

Executive Order Directs Investigation to Consider a Global Copper-Import Tariff

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On February 25, 2025, President Trump signed the “Addressing The Threat To National Security From Imports of Copper” Executive Order (EO). This EO orders the Department of Commerce to investigate the effects of copper imports on national security, which could lead to tariffs on all copper imports. The United States currently imports just under half of the refined copper it consumes. More than 90% of the copper imported by the United States comes from Chile, Canada, and Peru.

The investigation is expected to be completed within 270 days, that being no later than November 22, 2025, and includes—but is not limited to—raw mined copper, copper concentrates, refined copper, copper alloys, scrap copper, and derivative products. The Department of Commerce will conduct the investigation under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962, which allows the federal government to investigate and adjust imports that threaten national security.

In conducting the investigation, the EO orders the Secretary of Commerce to assess factors such as:

- The current and projected demands for copper in the defense, energy, and critical infrastructure sectors;
- The extent to which domestic production, and other processing, of copper can meet demand;
- The role of foreign supply chains in meeting U.S. demand;
- The concentration of imports from a small number of suppliers and the associated risks;
- The impact of foreign subsidies, overcapacity, and predatory trade practices on United States industry competitiveness;
- The economic impact of artificially suppressed copper prices due to dumping and state-sponsored overproduction;
- The potential for export restrictions by foreign nations;
- The feasibility of increasing domestic copper production to reduce import reliance; and
- The impact of current trade policies on domestic copper production and whether other measures, including tariffs and quotas, are necessary to protect national security.”

The Department of Commerce will work with the Department of Defense, the Department of the Interior, the Department of Energy, and other relevant departments to complete the investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the Department of Commerce will submit a report to President Trump on the findings, recommendations for actions to mitigate any identified threats (including potential tariffs, export controls, or incentives to increase domestic production), and policy recommendations for strengthening the United States copper-supply chain. To the extent no threat is identified, then no further action will be required.

An executive summary of the report on the investigation will be published in the Federal Register for public review.

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