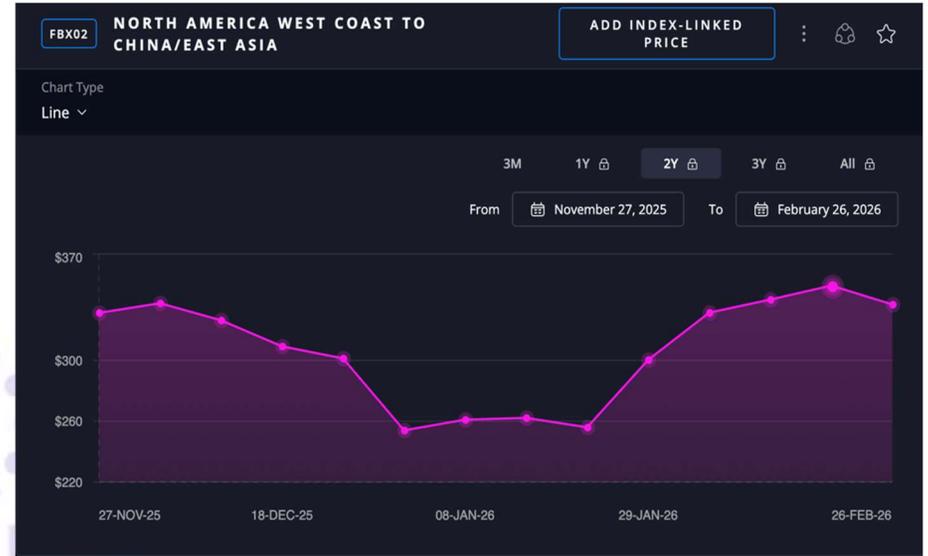
The Surface Transportation Board is reviewing the deal, which would create the nation's first coast-to-coast freight railroad. Supporters argue that the combined network would streamline long-distance grain movements—especially shipments from the Midwest to Southeastern feed and milling markets—by reducing interchange delays at hubs like Chicago, St. Louis, Memphis, and New Orleans.

The companies project \$4.2 billion in new revenue, \$1 billion in annual cost savings, and diversion of more than 2 million truckloads per year to rail.

Opponents, including competing railroads and shippers' groups, warn that the merged carrier could control more than 40 percent of U.S. rail traffic, reducing competition and raising freight rates. They also cite risks of service disruptions, similar to consolidation problems during the 1990s rail mergers, which affected agricultural shipments.

Regulators rejected the initial application as incomplete and require revised market-share projections and additional competitive safeguards before formal review continues. A resubmission is expected in March, with a final decision likely next year.

➤ **Freightos America West Coast – China/East Asia Container Index**



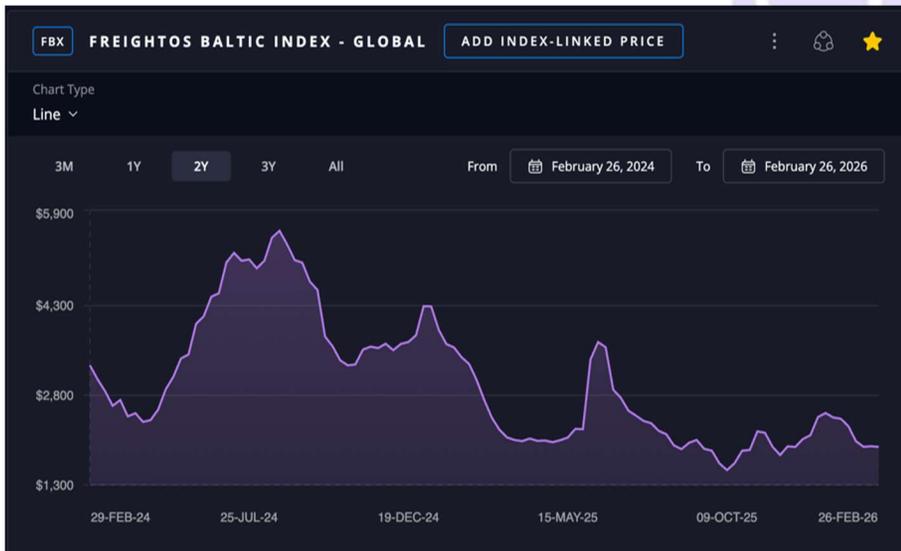
Source: <https://fbx.freightos.com/>

FBX stands for Freightos Baltic Index. It is the leading international Freight Rate Index, in cooperation with the Baltic Exchange, providing market rates for 40' containers (FEUs).

Prices used in the index are rolling short term Freight All Kind (FAK) spot tariffs and related surcharges between carriers, freight forwarders and high-volume shippers. Index values are calculated by taking the median price for all prices (to ignore the influence of outliers on active lanes) with weighting by carrier. 50 to 70 million price points are collected every month. The weekly freight index is calculated as an average of the five business days from the same week and published each Friday.

CONTAINER MOVEMENTS

➤ **Freightos Index (FBX): Global Container Freight Index**

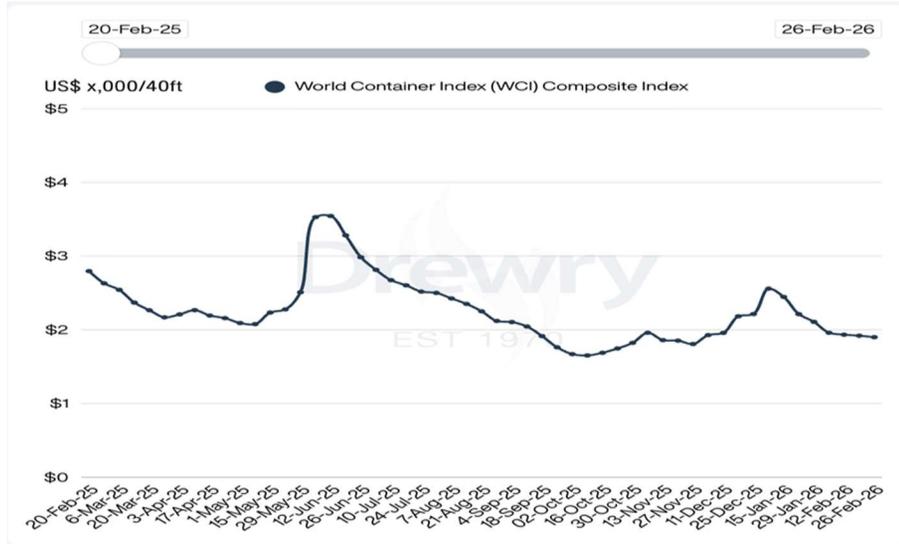


Source: <https://fbx.freightos.com/>

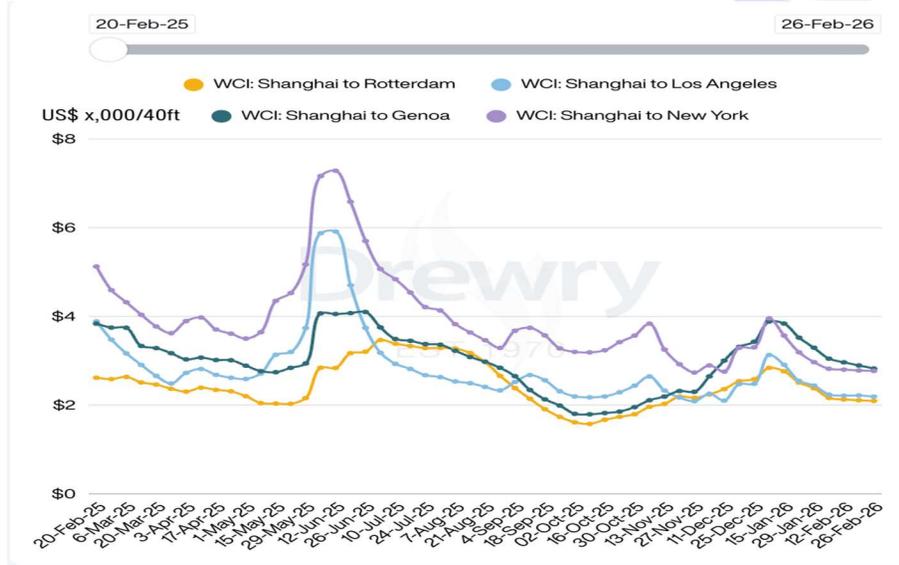
➤ **Drewry World Container Index**

26 February 2026 – Source: <https://www.drewry.co.uk/supply-chain-advisors/supply-chain-expertise/world-container-index-assessed-by-drewry>.

The Drewry World Container Index (WCI) decreased 1% to \$1,899 per 40ft container this week.



Our detailed assessment for Thursday, 26 February 2026



➤ **Proposed Rail Merger: Why trans-Pacific container rates continue to fall**

23 February 2026 By: Stuart Chirls (Freight Waves) - While ocean carriers wrangle with too many ships and too little cargo, continuing weak rates on the Asia-U.S. trade route are starting to show up on other benchmark shipping lanes.

“Average spot rates are down this week across all main fronthaul trades out of the Far East,” said Peter Sand, Xeneta chief analyst, in a note to clients. “From Far East to U.S. West Coast and U.S. East Coast, it is a textbook market development with falling spot rates coinciding with a slight uptick in offered capacity.”

Market average spot rates for the week ending Feb. 19 for Far East to U.S. West Coast were \$1,889 per forty-foot container (FEU), down from \$2,052 the previous week. Far East to U.S. East Coast settled at \$2,688 per FEU, from \$2,882.

The trans-Pacific has been whipsawed by importers playing a waiting game, while carriers struggle to manage overcapacity.

Xeneta’s four-week rolling average of offered capacity as of Feb. 16 increased 2.7% from the previous week on Asia-West Coast services, and by 2.2% to the East Coast.

The market uncertainty comes at a particularly inconvenient time for liner companies entering contract negotiations with shippers. An expected push for higher rates after a difficult 2025 that saw year-on-year profit decreases for major public liners may come up short if demand continues to be muddled by economic concerns aggravated by tariffs.

Conversely, the other major Asian trade lanes also weakened, but amid contrary circumstances.

“It is a different story from Far East to North Europe where offered capacity has decreased week-on-week, but spot rates continue to fall,” said Sand, suggesting an even weaker market on this trade. That’s headline news since China in 2025 found substantial export markets in Europe after tariffs substantially reduced volumes to the U.S.

“2026 is expected to be a year defined by overcapacity in container shipping, compounded by a large-scale return of services to the Red Sea,” Sand said. “Rising tensions between the U.S. and Iran could influence this situation, especially if it threatens Houthi militia resuming attacks on merchant ships in the Red Sea.

“Even if there is not a full escalation in conflict between the U.S. and Iran, the military posturing and rhetoric from political leaders can influence the security situation in the region and see carriers slow down plans to resume Red Sea transits. If so, this would delay a wider return of container shipping to the Red Sea and ease the overcapacity headache for carriers deeper into 2026.”

North Europe to U.S. East Coast edged higher to \$1,492 per FEU, from \$1,484 the previous week on capacity that shrank by almost 10%

ROAD MOVEMENTS & DIESEL FUEL PRICES

The weekly diesel price provides a proxy for trends in U.S. truck rates as diesel fuel is a significant expense for truck grain movements.

Table 13. Retail on-highway diesel prices, week ending 2/23/2026 (U.S. \$/gallon)

Region	Location	Price	Change from	
			Week ago	Year ago
I	East Coast	3.843	0.080	0.048
	New England	4.201	-0.014	0.158
	Central Atlantic	4.104	0.074	0.142
	Lower Atlantic	3.708	0.096	0.000
II	Midwest	3.798	0.134	0.183
III	Gulf Coast	3.489	0.077	0.069
IV	Rocky Mountain	3.683	0.076	0.188
V	West Coast	4.465	0.082	0.107
	West Coast less California	4.050	0.080	0.142
	California	4.944	0.084	0.067
Total	United States	3.809	0.098	0.112

Note: Diesel fuel prices include all taxes. Prices represent an average of all types of diesel fuel. On June 13, 2022, the Energy Information Administration implemented a new methodology to estimate weekly on-highway diesel fuel prices.
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration.

Figure 16. Weekly diesel fuel prices, U.S. average



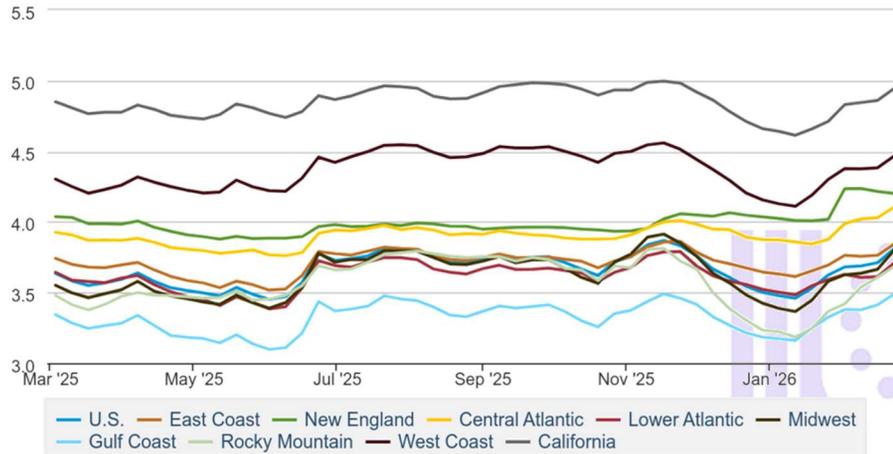
For the week ending February 23, the U.S. average diesel fuel price increased 9.8 cents from the previous week to \$3.809 per gallon, 11.2 cents above the same week last year.

Note: On June 13, 2022, the Energy Information Administration implemented a new methodology to estimate weekly on-highway diesel fuel prices.
Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration.

➤ **Diesel Prices**

On-Highway Diesel Fuel Prices

(dollars per gallon)



eia Data source: U.S. Energy Information Administration

Source: <https://www.eia.gov/petroleum/gasdiesel/>

- For the week ending February 23, the U.S. average diesel fuel price increased 9.8 cents from the previous week to \$3.809 per gallon, 11.2 cents above the same week last year.

➤ **Oil Tanker Rates Surge to Six-Year High**

24 February 2026 By: Tsvetana Paraskova (Oil Price) - Supertanker rates to ship crude on the key Middle East-to-China route have surged to a six-year high as Persian Gulf supply to India soars and traders rush shipments to precede a potential U.S. military campaign in Iran, industry data and sources tell Reuters.

The daily rate for hiring a very large crude carrier (VLCC) capable of shipping 2 million barrels of crude jumped to as much as \$170,000 on Tuesday, tripling since the beginning of 2026.

A number of factors have contributed to the surge, most notably the increased demand from India for Middle Eastern crude as New Delhi seeks to replace a large part of the Russian barrels it had bought over the past three years.

Moreover, tanker owners and charterers have hastened in recent days to ship crude out of the Middle Eastern region amid escalating tensions between the United States and Iran. The U.S. and Iran are preparing for last-ditch indirect talks on Thursday in Geneva, according to the Omani mediators.

Analysts aren't ruling out a failure in the talks and some kind of a U.S. military campaign as early as this weekend.

The heightened geopolitical tensions could also boost the war premiums that shippers and insurers will ask, according to analysts.

The rally in the VLCC freight rates began at the end of 2025 on the back of growing oil supply, longer voyages, and disruptions due to sanctions and altered shipping lanes.

Following a brief respite in January, the tanker rates have rebounded this month to the highest since 2020 as the market became aware of a major vessel buying spree from South Korea's Sinokor shipping group, which is now estimated to control about a fourth of all available non-sanctioned tankers.

"Military action in the Middle East will likely take VLCC rates to levels not seen since 2019," Anoop Singh, global head of shipping research at Oil Brokerage Ltd, told Bloomberg at the end of last week.