

A fisherman with a beard, wearing a cap and waders, stands in a river, holding a fishing rod. The background shows a lush, green forest along the riverbank.

Hooked by Uncertainty: Tariffs Put America's Fishing Tackle Industry on the Line

Reeling from the Tariffs, This American Company Fights for its Future

In the heart of Pennsylvania's famed "Steelhead Alley," a few casts from Lake Erie, sits the headquarters of **FishUSA**, a business built on grit, gear, and the great American outdoors. Known as "America's Tackle Shop," [FishUSA](#) is one of the nation's premier specialty wholesalers and retailers of fishing tackle and apparel. But now, after 25 years of steady growth and service, the company faces a serious threat—not from competitors, but from Washington.

But a new wave of global tariffs threatens to sink the company's steady growth—and with it, the livelihoods of the Pennsylvanians who keep America's anglers equipped and on the water.

"We built this company from a garage with nothing but a love for fishing and a commitment to customer service," says founder Dan Pastore. **"We've stayed resilient through recessions and the rise of e-commerce. But these tariffs—and the uncertainty they create—threaten everything we've worked for."**

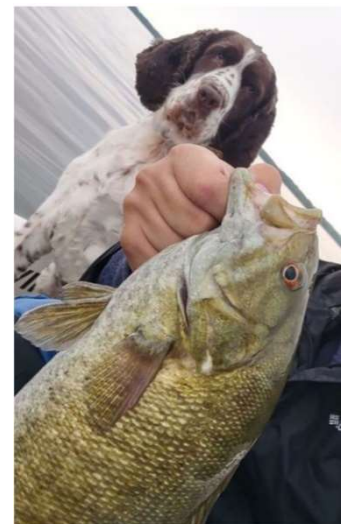
FishUSA is one of five small businesses joining the Liberty Justice Center in a legal challenge to the so-called "Liberation Day" tariffs imposed by the federal government under emergency powers. These sweeping tariffs add up to 150% on many imported goods, particularly from Asia—where much of the world's fishing gear is manufactured.

"We're not some faceless multinational," said Dan Pastore, [FishUSA's founder](#). **"We're a Pennsylvania business employing dozens of hardworking Americans, trying to compete in a global market. These tariffs make it nearly impossible to plan, price, or grow."**

Although FishUSA sources some gear domestically and is even developing a U.S.-built fishing rod, the vast majority of the world's tackle is still produced overseas. The company works with hundreds of suppliers and also designs custom and private label products—like fishing rods, nets, and fly boxes—that take years to develop and fine-tune.

Now, those carefully planned product lines are on hold.

"We've already hit pause on multiple product launches," Pastore explained. **"Not because the products aren't ready, but because we can't predict what the tariff rates will be by the time they arrive at a U.S. port. That kind of uncertainty is devastating for a company like ours."**



In some cases, manufacturers have already raised prices preemptively in anticipation of new tariffs. FishUSA is caught in the middle—unable to absorb the costs without hurting margins and unwilling to pass on steep hikes to loyal customers.

And while policymakers say businesses can simply shift operations to the U.S., Pastore says that’s easier said than done.

“If a competitive U.S. manufacturer exists, we use them. But the reality is, most fishing tackle is made overseas. You can’t just flip a switch and move that to Pennsylvania. It takes years—and even then, the costs are often too high for the products to remain viable.”

Despite the challenges, FishUSA remains committed to its mission: helping anglers across America enjoy the water with high-quality, reliable gear. But as Pastore puts it, “We need smart trade policy—not politically motivated tariffs that punish small businesses and the American families who rely on them.”

As the case moves through the U.S. Court of International Trade, **FishUSA is casting its line not just for justice—but for the future of American fishing.**

