

Unexpected fees shock U.S. consumers as Trump ends \$800 duty-free imports from China

Temu, Shein, and shoppers hit hard by new import tariffs

By [Skye Jacobs](#) February 9, 2025, 10:27 | [55 comments](#)



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WHAT JUST HAPPENED? President Trump's recent implementation of a 10 percent tariff on Chinese imports has sent shockwaves through the e-commerce world, disrupting online shoppers, shipping providers, and e-commerce platforms. The change stems from the reversal of the *de minimis rule*, a regulation that allows U.S. consumers to receive foreign packages valued under \$800 duty-free. After some immediate backlash, Trump reversed his decision temporarily until a proper system to collect tariffs on packages under \$800 is put in place.

This exemption had fueled the growth of cross-border e-commerce,

particularly benefiting platforms selling low-cost items from China like Temu and Shein. Now, the sudden imposition of tariffs on previously exempt low-value packages has led to unexpected import fees for consumers and confusion among shipping providers.

Social media has been [flooded](#) with complaints about these new costs. One TikTok user shared her frustration over a DHL notice demanding an extra \$115.91 for package delivery, exclaiming, "I'm calling out all shopping girlies: We've been hit."

Shipping providers have struggled to adapt to the new regulations. UPS initially applied fees to all Chinese imports as if they were valued at \$800, regardless of their actual worth, and is now working on contingency plans. USPS is preparing to collect import duties on all inbound packages from China and Hong Kong, having briefly [suspended](#) and then reinstated parcels from these regions. Meanwhile, DHL has introduced additional charges on packages from China, contributing to consumer sticker shock.

In response to the backlash, President Trump issued a new executive order temporarily reinstating the de minimis exemption. However, this revival is conditional, lasting only until adequate systems are in place to process and collect tariff revenue on packages under \$800.

The policy shift has also impacted major e-commerce platforms specializing in direct-from-China shopping. Temu and Shein now require Chinese merchants to pay an additional 30 percent levy on all retail goods sold through their platforms – a cost that will likely be passed on to consumers, as merchants struggle to maintain their already thin profit margins.

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Although the reversal of the de minimis rule was ostensibly aimed at curbing the flow of fentanyl and precursor chemicals into the United States, its consequences extend far beyond its intended purpose.

The change has disrupted e-commerce firms that built their business models around low-value, duty-free shipments to U.S. shoppers. American consumers, accustomed to purchasing inexpensive items like \$5 shirts, \$10 lamps, and \$20 shoes from Chinese platforms, may soon face higher prices.

As the situation continues to evolve, online shopping from China is undergoing a dramatic shift. Consumers, shipping providers, and e-commerce platforms must now navigate an uncertain landscape. While the full impact on online shopping habits and the broader e-commerce industry remains to be seen, one thing is clear: the era of effortless, ultra-cheap imports from China may be coming to an end.

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