

Bulk Freight Rates Ease 4.2% in June as a Fragile Iran Ceasefire Pulls Diesel Lower

A Shaky Ceasefire Just Cut Your Diesel 50 Cents. Here's What's Next." / "Why Bulk Rates Eased in June While Every Commodity Group Rose

SPRINGFIELD, MO, UNITED STATES, June 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [BulkLoads'](#) June Bulk Freight Market Update shows per-mile rates cooling off record spring highs even as major commodity groups firm. A preliminary ceasefire framework has already eased diesel roughly 50 cents, making fuel the most direct tailwind for carriers, though implementation remains unresolved.

Median bulk freight rates eased 4.2% in June to \$4.99 per mile, according to the latest Bulk Freight Market Update from BulkLoads, the bulk freight marketplace and data platform. The figure, drawn from 23,952 verified loads across 47 origin states through June 19, remains 20.8% higher than June 2025, underscoring how far the market's floor has climbed over the past year.

The month-over-month dip is largely a mix story rather than a sign of weakening demand. While the blended median cooled, the network's major commodity groups firmed underneath it: grain rates rose roughly 9% on the month, and aggregates and industrial rates gained about 8%. Corn, the highest-volume product on the platform with 2,115 verified loads, climbed 8.3% month-over-month and 30% year-over-year. The softer blended average reflects a tilt toward shorter-haul, lower-rate lanes. Total volume held essentially flat, down just 0.6% from May and running 8.5% above the trailing 12-month average.

"The number on the screen says rates cooled, but that's the wrong thing to watch," said John F. Calloway, Growth Architect, Enterprise at BulkLoads. "Underneath the blended average, the



freight that actually moves this network is firming. And for the first time in months, fuel is finally working in carriers' favor."

Diesel remains the second-largest variable cost for bulk carriers, and its trajectory has become the central question for the back half of 2026. The U.S. average fell 9.6% in June to \$5.06 per gallon and is now roughly flat over the trailing three months, though still 35.7% above year-ago levels. That 12-month spike was driven largely by the Iran conflict and the disruption of the Strait of Hormuz, through which roughly a fifth of the world's oil and gasoline normally moves. The conflict reset the entire diesel curve higher and, with it, the floor under freight rates.

A preliminary ceasefire framework and a 60-day negotiating window reached in mid-June have already pulled diesel about 50 cents off its mid-May level, the most direct rate-input tailwind in the report. BulkLoads cautions that the relief is not yet durable. Nuclear program terms and the practical reopening of the Strait of Hormuz remain unresolved, and the framework has already been tested by renewed regional tension. The company frames the development as a watch item rather than a settled story.

"Fuel is doing the work for carriers right now, and that's real money on the margin," Calloway added. "But this framework is fragile. If it holds, diesel grinds lower and eases rate floors into the third and fourth quarters. If it breaks, fuel snaps back fast. The operators who win the next two quarters will price that move before it fully shows up."

Regional trends are beginning to split. Over the trailing six months, both Midwest and South Central origins posted strong gains. In the June month-to-date window, however, the Midwest held its lead while South Central origins softened 6.8% and the Northeast firmed 3.9%. Short-haul intrastate moves continued to dominate, with the three busiest corridors accounting for 20% of all flow.

The monthly update is a snapshot of BulkLoads' broader data platform, Bulk Freight [Insights](#), which extends the report into live rate-quoting tools, lane analysis, and fuel-adjusted estimates across every commodity in the network. The platform is built on verified, transaction-backed data rather than scraped or self-reported rates.

BulkLoads will also host the Bulk Freight Conference, with tickets now available at bulkfreightconference.com.

BulkLoads operates a bulk freight marketplace and data platform connecting carriers, brokers, and shippers across the agricultural and bulk commodity sectors. Through BulkLoads.com and Bulk Freight Insights, the company delivers verified market data, rate intelligence, and freight-matching tools built specifically for bulk haulers.

Media Contact

John F. Calloway, Growth Architect, Enterprise

BulkLoads · John.c@bulkloads.com · (417) 501-3934 · bulkloads.com

John F. Calloway

BulkLoads

+1 4175013934

john.c@bulkloads.com

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