



U.S. Imports & Exports of Fasteners: The Potential Impacts of Trump's New Tariff Policies

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Article by Sabrina Rodriguez

Data note: The data for this article is derived from the US Census trade statistics. US Census trade statistics analyze imports and exports on all modes of transportation. That value is calculated in USD by general FOB for imports and FOB for exports. Fasteners in this article are defined as any product under HS Code 7318 (screws, bolts, nuts, coach screws, screw hooks, rivets, cotters, cotter pins, washers and similar articles, or iron or steel). The volume in terms of mass is recorded in Gross Weight (KG).

The Trump administration recently confirmed the imposition of a 25% tariff on all steel and aluminum imports into the U.S., which will directly impact U.S. fastener supply chains, effective March 12, 2025. Fasteners, an integral component for industries such as construction, automotive and manufacturing, rely heavily on steel and aluminum. For U.S. companies in these industries, most fasteners are being imported from global trading partners. Manufacturers, especially small business, may face disruptions in sourcing materials, resulting in delays and shortages in production of finished goods. Smaller companies could struggle to absorb the increased costs due to the increased tariffs, challenging their competitiveness in the market and profitability.

The imposed tariffs also risk provoking retaliatory measures from trading partners, further complicating the supply chain landscape. With Canada, Mexico and China being significant suppliers of steel and aluminum, the imposition of tariffs on imports from these countries could lead to an unfortunate ripple effect with additional trade barriers and restrictions on U.S. exports. Fastener manufacturers will need to plan for these upcoming challenges by exploring alternative sourcing strategies in the event they are currently sourcing from China, boost domestic production capabilities or adjust pricing structures to stay competitive and maintain supply chain stability.

U.S. Fastener Trade in 2024 & Major Trading Partners

The U.S. imported a total of 1.7 billion KG of fasteners in 2024 which is 9.2% more than was imported in 2023. The top trading partners supplying the U.S. with fasteners were Taiwan accounting for 36% of the total amount in 2024, followed by China accounting for 34%. Additional amounts of fasteners were imported from countries like Japan, India and South Korea, each accounting for anywhere between 7% and 3% of the total imported amount in 2024. In the case of fasteners, Mexico and Canada were not amongst the top 10 trading partners in 2023 or 2024. Fastener imports are primarily being imported via ocean vessels into several of the major west coast districts such as Los Angeles, CA, Seattle, WA and San Francisco, CA. On the east coast, ports within the New York City, NY, Savannah, GA and Norfolk, VA districts imported most of the cargo.

In 2024, the U.S. saw the second-largest total amount of fastener imports, with the highest recorded amount occurring in 2022. While the primary trading partners in 2022 were Taiwan and China, the total amount imported was 1.9 billion KG totaling 7.7 billion USD. Historical trend analysis shows a slight decline in 2020 during the height of the global pandemic, and then an upward trend beginning in 2021. Since 2021, the total amount of fastener imports has remained strong in comparison to pre-pandemic years.

Fasteners within HS 731815 (threaded screws and bolts, with or without their nuts or washers) accounted for nearly half of all imports in 2024, followed by 731814 (self-tapping screws,



U.S. Top 10 Fastener Import Origins in 2023-2024 (Ranking by 2024 Weight)

| Country of Origin | 2023 | | | | 2024 | | | | Volume Change | | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| | FOB Value (USD) | % | Gross Weight (Kg) | % | FOB Value (USD) | % | Gross Weight (Kg) | % | FOB Value (USD) | % | Gross Weight (Kg) | % |
| TAIWAN | 2,212,878,280 | 34.91 | 599,043,132 | 38.18 | 2,173,207,776 | 32.76 | 620,248,460 | 36.18 | -39,670,504 | -1.80 | 21,205,328 | 3.54 |
| CHINA | 1,083,800,060 | 17.10 | 490,342,798 | 31.25 | 1,192,677,935 | 17.98 | 587,910,874 | 34.30 | 108,877,875 | 10.05 | 97,568,076 | 19.90 |
| JAPAN | 557,379,560 | 8.80 | 128,329,529 | 8.18 | 622,987,938 | 9.40 | 130,841,085 | 7.64 | 65,608,378 | 11.78 | 2,511,556 | 1.96 |
| INDIA | 200,601,049 | 3.17 | 86,131,109 | 5.49 | 237,623,400 | 3.59 | 102,233,500 | 5.97 | 37,022,351 | 18.46 | 16,102,391 | 18.70 |
| S. KOREA | 274,247,462 | 4.33 | 58,312,843 | 3.72 | 300,043,225 | 4.53 | 59,368,471 | 3.47 | 25,795,763 | 9.41 | 1,055,628 | 1.82 |
| GERMANY | 376,438,579 | 5.94 | 40,717,612 | 2.60 | 388,416,313 | 5.86 | 40,327,551 | 2.36 | 11,977,734 | 3.19 | -390,061 | -0.96 |
| VIETNAM | 107,541,117 | 1.70 | 45,551,507 | 2.91 | 84,752,849 | 1.28 | 35,220,887 | 2.06 | -22,788,268 | -21.20 | -10,330,620 | -22.68 |
| THAILAND | 89,709,363 | 1.42 | 26,051,571 | 1.66 | 87,363,759 | 1.32 | 27,207,270 | 1.59 | -2,345,604 | -2.62 | 1,155,699 | 4.44 |
| ITALY | 227,522,496 | 3.59 | 17,163,730 | 1.10 | 259,247,097 | 3.91 | 17,466,003 | 1.02 | 31,724,601 | 13.95 | 302,273 | 1.77 |
| UAE | 11,526,744 | 0.19 | 8,670,337 | 0.56 | 21,080,744 | 0.32 | 16,275,016 | 0.95 | 9,554,000 | 82.89 | 7,604,679 | 87.71 |
| Total | 6,340,039,968 | 100 | 1,569,408,097 | 100 | 6,633,900,719 | 100 | 1,714,400,686 | 100 | 293,860,751 | 4.64 | 144,992,589 | 9.24 |

threaded), and 731816 (nuts, threaded). 731822 (washers, other than lock washers) and 731829 (non-threaded articles, fasteners) were the two categories of fasteners least imported.

Unlike imports, the U.S. exported fewer fasteners in 2024. Brazil and China were the U.S.'s primary trading partners, each accounting for around 9% of the total exported amount in 2024. Canada was the third largest trading partner in 2024, followed by Germany and the United Kingdom. In terms of total value, Canada accounted for 22% of the total trade in 2024 and similarly 24% of the total trade in 2023. Overall, the U.S. exported nearly 4% more in 2024 compared to 2023. Japan, France, Thailand, Australia and India each accounted for 3% to 4% of the U.S. exported number of fasteners in 2024. Fastener exports to top trading partners primarily were exported via air cargo followed by ocean vessel cargo. New York City, NY, Los Angeles, CA, New Orleans, LA, Cleveland, OH and Miami, FL were the top port districts that exported the most fastener cargo to the world in 2024.

U.S. Top 10 Fastener Export Destinations in 2023-2024 (Ranking by 2024 Weight)

| Country of Destination | 2023 | | | | 2024 | | | | Volume Change | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|----------------------|------------|-------------------|------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | FOB Value (USD) | % | Gross Weight (Kg) | % | FOB Value (USD) | % | Gross Weight (Kg) | % | FOB Value (USD) | % | Gross Weight (Kg) | % |
| BRAZIL | 121,512,004 | 2.24 | 9,132,374 | 9.59 | 131,301,027 | 2.34 | 9,618,559 | 9.72 | 9,789,023 | 8.06 | 486,185 | 5.33 |
| CHINA | 275,380,162 | 5.06 | 10,831,834 | 11.37 | 266,222,256 | 4.74 | 9,456,832 | 9.56 | -9,157,906 | -3.33 | -1,375,002 | -12.70 |
| CANADA | 1,355,178,746 | 24.88 | 7,110,907 | 7.46 | 1,281,900,314 | 22.78 | 6,821,241 | 6.90 | -73,278,432 | -5.41 | -289,666 | -4.08 |
| GERMANY | 139,966,839 | 2.57 | 6,011,317 | 6.31 | 148,432,320 | 2.64 | 6,189,972 | 6.26 | 8,465,481 | 6.05 | 178,655 | 2.98 |
| UK | 139,243,684 | 2.56 | 4,333,006 | 4.55 | 185,877,108 | 3.31 | 5,552,487 | 5.61 | 46,633,424 | 33.50 | 1,219,481 | 28.15 |
| JAPAN | 90,262,014 | 1.66 | 2,787,570 | 2.93 | 127,251,376 | 2.27 | 3,914,202 | 3.96 | 36,989,362 | 40.98 | 1,126,632 | 40.42 |
| FRANCE | 88,451,232 | 1.63 | 2,097,319 | 2.21 | 135,464,139 | 2.41 | 3,320,096 | 3.36 | 47,012,907 | 53.16 | 1,222,777 | 58.31 |
| THAILAND | 134,333,392 | 2.47 | 2,956,841 | 3.11 | 48,065,054 | 0.86 | 3,246,788 | 3.29 | -86,268,338 | -64.22 | 289,947 | 9.81 |
| AUSTRALIA | 81,806,533 | 1.51 | 3,788,340 | 3.98 | 86,050,808 | 1.53 | 3,235,234 | 3.27 | 4,244,275 | 5.19 | -553,106 | -14.61 |
| INDIA | 48,718,460 | 0.90 | 2,744,161 | 2.88 | 63,689,499 | 1.14 | 3,196,799 | 3.23 | 14,971,039 | 30.73 | 452,638 | 16.50 |
| Total | 5,446,992,533 | 100 | 95,323,141 | 100 | 5,628,007,197 | 100 | 98,981,289 | 100 | 181,014,664 | 3.33 | 3,658,148 | 3.84 |

Compared to 2016 through 2019, the U.S. exported less fasteners in 2024. There has been a slight and consistent decline in the amount of fasteners the U.S. has exported since 2019. However, the total values of fastener exports reached all time highs in 2023 and 2024 compared to earlier years. Much like the fasteners being imported, the U.S. exported mostly 731815 (threaded screws and bolts, with or without their nuts or washers) and 731822 (washers, other than lock washers).

Since Trump's January inauguration, it seems there is a new executive order in the U.S. that imposes a layer of unpredictability to the commerce landscape. These frequent policy shifts are often influenced by the changing political agenda, trade negotiations and economic conditions. As a result, businesses must constantly remain informed and adaptable to stay in compliance with the latest regulations. To prevent a disruption in their supply chains and incur increased costs, trade policies are forcing companies to reassess their strategies. The ever-changing nature of these tariffs is a grim reminder of the first Trump administration and the imposed tariffs on steel, leaving fastener manufactures and importers alike uneasy on what is to come in 2025. While companies continue to plan short term and long term, they face the constant challenge of keeping up with the new rules that can affect everything from raw material costs to international trade relations. The unfortunate reality is the uncertainty of what is in store for the next months as U.S. trade negotiations become solidified by the new administration. ■

