

Trump's 50% Copper Tariff Sparks Industry Backlash

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President Donald Trump has ignited a new wave of controversy after announcing a major tariff on copper, a metal vital to countless American industries. In a post on his Truth Social platform Wednesday night, Trump declared that the United States will impose a 50% tariff on all imported copper beginning August 1, 2025. He justified the move by pointing to a “robust national security assessment,” arguing that copper is essential for semiconductors, aircraft, data centers, ammunition, and even hypersonic weapons.

“Copper is one of the most critical materials used by the Department of Defense,” Trump wrote. He then blamed the Biden Administration for damaging the domestic copper industry,

promising that the new tariff would help rebuild what he called a “dominant” American supply chain.

But the reaction from economists, investors, and trade experts has been swift and overwhelmingly negative. Critics quickly pointed out that the United States simply does not produce enough copper to meet demand, no matter how high the tariff goes. According to the United States Geological Survey, the country produced about 880,000 metric tons of refined copper in 2024 and imported a similar amount.

Spencer Hakimian, Founder of Tolou Capital Management, warned homeowners and builders that the cost of renovations could soar in the coming years. “Rest in peace if you were planning to build or renovate a home in 2025 to 2028,” he posted on social media.

Other experts argued that tariffs on raw materials like copper only drive up costs for American manufacturers and defense contractors. Ed Carson of Investor’s Business Daily said tariffs on essential metals “discourage and raise the cost of domestic manufacturing,” even for companies that support the policy of protective tariffs in other industries.

Financial writer A.J. Button mocked the logic behind making the Department of Defense pay more for copper when it relies on vast quantities for advanced weapons systems. Meanwhile, traders and economists joked that Trump’s move was just another example of using tariffs as a blunt political tool rather than a carefully planned economic policy.

As the debate grows, one thing is clear: this copper tariff is likely to touch nearly every corner of the economy, from high-tech manufacturing to everyday homebuilding, setting the stage for yet another polarizing fight over trade policy.

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