

MARCH 2026

CROSS BORDER TRUCKING IS SHIFTING

WHY BC CARRIERS MUST ADAPT TO A NEW REALITY



In March 2026, the BC Trucking Association (BCTA) conducted a comprehensive review of transborder freight activity between British Columbia and the United States, using [data](#) from the U.S. Department of Transportation. The goal was to understand long term trends shaping BC’s cross border trucking sector, and to determine whether recent shocks – such as the pandemic and the U.S. tariffs – are influencing freight movement volumes.

Our study spanned **20 years of freight data (2006–2025)**, focusing exclusively on goods moved by truck through BC’s 17 land border crossings, connecting the US states of Washington, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska.

WHAT WE FOUND WAS STRIKING

Cross border trucking volumes between BC and the U.S. have not recovered from their post-pandemic surge and have, in fact, been on a steady decline since 2022. Notably, this downward trajectory continued at nearly the same pace through 2025, strongly suggesting that the recent U.S. tariffs are not the primary driver of the slowdown. Instead, the data points to a longer running, structural downturn, which was well underway long before tariffs entered the picture.

LONG-TERM TRENDS

The chart below shows the total value of freight moved between Canada and the U.S. through BC’s 17 land border crossings¹.

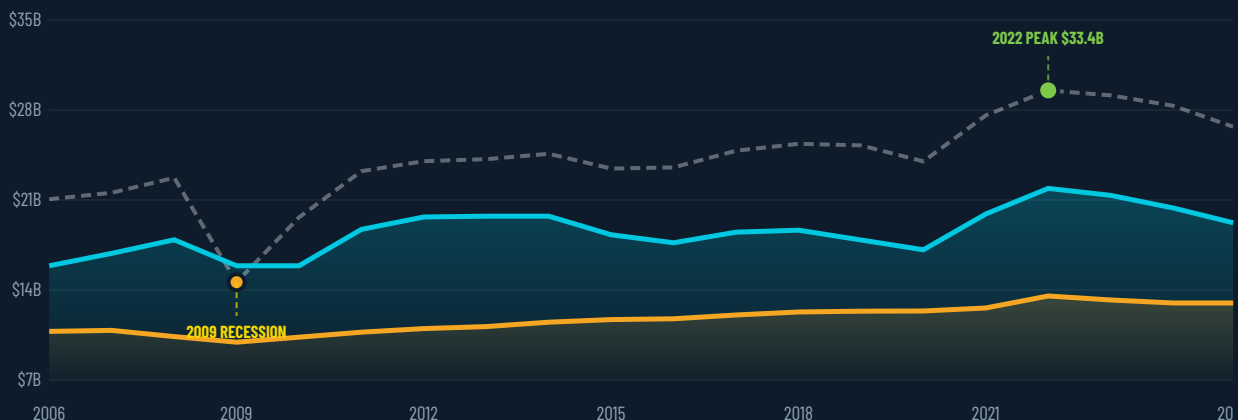
The long term trend is unmistakable: after the 2009 global economic slowdown, cross border trucking volumes climbed steadily, interrupted only by an expected dip in 2020 during the pandemic. This was followed by a sharp rebound in 2021 and 2022 that pushed activity well above pre pandemic levels.

However, beginning in 2022, that momentum changed direction, and trucking volumes have been consistently declining ever since. Notably, the 2025 declines at 3% (Canada to U.S.) and 9% (U.S. to Canada) are not significantly different from the 2024 declines at 1% and 8%, respectively.

¹Throughout this analysis, **we use dollar value rather than tonnage as the primary metric**, due to gaps in the available tonnage data. In practice, the two measures generally trend in the same direction, and dollar value often provides a clearer signal of underlying economic shifts than raw weight alone. All values presented in this analysis reflect nominal US dollar amounts and have not been adjusted for inflation.

TOTAL VALUE OF FREIGHT MOVED BETWEEN CANADA AND USA VIA BC LAND BORDER CROSSINGS

USA → CANADA CANADA → USA TOTAL



BREAKING THIS DOWN BY COMMODITY GROUP

To understand where the slowdown is concentrated, we also analyzed cross border trucking volumes by commodity group. The charts below break out freight moving from Canada to the U.S. and from the U.S. to Canada, revealing distinct patterns in each direction.

In the Canada to U.S. direction, the most dramatic shift is in wood and wood products, which has fallen an alarming 38% since 2021 – a decline that strongly influences overall freight trends given the sector’s historical importance in BC exports. In contrast, machinery and electrical goods have bucked the broader downturn, increasing 59% over the same period. Foodstuffs have shown notable resilience with a 24% increase over the same period.

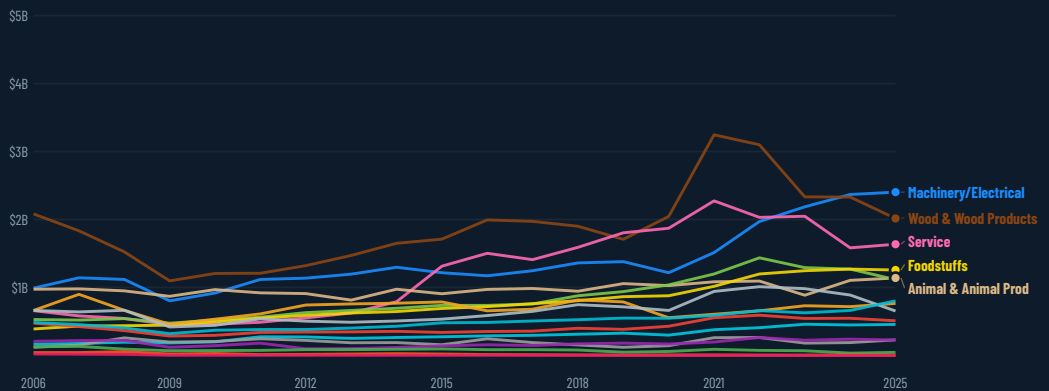
In the U.S. to Canada direction, machinery and electrical goods remain the dominant commodity group entering BC. However, the movement of transportation equipment has seen a significant pullback, declining 39% since 2022.

Together, these patterns suggest that the cross border slowdown is not uniform. It is heavily concentrated in specific sectors, particularly those tied to wood and transportation equipment, while others continue to show growth despite the broader decline.

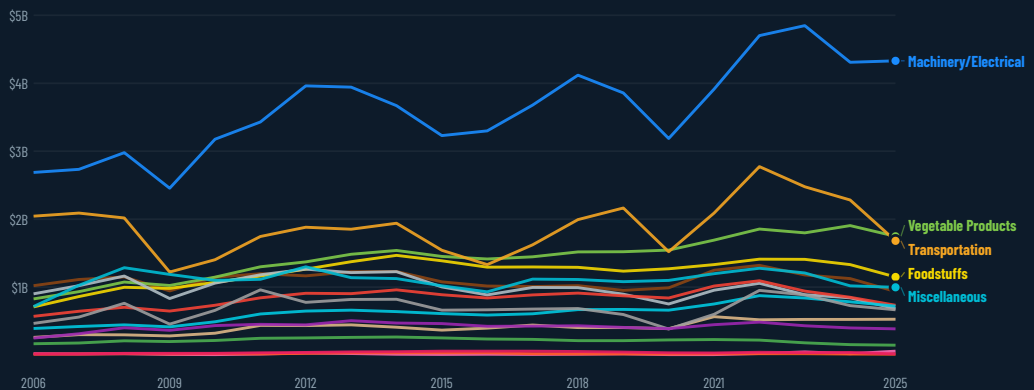
VALUE OF FREIGHT MOVED ACROSS THE BORDER

VIA BC LAND BORDER CROSSINGS

▶ CANADA → USA



▶ USA → CANADA



- MACHINERY/ELECTRICAL
- WOOD & WOOD PRODUCTS
- SERVICE
- ANIMAL & ANIMAL PROD
- VEGETABLE PRODUCTS
- FOODSTUFFS
- TRANSPORTATION
- METALS
- PLASTICS / RUBBERS
- MISCELLANEOUS
- CHEMICALS & ALLIED
- MINERAL PRODUCTS
- STONE / GLASS
- TEXTILES
- RAW HIDES/SKINS
- FOOTWEAR / HEADGEAR

THE TOP BORDER CROSSINGS

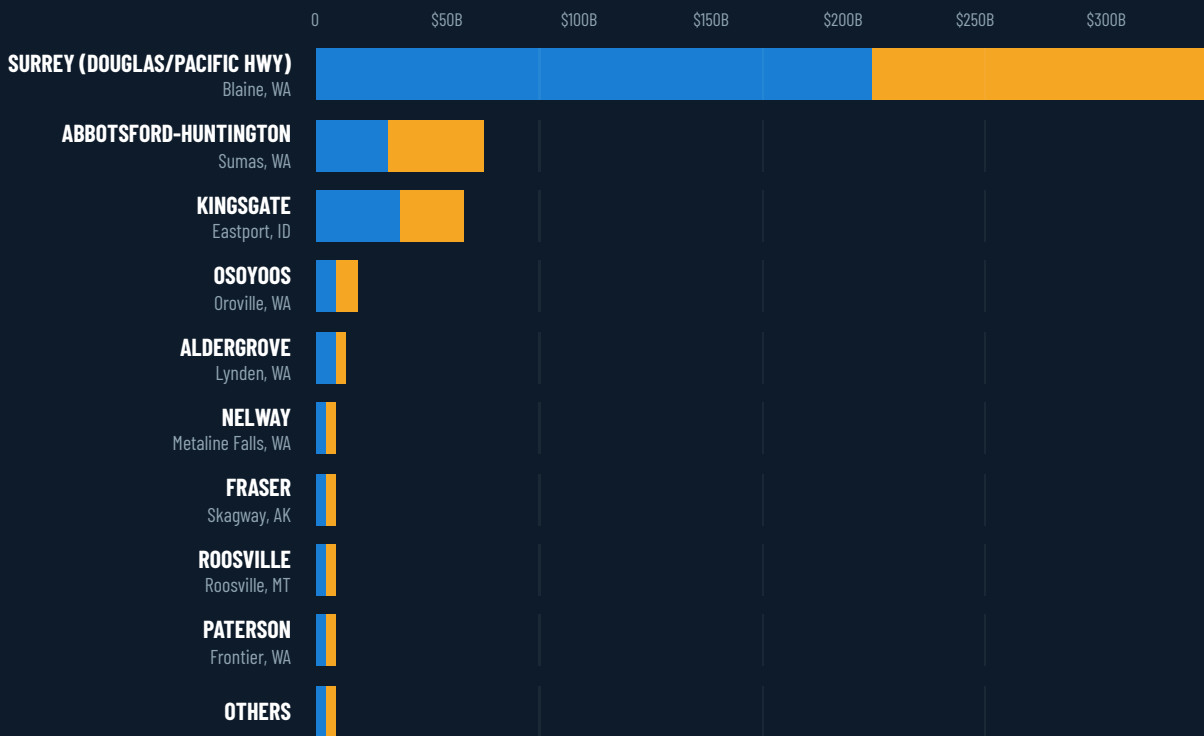
We also examined trucking volumes by individual border crossing. The results highlight just how concentrated BC–U.S. freight movements are. The Douglas / Pacific Highway crossings in Surrey, BC (known as the Blaine, WA crossings on the U.S. side) overwhelmingly dominate cross border activity, accounting for 68% of all trucking freight by dollar value, over the 20 year period from 2006 to 2025. The Abbotsford–Huntington (Sumas, WA) crossing follows at 13%, with Kingsgate (Eastport, ID) close behind at 11%. Rounding out the top five are Osoyoos (Oroville, WA) and Aldergrove (Lynden, WA). Together, these five crossings handle an extraordinary 98% of all trucking freight moving between BC and the United States.

Despite shifts in overall volumes, the distribution among these major crossings has changed only marginally over time. In 2006, Douglas / Pacific Highway accounted for 69% of BC’s cross border trucking traffic. Its share rose to a peak of 71% in 2012 and sits at 66% as of 2025, making it still the undisputed hub of BC–U.S. truck trade. By contrast, Kingsgate has seen notable growth in its relative importance, increasing from 10% in 2006 to 14% in 2025, overtaking Abbotsford–Huntington as BC’s second busiest commercial crossing.

TOTAL VALUE OF FREIGHT MOVED BETWEEN BC - USA

VIA BC LAND BORDER CROSSINGS

USA → CANADA CANADA → USA



KEY TAKEAWAYS

The findings from this analysis point to a trucking landscape that is undergoing a significant shift, revealing a multi layered story about BC's cross border freight economy. Some of the key takeaways are as follows:

- **The downturn is real, persistent, and predates the tariff conversation.**

Cross border trucking volumes have been sliding since 2022. This is not a tariff driven disruption but a structural shift already years in motion.

- **The slowdown is concentrated in specific sectors - not a universal collapse.**

Wood and wood product exports and transportation equipment inbound to Canada have both contracted sharply. Meanwhile, machinery, electrical goods, and foodstuffs continue to show resilience or growth.

- **Cross border activity remains dominated by a small number of crossings.**

Douglas / Pacific Highway continues to carry two thirds of all truck moved freight between BC and the U.S., with the top five crossings handling 98% of volumes. While Kingsgate has gained share over the years, the broader pattern of concentration remains largely unchanged.

- **The long term trend signals deeper competitive and economic pressures.**

The fact that volumes never regained their post pandemic highs points to larger forces at work: slowing demand in key export sectors, shifting U.S. sourcing patterns, increased competition from other jurisdictions, or broader macroeconomic restructuring. These pressures deserve serious attention.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR BC'S TRUCKING SECTOR

The message in the data is clear: the winds have changed. BC's carriers are now operating in a landscape where steady cross border growth can no longer be taken for granted. The structural nature of the downturn suggests that U.S.-bound freight may play a smaller role in the years ahead, and planning for that reality will be essential.

But this shift also represents an opportunity. Intra provincial and regional freight markets are poised to become increasingly important as BC's population expands, major construction and infrastructure projects advance, and domestic supply chains continue to evolve. Federal interest in building a more integrated "One Canadian" economic framework may further strengthen east west shipments and open up new domestic corridors.

At the same time, Canada's push to diversify export markets beyond the U.S. – particularly toward the Asia Pacific – positions BC's ports as critical gateways in that shift. This translates into potential growth for port related trucking, drayage, and intermodal movements, especially as container traffic and global trade patterns rebalance.

Our industry has weathered downturns before, but the length and consistency of the current one indicate that adaptability will be central to long term resilience. This moment offers BC trucking companies a chance to reassess their strategies, identify emerging domestic opportunities, and reinforce their place within the broader goods movement ecosystem.

Recognizing these changes early and responding proactively will help ensure that BC's carriers remain competitive, resilient, and well positioned as the cross border landscape continues to evolve.

WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1913, BCTA represents a diverse range of for-hire and private carriers, transporting everything from manufactured goods and heavy specialized commodities to bulk products, household goods, and general freight. Our membership also includes motor coach, courier, and waste management companies, along with key suppliers to the industry. Collectively, our motor carrier members operate 13,000 to 14,000 vehicles, employ over 26,000 people, and contribute approximately \$2 billion annually to BC's economy.

BCTA is an active member of the International Mobility & Trade Corridor (IMTC) program, a bi national coalition of government and non government partners dedicated to improving the movement of people and freight between British Columbia and Washington State. Our participation at IMTC keeps us closely connected to emerging cross border issues and provides valuable access to the agencies shaping border operations. This engagement ensures BCTA can bring the most current insights back to our members and advocate effectively on behalf of BC's trucking industry.

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