SEPTEMBER
2026

STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

R E P O R T

SUPPLY CHAIN | DEDICATED TRANSPORTATION | FLEET MANAGEMENT SOLUTIONS

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Continued Confrontation

August 31, 2026 | 1 p.m. ET

Overview

The national freight market found a floor in the middle of August after spot rates slid slightly faster than expected in July. Demand slippage was the primary culprit as shippers utilized intermodal more frequently. This pulled rejection rates down a few percentage points lower than expected, but conditions remain tight and should remain so though the rest of the year.

Diesel prices climbed again in Ryder's latest State of the Industry report, though the path there shows how unpredictable oil pricing remains as the Iran war continues. Ultra low sulfur diesel swung wildly on the CME exchange in August—from $4.12/gallon on July 31 down to $3.77, up to nearly $4.50, then down and back up again. At the pump, AAA prices rose more steadily, from $5.362/gallon on August 1 to about $5.60 by month's end.

The bigger question is why prices haven't risen further. Tanker traffic through the Strait of Hormuz remains well below the roughly 20 million barrels/day that flowed before the war, yet diesel prices remain far below the inflation-adjusted 2008 peak of $7.23/gallon. Vijay Vaitheeswaran, writing for the Council on Foreign Relations, attributes this to a favorable pre-war supply/demand balance, a record 273-million-barrel release of strategic stocks coordinated by the IEA, rerouted Saudi and UAE pipeline exports, and an underappreciated demand-side response—including efficiency gains and a surge in Chinese EV exports.

Still, not everyone is convinced the worst has passed. Jeffrey Currie, former head of commodity analysis at Goldman Sachs, argues that diesel and gasoline prices have decoupled from crude in ways that matter more to consumers, since refiners—not the broader market—are crude's real buyers. He points to compounding chokepoints: the difficulty of moving finished product out of conflict zones, Ukrainian strikes on Russian refining capacity, and low water on the Rhine limiting European distribution. As Currie puts it, nearly everything the economy consumes ultimately depends on "dirt plus diesel."

Fleet counts (six-month change)

Total for-hire fleets	300,027 (+8.8%)
Total private fleets	158,865 (+1.2%)
For-hire oil field specialization	20,190 (+1.4%)
Private fleet oil field specialization	8,256 (-1%)

Tractor counts (six-month change)

Total for-hire tractors	1,810,000 (+2.3%)
Total private tractors	766,799 (+0.6%)
For-hire oil field specialization	326,544 (-1%)
Private fleet oil field specialization	53,747 (+1%)

Active daily rig count (y/y change)

Permian Basin	251 (+5.5%)
Gulf Coast Basin	70 (+12.9%)
Anadarko Basin	64 (+33.3%)
Total	**665 (+15.3%)**

Crude oil prices per barrel (y/y change)

WTI crude	$83.40 (+29.1%)
Brent crude	$89.31 (+30.2%)
Brent-WTI Spread	**$5.91 (+47%)**

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Oil market

First things first: the price of diesel is higher than it was in the prior Ryder State of the Industry report.

But in a classic half empty/half full analysis, how we got there says a lot about the difficulty in projecting where the price of oil is headed as the Iran war drags on.

The numbers in the commodity market are that on July 31, the price of ultra low sulfur diesel (ULSD) settled at $4.1215/gallon on the CME commodity exchange.

But within two days it was down to near $3.77/g; 13 days later, it was up just under $4.50/g. Then it sliced about 25 cts/g off the price before climbing during the last two days of trading before August rolled into September.

Thankfully for consumers, that sort of volatile whiplash in trading on the ULSD contract on the CME commodity exchange doesn't show up that rapidly at the pump. But the overall trend for the month did drain diesel consumers' wallets a little bit further, opening the month on August 1 at $5.362/g and closing it at about $5.60, according to the AAA, with an intra-month higher of $5.623/g on August 26.

While this is obviously an upward trend, the real question is why isn't it higher. While there has been movement of tankers out of the Strait of Hormuz, the precise number has been subject to a significant amount of debate. Figures presented by the Department of Defense are generally seen as somewhat inflated compared to what is coming out of tanker tracking sources such as Kpler.

But regardless of the precise number of ships making the transit, the reality is that it is nowhere near enough to have oil flows hitting the 20-million barrel/day in oil exports, crude and products, that exited the Strait every day before the war began.

And yet as measured by the price of diesel, the lifeblood of trucking, it's been a lot worse.

For example, the Department of Energy's average weekly retail diesel price hit $4.764/g in the great oil market surge that peaked in July 2008. Adjusted for inflation, that price today would be $7.23/g. The AAA price on August 31 to close out the month was right around $5.60/g.

Why didn't things get worse given the cutoff of a huge amount of supply, a condition that was not a factor in the runup to the July 2008 price spike?

Vijay V. Vaitheeswaran was the long-time energy editor at The Economist. He recently authored an article for the Council on Foreign Relations that addressed that question, at least as the market moves into September, the price spike in petroleum has been so muted.

In the article, Vaitheeswaran discusses some of the supply-side steps that have been taken to cushion the blow of the lost supply, most notably the release of strategic stocks from such countries as the U.S. and China.

He also discusses how the oil market went into the Iran war that began at the start of March in an extremely comfortable supply/demand balance that favored consumers. All of the key models that the market looks at, such as that out of the International Energy Agency each month, went into 2026 with a forecast that supply would significantly outstrip demand, and there were projections that crude might drop below $50/barrel sometime during the year. But the postwar reality is that Brent, the world's crude benchmark, was more than $90 as August came to a close and has been more than $100 at times since the Iran war began.

The release of strategic stocks was described by Vaitheeswaran as the result of planning.

"Advanced economies, coordinated by the IEA, quickly made the largest-ever release of strategic stocks of petroleum, some 273 million barrels, which further cooled markets," Vaitheeswaran wrote.

He also cited the diversion of crude exports from Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates through pipelines that were hardly used at the time military action against Iran began.

"However, this supply-side analysis ignores the largely unanticipated role played by demand," Vaitheeswaran said. Some of the demand adjustment has been short-term and painful, primarily in poorer countries.

But years of greater energy efficiency have been one of the reasons why today's diesel price that has consumers wringing their hands is so far below the 2008 adjusted price, which got to that level despite the lack of any sort of supply shock.

"Electrification, a far more efficient way to use energy than combustion, is growing at two to three times the rate of overall global energy demand," Vaitheeswaran writes. "In the early months following the Strait of Hormuz cut-off, exports of electric vehicles from China soared—they shot up to $9.2 billion in May, nearly 50 percent higher year-on-year—as countries sought to diversify away from volatile fossil fuel imports."

Demand, according to the IEA, is the "first fuel," Vaitheeswaran writes. Managing it is part of a response to a supply shock.

Despite the fact that so far, the price of petroleum has risen sharply but not gone crazy, the way some have predicted, there are still voices that much higher prices could still loom.

The most prominent voice puncturing the idea that the worst is over has consistently been Jeffrey Currie, the former head of commodity analysis at Goldman Sachs.

In a recent post on X, Currie came back to a consistent theme: the rise in the price of diesel and to a lesser degree gasoline has outstripped crude, and ultimately, that's what really matters since the only consumers of crude are refiners.

Just before the war began, Brent crude settled at $72.48/b and ULSD was an equivalent of $109/b. On the final day in August, those numbers were $89.31 and $183, as diesel has surged against crude.

In his post, Currie laid out several reasons why products are likely to head higher.

“You can flush the crude out of the region but you cannot get the product out,” he wrote. “Nobody is going to guide a full product tanker through what is still a hot conflict zone. Solving one chokepoint does not solve the problem. Hormuz is one squeeze among many that are both war-made and weather-made.”

He cited the impact of attacks on Russian refining capacity and Ukrainian strikes have taken out Russian refining capacity. The Rhine is at extremely low levels and that cuts the ability to deliver lots of things, like diesel.

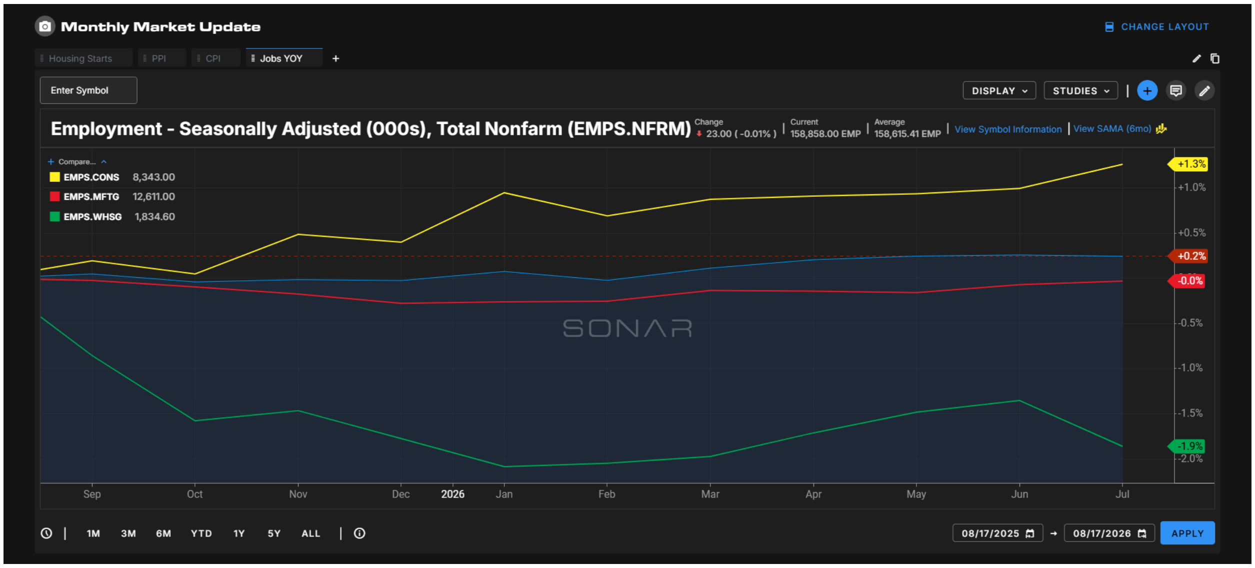
Diesel’s role in the economy was summed up by Currie as the reality that every commodity we consume, whether it is a metal or a grain or something else, is “dirt plus diesel”: it comes from the soil somehow but it is most likely diesel that enables the human race to access it.

National economic outlook

The Federal Open Market Committee held the federal funds target range at 3.50 to 3.75 percent at its July 28–29 meeting, unchanged from the June 16–17 meeting. The vote was 9 to 3. Cleveland Fed President Beth Hammack, Minneapolis Fed President Neel Kashkari, and Dallas Fed President Lorie Logan dissented, each preferring a quarter-point increase rather than the hold. Chair Kevin Warsh said the Committee removed explicit forward guidance from its statement and would assess incoming inflation data meeting by meeting. A stable fed funds rate keeps financing costs for trucks, trailers, and warehouse space level month to month, which limits any near-term change in capital-spending pressure tied specifically to rates.

On tariffs, the picture changed twice since mid-July. A replacement levy imposed under Section 122 of the Trade Act of 1974, capped by statute at 150 days, expired July 24. The same day, the U.S. Trade Representative implemented a new Section 301 action, citing forced-labor enforcement, applying rates of 10 to 12.5 percent across roughly sixty trading partners. Separately, on July 20, the administration invoked Section 338 of the Tariff Act of 1930 for the first time, placing a 50 percent tariff on select Canadian goods including vehicles, dairy, alcohol, and cement, effective August 19. Section 232 tariffs on steel, aluminum, autos, copper, timber, trucks, and semiconductors were not affected by either change. The Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis's Trade Policy Uncertainty Index stood at 1,230.99 in June, the most recent month available, down from a March peak of 2,194.97. Shippers moving goods from the roughly sixty economies named in the new Section 301 action, and carriers serving U.S.–Canada lanes in the affected commodities, should expect documentation and routing questions tied to the new rates; the tariff changes themselves do not, on their own, indicate a change in underlying freight demand.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics' July Employment Situation report, released August 7, showed total nonfarm payrolls down 23,000. May was revised down to 63,000 from 129,000, and June was revised down to 20,000 from an originally reported 57,000, a combined downward revision of 103,000 across the two months. Manufacturing employment rose by 5,000 in July, compared with 3,000 in June. Transportation and warehousing employment rose by 9,700 in July, compared with 2,300 in June; BLS does not isolate warehousing and storage separately from transportation in its headline tables, which limits how precisely this figure can be used as a warehousing-specific hiring signal, though the faster July pace is consistent with continued sector hiring overall.



The unemployment rate was 4.1 percent in July, compared with 4.2 percent in June. The labor force participation rate was 61.4 percent, compared with 61.5 percent, and is down 0.7 percentage point since January. A gradually declining participation rate points to a somewhat tighter pool of available labor at the margin, relevant to driver and warehouse staffing costs industry-wide, though a single month's move is not enough to establish that as a trend.

On trade agreements, the United States and Jordan signed a reciprocal trade agreement on July 21, building on the existing 2001 free trade pact and including commitments on labor and environmental enforcement, along with Royal Jordanian Airlines' announced purchase of six Boeing 787-9 aircraft. A third round of USMCA joint-review negotiations with Mexico took place in late July but had not concluded as of this writing. No other new trade agreements were finalized in the preceding sixty days. The Jordan agreement's near-term freight relevance is limited; the Boeing order touches aircraft manufacturing and export logistics rather than general freight volumes, and the unresolved USMCA review leaves North American freight lanes without a finalized updated framework.

Taken as a whole, this section describes a freight market operating against a steady interest-rate backdrop but a tariff regime still being rebuilt in real time, alongside a softer-than-expected labor report carrying unusually large downward revisions. None of these three threads points in a single direction; together they describe a period of policy transition rather than settled conditions.

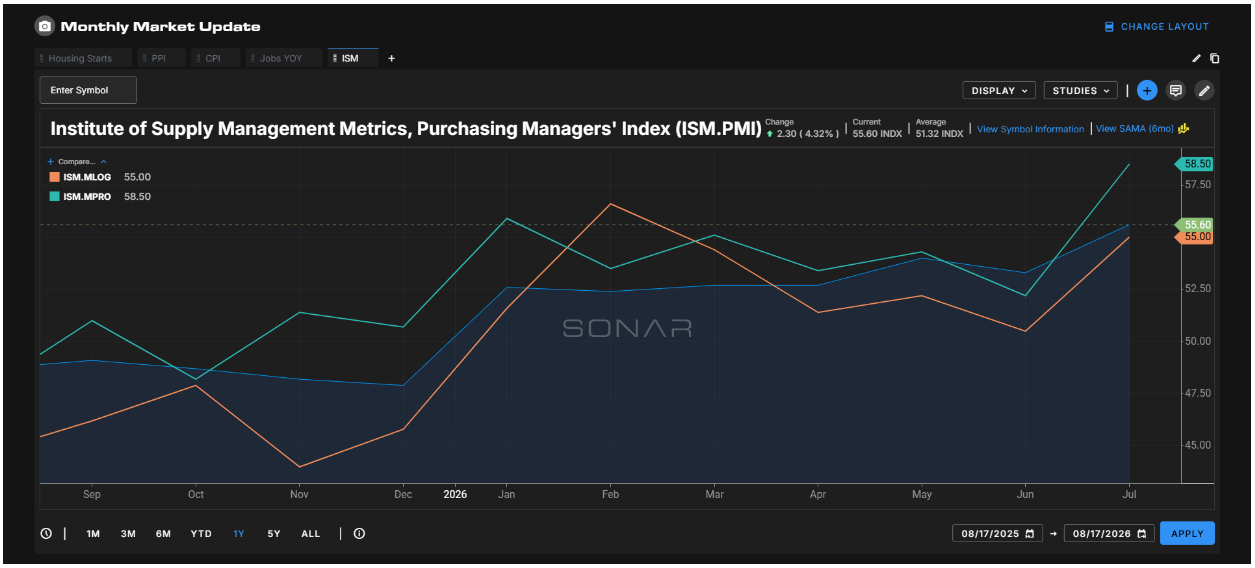
Manufacturing

Factory orders fell 0.3 percent in June, the second consecutive monthly decline, following a 1.1 percent drop in May. Two straight months of declining factory orders does not, on its own, point to near-term growth in outbound manufacturing freight volumes tied to new order flow.

Durable goods orders rose 0.3 percent in June, and 0.6 percent excluding transportation, following a 4.0 percent decline in May. The rebound is a tentative positive signal for machinery, equipment, and component freight, though a single month's gain following a much larger prior decline is worth reading cautiously rather than as a turning point.

The New York Fed's Empire State Manufacturing Survey, which reports on current-month conditions rather than the prior month, showed its General Business Conditions Index at 20.6 in August, compared with 15.6 in July. The six-month-ahead expectations index stood at 32.1 in August, compared with 27.9 in July. This survey has now improved for two straight readings, but it is geographically limited to New York State and should not be read as describing the national manufacturing base.

The Institute for Supply Management's Manufacturing PMI registered 55.6 percent in July, compared with 53.3 percent in June, the highest reading since May 2022 and a seventh consecutive month of expansion. The Production Index was 58.5 percent, compared with 52.2 percent, and the Backlog of Orders Index was 55.0 percent, compared with 50.5 percent. A rising production index and backlog, both well above the 50-percent expansion threshold, are typically associated with sustained factory output and downstream trucking demand in the following weeks; as a national survey, this carries more weight than either regional Fed survey discussed here.



The Dallas Fed's Texas Manufacturing Outlook Survey put its General Business Activity Index at 1.3 in July, compared with 0.0 in June, and its Production Index at 10.1, compared with 4.1. The improvement is specific to Texas and most relevant to carriers serving Gulf Coast and Texas manufacturing and petrochemical freight lanes, rather than a national indicator.

The Federal Reserve's Industrial Production Index rose 0.2 percent in July, with the manufacturing output component also up 0.2 percent, released today, August 18. June's readings were revised up to a 0.3 percent increase for both measures, from the 0.1 percent total and unchanged manufacturing figures reported a month ago. Total capacity utilization was 76.3 percent in July, up from a revised 76.2 percent in June; manufacturing capacity utilization was 76.0 percent, up from a revised 75.9 percent. Both the fresh July readings and the upward revision to June point to modestly firmer national factory output over the two months than the prior report indicated, a mild positive for manufacturing-linked freight volumes, though the month-to-month increases remain small.

Overall, these readings now point in a broadly similar direction: factory orders are the outlier, having fallen for a second straight month, while durable goods, the national ISM survey, both regional Fed surveys, and industrial production and capacity utilization (following an upward revision to June) all improved. More of these measures point to firmer conditions than softer ones over this comparison window, though the factory-orders decline is a reminder that the signals are not unanimous.

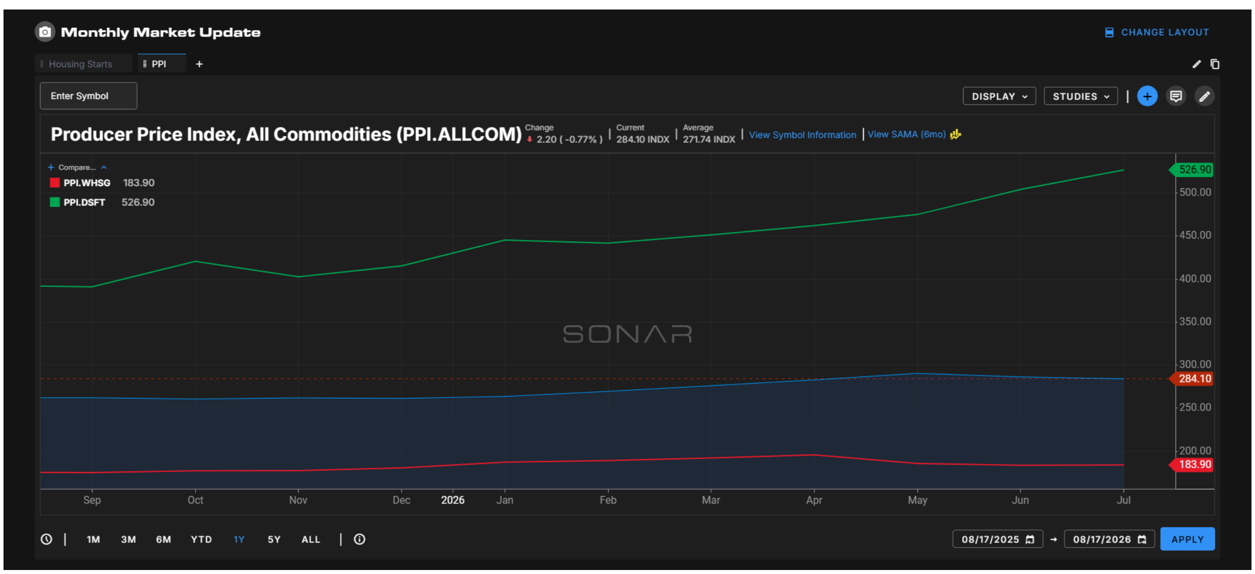
Consumer and Retail

Retail and food services sales fell 0.6 percent in July, following a 0.2 percent increase in June. Retail sales are a direct input to dry van and parcel-adjacent freight volumes, and the July decline indicates the consumer side of the freight market did not carry forward June's momentum.

Total consumer credit grew at a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 3.3 percent in June, reaching $5,166.9 billion; May's growth rate was revised down to negative 0.3 percent from an originally reported flat reading. Revolving credit grew at a 6.0 percent annual rate in June, reaching $1,351.1 billion, compared with a 4.7 percent decline in May. The rebound in revolving credit growth after a May contraction is one input into near-term household spending capacity, though a single month's reversal is not on its own predictive of freight volume.

The Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers rose 0.1 percent in July, seasonally adjusted, and was up 3.4 percent from a year earlier; in June, the all-items index had fallen 0.4 percent, with the year-over-year rate at 3.5 percent. Gasoline prices fell 2.9 percent on a seasonally adjusted basis in July, following a 9.7 percent decline in June, and stood 24.6 percent higher than a year earlier, compared with a 26.7 percent year-over-year gain in June. Gasoline is a CPI-tracked proxy only, since on-highway diesel is priced and tracked separately, but the direction here, prices falling in both months, is a mild relief on the fuel-cost side even as year-over-year comparisons remain elevated on base effects.

BLS's Producer Price Index news release for July shows its water transportation of freight index, the closest published breakout to deep sea freight, rose 1.5 percent in July, seasonally adjusted, following a 2.7 percent increase in June, and was up 17.2 percent from a year earlier, not seasonally adjusted; BLS does not publish a stand-alone deep sea freight figure in this monthly release, so this index also captures other water freight modes. This cost line is most relevant to ocean carriers and to the drayage and inland capacity feeding port networks, and it has now risen for two straight months. The index for warehousing, storage, and related services rose 0.1 percent in July, following a 0.7 percent decline in June, and was up 3.9 percent from a year earlier; this segment's cost trajectory did not move in lockstep with water freight costs over the same two months.



The University of Michigan's preliminary Index of Consumer Sentiment for August was 51.0, compared with a final July reading of 55.2, with the final August figure due August 28. Combined with the credit uptick noted above, sentiment and credit are sending mixed signals on household demand heading into the back half of the year, and neither series alone reliably predicts near-term freight volume.

Across this section, retail sales pulled back even as building materials sales rose and credit growth resumed, sentiment fell while fuel costs eased, and ocean freight and warehousing producer prices moved in different directions from each other. Taken together, the consumer-facing indicators do not point in a single direction for freight demand over this one-month comparison.

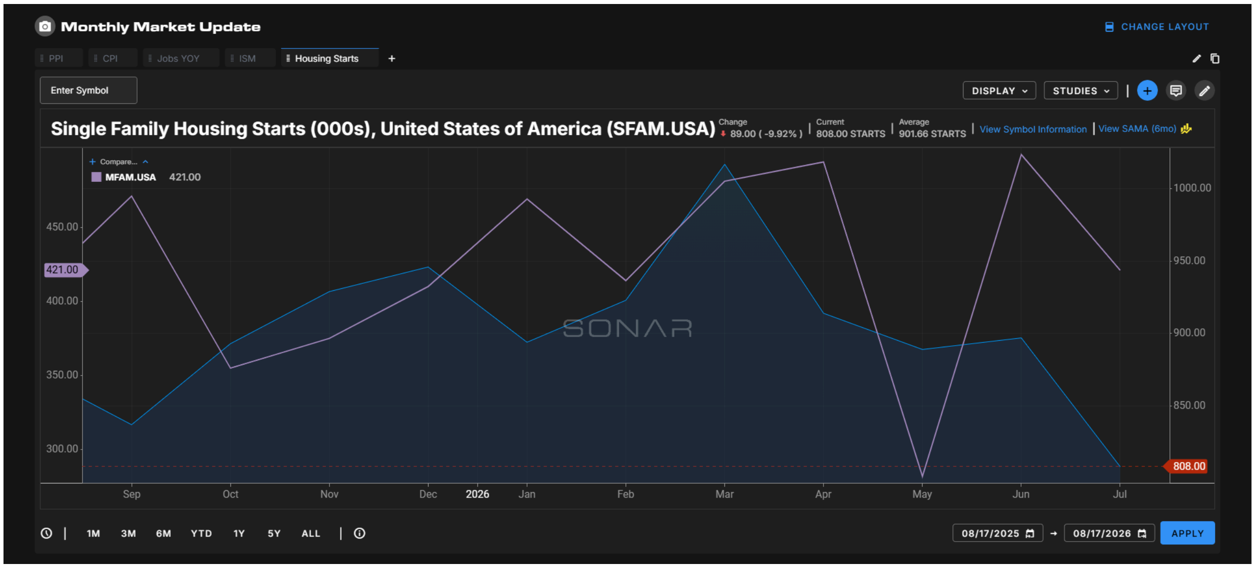
Construction and Housing

Freddie Mac's Primary Mortgage Market Survey put the 30-year fixed mortgage rate at 6.67 percent as of August 13, compared with 6.55 percent on July 16. The Census Bureau's Housing Vacancies and Homeownership survey showed a homeownership rate of 65.0 percent in the second quarter of 2026, compared with 65.3 percent in the first quarter, a difference Census describes as not statistically significant. The modest rate increase is a factor generally cited alongside affordability in both the NAHB and NAR releases discussed below, though this report does not independently verify a causal link between that specific rate move and the sales and starts figures that follow; the stable homeownership rate points to no rapid shift in owner-occupied housing stock turnover.

Existing-home sales fell 1.7 percent in July to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 4.06 million, from 4.12 million in June. New-home sales, for which June is the most recent available reading, rose 1.6 percent to 628,000, from 618,000 in May. Existing-home sales do not generate new-construction freight but do drive relocation and household-goods moving volume, and that channel weakened in July; new-home sales, which drive builder-side freight more directly, moved higher over their most recent reading, so the two channels are pointing in opposite directions as of their respective latest data.

The existing-home median price was $434,100 in July, up 2.0 percent from a year earlier; the new-home median price was $398,300 in June, down 3.3 percent from May's $412,000. Lower new-home median prices may mean more demand for appliances and furniture.

Housing starts fell 12.4 percent in July to an annualized 1,239,000, from a revised 1,415,000 in June (originally reported as 1,427,000), released this morning, August 18. Single-family starts fell 9.9 percent to 808,000, from a revised 897,000; multi-family starts of five units or more fell 15.6 percent to 421,000, from a revised 499,000. Building permits, which tend to lead starts by a few months, moved in the opposite direction over the same month: total permits rose 5.0 percent to 1,443,000, single-family permits rose 2.5 percent to 894,000, and multi-family permits rose 9.1 percent to 490,000. July's broad decline in starts across both housing types points to reduced near-term demand for lumber, drywall, and other construction-material hauls; the permit increase is worth watching in subsequent months, but a single month in which permits rise while starts fall is not itself a reliable predictor of which direction construction-linked freight volume is headed next.



NAHB's second-quarter Multifamily Market Survey, released August 6, showed its Multifamily Production Index at 43, down three points from a year earlier, and its Occupancy Index at 74, down eight points, citing financing conditions, regulatory approval timelines, and labor availability. The NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Market Index rose to 35 in August, from 34 in July, released August 17; the index has remained below 40 for sixteen consecutive months. The National Association of Realtors' Pending Home Sales Index fell 2.3 percent in July from June, and was down 2.2 percent from a year earlier, released this morning, following a 5.4 percent decline in June to 72.5 from 76.5 in May. Builder sentiment remaining below 40 for sixteen straight months, even after this month's uptick, together with the weak multifamily readings, indicates builders as a group continue to view conditions as more negative than positive; pending sales have now fallen for two straight months, which would typically precede continued softness in existing-home sales over the following one to two months, consistent with the July existing-home sales decline already noted above.

On balance, this section points toward more softness than strength, and more clearly so than before this morning's data: housing starts fell sharply in July across both single-family and multi-family construction even as permits rose, builder sentiment remains historically weak, and pending home sales have now declined for two consecutive months alongside July's existing-home sales decline, against a backdrop of a modestly higher mortgage rate.

Flatbed safety is exacting but essential

Given the open nature of flatbed trailers, it is arguably more important for flatbed drivers to follow best safety practices than for drivers in any other mode. This is compounded by the fact that flatbed drivers are uniquely responsible for ensuring that their loads are properly secured and, if necessary, covered by tarps. Otherwise, cargo can shift or even fall in transit, harming not only drivers and their equipment but also fellow motorists.

Thus, drivers should first choose high-quality straps, chains and binders that are designed to withstand the weight and type of cargo being transported. When loading, drivers must be careful to confirm that cargo is distributed evenly across the deck to maintain stability and to prevent excessive stress on specific areas of the flatbed. If applicable, drivers should employ edge or corner protectors to protect straps from sharp edges as well as sensitive cargo from damage caused by undistributed downward force.

Flatbeds also serve a vital role for the domestic oil and gas industry, in part because safety can be compromised by the (often) time-sensitive nature of such deliveries. As such, it is critical that the pre-trip inspection be fully carried out, not only with regard to the vehicle and trailer but also to the rigging equipment used, checking for frays or other signs of excessive wear.

Finally, special attention should be paid to the surroundings when the flatbed is not in use, particularly during loading and unloading. Trucks should be parked on a surface that is as flat as possible, taking care that the truck is not only level from front to back but also untroubled by side grades. To be sure, side grades need special attention when the truck is in motion, such that a heavy object does not suddenly shift forward into the cab or backward into any traffic. When dealing with hazardous materials, drivers should be aware of potential obstacles during loading and unloading that could impede an evacuation route.

Truck capacity outlook

The trucking capacity outlook is showing signs that capacity is exiting the market, which is needed to firm up pricing, but at a relatively slow rate. The back half of the year is traditionally a period when capacity tightens across modes. But with all the added capacity throughout the year, the usual tightening was muted throughout the fourth quarter of 2023.

The interesting growth areas haven't necessarily been in carriers or tractors but in the number of trailers added over the past few years. When the market reacted to the COVID-19 pandemic, semiconductor shortages prevented new truck order backlogs from being worked through. This led to fleets investing elsewhere, namely in trailer counts, which was one of the first areas addressed when the increased rates were sustained throughout the back half of 2020 and early '21.

With rates falling rapidly, the growth in capacity will likely return to levels closer to 2019 until some of the capacity added over the past year is removed from the market.

Total Fleets, Tractors and Trailers				Percent Change since February 2022		
Time Period	Carriers	Tractors	Trailers	% Carriers	% Tractors	% Trailers
Jul-22	498,170	2,780,000	4,298,588	5.75%	1.83%	14.34%
Feb-22	471,102	2,730,000	3,759,410			

Total For-Hire Fleets, Tractors and Trailers				Percent Change since February 2022		
Time Period	Carriers	Tractors	Trailers	% Carriers	% Tractors	% Trailers
Jul-22	300,027	1,810,000	3,022,330	8.76%	2.26%	1.00%
Feb-22	275,856	1,770,000	2,992,449			

Total Private Fleets, Tractors and Trailers				Percent Change since February 2022		
Time Period	Carriers	Tractors	Trailers	% Carriers	% Tractors	% Trailers
Jul-22	158,865	766,799	1,147,612	1.20%	0.63%	49.63%
Feb-22	156,979	761,967	766,961			

Source: Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration monthly census data.

Since February 2022, the total number of fleets, which is filtered to those that report having at least one tractor and 20,000 or more annual miles per tractor on their MCS150 forms, has increased by 5.75%. Carriers have to report the data only once every two years, so the growth over the past two years is evident from the rise in July's numbers compared to February's. The average fleet size (number of tractors divided by fleet count) declined from 5.8 to 5.5, which indicates that growth is stemming from smaller carriers entering the market.

Growth in carrier and tractor counts is emerging from for-hire carriers, which is expected as the number of owner-operators has increased dramatically over the past two years. Overall, the number of carriers has jumped by 8.8% since February, but the number of tractors has increased by only 2.3%. This signals that owner-operators are the largest group to experience growth between February and July 2022.

While the for-hire side of the trucking industry is experiencing gains in carriers and tractors, private fleets are where most of the growth in trailer counts is originating. Between February and July 2022, private fleet trailer counts increased by 49%. Again, it is important to note that carriers have to report this number only biennially, so it really shows the growth over the past two years.

The for-hire market may see some consolidation — and bankruptcies — over the next six to 12 months, but it may not actually show up in the data, with carriers having to report only once every two years and new carriers always entering the market. As the freight market softens, the difference is that drivers will return to the umbrella of large enterprise carriers and thus may actually be double counted at some point in the future.

Total Fleets, Trucks and Trailers with oilfield or liquid/gas specialization				6 month % Change		
Time Period	Carriers	Tractors	Trailers	% Carriers	% Tractors	% Trailers
Feb-22	28,446	380,291	1,074,897	0.7%	-0.5%	0.9%
6 months ago	28,260	382,131	1,065,222			
Total For-Hire Fleets, Trucks and Trailers with oilfield or liquid/gas specialization				**6 month % Change**		
Time Period	**Carriers**	**Tractors**	**Trailers**	**% Carriers**	**% Tractors**	**% Trailers**
Feb-22	20,190	326,544	923,705	1.4%	-0.7%	1.2%
6 months ago	19,906	328,902	912,408			
Total Private Fleets, Trucks and Trailers with oilfield or liquid/gas specialization				**6 month % Change**		
Time Period	**Carriers**	**Tractors**	**Trailers**	**% Carriers**	**% Tractors**	**% Trailers**
Feb-22	8,256	53,747	151,192	-1.2%	1.0%	-1.1%
6 months ago	8,354	53,229	152,814			

Source: FMCSA monthly census data.

The capacity landscape for carriers with oil and gas exposure was relatively unchanged from six months ago as their numbers have increased across the board. The largest rise is in the for-hire market, where the number of carriers has risen by 1.4%.

Even with additional carriers in the market, the number of available tractors has declined by nearly 1%, indicating a couple of things: Smaller carriers are entering the market, and larger carriers with exposure to oil and gas are thinning out their fleets.

While the number of tractors has declined in the past six months, for-hire carriers have added trailer capacity to their fleets, increasing the number of available trailers by 1.2% in the six-month span.

Private fleets haven't experienced the same fate, as there were 98 fewer private carriers operating in the oil and gas space over the past six months. Those continuing to operate have added to their fleets, however, as the number of available tractors has increased by 1%.

Total Fleets, Tractors and Trailers with oilfield or liquid/gas specialization in California

Time Period	Carriers	Tractors	Trailers
Jul-22	993	15,858	11,629

Total For-Hire Fleets, Tractors and Trailers with oilfield or liquid/gas specialization in California

Time Period	Carriers	Tractors	Trailers
Jul-22	549	3,651	5,262

Total Private Fleets, Tractors and Trailers with oilfield or liquid/gas specialization in California

Time Period	Carriers	Tractors	Trailers
Jul-22	395	11,799	5,967

Source: FMCSA monthly census data.

Nearly 1,000 carriers based in California were operating in oil field services or liquid/gas specialization as of last July. The vast majority, in both the overall trucking industry and the oil and gas industry, were for-hire carriers. More than 55% of the fleets in California that operate in the space are for-hire carriers, whereas private fleets make up just under 40% of carriers.

Private fleets do make up the vast majority of tractors in California. Of the 15,858 total tractors that operate in the oil and gas industry, 11,799 are from private fleets, which is roughly 75%. For-hire fleets have an average of 6.65 tractors, compared to private fleets with nearly 300 tractors in operation.

The difference in trailers is less dramatic as for-hire fleets have 45% of the trailers in California. But it is important to note that this data only includes owned trailers and not those that carriers have leased.

Ultimately, the capacity outlook appears quite different than it did at the beginning of 2022. The extreme growth over the past two years has passed its peak and is slowly starting to correct itself. However, having to report counts to the FMCSA only once every two years may mean the data does not show the capacity exiting the market as quickly as it actually does.

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