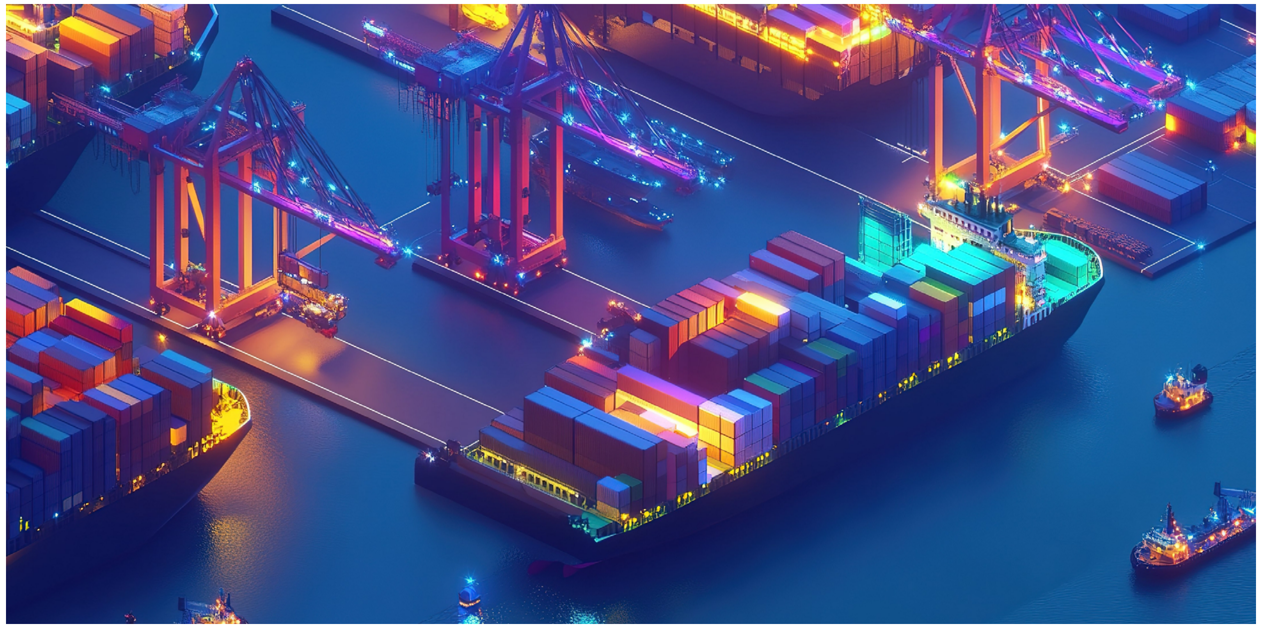
By SUPPLY CHAIN CONNECT STAFF



February's Top Supply Chain News

Here are some of February's top supply chain and logistics announcements and news stories.

February may have been a short month, but that didn't impact activity levels and news on the supply chain and logistics front. From the tariff whiplash to big announcements by major electronics manufacturers to the proposed international sanctions, the sector filled the headlines for much of the month.

One of the bigger announcements involved Apple's plan to spend over $500 billion to expand its domestic manufacturing footprint. According to the company, the announcement builds on the company's "long history of investing in American innovation and advanced high-skilled manufacturing." It says the funding will support initiatives focused on artificial intelligence (AI), silicon engineering and skills development for U.S. students and workers.

For example, the company has plans for an advanced manufacturing facility in Houston; double its U.S. Advanced Manufacturing Fund; create an academy to train the next generation of U.S. manufacturers; and grow its research and development investments in the U.S. to support cutting-edge fields like silicon engineering.

"We are bullish on the future of American innovation, and we're proud to build on our long-standing U.S. investments with this $500 billion commitment to our country's future," CEO Tim Cook said in a press release. "From doubling our Advanced Manufacturing Fund, to building advanced technology in Texas, we're thrilled to expand our support for American manufacturing. And we'll keep working with people and companies across this country to help write an extraordinary new chapter in the history of American innovation."

Sanctions, Port Charges and Tariffs

The Treasury Department rolled out new sanctions targeting Iran's oil supply chain. According to *WSJ*, more than 30 entities, individuals and vessels connected with Iran's "shadow fleet" have been hit with new U.S. sanctions. The sanctioned entities include oil brokers in the United Arab Emirates and Hong Kong, tanker operators and managers in China, and the head of Iran's state-owned oil company.

Shadow fleets of vessels have emerged as a way to move the oil despite a crackdown on the shipping of sanctioned product, WSJ reports. The policy is aimed at reducing Iran's oil exports to zero, it adds, and the directive also explicitly referred to Iran's exports to China.

"As the U.S. has raised sanctions pressure on the oil-producing powerhouses of Russia, Venezuela and Iran, China has been able to get oil at a steep discount by dodging U.S. measures on the trio, which have been called the 'Axis of Evasion,'" the publication reports.

The administration has also proposed new port charges on Chinese built and operated cargo vessels. The new development is rooted in a 2024 investigation that found China leveraged unfair trade practices to dominate the maritime, logistics and shipbuilding sectors, according to *Freightwaves*, which says the new fees include:

- Up to $1 million per call for a Chinese-operated vessel, based on a rate of $1,000 per net ton of capacity.
- From $500,000 to $1.5 million per call depending on how many Chinese-built vessels are in an operator's fleet.
- From $500,000 to $1 million per call for operators with vessels on order at Chinese shipyards.

"There are also new ocean cargo preference rules which would immediately require 1% of U.S. exports move on U.S. flagged and operated ships," it adds, "then 3% within two years, 5% within five years and 15% within seven years."

New Chip Plant for Germany

The European Commission (EC) approved a €920 million (roughly $963 million USD) German aid measure for the construction of a new semiconductor manufacturing plant in Dresden. The measure will allow Infineon to complete the MEGAFAB-DD project, which will be able to produce a wide range of different types of chips.

This new manufacturing plant will bring "flexible production capacity to the EU and thereby strengthen Europe's security of supply, resilience and technological autonomy in semiconductor technologies," the EC said in an announcement.

The new facility will be the first of its kind in Europe in that it will be able to rapidly switch its production between the two technology families while maintaining its high-output capacity. It will be a front-end facility, covering wafer processing, testing and separation, and will reach its full capacity in 2031. *Reuters* says the new funding will allow Infineon to complete the MEGAFAB-DD project, which will be able to produce a wide range of different types of chips. "Chipmakers across the globe are pouring billions of dollars into new plants," it adds, "as they take advantage of generous subsidies from the United States and the EU to keep the West ahead of China in developing cutting-edge semiconductor technology."