
SHIP IT Act

While the COVID-19 pandemic drastically increased e-commerce sales, the surge in online goods has exposed long-standing problems with the U.S. supply chain, including our truck driver shortage, port capacity and technology, as well as port labor challenges.

Americans are already experiencing consumer product shortages and the end does not appear to be in sight. The supply chain crisis is negatively impacting businesses' bottom lines, increasing consumer prices, and contributing to our broader inflationary pressures. It is time that Congress lead our nation with a targeted response to, at least temporarily, address our supply chain challenges and help our nation weather this storm. Senator Lee's Stopping Hindrances to Invigorate Ports and Increase Trade (SHIP IT) Act would provide necessary relief.

Bill Specifics:

- Require the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) to temporarily waive (with some exceptions) the hours-of-service requirements for truck drivers and motor carriers who are transporting cargo directly to or from a U.S. port. The particulars of this waiver are modeled directly after the current FMCSA waiver that trucking companies are currently using to transport cargo used to fight COVID-19.
- Require the FMCSA to temporarily allow 18-year-old drivers to receive a temporary commercial driver's license for (1) the transportation of cargo to or from a U.S. port or (2) to assume the commercial operations of a truck driver who has been re-routed to a U.S. port.
- Require the Coast Guard and the Transportation Security Administration to jointly prioritize and expedite the consideration of Transportation Worker Identification Credentials (TWIC) applications for those workers needed to provide direct assistance to a U.S. port.
- Require the Department of Homeland Security to provide temporary waivers of the Jones Act for vessels that are (1) transporting cargo from a U.S. port to another U.S. port in order to relieve a port's congestion, backlog, or delay or (2) engaging in lightering operations, which includes transporting cargo from a ship that is anchored off the coast of the United States to a U.S. port.
- Require the Administrator of General Services and the Secretaries of Agriculture, Interior, Transportation, and Defense to jointly consult ocean carriers, ports, railroads, and truckers to identify and designate plots of federal land that could temporarily (no more than 6 months) be used for the storage and transfer of empty cargo containers in order to ease the congestion and backlog at U.S. ports.
- Require the Secretary of Defense to take an inventory of intermodal equipment (including truck chassis), and permit trucking companies to use such equipment provided their use does not affect our national security and the truck company agrees to reimburse for any damage. Gives the Secretary of Defense the discretion to impose a fee for use of such equipment that could only be used for remediation of federal land used for cargo container storage.
- Temporarily eliminate tariffs on truck chassis imported from countries with which the U.S. has a collective defense arrangement.
- Require the Federal Maritime Commission and the Maritime Administration to jointly convene a meeting of ports, ocean carriers, railroads, trucking companies, and U.S. Inland Port Authorities, to discuss the long-term feasibility of using inland ports for the storage and transfer of cargo containers.
- Require GAO to report to Congress on technology adoption at U.S. ports as compared to foreign ports.
- For the next 10 years, permit NATO-affiliated dredge vessels to operate in the United States.