Supply Chain Visibility: Your Company's Readiness for Coming Changes

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Featured Industries: Transportation & Logistics, International Trade & Supply Chain Management

Key Takeaways:

- U.S. Customs and Border Protection is signaling the need for greater government visibility into import supply chains, including foreign export documentation, a replacement for the Manufacturer Identification Code (MID) and supply chain tracing technologies, and is seeking public comment.
- The proposed regulatory changes signal heightened scrutiny of supplier identity, illegal transshipment, and sanctions and export controls risk, which could increase documentation burdens and compliance exposure for importers, their suppliers, and logistics providers.
- Importers and their supply chain services companies can begin preparing for new scrutiny and reporting obligations now by reviewing documentation and information-collection practices, strengthening party and ownership screening, and confirming the identities of third parties and the chain of custody for goods.

Supply chain visibility is emerging as the dominant theme for global sales, procurement, logistics and compliance operations in 2027. For supply chain professionals, this is an evolution beyond the supply chain mapping exercises that have occupied import and export functions in recent years. Those efforts were driven by dramatic increases in sanctions risk, export controls complexity and import compliance (particularly forced labor and anti-fraud efforts).

Now, U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is preparing for improvements in supply chain visibility under its new Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (ANPRM), with comments due December 1, 2026. This development is a tangible advancement of White House trade policy as announced under E.O. 14411, titled "Strengthening Customs Enforcement" (the "E.O.").

CBP's Supply Chain Visibility Objective

Customs's new ANPRM is aimed at giving the agency greater visibility into import supply chains so that it may detect and halt illicit imports, stop illegal transshipment, and prosecute evasion of customs laws. Customs now seeks public comment on three categories of new proposed information requirements: (1) foreign export documentation collection; (2) replacement of the Manufacturer Identification Code (MID) in customs entry summaries; and (3) technology approaches for supply chain tracing.

Foreign Export Documentation: Customs is considering new regulations that would require importers to provide foreign export documentation at the time of entry, as required under the E.O. Specifically, the ANPRM seeks comments on which foreign export documentation should be collected and the circumstances in which it should be presented for agency review. Documentation may include export declarations made to foreign customs authorities, commercial invoices, packing lists, certificates of origin, export licenses or permits, as well as transportation documentation (e.g., bills of lading).

Replacement of the Manufacturer Identification Code: Customs is also considering redefining or replacing the MID in entry summaries. The MID is derived from the name and address of the manufacturer or shipper, as specified on the commercial invoice. Customs acknowledges that the MID provides limited identifying information and does not always identify the most relevant manufacturing party that may be of interest to Customs. Also, Customs is not always able to receive and evaluate MID information early enough in the entry process to make use of it. The ANPRM poses questions to the public regarding how to identify the manufacturer, how to integrate logistics platforms in overseas supply, and whether end user information should also be collected.

Technology Approaches to Supply Chain Tracing: Customs is currently evaluating supply chain tracing technologies for, and possible expansion of, Customs Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (CTPAT) requirements. The goal is to prevent illegal transshipment of goods through a third country before import to the U.S., which can obscure the country of origin and deprive the U.S. of lawful duty payments. Customs has intensified its own enforcement efforts and is evaluating artificial intelligence solutions aimed at managing illegal transshipment risk and supporting "rapid and resource-efficient" decisions about that risk before goods arrive in the U.S. or are released from the port of entry. The ANPRM seeks comments on private-sector tools used for supply chain traceability and how they can be integrated with existing data systems, including the Automated Commercial Environment (ACE).

U.S. Supply Chain Readiness

The ANPRM request for comment offers a meaningful roadmap to the top-of-mind matters Customs wishes to address, including supplier verification, illegal transshipment and the risk of sanctions and export controls violations. Importers of record (and the suppliers and logistics service providers who support them) can start planning their own internal approaches to documentation and information collection across all relationships with suppliers and customers. Supply chain professionals can also begin thinking about their approach to verifying the parties with whom they deal, including implementing and managing party screening and party ownership screening processes. Now is the time to begin having conversations with stakeholders about developing records and internal practices to confirm the identities of third parties, the chain of custody for raw materials and finished goods, and the lawful nature of products, as well as third-party operations.

Benesch's team is available to counsel clients on the full range of customs compliance matters, including building processes in response to this ANPRM, CTPAT applications, risk assessments and prior disclosures, and defending customs investigations and enforcement actions. To receive our client alerts on these and related supply chain issues, sign up here.

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