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## U.S. Targets Chinese Steel, Copper Under Uyghur Law

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WASHINGTON, The U.S. government on Tuesday announced it will target additional Chinese imports, including steel, copper, and lithium, for high-priority enforcement under the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, citing alleged human-rights abuses involving the Uyghur population.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) posted that caustic soda and red dates will also be subject to heightened scrutiny, expanding the list of goods linked to forced labor in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.

“The use of forced labor is repulsive. We will hold Chinese companies accountable for abuses and eliminate threats posed to U.S. prosperity,” said U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

The Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, enacted in 2021, prohibits the import of goods produced wholly or in part by forced labor in China’s Xinjiang region. U.S. authorities allege that Chinese officials operate internment camps for Uyghurs and other religious and ethnic

minorities. Beijing has consistently denied allegations of abuse, describing them as politically motivated.

The new measures expand existing enforcement priorities that aim to prevent products tied to forced labor from entering U.S. markets. Importers of targeted goods now face additional inspections and potential seizure of shipments deemed to violate the law.

Industry groups have expressed concern over the broad scope of the law, highlighting challenges in tracing supply chains. Some manufacturers note that materials such as lithium, used in batteries for electric vehicles and electronics, have complex global supply chains that make it difficult to confirm origin.

Despite these concerns, U.S. officials maintain that enforcing human-rights standards in trade is critical. Advocates argue that preventing products made with forced labor from entering U.S. commerce protects ethical supply chains and deters abusive practices abroad.

The move aligns with previous U.S. actions, which have included banning cotton and tomato products from Xinjiang under the same legislation. Analysts say the Biden administration, following the groundwork laid by the Trump-era policies, continues to use trade law as a tool to address human-rights abuses in China.

Experts warn that tensions over such measures could affect U.S.-China trade relations, particularly in industries like steel and technology. Nevertheless, Washington has emphasized that human-rights concerns remain a top priority, signaling ongoing enforcement and monitoring of goods connected to forced labor.

The DHS statement underscores the U.S. commitment to upholding human rights and enforcing trade laws designed to prevent complicity in forced labor practices. U.S. authorities will continue to review imports for compliance and work closely with international partners to ensure responsible sourcing.