

# Tariffs Briefing

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APRIL 16, 2025 - GUIDANCE & ADVICE  
ON TARIFFS AND TRADE REGULATIONS

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GEORGIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



# Guidance & Advice on Tariffs and Trade Regulations

## Executive Summary

In the rapidly evolving global business environment, Georgia businesses face opportunities and challenges arising from ongoing tariff changes and trade disputes. This latest update from the Georgia Chamber Foundation on the impact of new tariffs and barriers to free trade identifies the Georgia industry sectors most at risk, and delivers specific recommendations tailored to various industries. The Georgia Chamber of Commerce and the Georgia Chamber Foundation aim to empower Georgia businesses with actionable strategies, insights, and links to trusted resources for informed decision-making.

Recent shifts in global economic policies have led to tariff adjustments and protracted trade wars involving major economies. These policy moves are responses to geopolitical tensions, protectionist measures, and efforts to counteract trade deficits. The impacts are widespread—affecting supply chains, production costs, export competitiveness, and market access.

As part of a tumultuous April, the U.S. levied 145% tariffs on Chinese imports, with Chinese retaliatory tariffs reaching 125%, followed by an announcement from Beijing that they “will ignore” future tariff hikes from the U.S. The escalatory tariff policies from both countries came after the Trump Administration announced reciprocal tariffs on most trading partners, before issuing a 90-day pause on those tariffs on April 9.

The constant disruption from both the United States and foreign governments poses significant challenges across nearly every Georgia business sector. Whether you operate a small manufacturing plant, retail store, farming operation, or a multinational logistics hub, these developments may impact your supply chain, pricing, and competitive outlook.

The Georgia Chamber of Commerce is committed to providing our members with insights into these developments and actionable advice for mitigating adverse impacts while leveraging emerging opportunities as potential existing trade barriers are lowered or eliminated.

# Understanding the Trade Environment

## ONGOING DISPUTES:

- The U.S. remains a focal point in several trade disputes, particularly with China, the European Union, Canada, and Mexico. Recent tariff hikes and retaliatory measures have disrupted established supply chains and paused logistics decisions.

## EVOLVING TRADE POLICIES:

- Changes in administration and shifting geopolitical alliances have prompted a review of trade policies. Current U.S. policies favor reevaluating bilateral agreements, whereas multilateral agreements continue to be a subject of debate.

## MARKET DISRUPTIONS:

- Major sectors such as agriculture, automotive, and technology have seen increased volatility. Tariff adjustments are directly impacting Georgia companies.

## TARIFF LEVELS:

- Recent U.S. imposed tariff adjustments vary between 5% and 25% on key imports, impacting pricing structures.

## SUPPLY CHAIN DYNAMICS:

- In the wake of tariff shifts from President Trump's first term, many companies looked to re-evaluate sourcing strategies, with a growing trend toward diversification and re-shoring. This could continue if current tariff rates are sustained.

## China-U.S. Update

U.S. tariffs on thousands of Chinese products now reach as high as 125%, affecting electronics, machinery, textiles, vehicles, and raw materials.

China's retaliatory tariffs disproportionately target U.S. agriculture and heavy industry—including poultry, lumber, pecans, and chemicals, key Georgia exports.

China is also adopting a new trade regulatory policy that extends past tariffs to include restricting exports of the heavy earth rare metals that are vital to EV production and other heavy manufacturing in Georgia, restricting the number of U.S.-made movies and T.V. shows that can be screened in China. On April 15, China accused the U.S. of launching cyberattacks against China.

## Immediate Future

With trade experts anticipating ongoing tariff fluctuations, businesses must prioritize contingency planning, financial agility, and diversified sourcing strategies.

Washington is now reviewing potential trade sanctions and tariffs on pharmaceuticals, lumber, and computer chip imports, which would create inflationary impacts on both consumers and manufacturers.

# Strategies for Georgia Businesses

## 1. Supply Chain Adaptation

### DIVERSIFY SUPPLIERS

- Reduce exposure by identifying alternative sourcing options from domestic vendors or from countries less impacted by U.S. or retaliatory tariffs.

### STRATEGIC EVALUATION

- Modify the composition, packaging, or assembly process of products to fall under different Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) classifications with lower duty rates. Consult trade compliance professionals to explore lawful reclassifications and country-of-origin rules that could reduce total landed costs.

### DOMESTIC RESHORING

- Explore opportunities to bring manufacturing, packaging, or final assembly operations back to Georgia or neighboring states. This strategy not only mitigates exposure to foreign tariffs but also shortens supply chains, improves quality control, and supports Georgia's workforce and economy.

## 2. Leverage Federal and State Trade Tools

### DUTY DRAWBACK PROGRAMS

- A duty drawback is a refund on duties, taxes, and fees paid on imported merchandise that is subsequently exported, unused, or destroyed. Companies may reclaim 99% of duties paid. This is particularly useful for companies in aerospace, heavy machinery, and precision manufacturing that operate across borders.

### FOREIGN TRADE ZONES (FTZ)

- Use Georgia's Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) network—including zones near Savannah, Atlanta, and inland ports—to defer, reduce, or eliminate customs duties until goods enter domestic commerce. FTZs allow for lower entry processing costs, duty deferral, duty reduction or avoidance for products ultimately leaving the country, property tax benefits, and greater flexibility for the storage, manipulation, or assembly of goods in Georgia. Learn more: [georgiaftz.com](http://georgiaftz.com)

### BONDED WAREHOUSING

- A bonded warehouse is a secured area in which imported merchandise may be stored, manipulated, or undergo manufacturing operations without payment of duty for up to five years from the date of importation. Bonded warehouses are ideal for importers with long turnover times or complex distribution strategies.

### TARIFF CLASSIFICATION REVIEWS

- Ensure your products are properly classified by customs brokers or legal experts—misclassification can result in overpayment or penalties. Reviews can uncover significant cost savings.

## 3. Financial Planning and Access to Capital

### DECONSOLIDATE BUNDLED PAYMENTS FOR GOODS

- Cost-unbundling reviews can carve out any elements of a product's unit price which could be characterized as not subject to duties (ex: royalties, services) or create new services/intangibles that could escape inclusion in the duty basis.

### INVENTORY AND STOCKPILING STRATEGIES

- Anticipate future tariff increases by building strategic inventory reserves. Bulk ordering raw materials or finished goods in advance can buffer short-term shocks in price or supply. Many Georgia counties offer varying levels of tax abatements for goods in process or raw materials through locally adopted Freeport Exemption programs. Speak with your local county tax assessor's office or visit [dor.georgia.gov/freeport-exemption](https://dor.georgia.gov/freeport-exemption) to learn more.

### TALK TO YOUR BANK OR CREDIT UNION

- Engage your financial institution with an articulated trade risk strategy.
  - **Forecast the tariff impact:** Show potential margin compression or sourcing disruptions.
  - **Request capital access:** Seek inventory financing, working capital lines, or letters of credit to support stockpiling or re-tooling supply chains.
  - **Leverage federal programs:** Ask about the Small Business Administration's Export Working Capital Program (EWCP) and International Trade Loans, both designed to support small- and mid-sized exporters navigating disruptions in global trade.

### RISK MITIGATION INSTRUMENTS

- Explore insurance options that cover global logistics, political risk, or trade credit insurance for overseas buyers. These are particularly useful for agribusinesses and heavy exporters.

## 4. Make Your Voice Heard

In today's volatile trade environment, it's more important than ever for business leaders to speak directly to those shaping U.S. trade and tariff policy. Georgia's Congressional Delegation needs to hear how tariffs, supply chain instability, and global market access affect Georgia employers, employees, and communities.

We encourage all Georgia Chamber members to reach out respectfully, clearly, and consistently, to share your story, advocate for smart trade policies, and support efforts to reduce burdens on American businesses.

We also encourage our members to remain engaged with other federal partners including the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, so they can continue directing dialogue within Congress and the Trump Administration.

### KEY MESSAGES TO SHARE:

- How employees and elected officials' constituents are impacted by the global trade instability
- Support for predictable, pro-growth international trade policy
- Concerns about retaliatory tariffs on Georgia-made goods
- Interest in export promotion, supply chain resilience, and small business relief
- The need for investment in port and logistics infrastructure

### CONTACT YOUR CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION:

Below are links to each U.S. Senate and House office representing Georgia. These official pages include contact forms, phone numbers, and instructions for requesting meetings or submitting written input. Note that members of the U.S. House of Representatives can only advocate for people and businesses within their congressional district.

#### U.S. SENATORS – STATEWIDE REPRESENTATION

**Senator Jon Ossoff**  
<https://www.ossoff.senate.gov/contact>  
**Senator Raphael Warnock**  
<https://www.warnock.senate.gov/contact>

#### U.S. REPRESENTATIVES – CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS

**District 1 – Rep. Buddy Carter**  
<https://buddycarter.house.gov/contact>  
**District 2 – Rep. Sanford Bishop**  
<https://bishop.house.gov/contact>  
**District 3 – Rep. Brian Jack**  
<https://jack.house.gov/contact>  
**District 4 – Rep. Hank Johnson**  
<https://hankjohnson.house.gov/contact>  
**District 5 – Rep. Nikema Williams**  
<https://nikemawilliams.house.gov/contact>

**District 6 – Rep. Lucy McBath**  
<https://mcbath.house.gov/contact>  
**District 7 – Rep. Rich McCormick**  
<https://mccormick.house.gov/contact>  
**District 8 – Rep. Austin Scott**  
<https://austinscott.house.gov/contact>

**District 9 – Rep. Andrew Clyde**  
<https://clyde.house.gov/contact>  
**District 10 – Rep. Mike Collins**  
<https://collins.house.gov/contact>

**District 11 – Rep. Barry Loudermilk**  
<https://loudermilk.house.gov/contact>

**District 12 – Rep. Rick Allen**  
<https://allen.house.gov/contact>

**District 13 – Rep. David Scott**  
<https://davidscott.house.gov/contact>

**District 14 – Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene**  
<https://greene.house.gov/contact>

As your statewide advocate for free enterprise, the Georgia Chamber works directly with members of Congress to ensure the voice of business is heard in Washington. By adding your story and your perspective, you help amplify our shared mission: a more competitive, connected, and prosperous Georgia.

# Sector-Specific Impacts & Solutions

Trade disruptions, tariff escalation, and global supply chain instability impact industries in different ways. Tailored strategies ensure that Georgia's diverse business community—from advanced manufacturers to family farms—can adapt, compete, and thrive in uncertain markets.

## Georgia Manufacturers

### IMPACT:

Manufacturers face rising costs for imported components, raw materials, and specialized machinery. Complex origin rules, customs delays, and retaliatory tariffs on U.S. exports compound the pressure. Also of growing concern is that reduced profit margins can limit funds available for research and innovation.

### SOLUTIONS:

- **Tariff Engineering:** Work with trade consultants to legally reclassify product inputs, coordinate transfer pricing strategies, or adjust the design to shift into more favorable tariff brackets.
- **Foreign Trade Zones (FTZs) and Bonded Warehouses:** Use FTZs and Bonded Warehouses to delay or avoid duties on imports until goods enter U.S. commerce.
- **Supplier Diversification:** Establish multi-country sourcing networks to avoid overreliance on high-tariff regions.
- **Automation and Robotics:** Invest in smart manufacturing to control labor and quality costs as materials become more expensive.

## Georgia Retailers & Importers

### IMPACT:

Retailers and import-based businesses experience immediate margin compression when consumer goods, textiles, electronics, and packaging components are hit by tariffs. Shipping costs and fulfillment timelines are also in flux, all leading to higher consumer prices and, potentially, increased inflation. We are also seeing shifts in global supply chain reliability and alignment as countries seek new partners and markets.

### SOLUTIONS:

- **Tariff Engineering:** Work with trade consultants to legally reclassify product inputs, coordinate transfer pricing strategies, or adjust the design to shift into more favorable tariff brackets.
- **Foreign Trade Zones (FTZs) and Bonded Warehouses:** Use FTZs and Bonded Warehouses to delay or avoid duties on imports until goods enter U.S. commerce.

- **Supplier Diversification:** Establish multi-country sourcing networks to avoid overreliance on high-tariff regions.
- **Automation and Robotics:** Invest in smart manufacturing to control labor and quality costs as materials become more expensive.

### Georgia Farmers & Agribusinesses

#### IMPACT:

Georgia's agriculture industry, especially poultry, pecans, peanuts, cotton, and timber, has been directly impacted by retaliatory tariffs from China and other major markets. Export logistics, commodity pricing, and market access remain unstable. Additionally, increased costs for imported fertilizers, pesticides, and machinery may affect profitability.

#### SOLUTIONS:

- **Stay Informed:** Stay informed on export policy shifts, retaliatory tariff trends, and trade assistance programs.
- **Leverage USDA and SBA Tools:**
  - **USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)** offers direct export assistance.
  - **SBA's Trade Loans** can provide financial flexibility during market disruptions.
- **Explore New Markets:** Work with the Georgia Department of Agriculture and Georgia Department of Economic Development (GDEcD) to identify new international buyers or trade missions focused on non-retaliatory markets.
- **Risk Management:** Consider export credit insurance or price-protection tools to hedge against international volatility.

### Technology & Innovation

#### IMPACT:

Increased tariffs can slow the inflow of critical high-tech components which may affect competitiveness and innovation and impact intellectual property initiatives. We also expect market access for Georgia technology companies to be restricted in certain regions.

#### SOLUTIONS:

- **Build new R&D Networks:** Foster regional and university-based innovation hubs and partnerships.
- **Alternative Sourcing:** Identify and cultivate relationships with domestic suppliers or those in countries less impacted by trade friction.
- **Cybersecurity:** Strengthen cybersecurity measures and regulatory compliance to protect

## Georgia Logistics & Distribution

### IMPACT:

Rapid global trade changes and market disruptions are adding new layers of complexity to Georgia's logistics, warehousing, and technology sectors. We are also expecting tariff-induced freight cost increases as well as route adjustments.

### SOLUTIONS:

- **Digital Supply Chain Tools:** Adopt AI-driven logistics software for demand forecasting, container tracking, and customs automation.
- **Blockchain for Trade:** Integrate digital ledgers to improve transparency and speed up cross-border documentation.
- **Route Optimization:** Reevaluate distribution models, and use inland ports, FTZs, or alternative ports of entry to lower costs and mitigate congestion.
- **Cybersecurity Investment:** As digital tools expand, fortify IT systems to safeguard trade data and supply chain communications.
- **Flexible Contracts:** negotiate flexible terms with carriers to accommodate potential fluctuations in demand and costs.

# Resources & Support for Georgia Businesses

In today's increasingly complex global trade environment, Georgia companies must leverage every available tool—public, private, domestic, and international. The following organizations provide critical assistance, policy insights, and direct support to help businesses navigate tariffs, diversify markets, secure capital, and protect growth.

## Georgia Chamber of Commerce

As the state's premier business advocacy organization, the Georgia Chamber champions policies that promote global competitiveness and free enterprise and provides insightful business intelligence. Our role in trade support includes:

### SOLUTIONS:

- **Real-Time Policy Briefings:** Stay informed with updates on U.S. trade policy, global tariff trends, and Georgia-specific risks and opportunities.
- **Global Business Subcommittee:** Engage with fellow business leaders through our member-led council focused on trade, foreign direct investment (FDI), supply chain resilience, and regulatory affairs.
- **Strategic Coordination:** The Chamber works closely with federal trade agencies, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, consulates general, foreign trade offices, and diplomatic offices in Georgia, as well as the Georgia Department of Economic Development to advocate for pro-growth, pro-export solutions.
- **Advocacy at Every Level:** Whether it's influencing federal tariff policy or enabling local expansion into new markets, the Chamber is your voice.

Learn more: [www.gachamber.com](http://www.gachamber.com)

## Local Chambers of Commerce

Your local chamber exists to advocate for your company. Your engagement is critical for the success and prosperity of your community. To access a list of our local chamber partners, visit our website [here](#).

## Georgia Department of Economic Development – International Trade Division

GDEcD's International Trade Division supports companies across Georgia in growing exports and navigating global markets. Their experts offer:

- **Matchmaking Services:** Identify reliable buyers, distributors, and partners in priority markets.
- **Tariff and Compliance Assistance:** Get help understanding new duties and shifting import/export rules.
- **Market Access Strategy:** From labeling laws to port logistics, GDEcD helps you prepare to expand.

• Brazil • Canada • Chile • Columbia • Europe • Israel • Japan • Mexico • Peru • Southeast Asia • South Korea • United Kingdom and Ireland

Learn more: [www.georgia.org/international/trade](http://www.georgia.org/international/trade)

## Georgia Ports Authority

The Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) operates two of the fastest-growing and most efficient ports in the United States—the Port of Savannah and the Port of Brunswick—as well as inland terminals in Gainesville and Chatsworth. As a key driver of Georgia's global trade, GPA provides cost-effective, timely, and scalable logistics services that help businesses respond to global supply chain volatility and rising shipping costs.

- **Port of Savannah:** The largest single-terminal container facility in North America, featuring:
  - Deepwater access with ongoing harbor expansion for Post-Panamax vessels
  - Direct rail connections through the Garden City Terminal with CSX and Norfolk Southern
  - Fastest outbound truck turn times on the East Coast
  - Infrastructure designed to minimize congestion and speed throughput
- **Port of Brunswick:** One of the nation's busiest automobile and Roll-on/Roll-off (Ro/Ro) ports, ideal for manufacturers and agribusinesses handling breakbulk or large equipment.
- **Inland Ports (Inland Terminals):** GPA's network of inland terminals in Cordele, Chatsworth, and Gainesville reduces congestion and brings global trade closer to rural and inland Georgia:
  - Efficient container-on-rail service
  - Expanded export capacity for agriculture, timber, and manufacturing sectors
  -
- **Flexibility for Exporters:**
  - GPA supports Foreign Trade Zone access, cold storage, agricultural inspection facilities, and bulk/reefer cargo support to streamline exports of perishable and high-volume commodities.

Learn more: [gaports.com](http://gaports.com)

## Foreign Consulates and Trade Offices in Atlanta

With over 70 consulates general, honorary consuls, and trade investment offices, metro Atlanta is a gateway for global business.

### KEY OFFICES INCLUDE:

- Consulate General of India
- Consulate General of the Federal Republic of Germany
- Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)
- Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA)
- British Consulate General Atlanta
- Consulate General of Canada to the United States, in Atlanta
- Consulate General of France in Atlanta
- Consulate General of Israel in Southeast USA, Atlanta
- Consulate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands
- Quebec Government Office
- Consul General of Mexico in Atlanta
- Swiss Business Hub USA – Atlanta Branch
- The Austrian Trade Commission -- Southern Region Office
- Industrial Development Agency of Ireland Atlanta Office

These offices can provide direct links to international sourcing, export facilitation, regulatory insight, and trade dispute navigation.

## University-Affiliated Georgia Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs)

Georgia's SBDC network offers no-cost and low-cost business consulting services to help companies develop global resilience. Services include:

- **Tariff Impact Analysis:** Understand how duty changes affect your bottom line.
- **Supply Chain Optimization:** Reconfigure sourcing or inventory strategies.
- **Export Readiness Assessments:** Evaluate capacity to grow beyond U.S. borders.
- **Financial Planning:** Navigate cost increases, working capital planning, and trade loan options.

Learn more: [www.georgiasbdc.org](http://www.georgiasbdc.org)

## U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

The SBA provides direct financial tools and guidance to help small businesses weather trade disruptions.

- **Export Working Capital Program (EWCP):** Secures financing for orders, receivables, and raw materials.
- **International Trade Loan Program:** Offers long-term capital for equipment, facility upgrades, or working capital affected by foreign competition.
- **Small Business Trade Counseling:** Delivered through SBA field offices and local SBDCs.

Learn more: [www.sba.gov](http://www.sba.gov)

## Georgia Agribusiness Council

Georgia's agribusinesses are often the first affected by retaliatory tariffs. The Georgia Agribusiness Council serves as a powerful advocate for Georgia farmers and the ag-industry.

Learn more: [www.ga-agribusiness.org](http://www.ga-agribusiness.org)

## Georgia Department of Agriculture

Supporting one of Georgia's most export-driven sectors, the Department offers:

- **International Promotion Programs:** Assistance through trade missions, food expos, and outbound delegations.
- **Commodity-Specific Export Guidance:** Insights for navigating the poultry, pecan, peanut, forestry, and produce markets abroad.
- **Compliance Assistance:** Help with product labeling, documentation, and food safety rules in foreign markets.

Learn more: [agr.georgia.gov](http://agr.georgia.gov)

# Your Advocate for Free Enterprise



Navigating the turbulent waters of tariff and trade wars requires proactive planning, strategic foresight, and adaptive operations. By leveraging the guidance provided in this document, Georgia businesses can better prepare for potential challenges while seizing opportunities that arise from market shifts. The Georgia Chamber of Commerce remains dedicated to supporting local business interests through timely information, expert advice, and advocacy on the state and national stages.

As part of our **GEORGIA|2050** strategic vision, the **Georgia Chamber** is working with our global partners, Federal and State leaders as well as national allies to:

- **Expand Georgia's trade relationships and foreign investment**
- **Support infrastructure, logistics, and technology for global competitiveness**
- **Equip our small and mid-sized businesses to win in global markets**

Georgia business leads globally when it is informed locally. We are working for your business to ensure you remain competitive, resilient, and ready for what's next.

Disclaimer: The Georgia Chamber's opinions, interpretations, and recommendations are for informational purposes only and do not constitute legal or professional advice. No guarantees are made regarding accuracy or reliability. Use of this information is at the user's own risk, and the Georgia Chamber assumes no liability.

## Stay Connected

To access the latest updates, and insights or engage in our advocacy efforts:

**[gachamber.com](https://gachamber.com)**