

MEMBERSHIP VALUE
FOR INVESTMENT
REPORT

2023

Table of Contents



03

Letter from the Chair

04

Overview

06

Gains

14

AAEI Committees at Work

18

AAEI Actions & Resources

19

Annual Conference

21

Expanded Member Benefits

26

About AAEI

27

Board of Governors

28

2023 Sponsors



LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
OF EXPORTERS AND IMPORTERS

Dear AAEI Members and Trade Advocates,

As we stand at the threshold of a new year, it is my privilege to reflect upon the state of trade in the United States and the pivotal events that unfolded in 2023.

Every development in international trade held immense significance for trade compliance executives, who were increasingly called to the C-Suites of their companies for updates on their work. Their responsibilities now include validating environmental, social and governance claims that their companies make about sourcing and carbon output. Trade practitioners are expected to have total visibility into their supply chains and their suppliers' suppliers.

The American Association of Exporters and Importers has been diligently working to support our members' interests, advocate for policies that enhance trade opportunities, and provide resources to navigate the evolving trade landscape. The work demonstrates our resolute belief that trade matters and reinforces our commitment to forge a trade renaissance in the United States. We continue to champion sustainability and technological innovation as essential components of a thriving trade environment.

Ted Sherman

Chair, American Association of Exporters and Importers Board of Governors



OVERVIEW

The American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI) represents an international community of trade compliance executives, responsible for complying with and influencing the laws — both domestic and global — governing the export and import of goods. Representing an international community of trade compliance executives, AAEI advocates for, informs, and brings together those responsible for complying with and influencing global export and import laws.



The American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI) is a corporate membership association based in Washington, DC, for trade compliance executives involved in international trade and companies that provide services for the movement of goods. We are recognized as technical experts regarding the day-to-day facilitation of trade. AAEI members include importers, exporters, customs brokers, freight forwarders, trade services companies, and law firms. AAEI members receive advocacy, networking, and education benefits.

AAEI advocates on behalf of U.S. companies on trade policy issues before the U.S. Congress, Executive Agencies, and multi-lateral organizations including the World Trade Organization and the World Customs Organization.

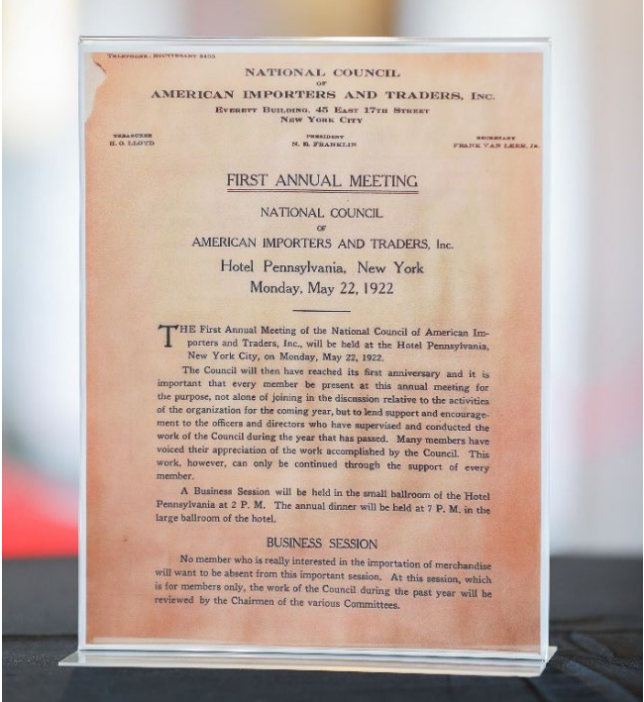
AAEI plays an important role in providing education to international trade compliance executives through its standing committees which seek to improve business processes and review proposed trade policy and regulations.

AAEI assists international trade compliance executives by providing information concerning government regulations through webinars, meetings with government officials, annual conferences, regional roadshows, weekly comprehensive member emails, and monthly *International Trade ALERT* newsletters.



Our Legacy of MAKING GLOBAL TRADE HAPPEN

For more than 100 years, AAEI has been the place where companies with an interest in international trade go for advocacy, networking, and education. Historically, AAEI's keys to success in advocating for free and fair trade have been its platforms for dialogue and providing a powerful voice for its members. AAEI has created important networking opportunities and open exchanges between private industry and government agencies. AAEI members have always come to the Association for valuable educational resources to learn about the changes in trade policy and trade compliance requirements that affect their businesses.



This report is designed to provide members with a synopsis of the Association's recent accomplishments and to highlight the value of AAEI membership.

AAEI works tirelessly for the interests of its members. The story of AAEI is told by our members, who are recognized as technical experts in trade. We bring together industry leaders, government regulators and lawmakers to further the pursuit of trade facilitation. Together, **we make global trade happen.**

GAINS

At the American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI), the work we do together creates tangible benefits for our members and the trade community at large. Our members invested in these key drivers in 2023.

Advocacy

AAEI works on behalf of its members to eliminate regulatory and legislative friction between the trade community and customs authorities.

Networking

AAEI's meetings and events provide opportunities to learn about practical solutions for problems in trade.

Education

AAEI's educational and professional development programs help members stay in-the-know.

2023 Accomplishments

- 01 Forced Labor Engagement with CBP and DHS
- 02 NextGen Customs (Customs Modernization)
- 03 Export Controls & Sanctions
- 04 Mass Liquidation Functionality for Drawback Claims
- 05 AI and Emerging Technology in Trade
- 06 Engagement with CBP's Centers of Excellence & Expertise
- 07 Impact of Possible Government Shutdown on Trade

Forced Labor Engagement with CBP and DHS

PRIORITY INTEREST	PERFORMANCE	VALUE
<p>Managing compliance of Forced Labor laws and regulations through U.S. and foreign government engagement</p>	<p>Direct discussion with high-level foreign and domestic government officials</p> <p>AAEI task force meetings with guest speakers</p> <p>Clarification on prohibition of using Foreign Trade Zones (FTZs) for UFLPA detentions</p> <p>AAEI Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for CBP internal guidance documents</p>	<p>Clarity for compliance</p> <p>Safe space for importers to freely discuss compliance obstacles and solutions</p> <p>Identifying and managing supply and financial risks</p> <p>Evaluating and improving business operations and risk management programs</p> <p>Safeguarding the corporate brand and reputation</p>



AAEI has remained actively engaged with U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) on Forced Labor enforcement since the implementation of the Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act (UFLPA). AAEI held multiple high-level meetings in 2023 with CBP and DHS leaders, including Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas. AAEI members heard directly from CBP’s Office of Trade, Trade Remedy Law Enforcement and Cargo & Conveyance Security.

AAEI also engaged with representatives from CBP Centers of Excellence and Expertise on the process of Forced Labor investigations. AAEI provided various

benchmarking opportunities for importers and exporters and obtained a sample detention notice to help educate members on the evidentiary requirements of an investigation.

AAEI stepped forward in 2023 as a leading organization to help importers and exporters manage the trade compliance challenges associated with the eradication of Forced Labor in U.S. supply chains.

CBP is currently working with AAEI members to identify inconsistencies in the enforcement process and engage in two-way discussions on specific issues and disparities.

NextGen Customs (Customs Modernization)

PRIORITY INTEREST	PERFORMANCE	VALUE
<p>Proposed legislation to modernize U.S. customs law</p> <p>Preserve trade facilitation measures in legislation</p>	<p>As a participant of CBP's 21st Century Customs Task Force, AAEI played an active role in proposing modified language for trade facilitation measures in any Customs Modernization bill</p> <p>Direct discussion, high-level meetings</p> <p>Support of COAC recommendations for trade facilitation through legislative and regulatory changes</p>	<p>Leveraging stakeholder role as technical experts in shaping future of Customs; AAEI members played active role in developing trade facilitation recommendations</p> <p>Business forecasting</p> <p>Driving growth and setting the strategy for trade facilitation for the next decade</p>



AAEI is the only association of its kind to be invited to CBP’s task force on the 21st Century Customs Framework (21CCF), with 9 active AAEI members. AAEI remains a strong, important voice in the discussions that shape the future of Customs.

As CBP transforms 21CCF into NextGen Customs, AAEI advocates for preserving and updating time-tested trade facilitation measures and modernizing the value of informed compliance and shared responsibility. Association leaders leverage their stakeholder role in these high-level discussions as technical experts on all aspects of the Customs process, including information gathering and record-keeping; consolidation of government agency processes; Trusted Trader/CTPAT/ISA programs; e-commerce; air cargo information; entry filings; HTS classification; release; country of origin; reconciliation; payment; post-summary correction; and prior disclosures/regulatory audit.

AAEI provided CBP and U.S. lawmakers with trade facilitation recommendations and joined in support of those submitted by the Commercial Customs Operations Advisory Committee (COAC). AAEI continues to work on legislative advocacy for trade facilitation.

Export Controls & Sanctions

PRIORITY INTEREST	PERFORMANCE	VALUE
Export Controls and Sanctions Compliance	<p>Direct discussion with the White House, Bureau of Industry and Security, Department of State, and the U.S. Department of Commerce</p> <p>Benchmarking events for exporters</p>	<p>Clarity for compliance of new export controls regimes that focus on dual-use products and emerging technologies</p> <p>Identify and assess the relevant key compliance risks and define mitigating strategies</p> <p>Building an appropriate and cost-effective export controls regime</p>

For executives responsible for managing export controls and international sanctions, AAEI’s work reduces risks, costs, and helps members ensure compliance. AAEI held direct discussions through the year with speakers from the Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) and leaders of its Export Administration, as well as leaders from the Census Bureau and the Department of State on the policy and practice of export compliance and facilitation. AAEI provided in-person benchmarking sessions for exporters that resulted in clarity for compliance and helped improve business certainty.

AAEI also organized high-level meetings to work on creating advanced manifesting for the Automated Export System (AES).



Mass Liquidation Functionality for Drawback

PRIORITY INTEREST

Improved efficiency for processing drawback claims

PERFORMANCE

Worked with CBP on identifying and resolving inefficiencies in processing drawback claims, including improvements to allow mass liquidation functionality

Provided drawback staffing process improvement recommendations to CBP

VALUE

Faster processing of drawback claims, saving importers thousands of dollars through the duty drawback program

Drawback specialists now able to simultaneously access multiple claims



Since 1789, duty drawback has a long history of demonstrating its value to importers, resulting in over billions of dollars in duty drawback every year. AAEI members who have drawback filing responsibilities depend on the AAEI Drawback Committee to secure revenue and time savings for their companies. In 2023, the Drawback Committee provided important and comprehensive updates on CBP’s new administrative management of drawback claims through the Centers of Excellence and Expertise. AAEI collaborated with the Trade Support Network’s (TSN’s) Drawback Working Group to address delays with unliquidated claims, reducing the volume of outstanding claims and privilege applications, and ruling delays on Merchandise Processing Fee (MPF) calculation methodology.

AAEI also saw through all stages of ACE development this year that allowed CBP to improve efficiency to mass liquidation functionality for drawback claims, allowing drawback specialists to simultaneously access multiple claims.

On the legislative side, AAEI opposed bills that sought to reform the informal entry process, which would have mitigated the effectiveness of the drawback process.

AI and Emerging Technology in Trade

PRIORITY INTEREST

Remaining compliant while leveraging machine learning (AI) tools and other emerging technologies in trade practice

PERFORMANCE

Benchmarking on application of AI software for use in classification

Seeking clarity on Reasonable Care standards

Speaking opportunities for technology experts to discuss emerging technologies used in trade practice

VALUE

Clarity for compliance

Business certainty

Leveraging innovation and technology

As the nation’s principal association for importers and exporters, AAEI’s substantive committees provided benchmarking opportunities for members to discuss the application of emerging and emergent technology in trade, including the use of AI. AAEI members discussed proactive approaches to remaining compliant while using AI tools and other emerging technologies in trade practice.



AAEI provided speaking opportunities for technology experts to educate members on the potentials and limits of such tools that are currently being adopted in trade practice. AAEI also provided opportunities for trade compliance executives to share industry practices.

Engagement with CBP’s Centers of Excellence & Expertise (CEEs)

PRIORITY INTEREST	PERFORMANCE	VALUE
<p>Improving consistency of CBP investigations</p>	<p>High-level discussion of inconsistencies with CBP leadership</p> <p>Creation of AAEL-CBP Centers Circle events, including meeting at Base Metals Center in Chicago</p> <p>Scoring importer experiences with various CEEs to illustrate inconsistencies</p>	<p>Clarity for compliance</p> <p>Business certainty</p> <p>Evaluating and improving supply chain operations</p> <p>Leveraging technology and innovation</p>



AAEI’s access to high-level leadership at CBP gave members a clear channel in 2023 to communicate examples of disparities and inconsistencies among the CBP Centers of Excellence of Excellence and Expertise (CEEs). AAEI leveraged members’ working relationships with CEE administrators to schedule updates from guest speakers and open dialogue with stakeholder members.

AAEI established a collaborative agreement with CBP to create bi-directional dialogue with importers and exporters. AAEI launched a series of events in 2023 in conjunction with CBP, called Centers Circle events, to help educate trade practitioners and trade enforcement representatives on the import and release process.

More events will be scheduled in 2024.

Impact of Possible Government Shutdown on Trade

PRIORITY INTEREST

Preparation of trade compliance programs in event of a government shutdown

PERFORMANCE

Guidance for importers, exporters and service providers on which Partner Government Agencies would be affected by a government shutdown

VALUE

Clarity for compliance
Identifying and managing business risks
Business certainty and resilience



On two occasions in 2023, the federal government came close to shutting down non-essential agencies due to funding shortages. The close calls required agencies to prepare in the event of a shutdown, which would have affected importers and exporters who work with Partner Government Agencies (PGAs). AAEI created a useful document for members and trade compliance executives charting the expected impact on trade practices in the event of a shutdown. AAEI sourced the information from government and external sources, many of which were based on the 2019 government shutdown.

AAEI members adopted the chart before making their contingency plans within their trade departments and found useful guidance from the chart. AAEI also gave members a consistent source of accurate information in the weeks and days leading up to the potential shutdowns, and the confidence to know that AAEI would continue to serve members in the event of a trade disruption.

AAEI COMMITTEES AT WORK

AAEI's substantive committees met regularly through 2023 to discuss, understand, and act on multiple trade issues. Here's the year in review.



Automotive and Aerospace Committee

AAEI's Automotive and Aerospace Committee underwent significant expansion in 2023, broadening its scope to include trade concerns within the Automotive Industry alongside those of the Aerospace and Defense Industries. This shift aligns with U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP's) Automotive and Aerospace Center for Excellence and Expertise.

The committee began collaborations with the Trade Support Network (TSN) to address multiple Automated Commercial Environment (ACE) development requests. A working group was developed with CBP, TSN and the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA) to enhance the ACE system, particularly streamlining [military duty-free import processing](#).

Members participated in benchmarking the [use of](#) Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies in international trade. Additionally, the committee hosted guest speakers from CBP's Automotive & Aerospace CEE to discuss pertinent industry trade issues.

Border Interagency Committee

AAEI's Border Interagency Committee (BIC) made strides to improve the Association's proposed One Government (1USG) streamlining of import processing, focusing on collaboration with Partner Government Agencies (PGAs). The BIC committee also hosted a webinar with the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) on its eFiling pilot program.

Problem Statement

- FORTY-SEVEN PGAs require hundreds of data elements for Import/Export Process requiring the trade to manually send or build electronic data connections with brokers.

Recommendation

- Streamline Import/Export Processes by building a Product & Partner repository in ACE eliminating the need to send product level details on every single transaction for PGA entries (Treat as a license/permit)

Challenges	Benefit
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expensive & Resource intensive projects to implement GT technology and data connections • Constantly changing CBP/PGA requirements require modification and/or manual offline efforts • Data exposure on a transactional basis (Cyber risk) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce data required on transactions • CBP & PGA Early visibility to review data - Immediate release (Eliminate PM requirements?) • Trade reduces time on managing border Release process (CA to US) • Data Rationalization (Drive one set of data)

Centralized Product & Parts Repository for PGA Data requirements

Diagram showing a central repository for Product and Partner data, connected to various agencies (CBP, CPSC, FDA, EPA, DHS, etc.) via data connections.

Goal: Decrease Errors & Omissions at the time of entry enabling ONE release of goods from all agencies at the same time to ensure seamless flow of the Supply Chain all while protecting the homeland

Customs Policy and Procedures Committee

AAEI's Customs Committee submitted AAEI's recommendations on trade facilitation for NextGen Customs legislation to CBP and U.S. lawmakers, including Sens. Bill Cassidy (R-LA) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). The committee also prompted CBP for clarification on prohibiting Foreign Trade Zones from being used for storage of detained goods during Forced Labor investigations. It filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for CBP to release internal documents related to Forced Labor enforcement practices. The committee hosted a webinar this year on the definition of Customs Business following the enactment of Customs Broker Modernization Regulations (19 CFR 111).

Through its Forced Labor Prevention Task Force meetings, the Customs Committee provided a platform for AAEI members to share information updates and engage in benchmarking on Forced Labor issues. Several of these Task Force meetings included guest speakers from CBP, who spoke on Forced Labor enforcement practices.

Drawback and Duty Deferral Committee

AAEI's highly respected Drawback Committee worked with CBP to improve efficiency to mass liquidation functionality for drawback claims. AAEI introduced the idea of mass liquidation functionality for drawback claims to allow drawback specialists to simultaneously access multiple claims. CBP later successfully deployed mass liquidation in ACE.

AAEI also worked with CBP on an alternate solution for the payment of Superfund Excise Tax drawback ahead of programming in the next fiscal year.

Export and Global Trade Compliance Committee

In 2023, AAEL created the new Export and Global Trade Compliance Committee (EGTC) by merging the Export Committee and the International Policy Committee, to focus on all outward-facing trade. The committee further expanded its scope to include global trade compliance responsibilities and trade challenges.

The committee successfully improved AAEL's engagement with export oversight agencies. The committee hosted two webinars in 2023, one on regulatory changes to 100% Air Cargo Screening and another on the European Union's climate-related trade regulations. It also developed enhancements to AAEL's proposals for Export Modernization and expanded AAEL's overseas partnerships and leveraged relationships to provide members with timely regional updates. The committee also shared firsthand reports on the World Customs Organization's (WCO's) Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG) and the SAFE Framework Work Group.

Healthcare Industries Committee

AAEL's Healthcare Industries Committee (HIC), which focuses on trade compliance for pharmaceutical and medical devices products, initiated quarterly meetings with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) on a variety of issues affecting [pharmaceutical and medical device imports](#). It developed bi-directional education for importers and Partner Government Agencies (PGAs). Additionally, the committee proposed adding new intended use codes to improve the import processing of pharmaceutical products.

Textiles, Apparel and Footwear Committee

AAEL's Textiles Committee engaged members in benchmarking on supply chain strategies regarding Forced Labor compliance in the Textiles industry. The committee promoted the renewal of trade preference programs, including Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), the Miscellaneous Tariff Bill (MTB), and the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The committee also hosted guest speakers from CBP's Apparel, Footwear and Textiles Center of Excellence and Expertise.

Trade Policy Committee

AAEL's Trade Policy Committee focuses on advocating for trade policies that work for AAEL members. This year, it filed comments in support of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' proposed revisions to the methods used for determining Import and Export Price Indexes (MXPI). It also promoted the renewal of trade preference programs, including Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) and the Miscellaneous

Tariff Bill (MTB). The committee organized AAEL's first Center Circle Event at CBP's Base Metals Center of Excellence and Expertise for aluminum importers.

Transpacific Committee

AAEL's Transpacific Committee filed comments this year with the Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) on shipping container and port equipment practices. It also filed separate comments with the FMC in support of proposed data and information sharing improvements among carriers, ports, and shippers. The committee expanded its engagement with the FMC and held a webinar this year with FMC Commissioner Carl Bentzel.

AAEI ACTIONS IN 2023

[Coalition Letter to President Biden on West Coast Port Labor Negotiations](#) – March 2023

[Coalition Letter to Senate Finance Committee and House Ways and Means](#) – June 2023

[AAEI Comments to Government of Canada on CBSA](#) – July 2023

[Coalition Letter to President Biden on UPS Teamsters Strike](#) – July 2023

[AAEI Letter to CBP on Forced Labor Detention in FTZs](#) – August 2023

[AAEI Letter to FMC on Supply Chain Bottlenecks](#) – September 2023

[Associations Letter on D.R.-Haiti Border Crisis](#) – September 2023

[AAEI Letter to FMC on Data Sharing](#) – October 2023 (duplicate)

[AAEI Letter to BLS on Import and Export Price Indexes \(MXPI\)](#) – October 2023

[Coalition Letter to USTR on Extension of Section 301 Tariff Exclusions](#) – December 2023

AAEI RESOURCES IN 2023

[AAEI Presentation on Next Gen Customs Core Policy Principles](#) – June 2023

Webinar: [What You Should Know About Upcoming TSA Air Cargo Security Enhancements](#) – July 27, 2023

Webinar: [Meet AAEI](#) – August 16, 2023

[Global Shipping Alliance US Country Report](#) – September 4-6, 2023

[AAEI 2023 Government Shutdown Agency Information Chart](#) – September 2023

Webinar: [EU Deforestation and Carbon Update](#) – September 22, 2023

[UFLPA Attachment to the Notice of Detention](#) – October 2023

[AAEI Centers Circle with Aluminum CEE](#) – October 2023

Webinar: [Updates on CPSC e-Filing Pilot](#) – October 24, 2023

[AAEI One-Pager on China's PNTR Status](#) – December 2023

ANNUAL CONFERENCE



AAEI held its 102nd Annual Conference and Expo in Washington, DC in June. This was the Association's first major event in the nation's capital since 2019. The conference topics were developed by AAEI's substantive committees, with many committee co-chairs serving as moderators. The conference covered critical issues in international trade, including subjects like forced labor, environmental compliance, emerging technologies, and international sanctions. The well-rounded program offered attendees high-level content and practical takeaways in trade policy and practice.



John Leonard

CBP Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner

The conference featured officials from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) including Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Trade John Leonard. Mr. Leonard filled in for Acting Deputy Commissioner Benjamin "Carry" Huffman and delivered the Premier Keynote Luncheon speech. His discussion focused on forced labor and customs modernization, drawing from his more than 30 years of experience at CBP. Other CBP officials who participated in the conference include CBP's Executive Director for Trade Remedy Law Enforcement Eric Choy, who was a panelist on AAEI's Forced Labor session, moderated by Jessica Libby of KPMG.

The Strategic Keynote Luncheon speech was delivered by Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) Matt Axelrod. Mr. Axelrod discussed the role of exports in the Biden Administration's national security strategy as well as the expansion of sanctions and export controls related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. He also discussed the increased role of export controls in U.S. trade policy with China. Other officials from BIS who participated in the annual conference include Charles Wall, who specializes in export controls and export administration regulations (EAR).



Matthew Axelrod

BIS Assistant Secretary for Export Enforcement

This year's conference featured a keynote speech by thought leader and futurist Ben Hammersley. Mr. Hammersley's speech focused on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the future of trade. Despite AI's inherent weaknesses and dependence on human oversight for accuracy, Mr. Hammersley cautioned attendees not to underestimate the value of emerging technologies in trade tools.



*Ben Hammersley
Hammersley Futures*

AAEI's conference was anchored by a discussion on ocean shipping reform with Federal Maritime Commissioner (FMC) Carl Bentzel.



*Carl Bentzel
FMC Commissioner*

Commissioner Bentzel talked about his work to implement the Ocean Shipping Reform Act of 2022 and the need for additional legislation to strengthen the FMC in its enforcement of fair business practices between ocean carriers and shippers. He called for updating data systems to allow for real-time tracking of ocean shipments from port to port. If it can happen with pizza delivery, he said, it should be happening with ocean cargo transportation.

AAEI's next annual conference will be June 10-12, 2024, at the Fort Lauderdale Marriott Harbor Beach Resort & Spa.

EXPANDED MEMBER BENEFITS

BENCHMARKING OPPORTUNITIES

This year, AAEI launched its first series of Benchmarking Roadshows, offering an exclusive in-person platform for both AAEI members and non-members to delve into and exchange insights on top trade issues. These discussions focused on key issues such as NextGen Customs, Forced Labor compliance, environmental trade adherence, emerging technologies, and the role of a trade compliance department within a corporate structure.



AAEI Chicago Benchmarking Roadshow

The 2023-2024 series commenced with the Los Angeles Roadshow on October 12, 2023, followed by the Chicago Roadshow on October 25, 2023, and the Washington, D.C. Roadshow on December 1, 2023.

Attendees, particularly AAEI members, shared their experiences from these gatherings. Mark Hirzel of American Honda Motor Co. articulated the significance of physically reconnecting within an industry that has largely transitioned to virtual interactions. He emphasized the value of engaging in insightful, face-to-face discussions on issues impacting their field. He stated, "Informally benchmarking with others, being able to look them in the eye to talk, agree and disagree, was well worth the battleground of LA traffic. Looking forward to doing it again in 2024!"

Similarly, John Segal from Northrop Grumman underscored the immense value the AAEI Roadshow brings to regional importers and exporters. He highlighted the forum's role in fostering open dialogues exclusive to industry professionals, allowing them to address specific issues, exchange best practices, and explore potential collaborations in resolving trade concerns with diverse government agencies.

More events will be scheduled in 2024.

GLOBAL OUTREACH

AAEI is expanding its partnerships outside of the U.S. in 2023 with similar associations and international counterparts in addition to developing relationships with other countries.



KOIMA-AAEI MOU Signing Ceremony

In August of 2023, AAEI signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Korea Importers Association (KOIMA), aimed at strengthening trade relations, facilitating knowledge exchange, and encouraging mutual business opportunities between members of KOIMA and AAEI. This alliance aims to advocate for policies supporting fair trade while addressing obstacles hindering

smooth trade relations. Additionally, both associations plan to conduct joint initiatives such as trade missions, business delegations, and networking events to facilitate direct interactions among their members.

AAEI's Government Affairs Manager Mitchell Hart also met with Panama Ambassador Ramón E. Martínez de la Guardia in August for introductory discussions of potential collaboration.

As a member of the Global Shippers Alliance (GSA), AAEI helped finalize the GSA's Shippers Bill of Rights, which was presented this year to the WCO and the United Nations (UN). The UN plans to review the proposal at next year's UN Supply Chain Conference in the Dominican Republic.

AAEI leveraged its relationship with the GSA to provide members with a time-sensitive webinar in September. AAEI held a member webinar on the European Union's carbon and deforestation regulations, both of which carry extensive new requirements for importers with responsibilities in the region. As a member of the GSA, AAEI arranged for members to hear from Godfried Smit, Secretary General of the European Shippers' Council; Joost Sitskoorn, Director of the Dutch Shippers' Council; and Nancy Lindenhovius of the Dutch Shippers' Council. Their presentation was comprehensive and outlined the challenges for importers to meet the new regulatory requirements.



*Malaysian Shippers Conference in Petaling Jaya, Malaysia
September 2023*

In October, AAEI met with Vietnamese business owners and Deputy Director General Le Hoang Tai of the Vietnam Ministry of Industry and Trade to discuss a potential MOU and other partnership opportunities. The goals of the collaboration include fostering growth through training and networking programs; engaging in mutual events like webinars, roundtable discussions, and conferences; sharing valuable information for mutual growth, including market trends, entry strategies, and economic conditions; and cooperating to reduce trade barriers and bolster global commerce.

In November, AAEI President and CEO Eugene Laney met with officials at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Washington, DC to discuss initiatives for export promotion. Eugene met the Embassy's new commercial attaché Reem Al Tharwa. The discussion included a potential MOU and initiatives including an export conference with AAEI compliance experts and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials.



*Reem Al Tharwa
Saudi Commercial
Attaché*



*Members of PSCG, Brussels
November 17, 2023*

In November, AAEI also participated in the November 2023 World Customs Organization's (WCO's) Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG) meeting in Brussels, Belgium, where Green Trade and Green Customs were top issues on the agenda. AAEI's co-chair of the Export and Global Trade Compliance Committee (EGTC) Donna Thresher represented AAEI at the meeting.

Donna reports that AAEI is being asked to write a position paper on the stress of Green Trade laws on the private sector. It will include defining the role and costs of customs and other agencies involved in Green Customs and other global initiatives. The EGTC will include this action item on its January 2024 agenda.

Eugene met with Costa Rica's Foreign Trade Minister Manuel Tovar Rivera in December to discuss opportunities for trade promotion. More than 80-percent of Costa Rica's foreign direct investment comes from the U.S., which leads to a boost in imports and exports. Costa Rica is interested in exploring trade alliances in the Asia-Pacific region.

AAEI is actively pursuing memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with additional countries and regional trade organizations as part of its ongoing efforts to broaden global partnerships. By establishing agreements with counterpart organizations worldwide, AAEI aims to further trade promotion on an international scale.

EDUCATIONAL COURSES

December 2023 marked a milestone for AAEI with the launch of Importing 201, AAEI's first educational course designed for importer compliance professionals and corporate leadership. Available through NCBFAA's NEI Platform, Importing 201 offers a comprehensive overview of key customs topics, compliance functions, and the framework to build effective internal compliance programs. It not only prepares companies for regulatory audits but also reinforces import compliance capabilities.

This course, an extension of NEI's Import 101, is ideal for customs brokers, global trade compliance teams, supply chain experts, executive leadership, trade law practitioners, educators, and corporate auditors, enhancing their compliance expertise. AAEI members enjoy discounted enrollment.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 2023, AAEL supported members' professional growth by enhancing its career center offerings. This expansion introduced free job postings for AAEL member companies. Members receive a 30-day basic job posting and exclusive access to AAEL's extensive resume collection.

For job seekers within the industry, the revamped career center offers a host of invaluable tools. The platform allows individuals to confidentially post their resumes, granting them visibility to potential employers while ensuring their privacy if desired. Additionally, users gain access to an array of features designed to streamline and optimize their job search:

- 01. Job Search Control:** Quickly and easily find relevant industry job listings and set up automatic email notifications for new opportunities that match personalized criteria.
- 02. Easy Job Application:** Apply for positions directly online and establish a secure, password-protected account for managing and monitoring job applications.
- 03. Saved Jobs Capability:** Save up to 100 desired job listings in a personalized folder within the account, facilitating easy access for future applications.

This expanded career center not only provides a platform for employers to find top talent but also equips professionals with the tools they need to navigate their career paths efficiently and effectively. By fostering these connections and empowering career advancement, AAEL continues to champion the growth and success of its members in the evolving landscape of the industry.

AAEL's Weekly Comprehensive emails also feature a Professional Development Digest once a month. These editions spotlight AAEL's extensive professional development resources and interviews with members offering a wealth of insight and career advice. Through this collaborative sharing, we empower our community to thrive in an ever-evolving professional landscape.

MEMBER NETWORKING

This year, AAEL introduced a valuable addition to its member benefits—a comprehensive membership directory exclusively available to AAEL members. This directory serves as a centralized platform, encompassing listings of importer, exporter, service provider, law firm, and other corporate members, along with their contact information. The directory serves as a vital resource for those seeking to forge partnerships, engage in business opportunities, or establish professional connections within the AAEL community. The membership directory can be found on AAEL's website and will be updated regularly. It is accessible to all members in good standing.

EXPANDED STAFFING

AAEI is the only professionally staffed organization which monitors and comments on the major legislative and regulatory issues relating to the import and export of merchandise. This year, AAEI expanded its professional staff by hiring a new Government Affairs Manager, Mitchell Hart, and a new Membership Coordinator, Nandini Tivakaran.

Mitchell's professional expertise in political science and strategy, as well as direct experience working with Congressional candidates, have been significant additions to the organization. In his role as Government Affairs Manager, Mitchell represents AAEI before executive agencies, foreign embassies, and Congress. Mitchell plays a vital role in advocating for AAEI members' policy interests, furthering the interests of importers, exporters, and trade service providers.

AAEI's new Membership Coordinator Nandini Tivakaran joined AAEI as a full-time staff member this year. Nandini works with Chris Enyart, Director of Membership. She serves as an additional point of contact for members to ensure members have seamless access to any resources and support that they need.

ABOUT AAEI

Mission, Vision, and Values

The American Association of Exporters and Importers (AAEI) is the only American organization solely devoted to dealing with the many problems that constantly face U.S. merchants handling the incoming/importing and outgoing/exporting of commodities and services. AAEI accepts the interpretations of principles involving the assessment of import duties and trade rules and regulations, so that American standards of living may be maintained.



AAEI strives for reasonable administrative interpretations and applications of U.S. trade and customs laws and regulations, so that the legitimate rights of importers and exporters are upheld.

Since 1921, it has been the aim of AAEI, in considering all trade questions, to do so not in a narrow, partisan spirit, but on a broad national basis, as affecting U.S. foreign trade generally, both incoming and outgoing.

We Make Global Trade Happen!

Eugene Laney Jr.

President and CEO

American Association of Exporters and Importers

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