MARKET UPDATE

SEPTEMBER 2026

MARKET TIGHTENING REMAINS STRONG

3 KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- **THE AUGUST PULLBACK DID NOT REPEAT—SPOT TURNED BACK UP IN EVERY MODE**
  Last month's month-over-month softening looked like the start of relief. It wasn't. Spot rose in all three modes in September—dry van +4% to $3.42/mi, reefer +4% to $3.93/mi, flatbed +1% to $3.58/mi—and all three sit 43–49% above last year. Rejections remain structurally elevated against 2025: van +169%, reefer +62%, flatbed +17%. Reefer rejections climbed again month-over-month to 22.59. Dry van tender volume is down 12% year-over-year while rejections are up 169% over the same period. Less freight is being tendered and far more of it is being turned down. That is capacity contracting, not demand surging.

- **CONTRACT STOPPED TRACKING SPOT, AND THAT SPREAD IS WHERE YOUR EXPOSURE LIVES**
  Dry van contract held flat at $2.68/mi while spot climbed to $3.42—a $0.74 gap. Reefer is wider and moving the wrong way: contract fell 0.8% to $2.39 while spot rose 4% to $3.93, a $1.54 spread. Flatbed has inverted entirely, with contract at $4.04 sitting above spot at $3.58. When contract and spot decouple this far, the number on your rate sheet stops predicting what you actually pay—routing guide depth does. The same dynamic is showing up in LTL, where general rate increases have gone off-cycle and density-based reclassification is repricing freight independent of any GRI.

- **THE BINDING CONSTRAINT HAS MOVED FROM RATE TO ACCESS**
  Fuel drove the LTL cost-per-hundredweight spike to $46.77/cwt, and surcharge reset frequency now determines how much of that a shipper absorbs. On the border, a 50% Section 338 duty escalates to outright import bans on certain Canadian vehicles, dairy, and alcohol September 29—regardless of USMCA origin—with Canada's matched counter-tariffs on $27.6B of U.S. goods already live as of September 8. Into Mexico, nine trailers now sit for every available B-1 driver. On the water, transpacific rates broke $10,000/FEU while schedule reliability deteriorated to two-week rollovers. Across every mode, what you can't move or can't clear is costing more than what you pay per mile.

DYNAMIC LOGISTIX

TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

DRY VAN TRUCKLOAD

DLX MARKET VIEW

Dry van market conditions remain very tight this month, with year-over-year rejections still elevated and continuing to put upward pressure on rates. Accepted volumes increased, while rejections remain higher than last year, indicating that carriers are shifting more capacity to the spot market.

SPOT RATES

↑ **$3.42/mi**

+4% MOM

+48.6% YOY

Spot rates increased again in September and remain higher than last year.

CONTRACT RATES

Flat $2.68/mi

+0.0% MOM

+16.1% YOY

Contract rates remained flat from August to September.

TENDER VOLUMES

↑ **6,556**

+1% MOM

-12% YOY

Tenders increased from the previous month.

REJECTION VOLUMES

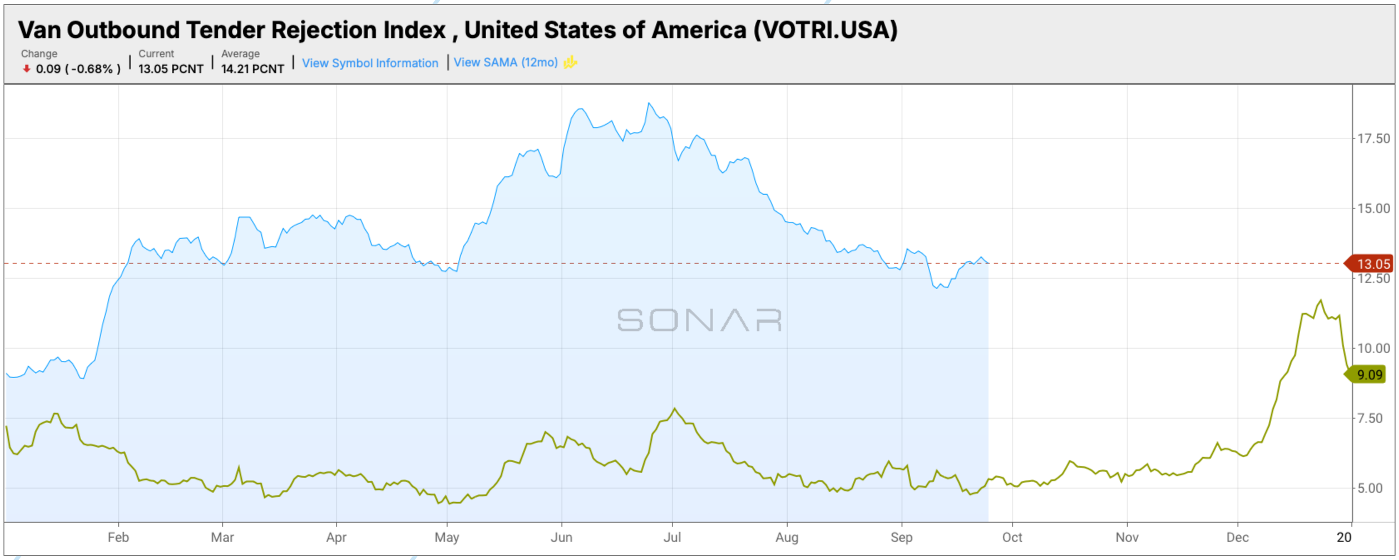
↓ **13.14**

-3% MOM

+169% YOY

Month-over-month rejections decreased slightly in September but remain elevated compared with last year.

VAN OUTBOUND TENDER REJECTION INDEX



TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

REFRIGERATED TRUCKLOAD

MARKET VIEW

Refrigerated market conditions remain very tight, as elevated rejections continue to put pressure on pricing. Ongoing year-over-year pressure on rejections and capacity continues to play a significant role in rates.

SPOT RATES

$3.93/mi

+4% MOM

+46.1% YOY

September spot rates increased over August.

CONTRACT RATES

$2.39/mi

-0.8% MOM

+3.9% YOY

Contract rates decreased slightly in September as the spot market remains high.

TENDER VOLUMES

1,243

+2% MOM

+1.29% YOY

Tender volume increased slightly month-over-month but remained relatively flat vs. last year.

REJECTION VOLUMES

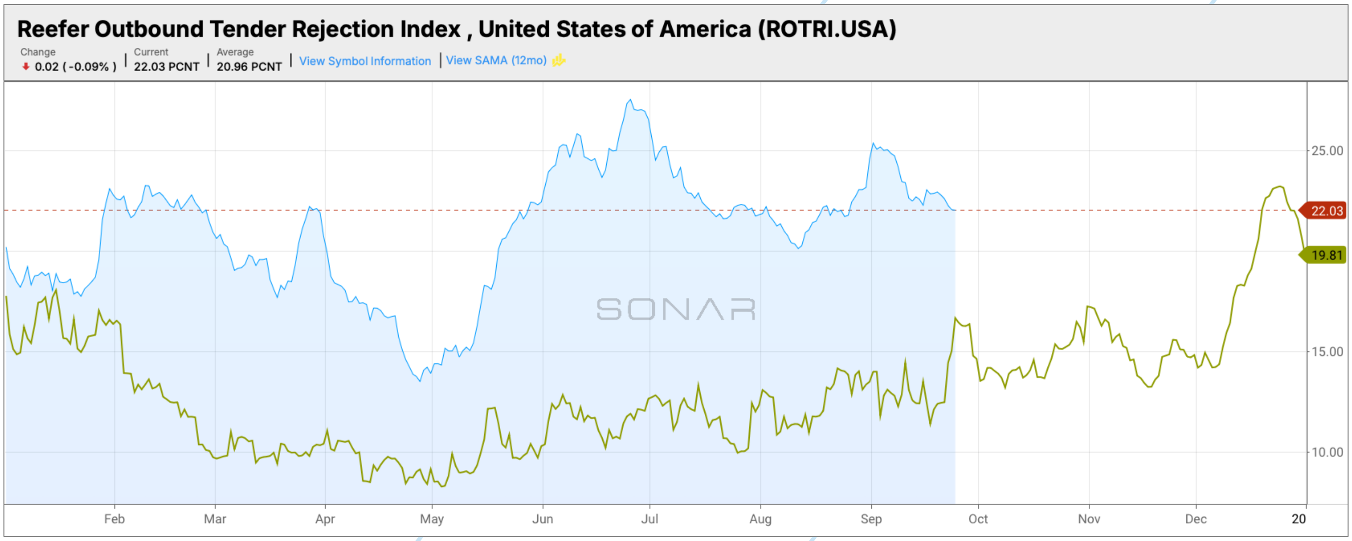
22.59

+3.8% MOM

+62% YOY

Rejections increased in September compared with August and remain elevated over last year, contributing to higher spot rates.

REEFER OUTBOUND TENDER REJECTION INDEX



TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

FLATBED

DLX MARKET VIEW

The flatbed market remains tighter than it was last year. Month-over-month contract and spot rates both increased this month.

SPOT RATES

↑ **$3.58/mi**

+1% MOM

+43% YOY

Modest upward movement continues to be reflected in higher rates each month.

CONTRACT RATES

↑ **$4.04/mi**

+3% MOM

+32% YOY

Rates continue to follow the same pattern as the spot market.

TENDER VOLUMES

↑ **29,033**

+6% MOM

+12% YOY

Tender volume increased again this month.

REJECTION VOLUMES

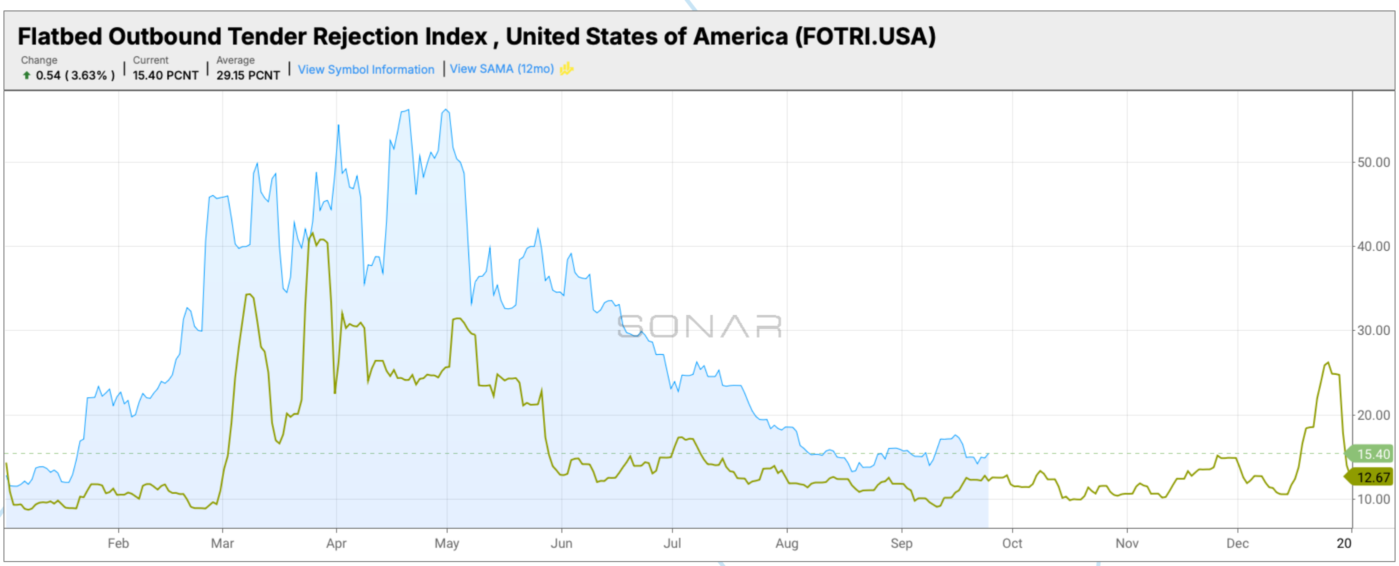
↓ **14.17**

-1% MOM

+17% YOY

Rejections decreased from last month but remain elevated year over year.

FLATBED OUTBOUND TENDER REJECT INDEX



DYNAMIC LOGISTIX

TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

LESS-THAN-TRUCKLOAD

DLX MARKET VIEW

The LTL market is tightening, but the tightening is being driven more by cost than by demand. The SONAR LTL Monthly Cost per Hundredweight Index (LTL.USA) spiked to **$46.77/cwt in August**, with fuel the primary driver. The TD Cowen/AFS LTL rate-per-pound index hit a record **76.8% above its January 2018 baseline** in Q3—up 5.9% year over year but only 0.2% sequentially, which tells you the increase is being carried by surcharges rather than a broad base-rate move.

Underlying volume is mixed and carrier-specific. ArcBest tonnage rose 9% year-over-year, and the carrier raised Q3 asset-light operating income guidance to $10–12M from $6–8M. XPO's August tonnage was up 3.7%. Saia's tonnage jumped 8.7% against easier comps, though its two-year stacked figure decelerated and new lower-margin terminals are pressuring Q3 profitability. Old Dominion went the other direction—tonnage slightly negative at -0.9% while revenue per hundredweight accelerated to +12.4%. That divergence is the clearest signal in the data: carriers are choosing price over volume, and the industrial backdrop (ISM Manufacturing at 54.6 in August, eighth consecutive month of expansion) gives them room to do it.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Fuel is the dominant cost variable, and surcharge reset frequency determines exposure.**
- **General rate increases (GRIs) went off cycle. Budget for midyear increases, not just January increases.**
- **Density-based classification is now enforced and is repricing freight independent of any GRI.**

TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

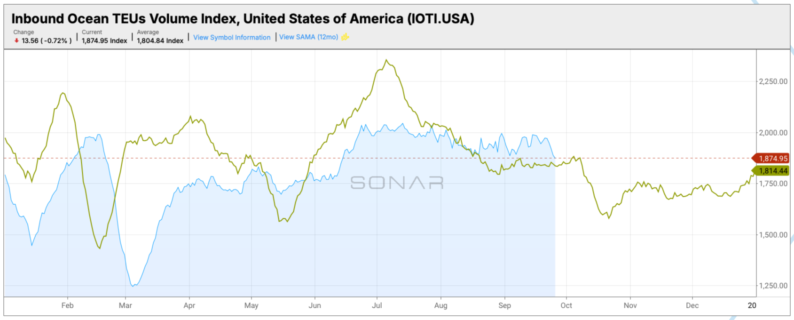
OCEAN FREIGHT

DLX MARKET VIEW

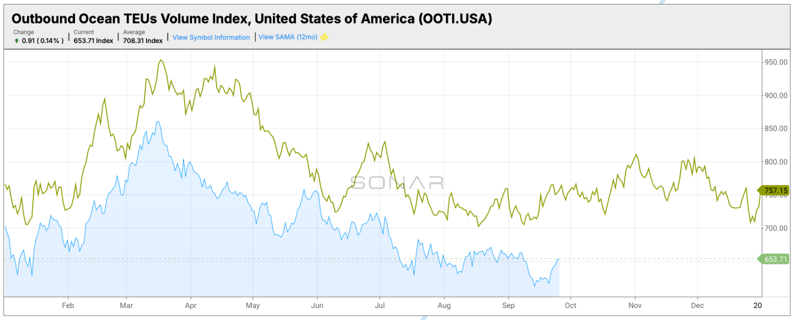
U.S. containerized imports held near record territory in August at 2,603,709 TEUs, the third-highest month ever recorded—behind only May 2022 (2,622,465) and July 2025 (2,621,910)—and 21.5% above pre-pandemic August 2019. The year-over-year line flipped from negative to positive, but the strength is not evenly distributed. China accounted for 884,318 TEUs, or 34.0% of total volume, down from 34.8% in July, while Vietnam (+5.2%), Thailand (+10.4%), Indonesia (+19.5%), and Germany (+8.4%) all posted gains. Sourcing diversification is no longer a stated intention; it is showing up in the monthly data.

Rates and reliability are diverging sharply by trade lane. Transpacific spot rates spiked in mid-September—Shanghai–New York reached $10,394/FEU the week of September 18, up 7% week over week and the first breach above $10,000 since July 2022—while Shanghai–Los Angeles hit $7,712/FEU (+5% WoW). Asia–Europe moved the opposite direction, with Shanghai–Rotterdam down 9% to $3,626/FEU, though still roughly double year-ago levels. Air cargo is following a third pattern: Xeneta reported August demand up 6% year over year against flat capacity, a 61% load factor (up 3 points), and a global average spot rate of $3.13/kg—up 24% YOY but down 3% month over month, with the year-over-year gap narrowing each month (28% in July, 38% in June, 41% in May).

INBOUND OCEAN TEUs VOLUME INDEX



OUTBOUND OCEAN TEUs VOLUME INDEX



IMPORT VOLUME

2,603,709 TEUs

+3.8% MOM

+3.3% YOY

The Key Developments Affecting Ocean Importers Right Now:

- **Volume is near record highs**, but the country mix is shifting, and origin now carries cost consequences.
- **On the transpacific, operational risk** has moved ahead of rate risk.
- **The three modes are no longer moving together**, so lane-level planning matters more than a market-wide read.

TRANSPORTATION TRENDS

CROSS-BORDER FREIGHT

DLX MARKET VIEW

Canada

The number: U.S.–Canada transborder freight hit $67.9B in June 2026—up 2.7% month-over-month and 17.0% year-over-year. Truck carried $35.9B, or 55.7% of the total by value. Top gateways: Detroit $13.7B, Port Huron $9.5B, Buffalo $7.1B, Pembina $3.3B.

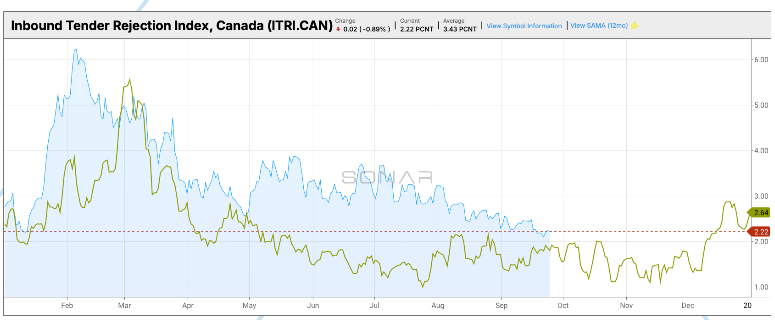
The Section 338 pause expired and the 50% duty took effect August 22—then kept expanding. September 15 added 122 HTSUS classifications. September 29 bans certain Canadian motor vehicles, dairy, and alcoholic beverages from U.S. import outright—no duty option, no transition period. USMCA origin exempts nothing, and 338 stacks on top of Section 232. Canada answered September 8 with matched counter-tariffs of 15%, 25%, and 50% on $27.6B of U.S. goods spanning dairy, paper, lumber, textiles, apparel, steel, plastics, and cosmetics. Only goods already in transit were spared.

Mexico

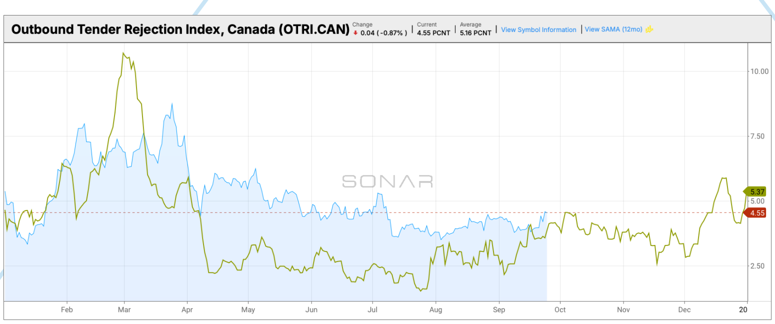
The number: U.S.–Mexico transborder freight hit $89.2B in June 2026—up 2.3% month-over-month and 22.2% year-over-year, outpacing Canada by more than five points. Truck carried $68.5B, or 73.6% of U.S.–Mexico freight by value. Laredo alone moved $35.6B—more than the next two border ports in the country combined.

Growth is real, but the crossing is where it breaks. The IRU now puts 14% of Mexico's driver positions unfilled—roughly 90,000 idle trucks—and the U.S. canceled visas for 20,000 Mexican drivers between April 2025 and 2026. Mexican-domiciled carriers at the southern border are down 6.3% since December. Nine trailers now sit for every available B-1 driver. Meanwhile Laredo domestic tender rejection fell from 12.24% to 6.93% between late July and late August—domestic loosened while crossing tightened. The fourth USMCA round lands in Washington this month, with 14 U.S. demands still open on steel, auto content, and labor.

INBOUND TENDER REJECTION INDEX, CANADA



OUTBOUND TENDER REJECTION INDEX, CANADA



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Canada

- **The pause is over** and the scope is still moving—122 classifications added September 15, outright import bans September 29.
- **A USMCA certification** of origin still isn't tariff protection, and as of September 8 there's a matching charge on the return leg.
- **Drawback is available** on the Section 338 duties, and FTZ entries need privileged foreign status to lock the rate—both are being left on the table.

Mexico

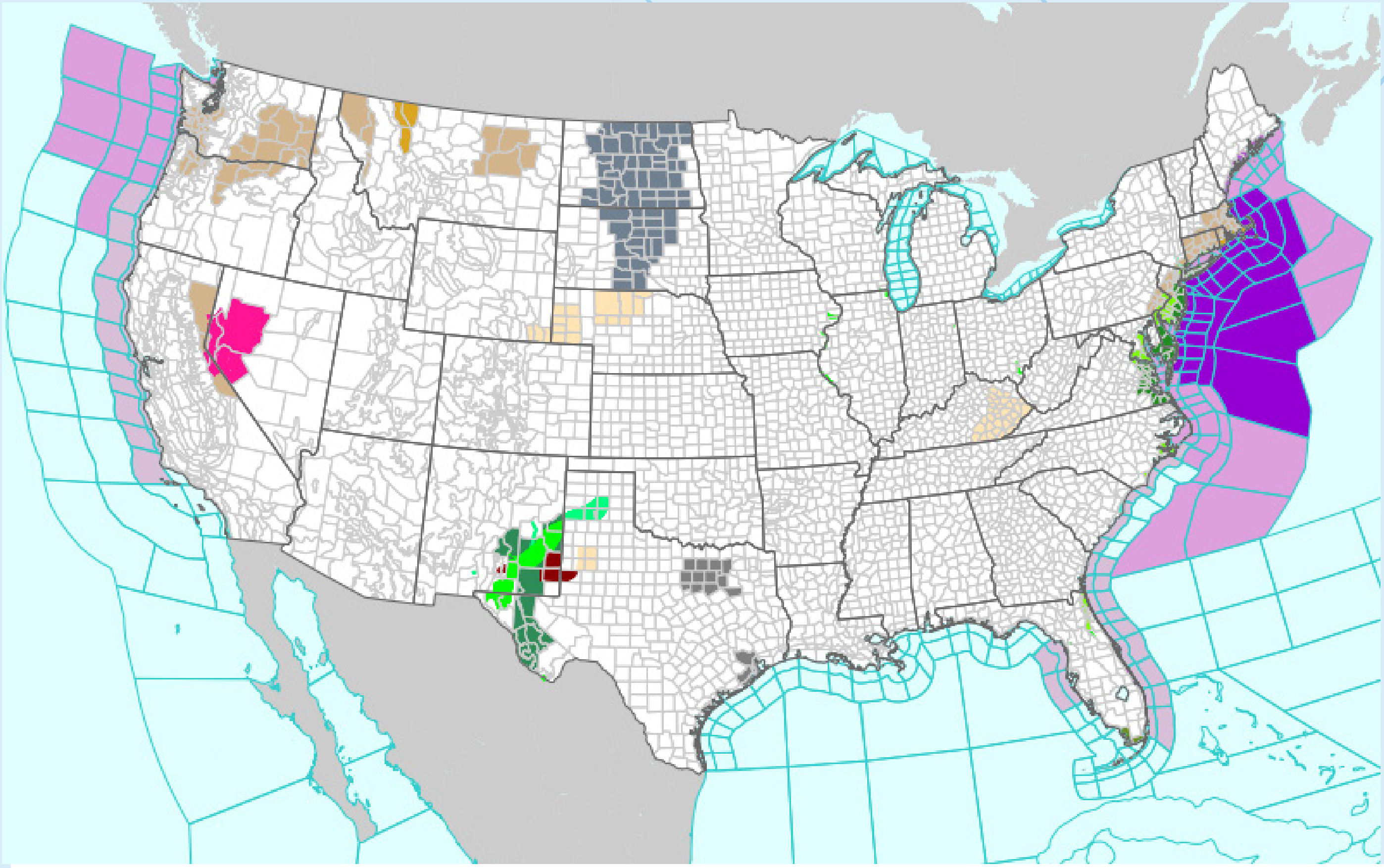
- **The unit of capacity** is the B-1 driver, not the trailer—nine trailers sit for every one driver.
- **Domestic Laredo** loosened while crossing capacity tightened. Same ZIP code, two different markets—don't read one as a proxy for the other.
- **September's USMCA** round is the variable that matters. The spread between preference and no preference is 0% versus 25%.

WEATHER

DLX MARKET VIEW

Moving into fall, we will need to keep a close eye on winter weather. As the heat fades, colder weather will begin to affect capacity, rates, and transit times.

ACTIVE WEATHER ALERTS



- RED FLAG WARNING
- HIGH WIND WARNING
- AIR QUALITY ALERT
- STORM WARNING
- FLOOD WARNING
- COASTAL FLOOD WARNING

DYNAMIC LOGISTIX

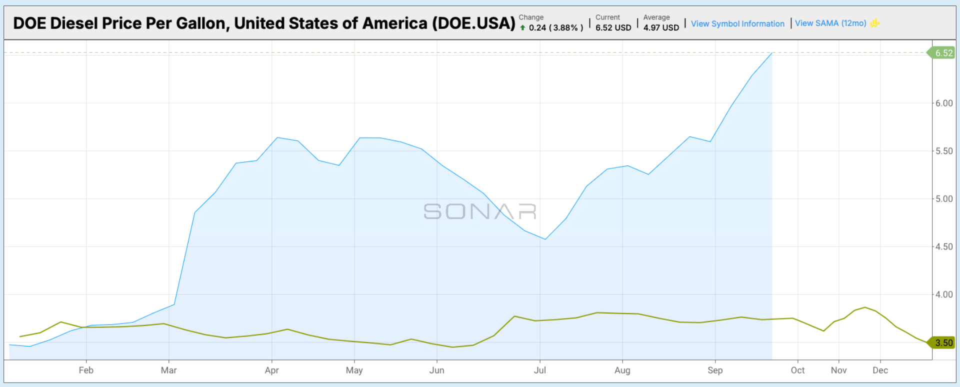
CARRIER INDICATORS

FUEL

$6.28/gallon

+15% MOM
+68% YOY

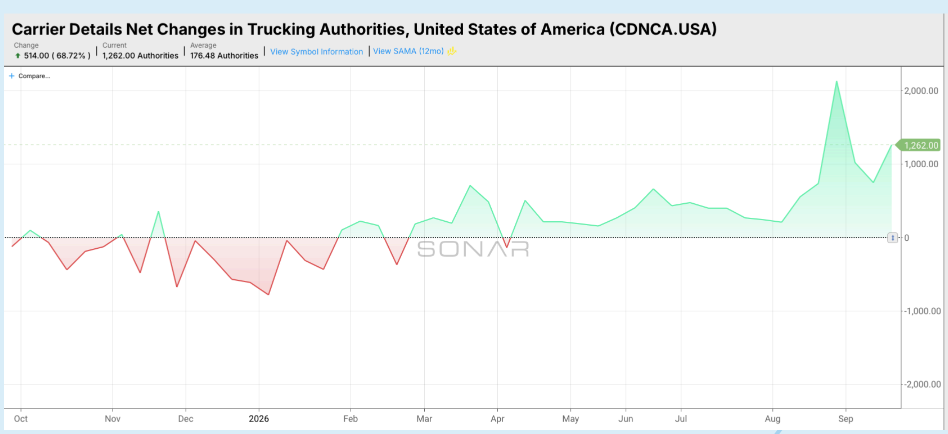
DOE DIESEL PRICE PER GALLON



CARRIER AUTHORITIES

September continues to reflect an uptick in the number of carrier authorities entering the market. It is critical to ensure that every carrier has the proper operating authority before using it for any load. As capacity remains tight, the number of authorities will continue to grow in response to market demand.

CARRIER DETAILS NET CHANGES IN TRUCKING AUTHORITIES



MACRO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

INVENTORY LEVELS

↓ **52.8**

Moderate decrease from August levels.

PRODUCER PRICE INDEX

↓ **9.84% MOM**

The PPI increased in September.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

↑ **3.35% MOM**

Slight increase from August.

UNEMPLOYMENT

= **4.1%**

Unemployment remained at 4.1% from August into September.