



December Supply Chain News Wrap-up

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In California, the state's energy commission [approved a \\$1.4 billion investment plan](#) that accelerates progress on the state's electric vehicle (EV) charging and hydrogen refueling goals. The California Energy Commission (CEC) says the investments will help deploy infrastructure for light, medium and heavy-duty zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) across California, expanding the most extensive charging and hydrogen refueling network in the country.

The plan details how the CEC's Clean Transportation Program will spend \$1.4 billion in state funding over the next four years, with at least 50% of the funding expected to benefit priority populations. The funding is part of the \$48 billion California Climate Commitment, which includes more than \$10 billion for ZEVs and ZEV infrastructure. The state has also received billions from the Biden-Harris Administration for clean transportation.

"Today's approval of the investment plan reaffirms California's commitment to funding zero-emission refueling infrastructure," said CEC's Patty Monahan in a [press release](#). "The plan prioritizes clean air benefits in low-income and disadvantaged communities that need it the most. There is no doubt – ZEVs are here to stay in the Golden State."

Semiconductor Trade Investigation

Also in December, the Biden administration announced a trade investigation into China's production of older-model semiconductors, in response to fears that the U.S.' growing dependence on these products could pose a national security threat, [The New York Times](#) reports.

The Biden administration could proceed with a trade investigation under two different laws: Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act, which focuses on threats to national, or Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which applies to acts that are "unjustifiable" or "unreasonable" and burden U.S. commerce, the publication reports.

"The investigation could ultimately result in tariffs, import bans or other actions on certain Chinese chips and the products that contain them," The New York Times adds. "But the decision about what course to take would fall to the incoming Trump administration. The Biden administration may initiate its investigation in the coming weeks, but it would most likely take at least six months to conclude."

In another China-related development, the country banned exports of gallium, germanium and antimony to the U.S. These critical minerals are used to make semiconductors, infrared technology, fiber optic cables and solar cells, among other products. "The move has sparked fresh concern that Beijing could next target other critical minerals, including those with even broader usage such as nickel or cobalt," [Reuters](#) reports.

Full Speed Ahead with Autonomous Trucking

Volvo Autonomous Solutions (V.A.S.) and DHL Supply Chain moved the autonomous trucking needle this month by [launching their new autonomous operations](#) in the U.S. The operations will be enabled by the purpose-built, production-ready Volvo VNL Autonomous which is powered by the Aurora Driver.

The companies say this "marks a critical phase in validating the full ecosystem required for autonomous transport at scale." At this stage, a safety driver will be present to monitor performance and ensure seamless integration into existing logistic networks. Freight will initially be hauled on two lanes: Dallas to Houston and Fort Worth to El Paso.

The companies say autonomy lowers operational costs, increases efficiency and enhances safety. With 24/7 capabilities, autonomous transport can also help accelerate delivery times and optimize supply chains, promoting a more resilient transport network.

"Autonomous trucks can also offer drivers new opportunities, such as remote monitoring and management of fleets while also addressing ongoing labor challenges," DHL Supply Chain North America's Jim Monkmeyer said in a [press release](#). "Additionally, autonomous trucks can reduce the physical and mental strain on drivers, leading to improved quality of life and increased job satisfaction."