MYFREIGHTWORLD

ECONOMIC INSIGHTS

MARCH 2025

- LMI
- PMI
- Retail Sales
- Cass Freight Index
- LTL Producer Price Index
- OTRI
- ATA Truck Tonnage
- DAT National Rates
- Import TEUs
- Diesel Price
- Monthly GDP

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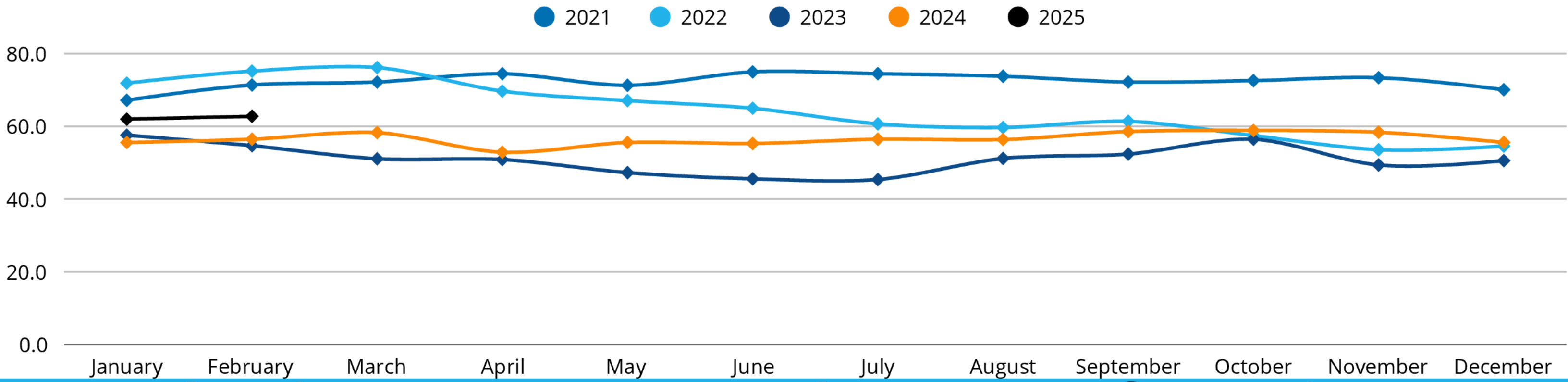
Logistics Manager's Index (LMI)

Source: The-LMI.com

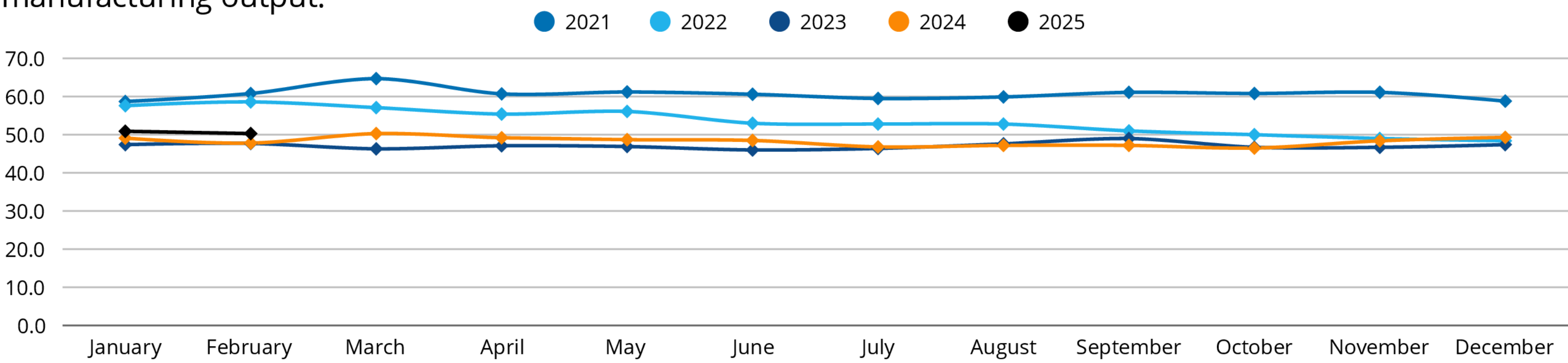
The Logistics Managers' Index rose to 62.8 in February, the highest since mid-2022, signaling strong growth across logistics. Inventory levels and costs climbed, pointing to active restocking and higher expenses tied to repositioning goods. Warehousing and transportation utilization increased, while prices surged—especially in freight, where transportation costs hit 69.5, the fastest rate since 2022. These trends reflect tight capacity and rising demand, suggesting shippers should brace for continued cost pressure moving into Q2.



Purchasing Manager's Index: Manufacturing PMI

Source: The Institue for Supply Management (ISM)

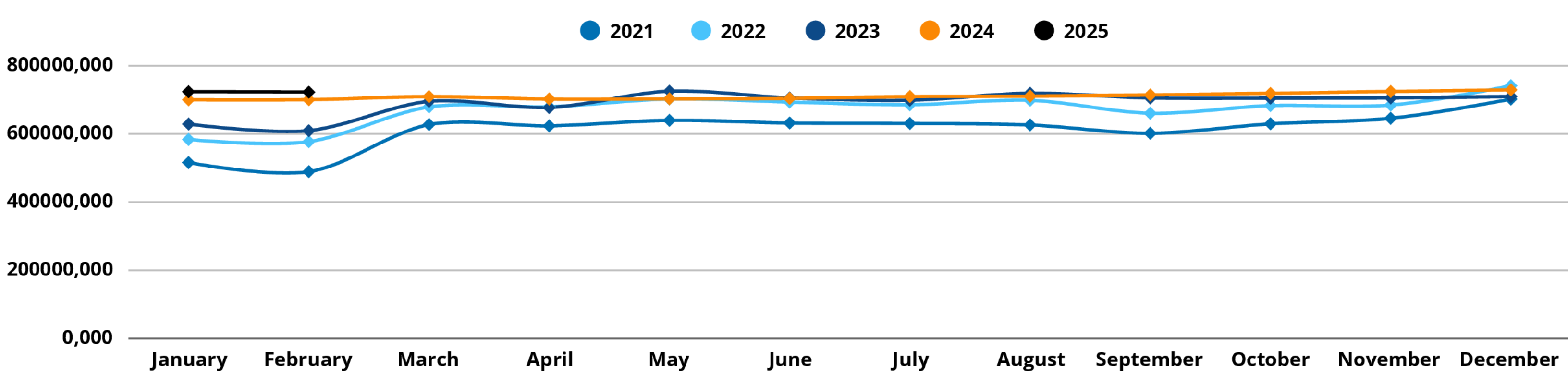
The Manufacturing PMI held at 50.3 in February, signaling modest expansion. Production rose and inventories stabilized, but new orders slipped to 48.6%, indicating softening demand. Employment contracted, while input prices surged to 62.4%, the highest since mid-2022. Import and export activity stayed positive, pointing to steady global movement. Shippers should stay alert to cost fluctuations and shifts in manufacturing output.



Monthly Retail Sales

Source: Census.gov

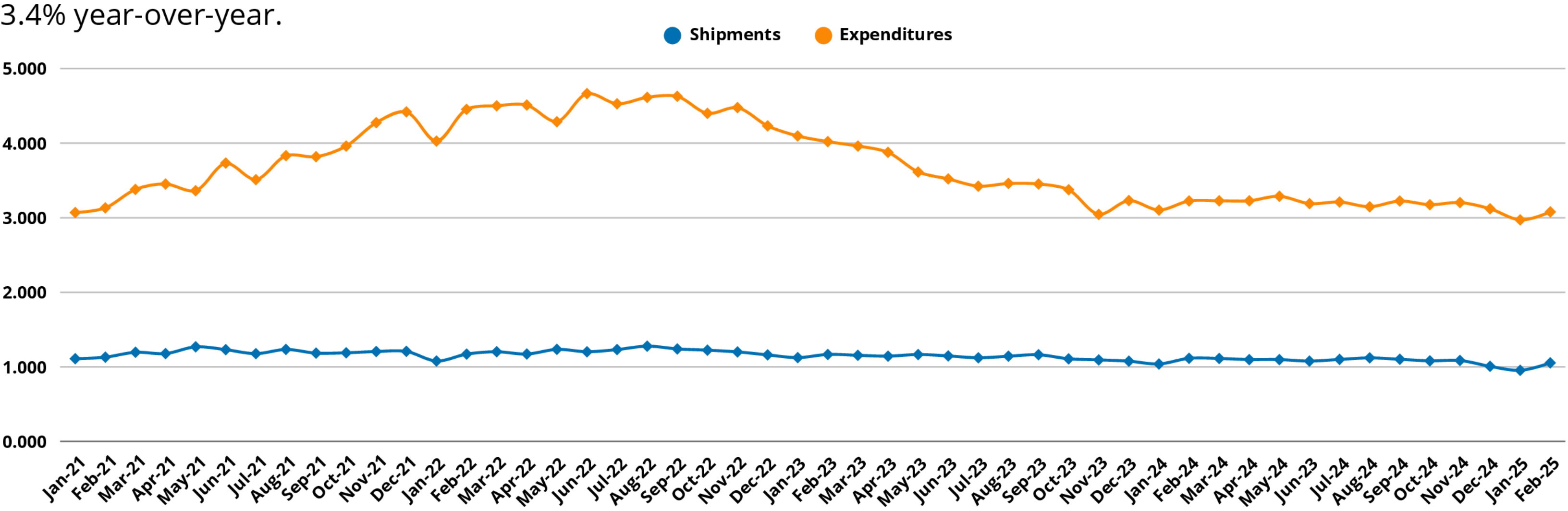
U.S. retail and food services sales rose to $722.7 billion in February, reflecting a 0.2% month-over-month increase and a 3.1% year-over-year gain. Growth was led by sectors like motor vehicles and food services, which saw 6.4% and 5.4% annual increases respectively. Nonstore retailers also continued their strong run with 6.5% growth, highlighting sustained e-commerce momentum.



Cass Freight Index

Source: Cass Information Systems

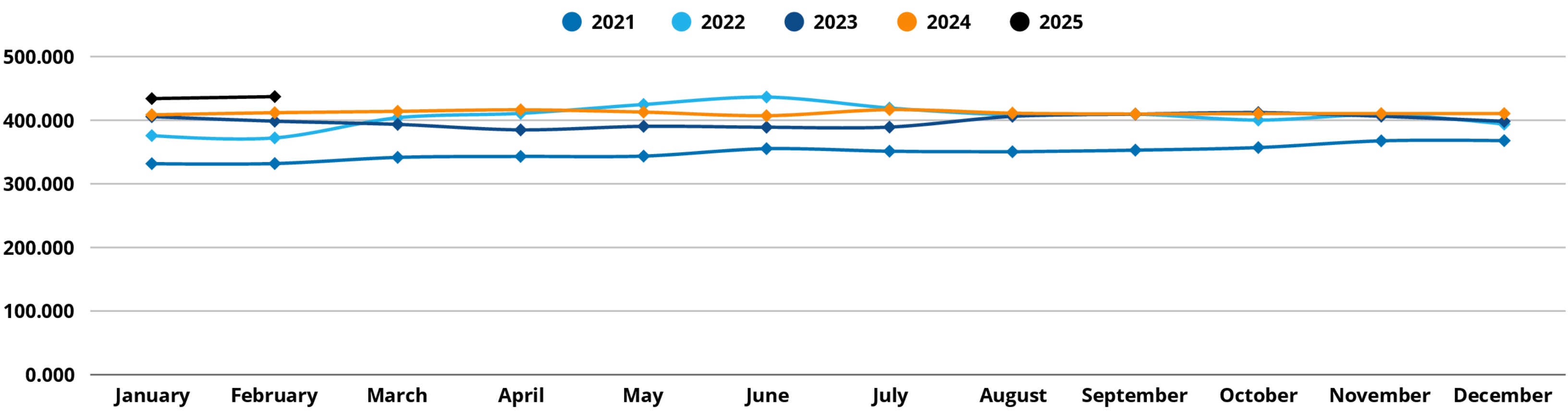
The Cass Freight Index® for December showed continued softness in freight activity. Shipments fell 7.3% month-over-month to 1.007, reversing the gains from November, while year-over-year shipments declined 6.5%, marking the largest drop since January 2024. Expenditures fell 2.6% month-over-month to 3.120 and declined 3.4% year-over-year.



LTL Producer Price Index

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics

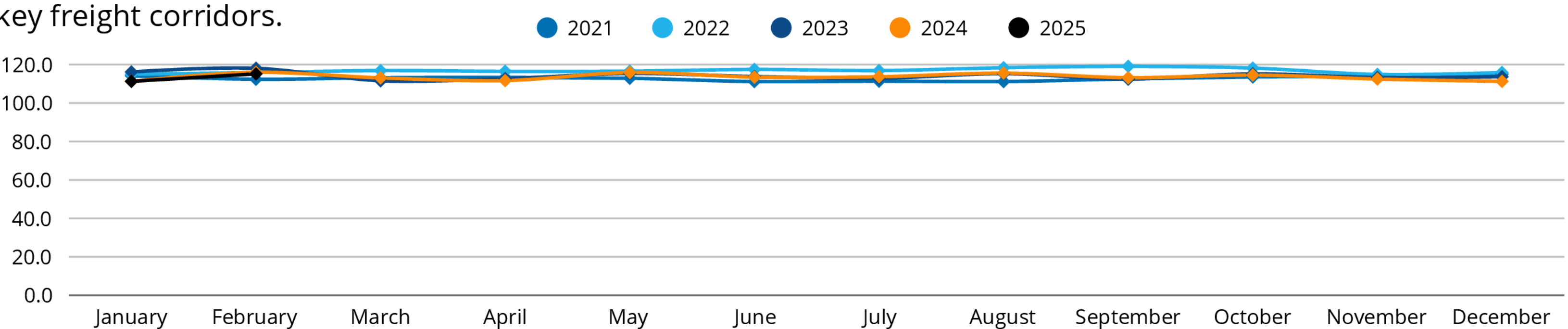
The LTL Producer Price Index remained relatively stable in February, coming in at 410.558, up slightly from January's 410.408. While the change was minimal, the index continues to hover near its all-time high, reflecting persistent cost pressure across less-than-truckload operations. Rising fuel prices, labor costs, and capacity constraints continue to support elevated rate levels.



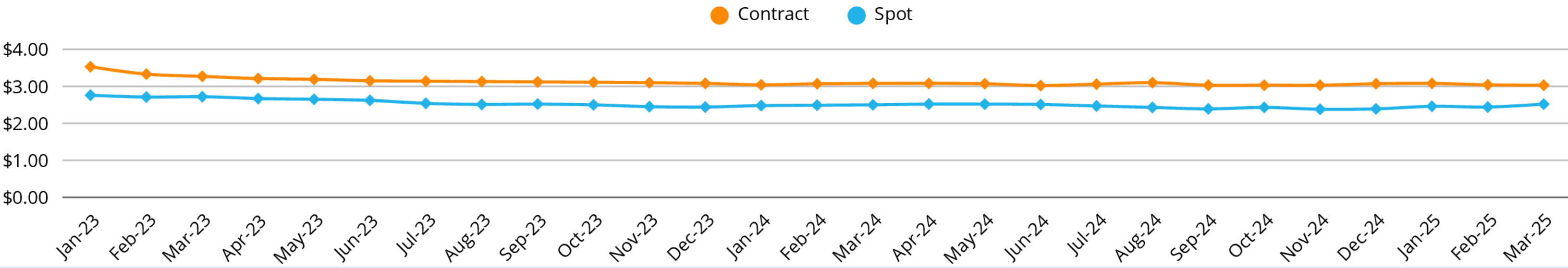
Truck Tonnage

Source: American Trucking Association

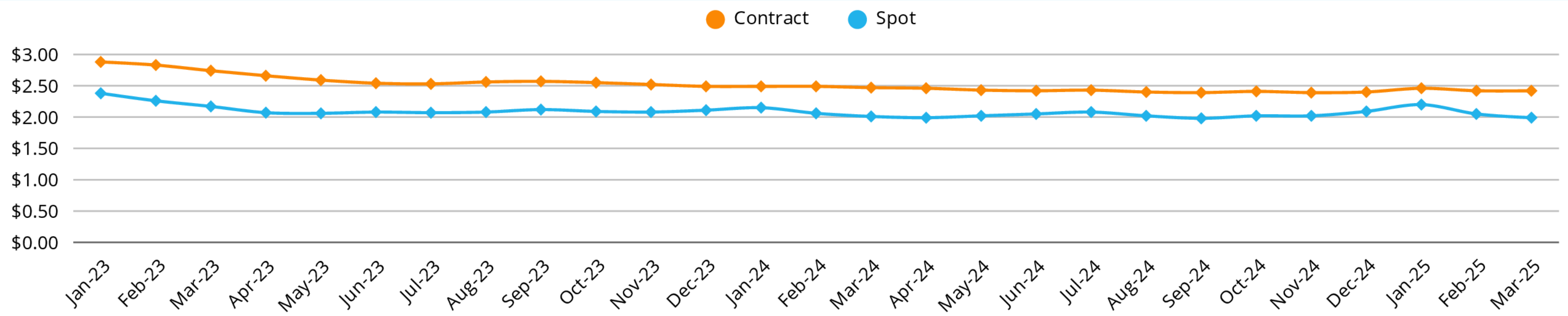
The ATA For-Hire Truck Tonnage Index climbed to 115.2 in February, up 3.0% from January and marking the first monthly gain in three months. On a year-over-year basis, tonnage rose 0.9%, reflecting gradual recovery across the trucking sector. This rebound follows recent seasonal declines and suggests stabilizing demand, especially in key freight corridors.



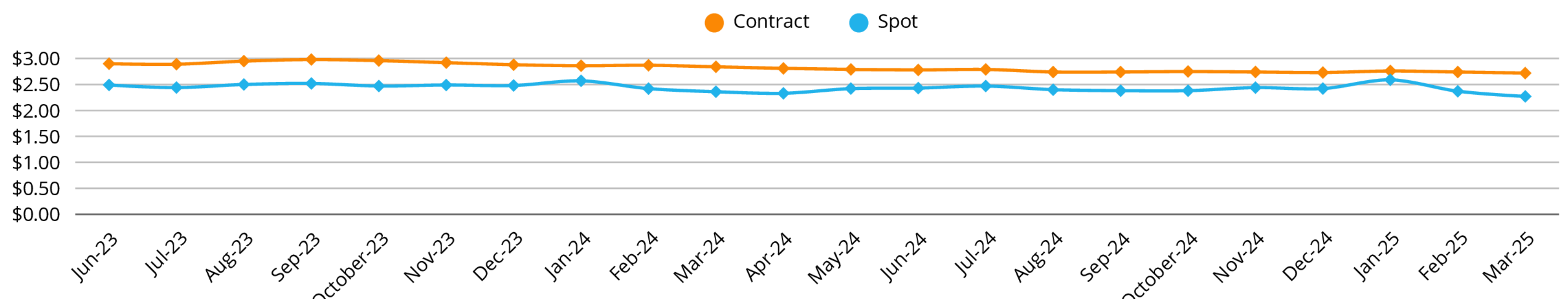
National Flatbed Rates
Source: DAT



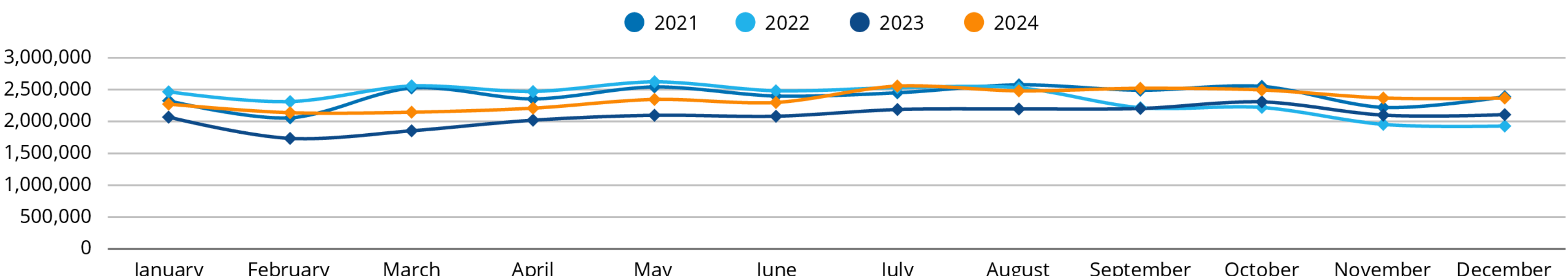
National Van Rates
Source: DAT



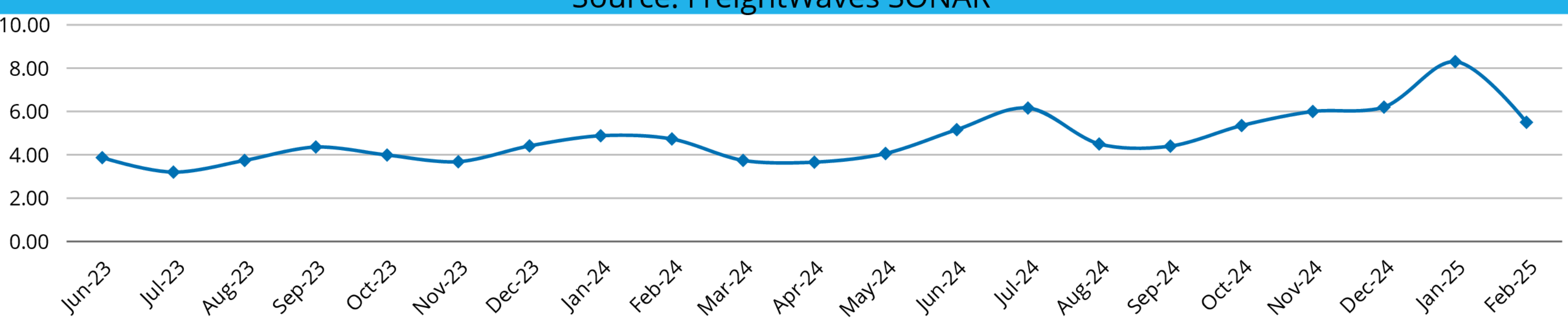
National Reefer Rates
Source: DAT



Import TEUs
Source: Descartes

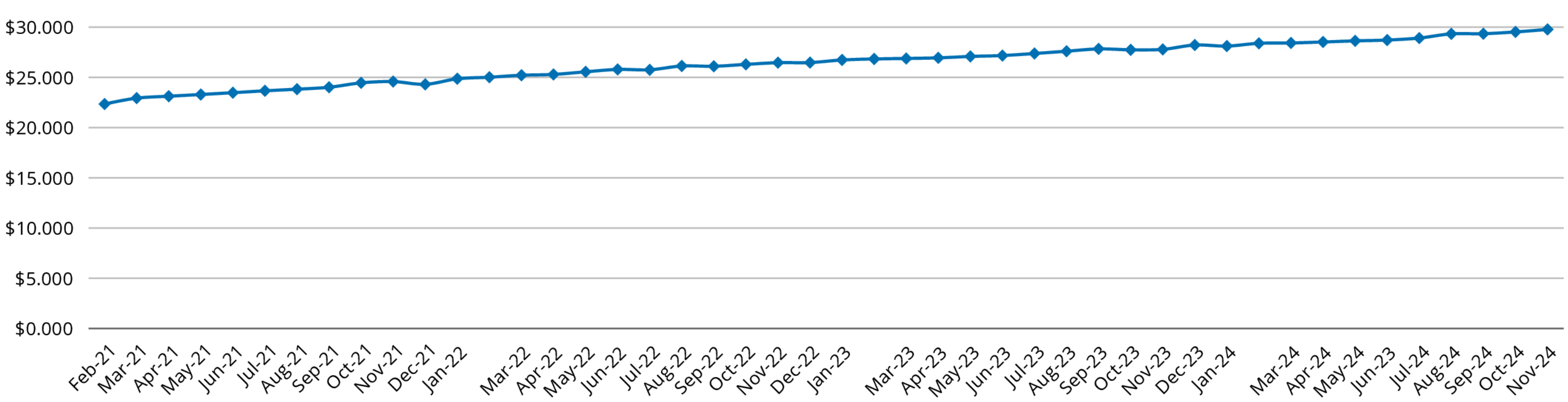


Outbound Tender Rejection Index (OTRI)
Source: FreightWaves SONAR



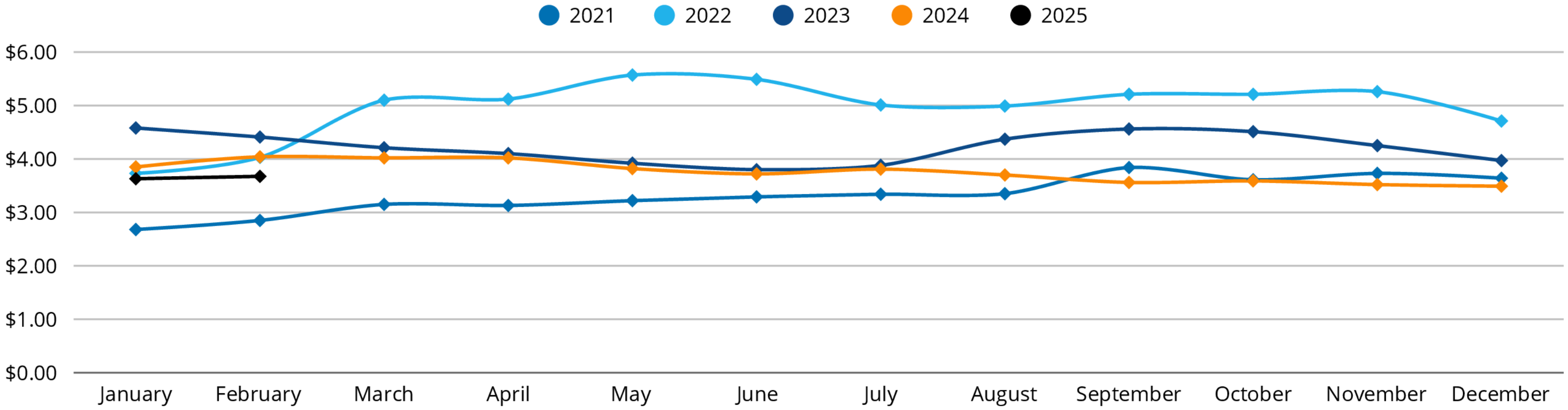
Monthly GDP (In Trillions)

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis



US Diesel Price

Source: US EIA



Future Outlook

As Q1 wraps up, the freight economy is showing signs of cautious momentum. February brought a mix of restocking activity, improved truck tonnage, and rising logistics costs—suggesting that while demand hasn't surged, supply chains are actively recalibrating. The jump in inventory levels and transportation prices, paired with steady consumer spending and manufacturing stabilization, points toward a more active freight environment heading into Q2.

Shippers should prepare for continued pressure on transportation rates, especially in LTL and final-mile segments where capacity remains tight. Warehousing costs are also trending upward, driven by increased utilization and limited availability. With the LMI signaling expansion across key logistics components, it's essential to stay agile—optimizing inventory placement, locking in rates where possible, and diversifying carrier relationships will help mitigate volatility.

Looking ahead, a successful Q2 strategy will center around flexibility. Balancing cost control with service reliability, investing in smarter routing, and leveraging data-driven insights will position shippers to adapt quickly as market dynamics evolve. MyFreightWorld's technology-driven solutions and expansive carrier network can help you navigate this complexity with confidence—whether you're optimizing lanes, managing costs, or scaling your supply chain. Connect with our team today to strengthen your transportation strategy for the months ahead.

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