SEPTEMBER 2026 REPORT

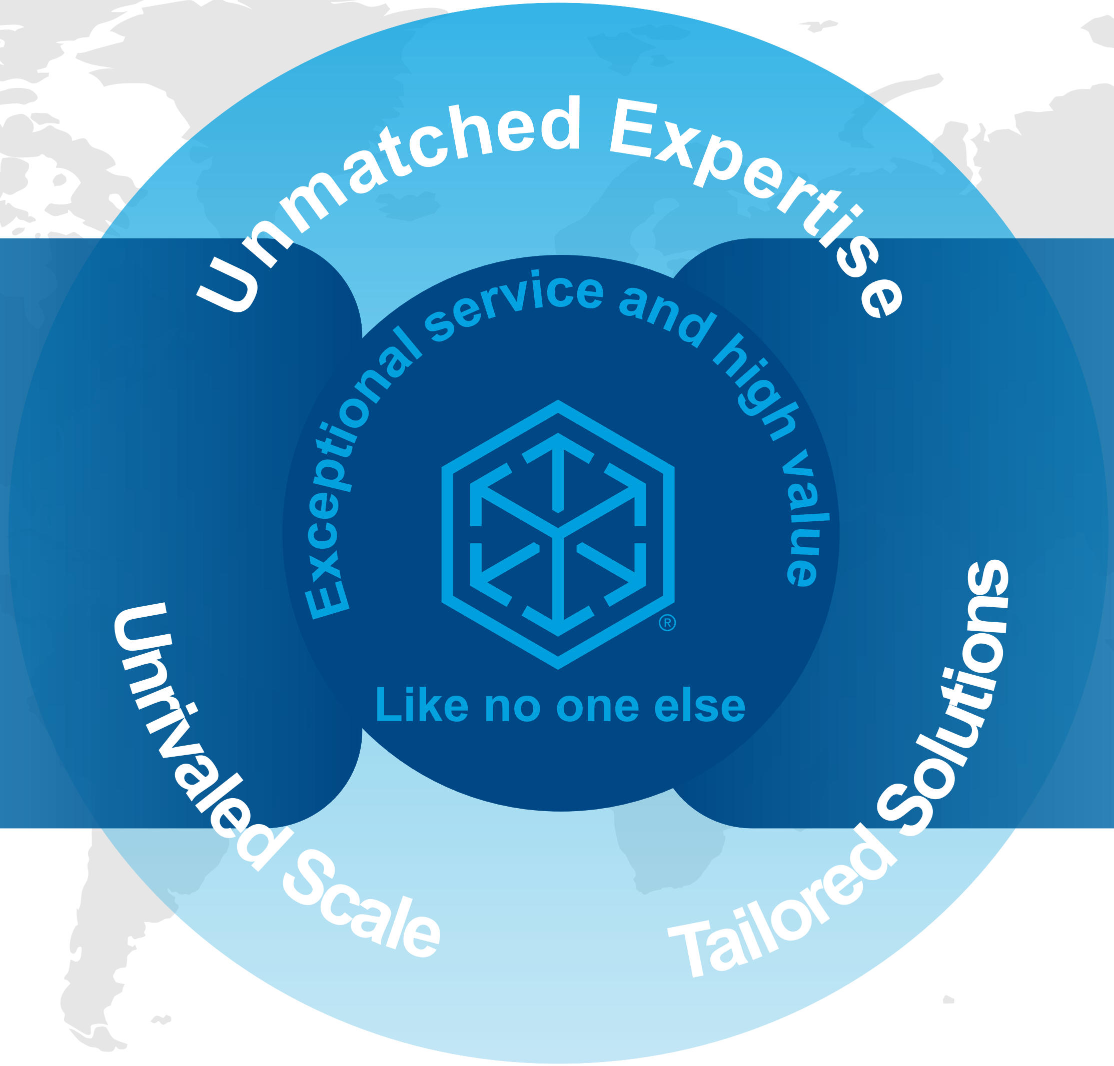
C.H. Robinson Edge™

Simplifying logistics—across the world

We solve challenges through our unmatched expertise, unrivaled scale, and tailored solutions

Shippers

- All industry verticals
- All regions in the world
- Small business to the largest, most complex companies



Carriers

- Airlines
- LTL carriers
- Steamship lines
- Truckload carriers
- Intermodal carriers

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→ Freight Market Update

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Key Takeaways

High-level insights at a glance

- **Truckload** U.S. spot market cost/mile forecasts
  - **Dry Van**: +30% year-over-year (y/y) growth for 2026, +10% for 2027 y/y
  - **Temperature Controlled**: +31% y/y growth for 2026, +11% for 2027 y/y
  - **Flatbed**: *New forecast introduced* at +28% for 2026 y/y growth, +10% for 2027 y/y
- **LTL** service levels normalize as networks become more fully utilized
- **Ocean freight:** Global vessel capacity remains broadly available. The concern for September is resilience: typhoon congestion, canal limits, and carrier network changes are leaving fewer workable alternatives when a shipment is disrupted.
- **Air freight:** The main pressure point is a short late-September window at select Asia origins, where quarter-end cargo, technology shipments, and China’s preholiday rush may reduce departure choices and lift spot rates.
- Trade and regulatory enforcement is intensifying across customs compliance and driver licensing, increasing the need for accurate documentation while adding pressure to an already constrained trucking supply.

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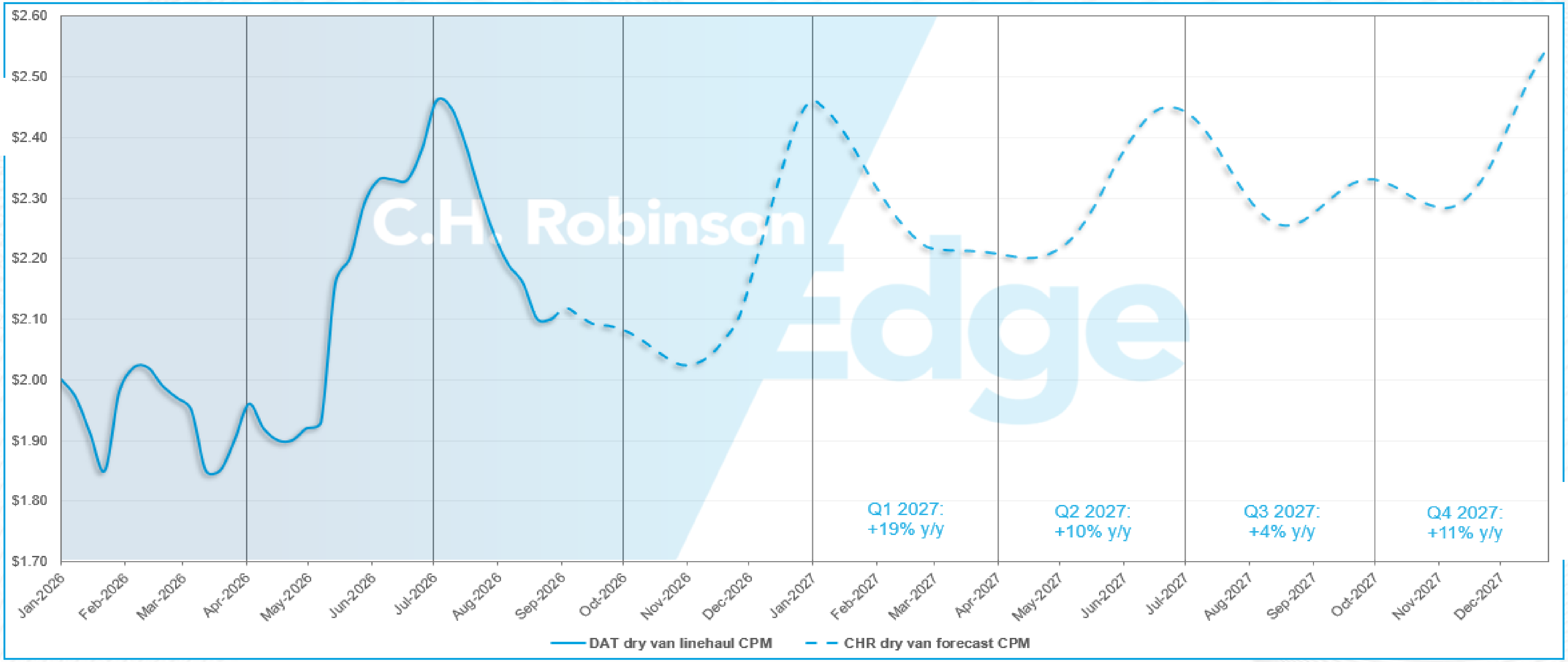
Truckload

U.S. Spot Market Forecast | Dry Van

2026 +30% linehaul cost/mile increase y/y, 2027 +10%



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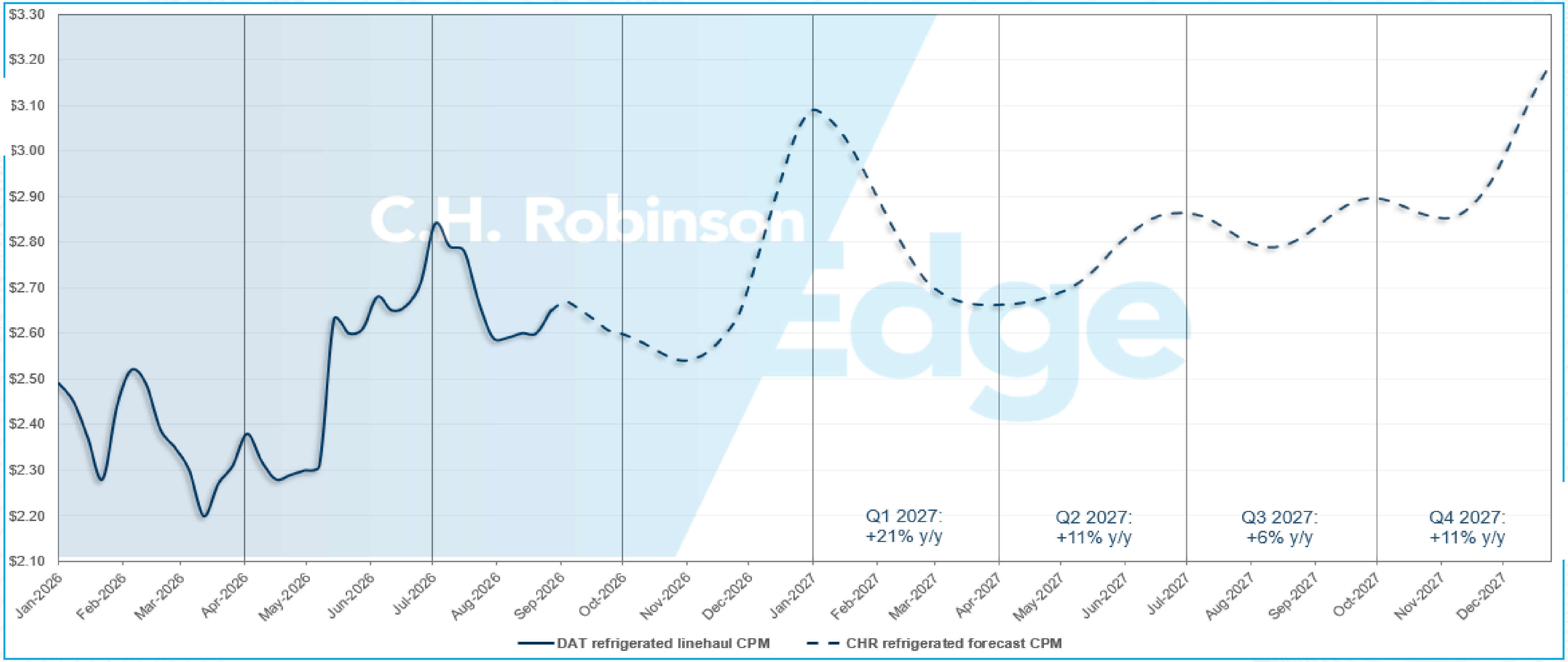
U.S. Spot Market Forecast | Temperature Controlled

2026 +31% linehaul cost/mile increase y/y, 2027 +11%



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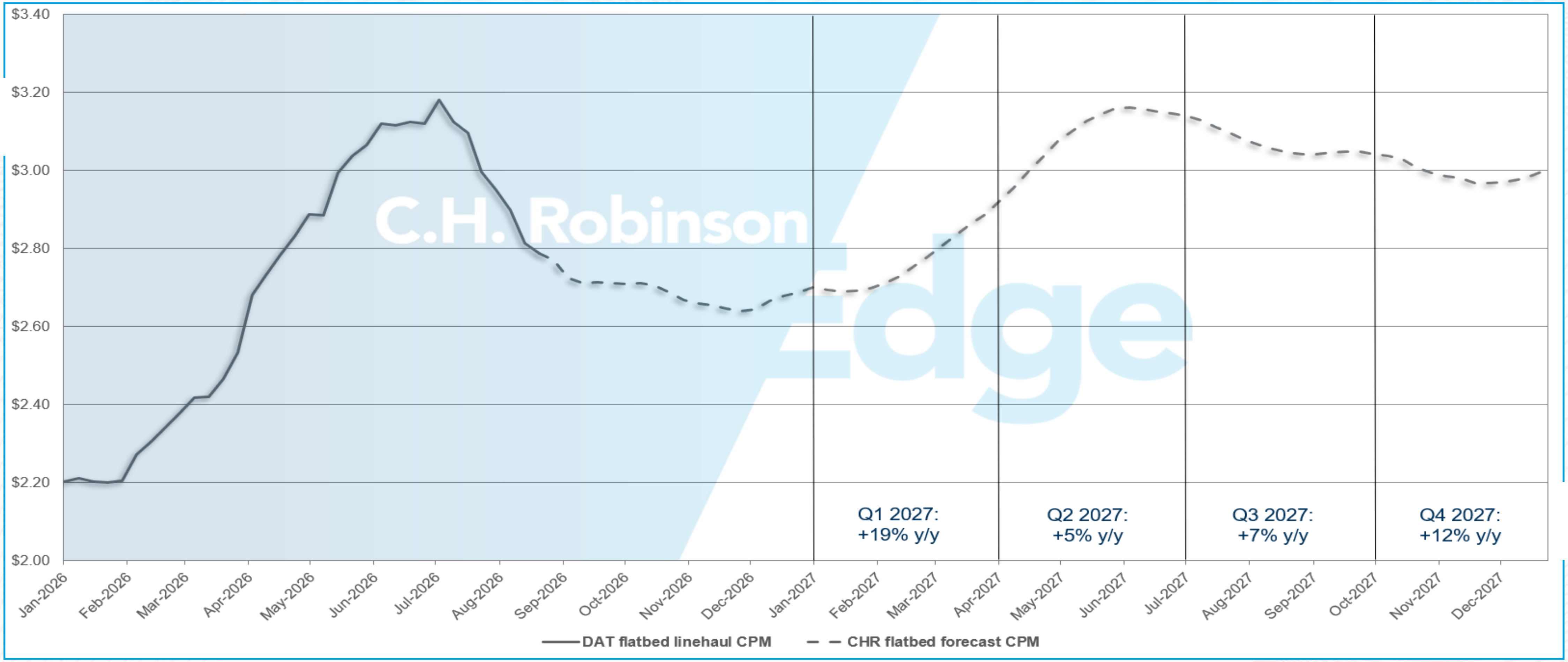
U.S. Spot Market Forecast | Flatbed

2026 +28% linehaul cost/mile increase y/y, 2027 +10%



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LTL Shipping

U.S. Less-Than-Truckload

service levels normalize as networks become more fully utilized

- **Carrier networks** remain stable overall, but isolated service delays are becoming more common as freight volumes increase and excess capacity declines.
- **Service performance** is returning to more typical LTL operating conditions after several years of unusually strong performance during the freight downturn.
- **Transit times** remain generally reliable, though variability is becoming more noticeable as carriers have less surplus capacity to absorb disruptions.
- **Market dynamics** are becoming apparent as capacity tightens. The tradeoff between cost and service is becoming more visible, making carrier network fit and freight profile increasingly important considerations.

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Ocean Freight

Ocean Freight

Capacity is available, but recovery options are narrowing

- **The U.S. import peak may taper early:** July imports rose 4.5% from June to 2.51 million TEUs, but September volume is forecast to decline to 2.16 million TEUs.
- **Asian disruption is tightening Trans-Pacific conditions:** Typhoon-related congestion had tied up an estimated 12.6% of global containership capacity by late August. Backlogs, blank sailings, and preholiday cargo may keep departure options tight through September.
- **Some origin markets require significantly more lead time:** Indian Subcontinent exports may need approximately four weeks for North America and at least three weeks for Europe. North Europe–North America also remains constrained by limited space and previously rolled cargo.
- **Rate trends are diverging by trade lane:** Trans-Pacific spot rates increased in late August, while Asia–Europe rates declined despite continued congestion. Global rate trends may not reflect conditions on an individual route.
- **Canal developments require shipment-level review:** Panama Canal draft limits may restrict heavy cargo on selected services. Some Suez routings are returning, but the changes remain carrier- and service-specific rather than a networkwide recovery.
- **Planning implication:** Confirm the preferred sailing, available equipment, cargo-weight acceptance, terminal cutoff, and a practical alternative before finalizing time-sensitive shipments.

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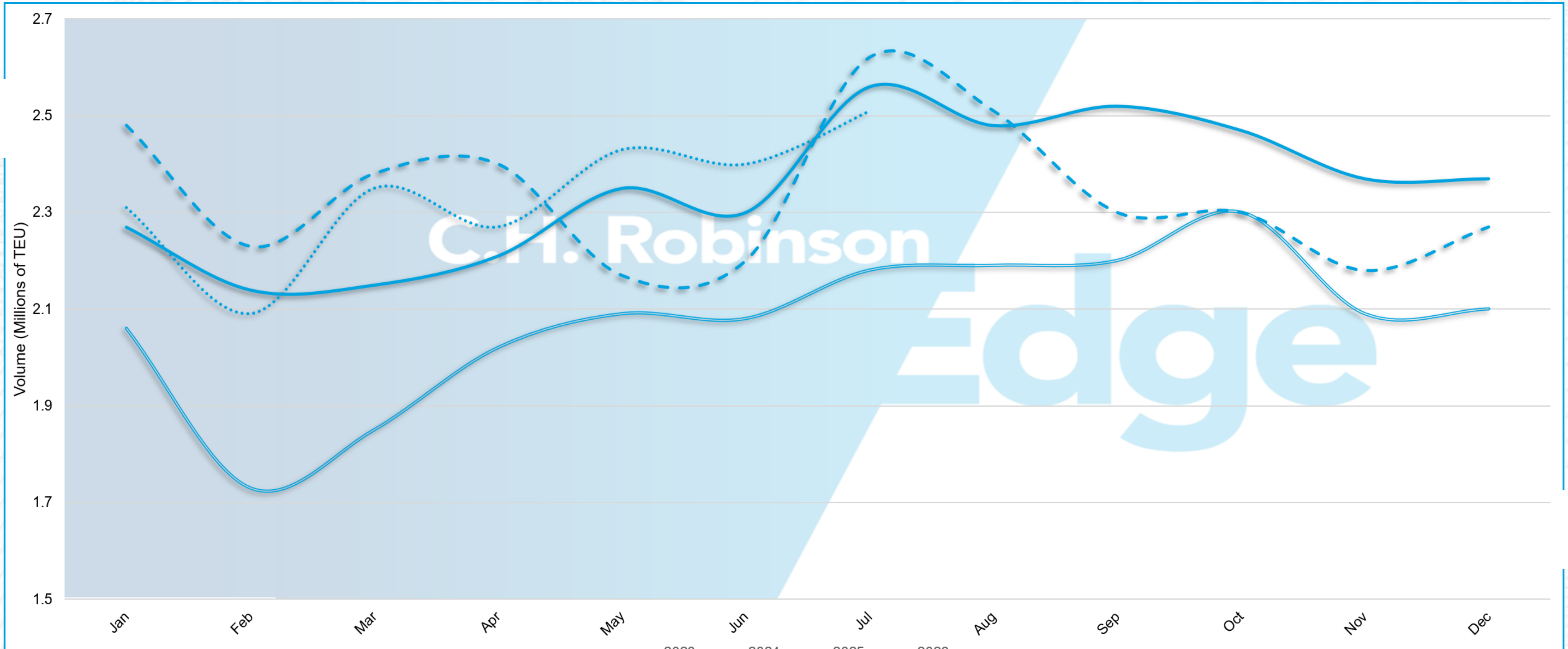
→ Ocean Freight

U.S. container import volumes, 2023–2026



Source: The Global Logistics Shipping Resource Center | Descartes

Air Freight

Air Freight

Late-September pressure may tighten select Asia departures

- **Pressure is concentrated in a short window:** Quarter-end shipments, technology-related cargo, and China's preholiday export rush could reduce departure options during the second half of September.
- **China's export push may affect nearby origins:** Taiwan, South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and Thailand could experience tighter conditions if airlines shift freighter rotations or allocations toward major China gateways.
- **Departure choices may narrow before rates rise broadly:** Preferred flights could fill earlier, leaving later departures, alternate gateways, or less-direct routings. Spot rates may increase first on the most sought-after flights.
- **Conditions elsewhere remain mixed:** Europe-origin capacity is generally available without uniform rate reductions. U.S.–Australia conditions are improving because demand has softened, while most other U.S. export lanes remain predictable.
- **Disruption could change the outlook quickly:** A late-September typhoon, Gulf-related schedule changes, or selective ocean-to-air conversions could add pressure during an already concentrated demand window.
- **Planning implication:** Move flexible cargo before the final two weeks of September, confirm holiday flight schedules and cutoffs, and identify an alternate routing for shipments that cannot tolerate a later departure.

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Trade Policy & Customs

→ Navigating Government & Trade Impacts

Policy uncertainty remains elevated and the regulatory environment gets stricter

- **U.S.–Canada tariffs**: Limited in scope, but increasing uncertainty for exposed industries and future USMCA negotiations.
- **Tariff refunds**: More than $100 billion issued, with the final processing phase delayed.
- **Transshipments**: Customs scrutiny of routing and origin claims is increasing.
- **Trade fraud**: A new federal enforcement division raises the stakes for accurate customs compliance.
- **Driver licensing**: Training-school closures and testing audits may further constrain qualified driver supply.
- Utilize C.H. Robinson's Client Advisories for critical updates and the North American Trade & Tariff Insights page for the most up-to-date tariff deal announcements

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