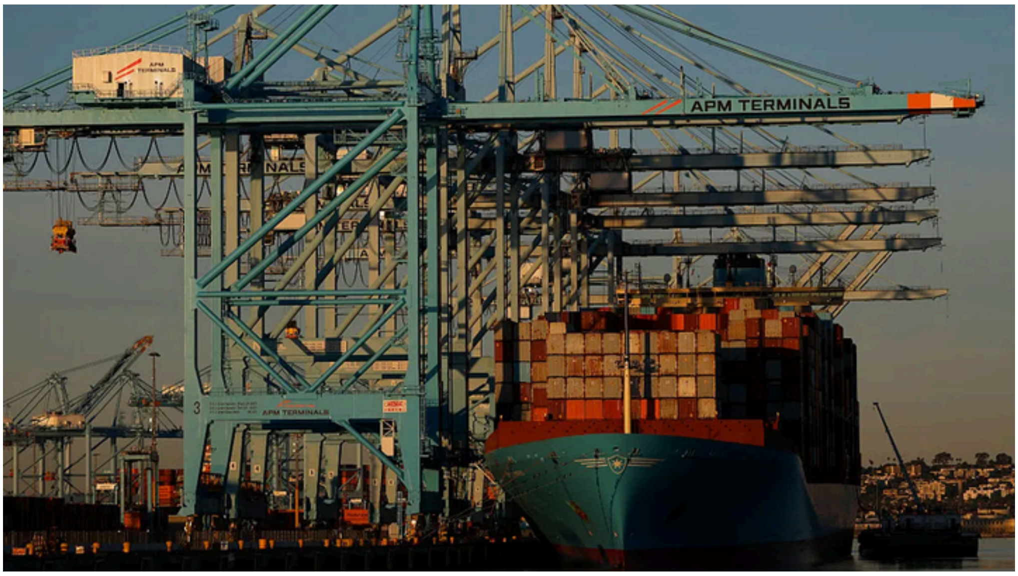
Newsletter

JUNE 2026



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Burlington Uses Long-Term Freight Contracts to Manage Rising Transportation Costs

Burlington Stores is using long-term transportation contracts and supply chain optimization strategies to manage rising freight costs caused by higher diesel prices and fuel surcharges.

According to the company's first-quarter earnings update, Burlington recently secured ocean and domestic transportation contracts for the coming year at favorable rates. These agreements are expected to provide greater cost stability and reduce exposure to volatile spot market pricing throughout 2026.

In addition to contract negotiations, Burlington is improving shipment efficiency by increasing cube utilization across both inbound and outbound freight. The company is also focusing on better loading practices within its distribution centers and taking advantage of consolidation opportunities to maximize transportation capacity and reduce costs.

The strategy follows similar measures implemented by Burlington in previous years, when the retailer secured ocean, truck, and intermodal capacity in advance to protect against market fluctuations and ensure reliable transportation services.

Many retailers are currently facing transportation cost pressures linked to higher fuel prices and ongoing geopolitical tensions affecting global supply chains. Disruptions around key trade routes and concerns over oil supply have increased uncertainty across both ocean and air freight markets.

Industry observers note that companies with strong carrier relationships and long-term contract strategies may be better positioned to manage transportation expenses and maintain supply chain stability during periods of market volatility.

Amazon grows LTL freight offerings for shippers

Amazon Supply Chain Services has expanded its less-than-truckload (LTL) freight offering, allowing shippers to move goods to virtually any destination across the United States rather than limiting deliveries to Amazon facilities.

Under the new service model, businesses can now use Amazon's LTL network to transport freight to third-party warehouses, distribution centers, retail partners, and other commercial locations nationwide. The expansion aims to provide greater flexibility for shippers of all sizes while leveraging Amazon's extensive transportation infrastructure.

According to Amazon Freight, the enhancement was driven by customer demand for LTL services that offer the same reliability and performance standards as full truckload transportation. The company reported that its LTL network moved millions of pallets across the U.S. last year and is now positioned to support a wider range of shipping requirements.

The move follows Amazon's recent decision to open its broader supply chain network to all businesses, including companies that do not sell through Amazon. Shippers can now access a large transportation and logistics ecosystem that includes more than 80,000 trailers, 24,000 intermodal containers, over 100 aircraft, as well as warehousing, distribution, and fulfillment services.

Industry observers view the expansion as another step in Amazon's long-term strategy to strengthen its presence in the logistics and transportation sector. By extending its LTL capabilities beyond its own facilities, Amazon is positioning itself as a more comprehensive logistics provider while offering shippers additional options to improve supply chain efficiency and nationwide distribution.

Can AI gains give alternative delivery providers an edge?

Alternative parcel carriers are increasingly using artificial intelligence (AI) to improve efficiency, strengthen customer service, and compete more effectively in the logistics market.

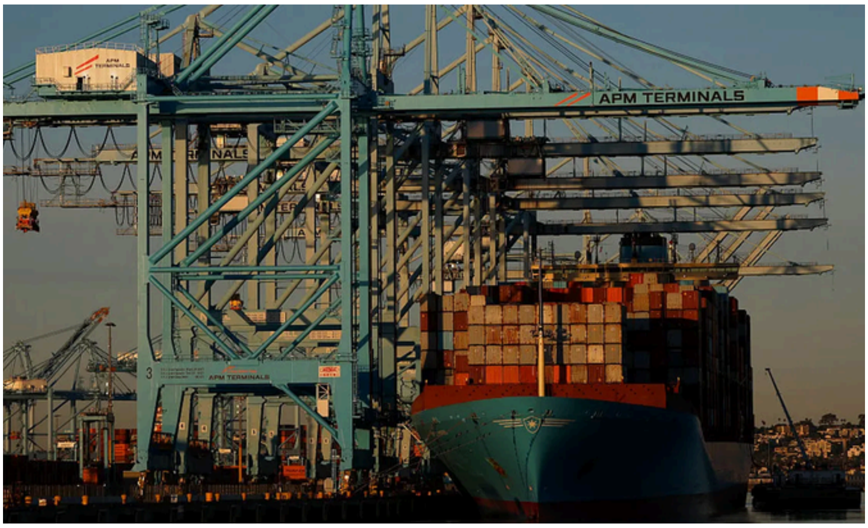
While FedEx and UPS have long invested in AI technologies, industry experts believe the growing availability of AI tools is helping smaller delivery providers narrow the technology gap with larger competitors.

Several carriers have already introduced AI-powered solutions to support daily operations. SpeedX, for example, developed its own AI customer service chatbot, which is integrated with internal systems and can provide real-time shipment information to customers.

According to the company, the chatbot now handles more than 80% of customer inquiries, reducing the workload for support teams and improving response times. SpeedX also uses AI to support delivery verification and help minimize failed deliveries.

Industry observers expect AI adoption to continue accelerating across the parcel sector. As technology becomes more accessible and cost-effective, AI is expected to help delivery providers improve operational performance, enhance customer experience, and create new opportunities for growth.

FMC can help ocean shippers in 3 key ways, chair says



The U.S. Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) is taking a more proactive approach to supporting ocean shippers as the industry continues to face evolving challenges, including congestion, vessel delays, and carrier surcharges.

According to FMC Chairman Laura DiBella, the agency aims to help shippers address potential issues before cargo is moved rather than responding only after disputes occur. The approach follows reforms introduced under the Ocean Shipping Reform Act (OSRA), which expanded the FMC's authority and strengthened its ability to support industry stakeholders.

DiBella emphasized that the FMC should be viewed not only as a regulatory body but also as a resource for shippers throughout the shipping process. Businesses are encouraged to contact the agency for guidance before making transportation decisions, particularly when dealing with complex carrier practices or contract terms.

The FMC has also increased its focus on enforcement and dispute resolution. In recent years, the agency reviewed a growing number of shipper complaints and helped secure refunds and waived charges related to unfair shipping practices.

As global shipping conditions remain uncertain, the FMC believes early communication and greater industry awareness can help shippers reduce risks, improve decision-making, and navigate the ocean freight market more effectively.

Unicargo Introduces US Import Tariff Refund Review Program

IPN member Unicargo has shared information about a program that may be relevant to members with clients importing goods into the United States during 2025–2026.

The program is designed to support importers in reviewing potential US import tariff refund opportunities. Through this process, members may continue maintaining the client relationship, while Unicargo works on the refund review and recovery process with its customs experts.

For members, this may provide an additional opportunity to support clients who have US import shipments during the relevant period. The review process would involve cooperation among the member, the client, and Unicargo's customs team.

According to the material provided by Unicargo, the program is based on a "no refund, no cost" arrangement for the member or client, and may also create a potential profit-share opportunity if a refund is successfully recovered.

Companies interested in learning more about this program may contact Unicargo directly at AmitC@unicargo.com or cape@unicargo.com.

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