



Section 232 National Security Tariffs on Copper Imports

Updated April 23, 2026

Congress has constitutional authority over foreign commerce and tariffs, a power it has [partially delegated to the President](#). [Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 \(19 U.S.C. §1862\)](#) authorizes the President to take action if the Secretary of Commerce determines that imports of a good threaten U.S. national security. In August 2025, President Trump [imposed](#) 50% tariffs on certain copper imports under Section 232. The copper tariffs were President Trump’s first action based on a Section 232 investigation completed during his second term. President Trump [modified](#) these copper tariffs in April 2026.

Issues facing Congress include whether to support, curb, or exercise oversight of the executive branch’s use of Section 232 copper tariffs and whether to monitor the potential implications of copper tariffs for the U.S. economy and relations with trading partners.

Background

Copper is used in a variety of sectors, including construction, electronics, transportation equipment, energy infrastructure and technology, and consumer products. According to estimated data from the [U.S. Geological Survey \(USGS\)](#), in 2025, the United States relied on imports for about 57% of total U.S. refined copper consumption. President Trump has [asserted](#) that “copper is the second most widely used material by the Department of Defense” (which is using “Department of War” as a “secondary title” under Executive Order 14347 dated September 5, 2025) and is “indispensable” for critical U.S. infrastructure. The [Department of Energy](#) included copper on its 2023 [critical materials list](#), and USGS added copper to its 2025 [critical minerals list](#).

Presidential Tariff Proclamations

Upon President Trump’s [direction](#), in March 2025, the Commerce Secretary [initiated](#) a Section 232 investigation into copper imports. [Table 1](#) compares the timeline of the Section 232 copper investigation (144 days from initiation to tariff implementation) to the Section 232 steel investigation, the first to be launched and concluded during the first Trump Administration (338 days).

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IN12614

Table 1. Selected Section 232 Investigation and Tariff Timelines

Action	Steel (2017-2018)	Copper (2025)
Commerce Secretary initiates investigation	April 19, 2017	March 10, 2025
Public hearing held	May 24, 2017	No hearing held
Public comments due	May 31, 2017	April 1, 2025
Commerce Secretary submits report to President	January 11, 2018	June 30, 2025
President decides to take action	March 8, 2018 (Proclamation 9705)	July 30, 2025 (Proclamation 10962)
Tariffs first go into effect	March 23, 2018	August 1, 2025
Total calendar days from initiation to tariff implementation	338 days	144 days

Source: CRS, based on various executive branch documents published in the *Federal Register*.

In July 2025, President Trump issued a [proclamation](#) stating that the Commerce Secretary had submitted a report finding that copper imports threaten to impair U.S. national security. To date, the Commerce report has not been published. According to President Trump, the Commerce Secretary recommended a range of actions including

- an immediate 30% tariff on semi-finished copper products and intensive copper derivative products;
- a phased universal tariff on refined copper of 15% in 2027 and 30% in 2028;
- a domestic sales requirements starting at 25% in 2027 for copper input materials; and
- a 25% domestic sales requirement and export controls for high-quality copper scrap.

The Commerce Secretary is to provide the President with an update on U.S. copper markets by June 30, 2026, after which the President may determine whether to impose duties on refined copper.

Starting August 1, 2025, President Trump imposed 50% tariffs on global imports of semi-finished copper products (e.g., copper pipes, wires, rods, sheets, and tubes) and copper-intensive derivative products (e.g., cables and connectors). President Trump did not impose Section 232 tariffs on copper input materials (such as copper ores, concentrates, mattes, cathodes, and anodes) or copper scrap. Section 232 tariffs applied only to the copper content of a product, and non-copper content remained subject to [other duties](#). The Commerce Secretary was to establish an “inclusions” process to add copper derivatives to the list of goods covered by Section 232 tariffs.

Effective April 6, 2026, President Trump imposed a *50% tariff on the full value* of semi-finished copper products and *25% on the full value* of copper-intensive derivative products (10% if at least 95% of the copper, steel, and aluminum in the product is U.S.-sourced). President Trump also terminated the inclusions process; he authorized the Commerce Secretary and the U.S. Trade Representative to add copper derivatives within the scope of tariffs on a rolling basis after a joint determination. They may also “reconsider” inclusion decisions, “including by modifying or reversing their decisions.” Goods covered by Section 232 tariffs are exempt from global, temporary tariffs under [Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974](#). See **Table 2** for treatment of selected products under Section 232 copper tariffs.

Table 2. Treatment of Selected Products under Section 232 Copper Tariffs

Product	Exempt from Copper Tariffs?
Goods covered by Section 232 automotive tariffs	Yes (Proclamation 10962)
Goods traded under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)	No (Proclamation 10962 , Proclamation 11012)
Certain goods imported for U.S. motorcycle production	Yes (Proclamation 11021)
Certain aircraft goods under bilateral deals with partners such as the European Union , the United Kingdom , Japan , and South Korea	Yes (Proclamation 11021)

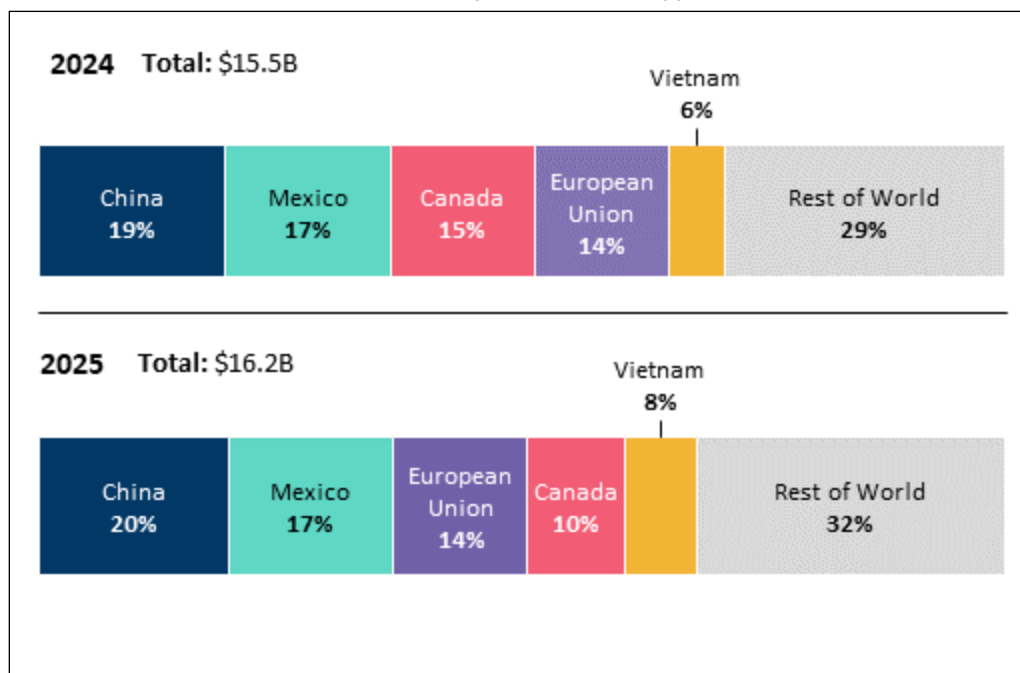
Source: CRS from various presidential documents as of April 23, 2026.

Potential Implications for the U.S. Economy

In 2025, the United States imported \$16.2 billion worth of copper products included in the April 2026 proclamation ([Figure 1](#)).

In 2025, the United States imported \$7.2 billion worth of semi-finished copper products (25% by value from the EU and 20% from Canada) and \$9.0 billion worth of copper-intensive derivative products (31% by value from China and 26% from Mexico).

Figure 1. Top Sources of U.S. Copper Imports
Products Covered by Section 232 Copper Tariffs



Source: CRS with U.S. Census Bureau data, as presented by Trade Data Monitor, accessed April 15, 2026. Based on product codes in U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Cargo Systems Messaging Services [#68253075](#), April 3, 2026.

Some [analysts](#) assert that targeted tariffs could provide support for U.S. copper producers and reiterate long-standing calls for pursuing [additional regulatory actions](#) to promote U.S. mining, processing, and manufacturing. Other [observers](#) caution that U.S. tariffs could increase costs for U.S. businesses, alienate

trading partners, encourage copper exporters to seek other markets (e.g., China), and lead to copper shortages in the United States.

Issues Facing Congress

Some Members advocate for expanding the President's tariff authorities, including under Section 232 (e.g., H.R. 735). Others argue that Congress should play a stronger role in setting and approving U.S. trade policy, including tariffs (e.g., S. 1272/H.R. 2665, S. 348, H.R. 1903, H.R. 2888). A related issue is the extent to which Congress should exercise oversight of the Trump Administration's ongoing negotiations with foreign trading partners, including on Section 232 copper tariffs. Members may consider whether to exercise greater oversight of [executive branch-led trade negotiations](#), whether Section 232 tariffs violate [U.S. trade obligations](#), whether to seek changes to existing trade agreements to increase the effectiveness of tariffs, or whether to mandate reports on the potential economic benefits and costs of tariffs (e.g., H.R. 2287, H.R. 4326). A key issue for the 119th Congress is a [scheduled review of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement \(USMCA\)](#). As part of their oversight of USMCA, Members may consider whether to urge the Administration to maintain or eliminate Section 232 copper tariffs on Canada and Mexico or exempt USMCA-compliant copper products.

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