
PERSPECTIVES

GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAINS:

Resilience, Transparency, and Ethical Sourcing in a Fragmented Global Landscape



Our perspectives feature the viewpoints of our subject matter experts on current topics and emerging trends.

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Legal advisors should read this article to:

- Understand how artificial intelligence is being used to compare supplier data against sanctions lists and improve resiliency by performing disruption simulations
- Know how to protect intellectual property across supply chains
- Realize the importance of hiring local legal talent to navigate trade, compliance, and anti-corruption laws and human rights mandates in each jurisdiction

Insurance advisors should read this article to:

- See how shifting tariff policies further exacerbate supply chain disruptions, resulting in delays and higher costs, especially for construction companies
- Understand the importance of client companies' integrated risk management strategy
- Recognize why more clients are shifting to short-term contracts

Executive Summary

Global trade has become increasingly fragmented amid rising geopolitical tensions and the rapidly shifting United States tariff regime. Companies face mounting pressure to build resilient, ethically sound supply chains. Yet current approaches often overlook the need for integrated risk management, traceability, and transparency—key elements in restoring trust and ensuring long-term viability. This article examines these gaps and highlights how J.S. Held's multidisciplinary expertise in [supply chain integrity](#), ethical sourcing, and strategic advisory services empowers organizations to navigate disruptions, meet stakeholder expectations, and leverage supply chain governance as a competitive advantage.

EXPERT VOICES

Andrea Korney

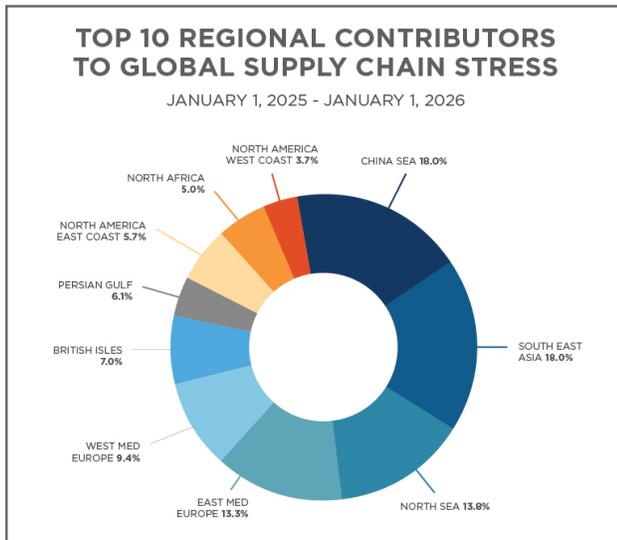


Andrea draws upon her expertise as J.S. Held's Vice President of Supply Chain and Sustainability to discuss how tariffs and shifting regulatory and geopolitical forces are reshaping today's complex, emerging markets. She outlines the proactive strategies companies can use to strengthen resiliency, transparency, and ethical performance across their supply chains.

From Procurement to Strategic Risk

For decades, a company's supply chain was viewed primarily as a procurement issue. However, as the world's various markets have become increasingly interconnected through the increased flow of goods, services, and capital, multinational corporations have found suppliers in new regions and witnessed remarkable growth in their global value chains. Now, supply chain resiliency and transparency are critical for boards of directors and executive management.

Yet, with that growth came vulnerabilities. Never was that more apparent than during the COVID-19 pandemic when supply chain disruptions demanded innovation. Nearly six years later, these disruptions persist, and new problems have arisen. [Trade and tariff volatility](#), protectionist policies, consumer demands, and environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues are among the latest problems confronting global supply chains. [One study](#) from the United Kingdom found that 88% of consumers are more loyal to companies that support ESG initiatives.



Source: World Bank, "[Global Supply Chain Stress Index](#)," interactive database.

In supply chains, there is a cycle that volatility hampers. Businesses of all sizes are increasingly compelled to conduct more thorough risk assessments of their supply chains to close operational gaps and seize opportunities in the evolving global trade landscape. Management must anticipate and respond to a wide range of disruptions beyond pandemics and tariffs, including extreme weather events, cyberattacks, rising shipping costs, labor shortages and stoppages, transportation issues, supplier bankruptcies, geopolitical fragility, and military conflicts.

Companies that stay vigilant can turn risks into advantages by addressing structural vulnerabilities such as poor inventory management and inaccurate demand forecasting. Clients may need to invest in client segmentation, improved supplier management, and tariff engineering and modeling.

Trade Policy Volatility & the Supreme Court Ruling

In 2025, the Trump Administration imposed wide-ranging tariff measures, largely executed through executive orders, including a minimum tariff on all imports and higher duties on 57 trading partners, such as the European Union (20%), India (27%), Taiwan (32%), and China (34%). These actions, however, were frequently revised or reversed, creating uncertainty across global markets. More broadly, US trade policy continues to evolve in real time, with tariff structures frequently adjusted in response to shifting political and economic priorities. This ongoing volatility has made long-term planning increasingly complex for companies operating across global supply chains.

One of the goals of the Trump Administration's trade policy was to reduce reliance on imports, particularly in strategic sectors such as defense, which uses rare-earth minerals sourced from China. Consequently, the US government has taken equity stakes in several rare earth mining operations to reduce risk and reliance on foreign sources.

In response to the [Trump Administration's America First Trade Policy](#), many countries recalibrated their trade strategies to mitigate the impact of shifting US rules and tariffs. President Trump had imposed the tariffs, relying on the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA). However, in February 2026, the US Supreme Court struck down those tariffs in [Learning Resources, Inc. v. Trump](#), which addressed the constitutional limits of executive authority in trade policy.

For companies caught in the tariffs controversy, the opinion raises questions over whether the tariffs already paid would need to be refunded and presents a complex legal process.

Ensuring Supplier Competence and Contractual Clarity

For many companies, particularly those involved in [construction](#), rising geopolitical tensions, conflicting regulations, and shifting tariff policies further exacerbate supply chain disruptions, resulting in delays, higher costs, lower-quality end products, and legal issues. When companies expand into new regions, they often partner with a local provider through a joint venture. The parent company will often pass through costs to the joint venture, potentially distorting the true cost of the underlying commodity.

Furthermore, governments often adopt protectionist policies to ensure local supply chains. These measures can trigger problems on large infrastructure projects, as the local supply chain may lack capacity, financial stability, or knowledge to meet supply chain needs. As a result, expert advisors may recommend adopting an appropriate pre-qualification process to ensure suppliers are competent and capable of providing services at the required scale.

Those advisors may also recommend that experienced legal teams in the local jurisdiction review contracts and draft them in a balanced manner to foster collaboration. In relation to contract enforceability, it is common for parties to seek to minimize all risks under a contract by passing them onto suppliers or others. However, this is often a short-sighted approach that results in economic duress for the party that accepted the risks, often leading to disputes due to the unenforceability of the contract.

Supply chain management is evolving beyond the flow of materials to encompass talent mobility and impose new contractual obligations. Consider the Trump Administration's new \$100,000 fee required for H-1B visas, which companies must pay to hire foreign

talent. This introduces a new cost element in industries that rely on specialized global expertise, namely technology, healthcare, and engineering. A coalition of labor unions, religious groups, university professors, and healthcare providers is challenging the H-1 B visa fee in US courts.

To better manage supply chain uncertainty and pricing fluctuations, more companies are shifting to short-term contracts. The benefits include capitalizing on market changes, securing cost savings, and making informed adjustments to their procurement decisions. Increasingly, customers serve as the importer of record and assume responsibility for ensuring that the imported goods comply with customs laws.

Protecting Intellectual Property Across Global Supply Chains

Intellectual property (IP) management is an inherently global endeavor that closely aligns with supply chain management. Poor supply chain management can expose companies to unnecessary IP risk, such as a supplier creating counterfeit versions of a product or an outsourced manufacturer leaking proprietary data. Beyond the obvious risk of licensed products going out the front door and counterfeits going out the back, poor supply chain management can expose companies to less obvious, but potentially more economically detrimental risks, such as the interjection of unlicensed components or the outsourced manufacturer's mismanagement of know-how, trade secrets, and other proprietary business data.

IP risk can further escalate when a company's supply chain crosses jurisdictions and enters new markets, exposing it to the national laws governing IP in those regions. In some cases, this can lead to unintended consequences,

such as a supplier becoming the legal owner of the IP if contracts aren't carefully drafted. As global sourcing becomes more complex, companies need to understand how and where their supply chains interact with different IP regimes and protect ownership through the appropriate legal barriers.

By contrast, strong supply chain management strategies can create new IP or present opportunities to monetize existing IP. An ethical, well-designed supply chain that leverages the strengths of different suppliers, manufacturers, and partners may yield patentable processes and valuable trade secrets. Technologies developed through supplier collaboration can be licensed to adjacent industries, creating new revenue streams. Moreover, IP licensing can prevent supply chain disruptions when companies need to rely more heavily on local manufacturers.

Geopolitical Tensions, Natural Disasters, and Related Considerations

The Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to have a significant impact on the supply chain, particularly for the construction industry. Consequences include difficulties in finding alternative resources and damages resulting from project delays. There were massive increases in costs for distribution and supplies. Gas prices soared. Companies had to reconfigure their material transportation and find new suppliers. Quality, time, and costs were all affected.

Escalating conflict in the Middle East, marked by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and widespread airspace and maritime disruptions, is constraining global capacity. Venezuela's political upheaval and volatile oil production outlook are adding further uncertainty to energy markets, together placing intensifying pressure on already strained global supply chains.

Beyond conflict zones, supply chains are also vulnerable to sudden disruptions from accidents and natural disasters, which can be just as disruptive and costly. Consider the March 2024 collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, Maryland, which resulted in a two-and-a-half-month closure of the port and an estimated \$85 million in demurrage charges. The California wildfires in 2025, which resulted in total property damages estimated between \$28 billion and nearly \$54 billion, according to the LA-EDC 2025 LA Wildfires Study. To remain resilient, companies must maintain a robust, emergency-ready strategy.

Diversifying the Supply Chain: Nearshoring and Reshoring

One trend that demonstrates how companies are mitigating risk from supply chain disruptions is the move to diversify their sourcing of materials and manufacturing. The Institute for Supply Management's 2025 Business Outlook Survey reported that 29% of respondents said a shift to the US is either planned or underway, and 35% said that a move away from China is either planned or underway.

Almost every large multinational has a significant presence in Asia and may struggle to leave easily. Some US companies, such as Apple, which had operations in China, have moved some of their operations to Vietnam and India. Apple also announced that it was expanding its US supply chain. Amgen announced a \$650 million expansion of its manufacturing network in Puerto Rico. Another pharmaceutical giant, Eli Lilly, is planning a new \$6.5 billion factory in Houston, Texas.

Evaluating Ethical and Regulatory Risks

Ethical issues can significantly complicate supply chains. Laws and regulations, particularly those related to environmental, employment, and governance issues, vary across regions and industries.

Europe has taken a particularly vigorous stance on ethical supply chain management, introducing measures that include the EU Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), Germany’s Supply Chain Duty Act, and the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), which covers seven commodities — cattle, cocoa, coffee, palm oil, rubber, soy, and wood. The European Commission has issued a delay in the implementation of the EUDR for large companies to December 30, 2026. These companies are now focusing on their supply chains to ensure compliance. Even though smaller companies do not have to comply directly in 2026, they are being asked for data to support the large companies they work with now.

Supply Chain Risk Considerations & Solutions

With global supply chains facing continuous volatility and uncertainty—from tariffs to a patchwork of conflicting regulations — an integrated risk management strategy is essential. The following priority areas offer a practical guide for boards, executives, and their outside counsel to assess vulnerabilities and strengthen resilience:

Supply Chain Mapping: Organizations should map their [supply chain risks](#), particularly those

related to regulatory requirements, other ESG mandates, and geopolitical controversies. They need to know suppliers from Tier 1 to those at the farthest end of the chain to ensure compliance across jurisdictions and identify vulnerabilities.

Tariff Impact Examination and Engineering Strategy: Redesign or re-label products to legally optimize tariff treatment and reduce costs.

Diversifying Suppliers and Geographies: Avoid overreliance on single suppliers or regions by expanding sourcing across multiple countries with favorable trade conditions, substantial legal protections, and strong ethical reputations.

Conduct Rigorous [Supplier Due Diligence](#): Evaluate suppliers for cost, quality, compliance, and legal soundness; ensure contracts are reviewed by legal experts.

Understand the Laws and Regulations: Employ experts to navigate trade, compliance, and anti-corruption laws and human rights mandates in each jurisdiction. Several countries have laws that require companies to audit and monitor human rights violations, such as modern slavery and trafficking.

Protect Intellectual Property: Draft contracts carefully to [safeguard IP ownership](#) and explore opportunities to [monetize](#) supply-chain innovations.

Prepare for Natural Disasters and Geopolitical Events: Develop contingency plans and maintain surplus inventory to mitigate disruptions.

Watch for Warning Signs: Late deliveries and slower communications from a supplier are often red flags. If these actions begin to occur, the company should send a representative to investigate what is happening on site.

Leverage Technology and AI: Use [Artificial Intelligence and cloud-based platforms](#) for forecasting, automation, and disruption

simulations while maintaining cybersecurity. The use of AI to manage supply chain issues is on the rise. According to the OECD Supply Chain Resilience Review 2025, AI can also be used to compare supplier data against sanctions lists and improve resiliency by performing disruption simulations. Additionally, the global AI supply chain market is expected to grow from \$9.94 billion in 2025 to \$192.51 billion by 2034, according to Precedence Research.

Case Study: An Energy Company Uses AI to Improve Safety in Its Supply Chain

Strathcona Energy, a Canadian owner and operator of many highly regulated and complex oil sands and energy facilities, embedded AI across its environmental, health, and safety (EHS) programs and core operations. Even a minor safety or compliance issue can have significant financial, environmental, and reputational consequences. These facilities are often located in remote or industrial areas, hours away from major urban centers, and frequently involve personnel working alone or in high-risk situations. They have challenging logistics and connectivity, harsh environmental conditions, and rotational or field-based workforces.

Guided by J.S. Held's two-phase AI readiness and market-scan roadmap, the company is leveraging intelligent automation to enhance the efficiency of its supply chain. With Enablon software, Strathcona's centralized EHS platform, AI now enables natural-language incident reporting, predictive safety analytics, and real-time compliance monitoring—reducing manual workload while elevating data accuracy and responsiveness.

Conclusion

Managing the growing complexity of global supply chains – especially in light of the recent US Supreme Court ruling striking down the Trump tariff policy – requires specialized, cross-functional expertise. From regulatory compliance and geopolitical risk to ethical sourcing and technological integration, the challenges outlined in this article reflect the need for deep, domain-specific knowledge.

External experts offer unique viewpoints, cross-sector experience, and objective analysis that can reveal blind spots and unlock innovative

solutions. By collaborating with professionals who understand the intricacies of global risk management, internal teams can more effectively assess vulnerabilities, vet suppliers, and develop supply chains that are not only compliant and cost-efficient but also resilient, ethical, and ready for the future.

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[Andrea Korney](#) is Vice President of Supply Chain and Sustainability for J.S. Held's [ESG & EHS Digital Solutions group](#). She provides an unrivaled depth, breadth, and rarity of expertise across sustainability, energy infrastructure, global supply chains, and trade-related regulatory risk. Andrea brings 25 years of experience to her role as an advisor to clients on climate and decarbonization strategies, greenhouse gas (GHG) accounting, resource and energy optimization, renewable energy transitions, sustainable finance, and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) disclosure. She also leads advisory work on sustainable supply chains, human rights, labor-risk due diligence, and compliance with rapidly evolving global regulations.

A senior authority on tariffs, sanctions, and trade control risk, Andrea guides multinational clients on Section 301/232 tariffs, the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), and coordinated US, Canadian, European Union, and United Kingdom sanctions regimes by assessing implications across complex supply chains. Her work includes identifying tariff exposure, evaluating sanctions and country-of-origin risks, and advising on contract and force majeure issues. Legal counsel, investigators, insurers, and executives regularly rely on her expertise.

Her analyses are increasingly intertwined with ESG obligations, such as forced labor import bans, transparency laws, and the EU’s Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). She also strengthens J.S. Held’s capabilities in tariff recovery, sanctions mitigation, supply chain restructuring, and trade-driven claims.

Andrea has led major energy and infrastructure initiatives and has been recognized for her regulatory engagement and Indigenous communities relations work. As a US Department of Energy Equity in Energy Ambassador—an honor rarely granted to Canadian citizens—she is widely recognized for her contributions to the sector. Andrea holds an MBA from Ivey Business School (Canada) and certifications in ESG and the European Union’s Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD).

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Dan was the Principal and CEO at MorrisAnderson. Prior to joining MorrisAnderson in 1997, he served as an executive and manager with several Fortune 500 companies, including Illinois Tool Works (ITW), Allied Signal, and Rand McNally. He has served on the Board of Directors of various businesses and non-profit organizations.

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