

Nvidia

China set to limit access to Nvidia's H200 chips despite Trump export approval

Discussions among regulators come as Beijing seeks to achieve self-sufficiency in semiconductor production



The H200 is Nvidia's second-best generation of artificial intelligence chips © Dado Ruvic/Reuters

Zijing Wu in Hong Kong

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Beijing is set to limit access to Nvidia's advanced H200 chips despite Donald Trump's decision to allow the export of the technology to China as it pushes to achieve self-sufficiency in semiconductor production.

According to two people with knowledge of the matter, regulators in Beijing have been discussing ways to permit limited access to the H200, Nvidia's second-best generation of artificial intelligence chips.

Buyers would probably be required to go through an approval process, the people said, submitting requests to purchase the chips and explaining why domestic providers were unable to meet their needs. The people added that no final decision had been made yet.

Trump on Monday said in a [Truth Social post](#) that he had told Chinese President Xi Jinping that the US would allow Nvidia “to ship its H200 products to approved customers in China . . . under conditions that allow for continued strong National Security. President Xi responded positively!”

Trump added that “\$25% (sic) will be paid to the United States of America”. It was unclear how such a mechanism would work. A previous deal to let Nvidia sell its less advanced H20 chip if it gave the government 15 per cent of the revenues has not materialised because the company and the Trump administration have not come up with a legally viable payment mechanism.

Shipments to China of [Nvidia's](#) H200 and other advanced chips crucial to the development of AI were banned under the Biden administration over concerns that they might be used in military applications.

Nvidia chief executive Jensen Huang has been lobbying for the ban to be lifted. Supporters, including White House AI tsar David Sacks, contend that allowing exports would help America by making Beijing reliant on US technology. But critics say the move will give China a big boost.

China has used the ban to push domestic chipmakers to make products to compete with Nvidia. Moves include stepping up customs checks of chip imports and [offering energy subsidies](#) to data centres using domestic chips.

The two regulators in charge of Beijing's years-long [semiconductor](#) independence campaign — the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology — could apply other measures to ensure the competitiveness of domestic chips, the people said, including banning China's public sector from buying the H200.

The return of Nvidia's advanced chips would be welcomed by tech giants such as Alibaba, ByteDance and Tencent, which have been using more Chinese chips for some basic AI functions but still prefer Nvidia's products because of their higher performance and easier maintenance.

Many of them are [training their AI models abroad](#) to access Nvidia chips banned at home.

While Trump has signalled his approval for the export of Nvidia's advanced chips to China, he faces some opposition in Congress. A bipartisan group of senators has introduced legislation that would prevent the administration from approving exports of chips, including the H200, to Beijing for 30 months.

But the prospects for the legislation are unclear given that few Republicans — including many who called for tougher export controls during the Biden administration — have publicly criticised Trump over the H200 decision.

While the president previously allowed Nvidia to sell the H200 to China, Beijing has [restricted tech companies' access](#) to the chip, saying its performance was not significantly better than Chinese alternatives.

The NDRC and MIIT did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Additional contributions from Cheng Leng in Beijing

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