

China's Cosco says US port charges threaten global supply chains

Largest Chinese container carrier speaks out against port fees

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(Photo: Cosco Shipping Lines)

China's largest container carrier on Monday lashed out at a U.S. plan to charge its ships steep fees to dock at American ports.

"We firmly oppose the accusations and the subsequent measures," Cosco Shipping Lines said in a statement. "Such measures not only distort fair competition and impede the normal functioning of the global shipping industry, but also threaten its stable and sustainable development.

"Ultimately, these actions risk undermining the security, resilience, and orderly operation of global industrial and supply chains."

The [watered-down plan](#) for port fees was revealed Friday by the U.S. trade representative following pushback by traders and maritime stakeholders to an initial proposal for millions of dollars in flat port charges. The revised plan sets fees tied to a ship's size or number of containers carried by a ship, whichever is greater.

Cosco, the world's fourth-largest container line, operates some of the biggest vessels between Asia and the United States. It's likely Cosco will feel the effects not just from the port fees but in fewer calls at U.S. ports as part of the Ocean Alliance with Chinese carrier OOCL and Evergreen of Taiwan.

The charges followed an investigation by the USTR that found China had leveraged unfair trade practices to build a dominant position in global shipping and shipbuilding.

Cosco in the statement denied the accusations, calling the USTR finding “discriminatory.”

“As a responsible global provider of shipping and logistics services, we consistently uphold the principles of integrity, transparency, and compliance in international industry competition,” the statement said. “We remain steadfast in our commitment to supporting global trade and delivering high-quality, reliable commercial shipping and logistics solutions to our clients worldwide.”

Cosco did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

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