

California Sues Trump administration over 'Unlawful' tariffs



Published on April 17, 2025

Document Date: Mon, Apr 27 2026 06:21:16 pm

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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LOS ANGELES, April 16—The state of California has filed a federal lawsuit challenging former President Donald Trump’s use of emergency powers to impose sweeping tariffs on major U.S. trading partners, claiming the move is unconstitutional and economically harmful.

Governor Gavin Newsom, speaking from an almond farm in the Central Valley, said the tariffs are severely impacting California’s agricultural sector, small businesses, and working families. “No state is more vulnerable than California,” he said, adding that products like almonds, pistachios, and dairy are key exports now facing rising trade barriers.

Filed in the U.S. District Court for Northern California, the lawsuit targets Trump’s use of the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act—intended for foreign crises—not trade disputes. Newsom argued that only Congress has the authority to impose tariffs. “President Trump’s reckless tariffs are driving up costs and threatening jobs,” he said.

Attorney General Rob Bonta emphasized that the case is a response to direct appeals from local farmers, small businesses, and trade groups. “We moved quickly to protect Californians,” Bonta said, citing the “immediate and irreparable” harm caused by lost exports, higher prices, and retaliatory trade actions.

Farmers in the Central Valley have already begun selling orchards to stay afloat, while many small

businesses report losing customers overseas. The California Chamber of Commerce has joined in lobbying against the tariffs.

Officials warned the tariffs have cost the state billions. Newsom is now pursuing alternative trade partnerships and exemptions for California-made goods, stressing that trade policy must remain within the constitutional powers of Congress—not the unilateral actions of the White House.