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MSC has warned its boxships could visit fewer US ports due to the new fees. Photo: MSC

US toughens stance on China-linked port fees

Draft executive order reportedly removes threshold for China-built ships in a fleet before charges kick in

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By [Paul Peachey](#) in **London**

The US appears to have toughened its stance on docking fees at US ports for fleets with Chinese-built or flagged vessels.

A draft order, seen by Reuters, proposes that any ship that docks in the US should be charged an additional fee if it is part of a fleet that includes vessels built or flagged in China.



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An earlier proposal had suggested that fees would be charged if Chinese-built ships accounted for 25% of vessels operating, slated for delivery or on order. That threshold appears to have been dropped, according to the news agency.

The order also said that the US would push allies to act in the same way against China or face retaliation, according to the report.

The move is part of the Trump administration's efforts to revive the country's shipbuilding industry and loosen China's grip on the broader shipping industry.

China is the world's largest shipbuilder, accounting for about 51% of total newbuilding deliveries in 2024, an increase of 17% from 2019. The US has not built a new crude tanker since 2017 and lacks the infrastructure for large-scale

production.

The Office of the US Trade Representative began seeking public comments last week on the fee proposals.

Chinese-owned vessels would be charged up to \$1m per US port call or a rate of up to \$1,000 per net tonne of the vessel's capacity. Chinese-built tonnage would be charged up to \$1.5m per port visit.

The proposals are due to be discussed on 24 March and could be adopted shortly after that.

Major liner operators have warned about the impact of the fees on the container shipping business.

Soren Toft, chief executive of the world's biggest container liner, MSC, said this week its ships could visit fewer US ports because of the new fees.



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Torsten Pedersen, chief operating officer of the tonnage provider Seaspan Corp, told TradeWinds that goods could end up being delivered to Mexico and Canada before being transshipped to their final US destinations to avoid the potential penalties.

Meanwhile, the CEO of the third-largest operator, France's CMA CGM, Rodolphe Saade, stood next to US President Donald Trump in the White House on Thursday and promised a \$20bn investment to create 10,000 US jobs. [\(Copyright\)](#)

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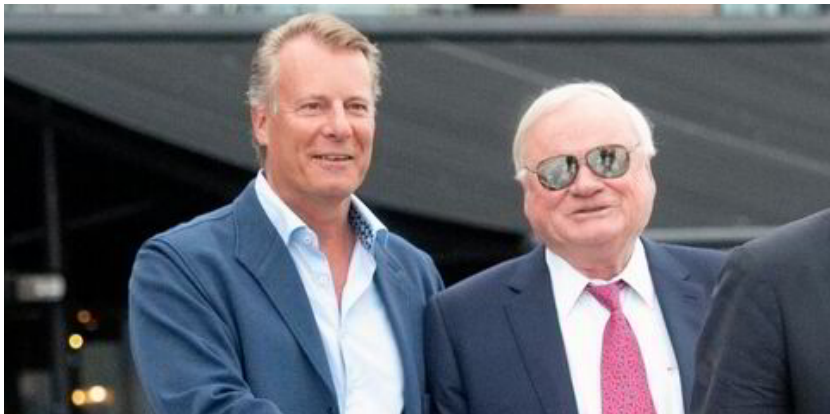
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