

## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES

# A history of growth

## US FTZ program aimed to strengthen business, provide jobs

Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZs) are one of the most powerful tools the United States has to strengthen domestic business and grow jobs. These special zones allow businesses to bring in goods from other countries and delay or reduce the customs duties they must pay. But what makes FTZs unique is that companies must invest in US land, facilities, equipment and workers to gain these benefits.

Unlike other trade programs that often benefit foreign production, the FTZ program is built around US investment. It supports companies that produce goods inside the US, replacing some of the need to import finished products.

### Strong roots

The FTZ program was created by Congress in 1934 to level the playing field for American-made products. While programs such as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement or other free trade agreements aim to reduce barriers to international trade, only FTZs tie savings directly to investment in American communities.

Today, FTZs are part of a successful public-private partnership. Ports, city governments, economic development groups and nonprofits within the US work with private businesses to operate these zones. Importantly, FTZs do not rely on government subsidies, making them a cost-effective and market-driven solution.

### A history of growth

In the early 1970s, there were just 13 FTZs in the US. In 1973, a group of six individuals founded the National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones (NAFTZ) to help promote the program. Their efforts quickly paid off, and by 1980, there were 58 FTZs across 30 states and Puerto Rico. Over 11,000 Americans were employed in FTZs, and zone exports totaled \$700 million.

The 1980s marked a period of dramatic expansion. NAFTZ worked with Customs and Border Protection and the FTZ Board to simplify procedures and make the program more attractive



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to manufacturers. With rising global competition, FTZs became a key tool to bring international companies — including auto manufacturers, pharmaceutical firms and electronics producers — to the US.

Major corporations such as Apple, IBM, General Electric, Caterpillar and Sony established production sites in FTZs across the country. The savings in duties on imported parts made it more affordable to build goods in the US, helping companies grow their operations and hire more American workers.

### Continued success

By the 1990s, the number of FTZs had tripled. NAFTZ played a major role in modernizing Customs regulations and expanding FTZ capabilities, and new programs were introduced to speed up processing and reduce administrative burdens. FTZs also gained recognition in international trade agreements, such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), allowing goods made in FTZs to qualify for duty-free export.

By 2000, there were over 240 FTZ projects with nearly 2,500 participating companies. Over 340,000 Americans were working in these zones, and exports had reached \$15 billion. Many well-known companies — including BMW, Hewlett-Packard and Merck — used FTZs to grow their US operations.

After the 2008 financial crisis, FTZ procedures were streamlined even further. The time to get approval for new zones fell from one year to as low as 30 days. These reforms led to even greater FTZ use by modern companies such as Intel, Rolls-Royce, Black+Decker, Airbus and Canon.

### Today's impact

FTZs continue to be a critical part of US trade strategy. As of 2023 (the most recent year for which FTZ data is available), there were more than 300 zone projects and over 1,300 active US FTZ operations across all 50 states and Puerto Rico. More than 3,400 companies operate in these zones, employing more than 550,000 US workers. A large majority of these employees work in manufacturing operations — from building



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## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES

cars and medical supplies to assembling electronics and refining fuel.

More than \$149 billion dollars of merchandise was exported from US FTZs in 2023, accounting for 7.3% of total US goods exports in 2023. More importantly, 68% of the materials coming into FTZs are of domestic origin, showing that US-made

payments for materials exported from a US FTZ

- Streamlined logistics and faster shipping
- Savings for goods stored, assembled or repaired in the zone
- Flexibility to ship goods domestically or internationally

between companies and government. FTZ grantees — including local ports, cities and economic development agencies — work hand in hand with businesses to promote growth and investment.

The National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones remains at the center of this effort. For over 52 years, NAFTAZ has helped shape FTZ policy, supported legislative improvements and served as the voice for FTZ operators, users and grantees across the country.

The US Foreign-Trade Zone program stands out as a proven model for economic development. By encouraging investment in US facilities, equipment and workers, FTZs help businesses grow while supporting American manufacturing. In a time of global uncertainty, FTZs offer a smart, stable way to strengthen the US economy — one job, one shipment and one investment at a time. ■

Article provided by the National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones (NAFTZ).

**As of 2023, there were more than 300 zone projects and over 1,300 active US FTZ operations across all 50 states and Puerto Rico.**

goods are a growing part of the supply chain.

FTZs offer real, measurable value to companies. Key benefits include:

- Delayed tax and duty payments until materials leave a zone for US commerce
- The potential of zero tax and duty

FTZs also help businesses avoid supply chain disruptions caused by changing trade rules or global instability.

### **A model for public-private partnership**

One of the biggest reasons FTZs succeed is the strong collaboration

## Maximize your profits with FTZ No. 25

Foreign-Trade Zone No. 25 (FTZ No. 25), administered and managed by Broward County's Port Everglades — located between Miami and Palm Beach, Fla. — is at the forefront of efficiency when it comes to foreign and domestic trade. That's one of the reasons why importers and exporters consider FTZ No. 25 a critical benefit to improve their bottom line.

An FTZ helps companies reduce costs by deferring, reducing or eliminating US Customs duties on imported goods. There are 1,300 FTZ operations in the United States, with an economic impact including approximately 550,000 jobs and nearly \$1 trillion in annual shipments, according to the Foreign-Trade Zones Board.

In Broward County, FTZ No. 25 stands out as South Florida's only FTZ that is both a grantee and an operator. The dual role provides qualified companies the flexibility to choose the level of support they want in managing their FTZ operations. By selecting FTZ No. 25 as their operator, businesses can focus on results rather than paperwork, while the FTZ No. 25 staff manages the day-to-day requirements set by US Customs and Border Protection. This benefit helps reduce third-party confusion and ensures a high level of accountability, service and efficiency.

Another advantage of FTZ No. 25 is that the importer and exporter can be located anywhere in Broward County.

FTZ No. 25 also gives globally minded companies an edge thanks to its location in Florida's second-most populous county and proximity to three international airports, interstates and the Atlantic shipping lane.

This strategic location supports the FTZ's impressive trade activity and global reach. In 2024, FTZ No. 25 handled \$8.6 billion in merchandise. ■

Whether a company is storing, processing or distributing goods for import/export, activating a business as an FTZ provides access to:

- Deferred, reduced or eliminated duty fees
- Improved inventory control and faster supply chain responsiveness
- Daily customs representation and filing managed by FTZ No. 25
- Concierge-level support for setting up shop and staying compliant

To learn more about how to take advantage of a Foreign-Trade Zone designation, email [ftz25@broward.org](mailto:ftz25@broward.org) or call 954-468-1925.







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## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES

# Comply, compete, grow

## Despite political disruption, US FTZ program goals stay consistent

By Patricia Cannon and Leigh Ryan

On June 18, 1934, Congress passed and President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Foreign-Trade Zones Act of 1934. This act established a process for creating and operating Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZs) in the United States, allowing goods to

be imported, stored, processed or re-exported under more stringent controls and reporting requirements.

The primary goal of the Foreign-Trade Zones Act of 1934 was to encourage and promote economic development in

the United States. Specifically, the act aimed to facilitate international trade, increase the global competitiveness of US companies and create jobs by allowing companies to reduce costs and improve efficiency using US FTZs. The act also

### A strategic solution to mitigate tariffs

Rising import costs due to Trump administration tariffs have reignited conversations around Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZs), with many companies seeking tools to manage tariff-related expenses. This renewed interest has led to a surge in inquiries from businesses across multiple industries.

With more than 75 years of combined Foreign-Trade Zone expertise, the IMS Worldwide, Inc. (IMSW) team delivers turnkey operational support. Over the past 45 years, IMSW has established more than 523 FTZ sites across the US. From zone designation to comprehensive managed services, IMSW offers flexibility and tailored solutions to meet each client's unique needs.

Recognizing that no two FTZ projects are alike, IMSW offers flexible service options tailored to the needs of grantees, zone operators, zone users, manufacturers and third-party logistics providers. IMSW supports every stage, from evaluating FTZ benefits to preparing best-practice applications, activations, operator training and compliance procedures. The services

that IMSW provides include (but are not limited to) FTZ designation applications (new zone, subzone, usage-driven), FTZ activation and operator training, FTZ managed services, production notifications and authority requests, bonded warehouse applications, and tax support assistance for FTZ requests in Texas, Arizona and Kentucky.

IMSW offers a proprietary cost-benefit analysis tool to ensure FTZ operations deliver measurable value. Using actual company data, IMSW delivers a realistic

five-year forecast outlining both costs and benefits. This tool is free of charge and available at [www.imsw.com](http://www.imsw.com).

IMSW's full-service, client-focused approach continues to position the company as a leader in FTZ consulting. In addition to its consulting expertise, IMSW provides managed services and zone services for companies looking to outsource administrative FTZ recordkeeping and reporting. ■

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## Navigating the Influx of Ever-Changing Tariff Rates?

**IMSW provides solutions to help companies impacted by tariffs defer and reduce duties within an FTZ environment.**



(July 16, 2025) Houston, TX: President Donald Trump has announced significant tariffs on imports from many of the US's trading partners to start August 1, 2025, after they were threatened in April. Chinese goods currently have a 34% tariff. In addition, product-specific tariffs have also been implemented. Negotiations with numerous countries are underway. These measures are expected to impact various industries, leading to increased costs for businesses and consumers. Importers may face higher expenses, which could affect their competitiveness and profitability.

IMS Worldwide, Inc. (IMSW) offers expertise in establishing and operating Foreign-Trade Zones (FTZs), which can provide significant benefits to importers. By utilizing FTZs, companies can defer, reduce, or even eliminate customs duties on imported goods. This can result in improved cash flow and reduced overall costs.



### Tariffs Can be Partially Mitigated in an FTZ Through:

- Duty deferral until goods enter U.S. commerce
- Duty elimination on all goods scrapped or re-exported
- Use of Weekly entry process
- Enhanced security protocols

With over 45 years of industry experience, IMSW has assisted clients with FTZ applications, activations, and operator training, ensuring compliance with regulations and optimizing the advantages of FTZs. The IMSW team has completed over 500 FTZ projects and assisted clients in navigating the complex trade environments and mitigating the impact of tariffs and other trade barriers.

In light of tariff uncertainty, importers should consider strategies like utilizing FTZs to maintain their competitive edge. Consulting with experts such as IMS Worldwide, Inc. can provide valuable insights and assistance in adapting to these changes. Please visit [www.imsw.com](http://www.imsw.com) to complete a **FREE** cost-benefit analysis and introductory call to determine if the benefits of an FTZ outweigh the costs of operating under an FTZ environment.



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## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES



The US Department of Commerce is one of three federal agencies that lead the FTZ Board.

created a Foreign-Trade Zones Board to approve and oversee the establishment of these zones.

Elected officials have come and gone since then, but members of Congress at that time had a vision of an America where United States-based companies could use the FTZ program to compete on a global stage by reducing costs associated with tariffs. Their vision included an America that would increase GDP by not only exporting more American products around the world, but also providing the highest-quality goods and services to the American people.

### Comply

Companies that participate in the US Foreign-Trade Zone program must comply with all federal laws and regulations in addition to those that have been established specifically for a company

operating and/or using the benefits of the program. There are three federal agencies involved when doing business with a person or an entity outside the US. These agencies also lead the FTZ Board. Their mission statements read:

US Department of Commerce: To create the conditions for economic growth and opportunity for all communities.

US Department of Homeland Security: To safeguard the American people, our homeland and our values.

US Department of the Treasury: To maintain a strong economy and create economic and job opportunities by promoting the conditions that enable economic growth and stability at home and abroad, strengthen national security by combating threats and protecting the integrity of the financial system, and manage the US Government's finances and resources effectively.

### Compete

To establish an FTZ in the US, a company must work with their local grantee to complete an application process for FTZ designation, which then must be approved by the FTZ Board. They then must successfully pass the rigorous security review and background checks as part of their application for activation with Customs and Border Protection (CBP). The business will be required to clearly document all cargo shipments and inventory through an electronic system that will estimate any tariffs that may be ultimately due and payable to the US Department of the Treasury.

The benefits allow them to compete on a global stage, despite offshore competitors that often sell cheaper, low-quality products with lower standards and lower wages.

## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES

**Grow**

Companies and federal agencies in the US are comprised of people who are all passionately committed to the core missions of their respective organizations. For business entities to maximize the fullest potential benefits of the US Foreign-Trade Zone program, every stakeholder must work toward building mutual respect for the important role that employees brings to the table, including:

**Operator/user:** Must be willing to meet more rigorous reporting and security requirements than a typical importer if they want to participate in the program, which can significantly increase their productivity and sales while reducing cost of goods sold as it relates to imported parts and materials.

**Grantee:** Must be willing to work closely as a trusted partner, facilitating information between the operator/user, Foreign-Trade Zones Board and CBP.

**Foreign-Trade Zone Board:** Must uphold the Foreign-Trade Zone Act and be willing to teach and guide grantees, as well as operators/users, how to appropriately apply, maintain and submit accurate reports for the US Department of Commerce as it relates to the US FTZ program.

**Customs and Border Protection:** Must be willing to work with grantees and operators/users regarding the requirements for application, maintenance, reporting and ongoing security checks. CBP is responsible for every aspect of security, safety and collection of appropriate tariffs, fees, fines and penalties on behalf of the US Department of the Treasury.

We celebrate their victories with every seized shipment of illegal drugs and/or counterfeit goods. We applaud their efforts to ensure imported parts and/or products are safe, according to US Department of Agriculture, US Food and Drug Administration, and US Consumer Safety standards. We respect the tremendous burden that our CBP officers carry within their scope of responsibilities. A strong, respectful working relationship between local grantees and CBP officers is an essential part of helping local businesses operating in US FTZs to grow.

We should expect every US company using the US FTZ program to comply with all federal rules and regulations, financially compete with companies around the globe, and grow their business, brand, facility and employment base in their community, their

state and throughout the US.

Although the barter system of trade is known as the "oldest" form of trade, it is the US Foreign-Trade Zone program that has stood the test of time in making the US the second-largest exporter of goods

and services and the largest national economy by nominal GDP. ■

Patricia Cannon, MSM, AZS, serves as treasurer of NAFTA's Board of Directors. Leigh Ryan, AZS, CZS, serves as secretary of NAFTA's Board of Directors.



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## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES

# Making voices heard

## NAFTZ supports employment, provides opportunities

By Jeff Tafel

The National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones (NAFTZ) has led the charge in promoting, protecting and expanding the US Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) Program for over 50 years. In today's evolving trade environment, NAFTAZ's mission is more important than ever.

### Advocacy with impact

In NAFTAZ, the "A" also stands for advocacy. The association works directly with Congress, US Customs and Border Protection, and the Foreign-Trade Zones Board to protect and enhance the FTZ Program, ensuring the voice of the FTZ community is heard. With reshoring, nearshoring and supply chain realignment top of mind, FTZs are gaining momentum — and NAFTAZ is ensuring that momentum translates into meaningful policy improvements and growth opportunities for its members.

### Proven results

Foreign-Trade Zones play a vital role in supporting the US economy by promoting job creation, increasing exports and encouraging investment. By offering duty deferral, reduction or elimination

on certain goods, FTZs give US-based manufacturing and distribution operations a competitive edge. This incentive helps companies keep and create jobs in the United States that might otherwise be outsourced, strengthening the domestic workforce and supply chain.

In addition to supporting employment, FTZs boost US exports by removing most duties on merchandise shipped abroad, making American-made goods more competitive in global markets. The program also attracts foreign direct investment, encouraging multinational companies to establish operations in the US. These firms often use more US-made components, providing an extra lift to local suppliers and regional economies.

### Supporting FTZ professionals

NAFTZ is the premier network of FTZ professionals and the leading source for advocacy, education and industry resources. Members influence US trade policy by participating in government outreach and public comment. Up-to-date guidance on FTZ compliance, logistics and operations is readily available, along with the opportunity to earn Certified

Zone Specialist and Accredited Zone Specialist certifications. Additionally, NAFTAZ's Legislative Summit, Annual Conference and regional events allow members to connect with more than 850 FTZ professionals, service providers and public-sector partners.

### A mission that matters

NAFTZ's vision is simple: To be the leading US FTZ advocacy and educational organization. Through public-private partnerships, NAFTAZ promotes FTZs as an economic development tool that drives US investment and job growth.

With increasing global trade uncertainty, NAFTAZ is the steady voice advancing the value of FTZs — and the organizations that rely on them.

If your organization operates within the FTZ ecosystem, or is exploring the benefits of joining it, NAFTAZ is your go-to resource and advocate.

Join the world's largest FTZ community and help shape the future of US trade. Learn more at [www.naftz.org](http://www.naftz.org). ■

Jeff Tafel is president of the National Association of Foreign Trade Zones.

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## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES

# Driving innovation and investment

## Phoenix's FTZ No. 75 streamlines logistics, propels growth

As the 5th largest city in the country and the capital of Arizona, the city of Phoenix is home to 1.7 million residents and is at the top of the market for a well-trained, educated workforce. The city has led the nation in new population growth over the last decade and has become a global center of advanced manufacturing, bio and life sciences, technology, and business and financial services.

Phoenix has emerged as a supply chain powerhouse in the American Southwest, thanks in large part to its visionary use of Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) No. 75. As the federally designated grantee, the city has transformed this program into a platform for reducing costs, accelerating logistics and boosting global trade — all while attracting high-wage jobs and significant capital investment to the region FTZ No. 75 serves.

### Global logistics gateway

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## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES

territory for import purposes. This distinction allows companies operating within a zone to defer or eliminate duties, simplify customs compliance and move goods with increased flexibility. Phoenix has positioned FTZ No. 75 as a strategic tool for international shippers and manufacturers looking to fine-tune supply chains across North America.

With more than \$22 billion in goods processed through FTZ No. 75 in 2023, and over 69,000 employees working in the activated space, the impact is substantial. From tech to textiles, the zone enables a range of firms to operate with sharper margins and faster response times in a competitive global market.

#### Simplifying shippers' costs

FTZ No. 75 offers a compelling value proposition. Through benefits such as weekly entry, companies reduce customs brokerage costs and merchandise processing fees. Duty deferral allows

companies to have cash flow savings by delaying payments on imports until the time at which the goods are shipped into US commerce. Additionally, direct delivery privileges help streamline logistics and accelerate supply chain speed.

The inverted tariff benefit previously allowed US FTZ manufacturers to pay a lower duty rate on finished products rather than on imported components, which was especially helpful in the semiconductor, automotive and aerospace sectors. However, because of the scope of the reciprocal and other tariffs, the FTZ inverted tariff benefit is currently limited.

#### A smart logistics advantage

The logistics advantages in Phoenix aren't just financial — they're geographic and infrastructural. FTZ No. 75 businesses benefit from:

- Immediate access to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport, a hub for time-sensitive freight

- Service from Union Pacific and BNSF, powering intermodal rail solutions
- A robust freeway grid, including I-10, I-17, Loop 202 and Loop 303, ensuring fast truck transport across the Southwest

When combined, these assets enable companies in the FTZ to reach West Coast ports, border crossings and inland markets with speed and consistency.

#### Built for the future

Phoenix has strategically leveraged the FTZ Program. It drives economic growth, attracts capital investment and creates high-wage employment that is integrated not as a standalone incentive, but as part of a broader mission to build a resilient, high-tech economy. Companies tied to advanced manufacturing, semiconductor supply chains, nutraceuticals, electronics, aerospace and electric vehicles are among those successfully operating in the zone.

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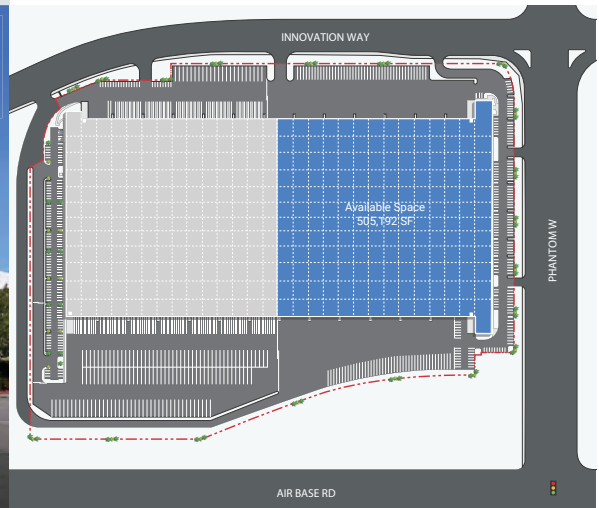
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## FOREIGN-TRADE ZONES

In May 2021, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) Arizona Corporation received FTZ status for its manufacturing campus spanning approximately 1,100 acres in North Phoenix. TSMC's initial \$65 billion

six), two advanced packaging facilities and a research and development center. The FTZ allows TSMC to leverage lowered input costs and streamline import and export processes as it accelerates cutting-edge manufacturing through 2027 and beyond.

FTZ Program, including suppliers to TSMC and others. With \$3 billion in exports reported from FTZ No. 75 in 2023, Phoenix is clearly not just receiving global goods — it's sending them back out, value-added and ready for new markets.

**Companies tied to advanced manufacturing, semiconductor supply chains, nutraceuticals, electronics, aerospace and electric vehicles are among those successfully operating in FTZ No. 75.**

investment into its operations in Phoenix included plans for three fabrication plants.

In March 2025, TSMC announced the intention to expand its investment to an additional \$100 billion. This includes plans for three more fabrication plants (bringing the long-term projected total number to

The FTZ status complements TSMC's \$165 billion investment in the US — solidifying the project as the largest single foreign direct investment in US history.

Phoenix's FTZ No. 75 currently has 27 companies in various industries benefiting from or in the process of applying for the

### A smarter way to trade

For international traders looking to reshore manufacturing to the US, Phoenix's FTZ No. 75 offers more than a location — it delivers reduced operational costs, expedited customs clearance and adaptable infrastructure. It's not just a zone, it's a modern trade ecosystem built for 21st-century global business.

As international uncertainty and supply chain volatility continue to shape global commerce, Phoenix leads the way in using the FTZ Program as a powerful incentive to lower costs, streamline operations and support global business expansion. ■

Article provided by the Phoenix Community and Economic Development Department.

## FTZ expertise and solutions across North America

Amid today's shifting trade landscape, the importance of efficient, compliant logistics has never been greater. As a global leader in transport and logistics, CEVA offers comprehensive, end-to-end services — from shipper to consignee — including expert customs brokerage and Foreign-Trade Zone (FTZ) solutions.

### Customs is in our DNA

While CEVA's history began in 1946, its roots of Customs service date back to 1898. Thanks to extensive experience, CEVA Logistics can deliver trusted customs brokerage services with a continuous improvement mindset, optimizing supply chains.

CEVA's strength lies in its people, technology and strategic presence:

- A network of 22 licensed customs brokers and 210 import specialists across 11 offices
- Advanced FTZ technology and software to support highly compliant operations
- Access to customs and FTZ warehouses (CEVA-owned or customer-dedicated) in major US cities including Atlanta; Chicago; Dallas; Laredo, TX; Los Angeles; Miami and New York.

### Your trusted FTZ partner

CEVA guides customers through every step of the FTZ journey — from initial evaluation to full activation — providing clear visibility, detailed timelines and tailored solutions.

Whether your goal is to defer or reduce Customs duties, optimize cash flow, or simplify complex compliance processes, CEVA can

scale and adapt resources to meet customer needs. The company's ability to operate FTZs across gateway offices, CEVA Contract Logistics facilities and customer sites is what sets CEVA apart.

### Why CEVA Logistics?

As global trade evolves, CEVA helps you navigate uncertainty with resilient, integrated supply chain strategies that balance cost, compliance and speed.

CEVA's agile FTZ solutions help customers maximize value while ensuring full Customs compliance — delivering all the benefits of FTZ without the administrative burden. ■

For more information about CEVA Logistics and its customs brokerage services, visit <https://www.cevalogistics.com/en/what-we-do/customs>.



# RESPONSIVE LOGISTICS FOR YOU



## STREAMLINE YOUR SUPPLY CHAIN WITH FOREIGN TRADE ZONES

At CEVA Logistics, we understand the complexity of navigating US customs for efficient supply chain management. Thanks to our experts and network of strategically-located FTZ sites, we offer you end-to-end services with clear guidance and customized solutions to ensure smooth operations and seamless processes.

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