FASTENER WORLD NEWS

Association News

IFI Kevin Vollmert Prioritizes Talent and Industry Advocacy

Kevin Vollmert has begun his term as Chairman of the Industrial Fasteners Institute (IFI), bringing nearly 20 years of experience at ITW Shakeproof, where he led commercial, applications engineering and innovation teams. **Over the next 12 months, Vollmert will focus on strengthening member value, workforce development and regulatory advocacy while advancing the IFI's strategic roadmap through 2027. Key priorities include expanding membership, increasing engagement and enhancing technical training through the institute's committees and educational programs.**

Addressing the industry's persistent labor shortage is another major focus. The IFI's registered apprenticeship program, developed with Marshall University, currently has five member companies onboarding apprentices, with another 18 in the pipeline. The program aims to build a stronger workforce of skilled cold heading and threading operators.

Vollmert also highlighted the importance of coordinated trade advocacy amid tariff pressures, including Section 232 measures affecting steel, aluminum and copper. With IFI membership now reaching 200 companies, Vollmert is encouraging more manufacturers to experience the organization's resources and industry network firsthand. He said stronger connections among members, committees and staff will help build a more resilient and influential fastener industry.

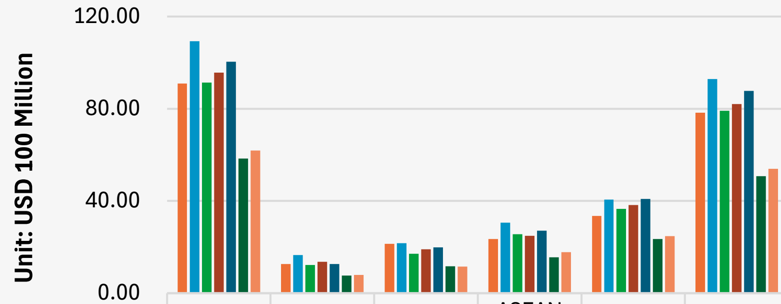
Tariff Frontline

Supply Chains Under Tighter Origin Scrutiny as White House Names Over 40 Countries as Facilitating Chinese Transshipment

How Chinese goods circumvent high tariffs to enter the U.S. has long been a major concern for the U.S. government. In its report The Great Transshipment Scam, the White House alleges that China has established a "shadow transshipment network" spanning more than 40 countries, enabling Chinese products to acquire a different "national identity" through third countries before entering the U.S. at lower tariff rates. The report places Taiwan, Canada, the EU, India, Japan, Mexico, and South Korea in the first tier of major economies associated with transshipment risks. However, this does not mean that Taiwan has been identified as an accomplice in illegal origin laundering. Rather, these economies have extensive links with Chinese supply chains, well-developed industrial bases, and substantial export capacity to the U.S., making illicit transshipment easier to conceal within large volumes of legitimate trade.

Data from the General Administration of Customs of China (***Figure 1***) also point to an apparent expansion of Chinese fastener exports beyond the U.S. market. Over the past 5 years (2021-2025), China's global fastener exports increased by 10%, rising from 9 to 10 billion USD. From January to July this year, exports grew by 6% year-on-year to US$6.1 billion. Exports to the United States increased by only 3%, while exports to the EU declined slightly by 1%. In contrast, exports to ASEAN, Japan, South Korea, and India surged by 14%, while exports to other markets rose by 5%. Non-U.S. regions accounted for as much as 87% of China's fastener exports, leaving the U.S. with only 13%.

Figure 1. Statistics on the Value of China's Fastener Exports to Various Countries



	World	U.S.A	EU+UK	ASEAN +Japan/ S. Korea/ India	Other Countries	Non-U.S. Regions
2021	90.90	12.57	21.40	23.43	33.50	78.33
2022	109.36	16.48	21.67	30.60	40.61	92.88
2023	91.39	12.27	17.06	25.57	36.50	79.12
2024	95.64	13.54	18.97	24.86	38.27	82.10
2025	100.43	12.61	19.86	27.03	40.92	87.81
Jan-July 2025	58.34	7.62	11.64	15.58	23.50	50.72
Jan-July 2026	61.84	7.86	11.46	17.78	24.73	53.98

Data from the General Administration of Customs of China

The U.S. Department of Commerce has long imposed antidumping and countervailing duties on steel threaded rods from China. It has also made clear that even if such products are sent to a third country for cutting, chamfering, coating, packaging, or assembly with other components, they may still be considered Chinese products if the processing is insufficient to fundamentally alter their essential character. A U.S. Customs and Border Protection ruling issued last year provides a representative example. In that case, wire rod sourced from China or Vietnam was shipped to Malaysia, where it underwent straightening, cutting, chamfering, and full-threading before being exported. CBP determined that these processing operations did not constitute a "substantial transformation," and that the country of origin continued to depend on the origin of the wire rod. In other words, sending Chinese materials to a third country for further processing, assembly, repacking, relabeling, or documentation changes will not make the product "Made in Malaysia".

For Taiwan's fastener industry, perhaps the warning is not that Taiwan was named in the White House report. Rather, it is that **the U.S. has elevated country-of-origin enforcement to a new policy level.** Customers and customs authorities may increasingly scrutinize the origin of steel, the locations where cold forming and thread rolling take place, heat treatment and surface finishing processes, supply chain records, and actual manufacturing activities. White House trade adviser Peter Navarro has also indicated that the U.S. is beginning to use AI tools to strengthen product-origin identification. **Complete material traceability, production records, and origin documentation will no longer be merely part of quality management—they may become the next "passport" for maintaining access to the U.S.. As the tariff war shifts from comparing duty rates to verifying product identity, those that can demonstrate where their products are genuinely made will stand a better chance of earning customer trust amid the global supply chain restructuring.**

ICBA FOUNDATION

Canadian Counter-Tariffs Raise Construction Cost Concerns, ICBA Says

Canada's new counter-tariffs on U.S.-origin goods could increase construction costs, with hundreds of products commonly used on jobsites included in the federal government's retaliatory measures, according to the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA).

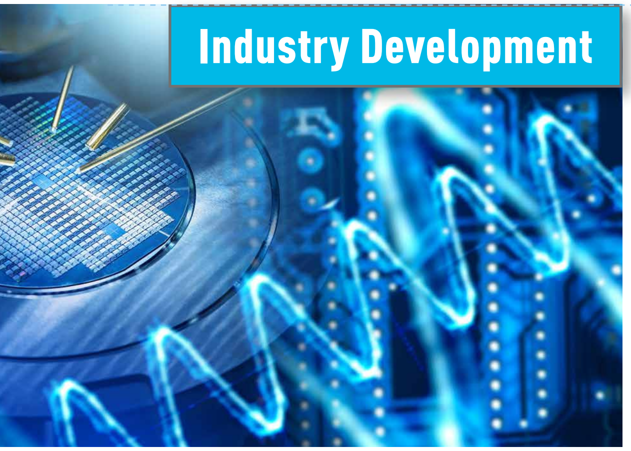
The association said the tariff list covers around 400 product lines and is scheduled to take effect Sept. 8. Construction-related products potentially affected include steel and aluminum materials, structural sections, pipes, wire products, fasteners, lumber, plywood, electrical equipment, HVAC products, tools and heavy machinery. **ICBA Chief Economist Jock Finlayson warned that the measures could add to existing cost pressures for Canadian companies and consumers while placing further strain on integrated North American supply chains.**

Of particular relevance to the fastener industry, the affected products include nails, screws, bolts, nuts, rivets, washers, anchors and aluminum fasteners, along with steel wires, chains and wire ropes.

The tariffs apply only to products classified as U.S.-origin. ICBA is urging contractors to verify product origins with suppliers, review procurement pipelines and identify shipments that could be in transit when the tariffs take effect.

Contractors are also advised to reassess pricing and review tariff, change-in-law and price-escalation provisions in fixed-price contracts. ICBA cautioned that the retaliatory measures could ultimately increase the cost of construction across Canada.

Industry Development



From Standard Fasteners to Semiconductor-Grade Solutions: A New Market Opportunity for Taiwan's Fastener Industry

For years, the semiconductor industry was regarded by many Taiwan fastener manufacturers as a high-tech market that was difficult to reach. Beyond the high technical barriers, many suppliers were unfamiliar with the stringent requirements of semiconductor equipment and uncertain about how fasteners could enter its supply chain. New technical insights, however, are helping bridge that gap by highlighting the critical role of fasteners in semiconductor fabrication.

Fasteners used in semiconductor processing equipment are far more than simple mechanical components. They may be exposed to vacuum conditions, plasma, corrosive process gases, elevated temperatures and repeated chemical cleaning. Unsuitable materials can generate particles, corrosion products or outgassing, potentially affecting equipment performance and wafer yield.

This creates opportunities for fastener manufacturers capable of supplying high-purity, corrosion-resistant and thermally stable products. Nickel-based alloys such as Hastelloy® C276, C22, Inconel® 600 and 625 can provide different combinations of chemical and high-temperature resistance, while specialty stainless steels may meet less aggressive applications. **Material selection must be matched to the actual process environment rather than relying on a single "best" material.**

Fastener design is equally important. **Vented socket head cap screws can provide gas escape paths during vacuum evacuation, while captive fasteners and vented washers can support assembly reliability in evacuated chambers. Cleanroom processing, including ultrasonic or IPA cleaning and controlled packaging, can also distinguish semiconductor-grade fasteners from conventional industrial products.** For Taiwan's fastener industry to enter this market, manufacturers need to demonstrate more than machining capability: alloy traceability, contamination control, cleanliness protocols, dimensional consistency, inspection, testing and production history can all become part of the qualification process. The key opportunity lies in working with equipment manufacturers and engineering teams at the design and qualification stages. By understanding the process chemistry, temperature, vacuum level, mechanical loading and cleanliness requirements, fastener suppliers can develop application-specific solutions rather than simply offering standard screws.

Aerospace Fastener Dispute Puts Trademark Protection Under the Spotlight

LONG·LOK

Safety Socket

A trademark dispute between two U.S. fastener companies is raising an important question for the industry: when does a distinctive fastener design become a trademark, and when is it simply a functional feature? The case involves Long-Lok, LLC, an aerospace fastener engineering company, and Safety Socket, LLC, a former supplier of high-strength fasteners. For more than 50 years, Long-Lok has engineered self-locking fasteners for aerospace applications, often modifying standard fasteners supplied or sourced for its customers. The dispute centers on Safety Socket's "Banded Knurl Mark," a distinctive double-band knurl design on socket-head fasteners. Safety Socket claimed trademark rights in the design and, in 2025, sent Long-Lok a cease-and-desist letter alleging that Long-Lok's modification, distribution and sale of its fasteners infringed those rights.

Long-Lok responded by asking the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Ohio to cancel the trademark. It argued that the knurling was functional because the two bands provided a better grip when fastening components and therefore should not be protected exclusively as a trademark. Long-Lok also claimed that Safety Socket had abandoned the mark after moving away from manufacturing in 2023.

In an August 21, 2026 ruling, the court allowed the functionality claim to proceed, finding that factual disputes remained over whether the design provided a meaningful utilitarian benefit. However, the court dismissed the abandonment claim without prejudice because Long-Lok's own complaint indicated that fasteners bearing the mark remained in commerce. Long-Lok was given 14 days to amend its complaint, leaving the trademark dispute unresolved.

Companies Development

Sheh Fung's Dual-Plant Strategy Drives Q2 Revenue to Five-Quarter High

Taiwanese screw manufacturer Sheh Fung Screws reported consolidated revenue of NT$547 million for the second quarter of 2026, up 0.25% quarter over quarter and 11.53% year over year, marking its highest quarterly revenue in nearly five quarters. First-half revenue reached NT$1.092 billion, an increase of 2.79% from a year earlier. June revenue rose 11.82% year over year to NT$179 million, extending annual growth for the fourth consecutive month. **Sheh Fung said recovering orders from customers in Europe and the U.S., combined with greater supply flexibility from its Taiwan and Vietnam production bases, supported the improvement in operating momentum.** The Americas and Europe accounted for 52.36% and 24.97% of Q2 revenue, respectively, while shipments from its Vietnam plant increased to 10.70% of total supply, supporting expansion in the European market.

The company continues to pursue a strategy centered on market diversification, multi-location production and higher-value products. It is expanding customer development in Europe and Southeast Asia while improving efficiency and workforce capabilities at its Vietnam facility. Sheh Fung is also developing specialty fasteners, new screw products and automotive fasteners, while strengthening quality and certification capabilities. Looking ahead to Q3, the company remains cautiously optimistic, with potential order growth depending on the successful validation and initial shipments of products for new customers.

Spec Products Enters Volvo EX60 Supply Chain with Waterproof Bolts Set for 2H26 Production

Taiwanese specialty fastener maker Spec Products has entered the supply chain for Volvo's new EX60 electric vehicle, working with Stanley to develop waterproof bolts for the battery assembly chassis. Spec Products is reportedly the only Taiwanese supplier approved to manufacture the products, with annual exports expected to reach at least 240 metric tons of high-margin fasteners. President Zephyr Chang said customized automotive components account for more than 80% of the company's development projects. For the EX60 program, Spec Products uses a digital mold design support system combined with six-die, six-blow forming technology, shortening development time by 30% and reducing total development costs by more than 10%.

Spec Products posted NT$1.256 billion in first-half revenue, up 3.67% year over year. Net income attributable to the parent company reached NT$116 million, rising about 298.5%, while EPS increased to NT$2.55. North America accounted for more than 60% of second-quarter revenue, with Europe contributing about 30%. Looking ahead, Spec Products plans to reduce its reliance on standard fasteners and focus on EV battery sealing components, multi-process specialty products, assemblies and patented products, while evaluating overseas investment, acquisitions and strategic alliances.

Strong U.S. Aluminum Demand and AI Infrastructure Support Ta Chen International's Growth

Ta Chen International is maintaining strong operating momentum, supported by a supply-demand gap in the U.S. industrial aluminum market and continued investment in AI infrastructure. The company has reported monthly revenue above NT$10 billion for five consecutive months. Ta Chen International said the U.S. continues to face a shortage of aluminum coil and sheet supply, while tariff policies have created an import barrier, keeping demand ahead of supply and supporting stable demand for its products.

The expansion of AI servers and related infrastructure is also driving demand for stainless steel, aluminum coil and sheet, screws and fasteners, further supporting Ta Chen International's shipments. Analysts believe that if U.S. economic conditions and tariff policies remain stable and AI infrastructure investment continues, the company's profitability could maintain its growth momentum. Ta Chen International reported July revenue of NT$12.618 billion, up 5.97% month over month and 46.12% year over year, marking a record monthly high. Revenue for the first seven months reached NT$79.814 billion, up 32.56% year over year. Second-quarter gross margin was 30.49%, an increase of 6.15 percentage points year over year, while net income rose 399% to NT$4.786 billion, with earnings per share of NT$1.93.

BBI Benefits from U.S. Factory and Data Center Demand as Fastener Orders Stay Strong

BBI reported record monthly revenue in June, supported by strong purchasing demand from U.S. customers. The company expects robust procurement momentum to continue through November and December, while anticipating further fastener demand from overseas companies investing in U.S. manufacturing facilities and data center construction. BBI mainly supplies carbon steel, alloy steel and stainless steel fasteners, with the U.S. as its primary market. The company operates around 20 warehouses across the country, with U.S. sales accounting for approximately 90% of total revenue. Customer purchasing has recently increased from about US$3 million to US$3.5 million per day, with industrial fasteners showing particularly strong growth.

The company said investment in U.S. manufacturing facilities and data center projects is driving demand for basic construction screws and structural fasteners. Although around 4,300 data centers have been approved for construction in the U.S., only about 160 have been completed, indicating significant potential demand ahead. BBI posted June revenue of NT$2.632 billion, up 12.88% month over month and 36.57% year over year. First-half revenue reached NT$14.073 billion, increasing 18.86% year over year.

Singapore Fastener Distributor Sin Lian Seng Targets US$28M Nasdaq IPO

Singapore-based fastener and solar solutions provider Sin Lian Seng has filed with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for an initial public offering that could raise up to US$28 million. The company plans to offer approximately 6.3 million shares at an estimated price of US$4 to US$5 each. At the midpoint of the proposed range, Sin Lian Seng Construction would have an implied market capitalization of about US$73 million. The company intends to list on the Nasdaq under the ticker ININ.

Founded in 1986, Sin Lian Seng Construction supplies bolts, nuts and other industrial components to customers in the construction, mechanical and electrical, maritime and manufacturing sectors. The company expanded beyond its traditional fastener business in June 2025 through the acquisition of Lumenx Energy, entering Singapore's solar photovoltaic engineering, procurement and construction market. Sin Lian Seng Construction reported approximately US$6 million in revenue for the year ended December 31, 2025. The company initially filed its IPO registration confidentially on December 19, 2025, marking a potential new milestone for the Singapore-based fastener distributor as it seeks access to U.S. capital markets.

Vossloh To Deliver Rail Fastenings For Two New HSR Lines

Vossloh has secured two contracts worth around EUR 60 million to supply rail fastening systems for new high-speed rail (HSR) lines in the Chinese province of Shandong. **The company is supplying System 300 fastening systems for slab track on the 269 km Jinan – Zhaozhuang line and the 109 km Qingdao – Zhucheng line.** Both new lines are designed for speeds of up to 350 km/h. Deliveries will begin in 2027, with production taking place at the Kunshan plant of the subsidiary Vossloh Fastening Systems China. The Jinan – Zhaozhuang link connects the provincial capital to the southern economic regions and also provides access to important tourist destinations such as Qufu. The Qingdao – Zhucheng line links the deep-sea port of Qingdao with industrial centres towards Jinan as well as destinations in the south of the province.

Sundram Fasteners Plans to Invest Rs 400 Crore

Manufacturer and supplier of engineering products, Sundram Fasteners Ltd (SFL) has plans to invest Rs 400 crore this fiscal year to expand manufacturing capacity across automotive and industrial segments. The investment will fuel the expansion required to meet demand across the internal combustion engine (ICE), plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV), and electric vehicle (EV) segments. Rs 250 crore will be deployed in the fasteners division to expand capabilities for the wind energy, space, and aerospace sectors. Rs 100 crore will be invested in the cast and machined assemblies business to enhance the production of high-value precision-engineered assemblies. This investment comes as the firm is looking to diversify its business.

Optimas Identifies Up to 50% Fastener Savings for Diesel Engine Manufacturer

Optimas International has helped a manufacturer of high-performance diesel outboard engines identify potential fastener cost savings of up to 50% without compromising product performance or reliability.

The project focused on threaded fasteners made from A4-80 stainless steel, which can help reduce the risk of thread galling but are not commonly held in standard inventory. Because these fasteners often require bar-turning to order, they can involve higher costs and extended lead times. Optimas reviewed the customer's standard operating procedure (SOP) bill of materials and assessed threaded assemblies throughout the engine. The company identified applications where A4-70 stainless steel could be safely substituted for A4-80 without requiring the additional performance margin.

Each proposed change was presented with the original specification, allowing the manufacturer to compare cost, lead time and performance on a like-for-like basis. **By optimizing fastener specifications at the component level, Optimas identified savings of up to 50% while reducing supply-chain and lead-time risks associated with specially produced A4-80 fasteners.**

NT Fasteners Opens Major New Darwin Facility, Realizing a Family Vision

NT Fasteners has officially opened a new 1,000-square-meter warehouse and showroom in Darwin, Australia, marking a major milestone for owner Tony Halikos and fulfilling a long-held vision shared with his late father, company founder John Halikos. Located on Berrimah Road, the new facility is more than 12 times larger than the company's previous premises. The project, unveiled on June 18, represents the culmination of a journey spanning nearly two decades.

Built entirely with local businesses, trades and materials, the development reflects the company's long-standing commitment to supporting the Darwin community. Tony Halikos said the investment was designed to strengthen NT Fasteners' role as a reliable local supplier and position the company for future generations.

The project also marked Tony's first business collaboration with his wife, Nicki. Its completion follows years of delays caused by economic conditions. The opening was attended by Northern Territory Treasurer Bill Yan, who said the investment demonstrated confidence in the region's economic outlook as several major industrial and infrastructure projects move forward.

Würth Group Reports 4.3% Sales Growth in H1 26 as Digital Business Expands

Germany-based Würth Group, the world's largest fastener products distributor, reported **solid financial growth for the first half of 2026 despite continued economic challenges across global markets.** The group generated €10.9 billion in sales, up 4.3% year over year, or 5.2% on a currency-adjusted basis. Operating profit increased 8.4% to €515 million.

Digital sales continued to strengthen, with Würth's eBusiness accounting for 25.3% of total first-half sales, following the company's first full-year result above 25% in 2025. Würth cited elevated energy costs, geopolitical uncertainty and weak industrial activity, particularly in Germany, as ongoing pressures on its markets. However, the company reported strong performance from its Electronics eiSos and Chemicals businesses, while its fastening technology segment, Arnold Group, showed signs of recovery.

Eastern Europe and South America also contributed positive growth momentum. Würth said recent order intake provides confidence for continued business performance through the remainder of 2026. The group ended June with approximately 86,700 employees, including around 44,000 sales staff, maintaining a workforce level broadly unchanged from the previous year.

Gersan Elektrik Explores Strategic Partnership with SmartBolts

Türkiye-based company Gersan Elektrik Ticaret ve Sanayi A.Ş. has signed a non-binding statement of intent with U.S.-based SmartBolts to explore potential strategic cooperation in the manufacture, commercialization, distribution, financing and development of products and technologies. The discussions remain exploratory and are subject to legal, technical, financial, regulatory and commercial reviews, due diligence and further negotiations. No partnership, joint venture or other binding commitment has been established at this stage. SmartBolts develops tension-indicating fasteners featuring a visual system designed to show bolt tension, helping improve installation reliability, inspection efficiency and maintenance visibility in critical bolted connections.

Gersan said the discussions form part of its broader internationalization strategy and could complement its existing industrial capabilities and market expansion efforts. The announcement follows Gersan's recent application to have its shares cross-traded on the OTCQX Market in the United States. Chairman Erkan İzgi said the two initiatives represent complementary steps toward increasing the company's international visibility in both capital markets and industrial business channels. Any future cooperation would require definitive agreements and approvals from both parties and their respective advisors. ■

compiled by Fastener World