

Notable 4Q Market Performance

	S&P 500 (Large Cap Stocks)	MSCI EAFE (International Developed Stocks)	MSCI Emerging Markets (EM Stocks)	Barclays Aggregate (Bonds)	10-Year Treasury (Bonds)	HFRI Hedge Fund Composite (Hedge Funds)	USD	WTI Crude Oil
4Q Return	-13.52%	-12.50%	-7.40%	1.64%	3.87%	-5.34%	1.09%	-37.49%
2018 Return	-4.38%	-13.36%	-14.25%	0.01%	0.00%	-4.08%	4.40%	-20.46%

4Q 2018 Market Commentary

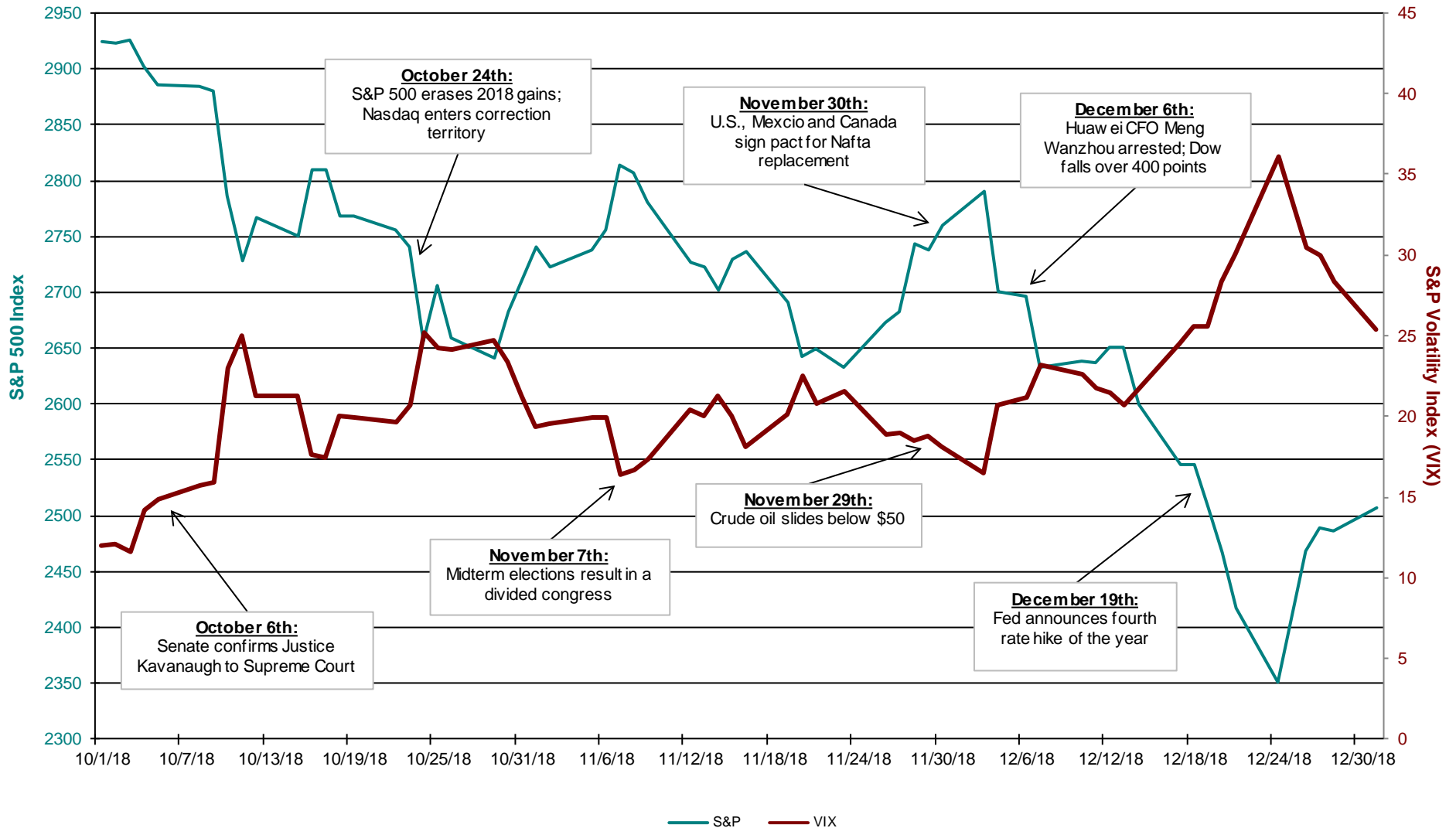
Risk assets sold off sharply during the 4th Quarter, leading the domestic stock market down for its worst annual performance since 2008. Investors spurned healthy US economic data, as unemployment remained below 4%, inflation (as measured by CPI) held above 2% and corporate earnings continued to post impressive double-digit growth. Non-US stocks were weighted down by US-China trade war rhetoric, uncertainty surrounding the pathway and effects of Brexit and the unsustainably high level of non-performing loans on the books of Italian banks. In addition, the unrelenting strength of the US dollar resulted in big declines for emerging market equity markets. Bonds proved more resilient but still the Barclays Global Aggregate Bond Index lost -1.2% in 2018. Towards the end of the year, credit spreads began to widen, signaling concern for lower liquidity and the overall quality of corporate bonds. As a result, high yield bonds fell -4.5% in Q4.

What is spooking the market and do these fears justify the kind of negative market action we witnessed in 2018, particularly in the final quarter of the year? Could it be wrong-minded decisions by central bankers including the Fed? Is it an increase in operating leverage on the balance sheets of corporations and households? Perhaps it's the post-peak corporate earnings outlook? Or could it be the slowdown in China's growth? While these are valid concerns, we don't think they paint a sufficiently dire picture to account for the recent re-rating of global markets. Take for example the Fed's attempt to break the market's codependency on easy money/zero interest rates. Even if the Fed's policy moves were to invert the yield curve, the average time from inversion to bear market since 1965 has been 17 months. Yes, the market is a discounting mechanism, but this lead time suggests there may be upside this year.

So although fundamentals have begun to erode, they have not deteriorated *drastically* and are not the primary reason for most of the recent negative investor sentiment. Rather, markets are preoccupied with the unpredictable nature of decisions that impact economic growth. Investors and corporations crave a steady, reliable hand — not confrontational trade or inconsistent foreign policy. Concern over policy missteps become amplified when there is a lack of confidence in, or a clear understanding of, the direction we are heading. Exacerbating this is the deafening feedback loop of sensationalized and polarizing reportage. One can only hope that this troubling phase will play itself out and we will return to a more thoughtful discourse based on shared objectives that are fully and well articulated.

Notwithstanding the heightened level of political and geopolitical risk, we remain long-term, fundamental investors, and we are not abandoning equities especially now that their valuations have become more attractive. Equity exposure has already been taken down via market action. We would not take further steps in this direction other than for the few clients who find this inflated level of volatility too difficult to bear.

The S&P 500 falls -13.5% During 4Q; Finishes -4.4% for 2018 as Trade Fears and Rising Interest Rates Loom Large



Source: Bloomberg, WSJ.com.

Domestic Capital Markets Snapshot: Risk Assets Hit Hard in 4Q

U.S. Equity

	4Q 2018			Full Year 2018		
	Value	Blend	Growth	Value	Blend	Growth
Large Cap	(11.72)	(13.82)	(15.89)	(8.27)	(4.78)	(1.51)
Mid Cap	(14.95)	(15.37)	(15.99)	(12.29)	(9.06)	(4.75)
Small Cap	(18.67)	(20.20)	(21.65)	(12.86)	(11.01)	(9.31)

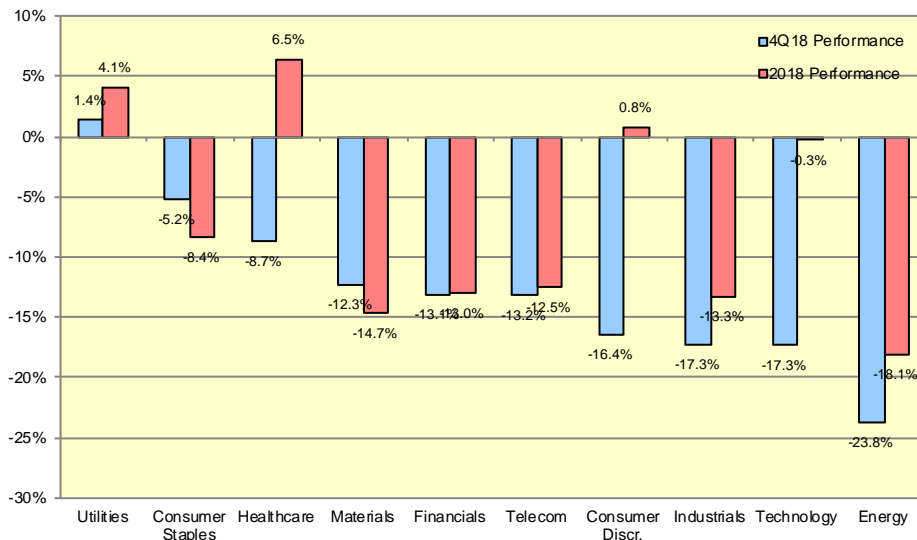
Source: Bloomberg

U.S. Fixed Income

	4Q 2018			Full Year 2018		
	Short Term	Int Term	Long Term	Short Term	Int Term	Long Term
Treasuries	1.31	2.24	4.19	1.56	1.41	(1.84)
Corporate	0.89	0.75	(1.64)	1.64	0.01	(6.76)
High Yield	N/A	(4.36)	(7.79)	N/A	(1.77)	(7.58)

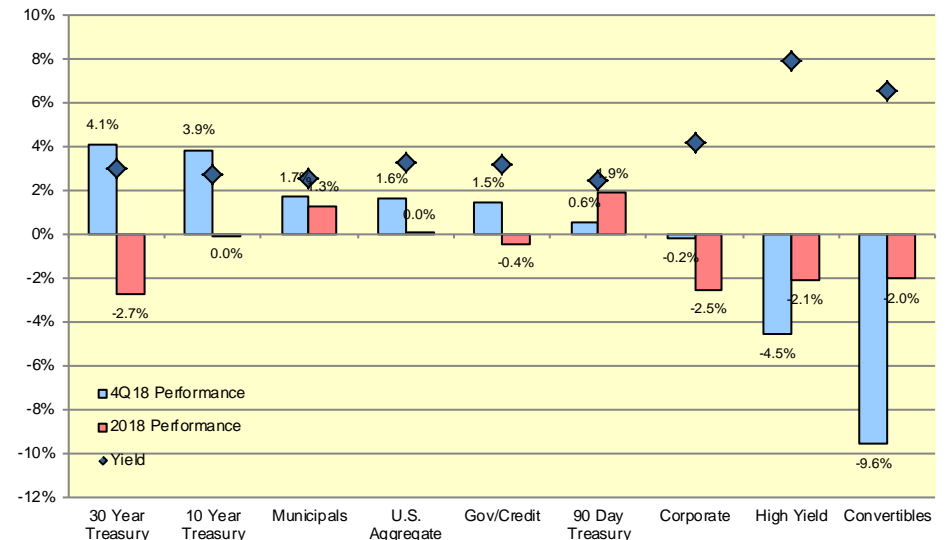
Source: Bloomberg

S&P Sector Performance



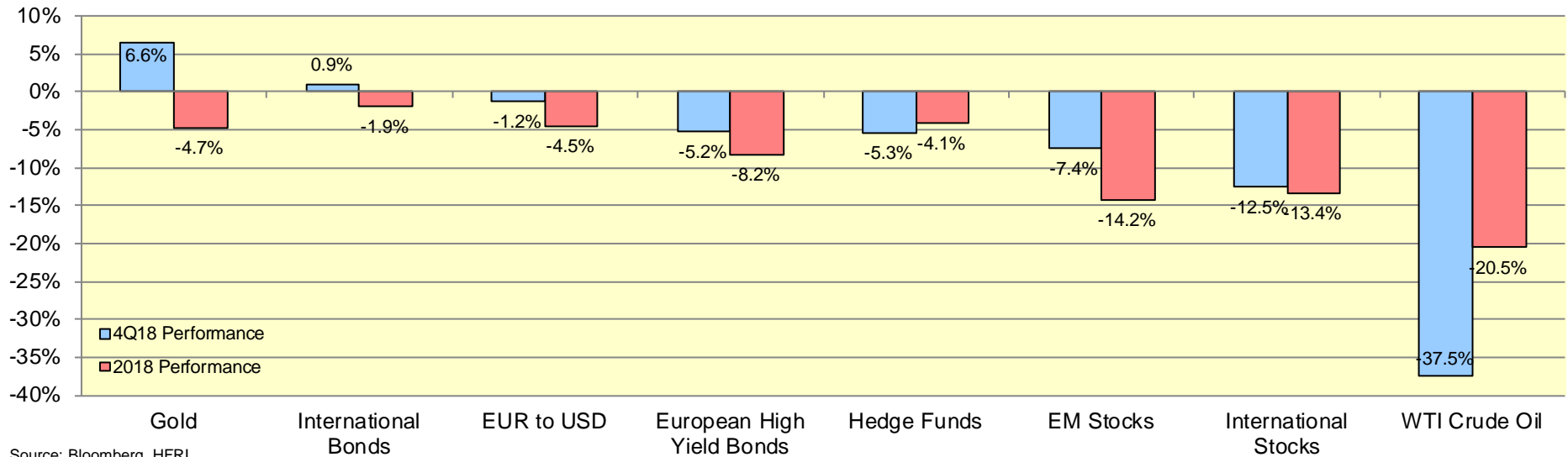
Source: Bloomberg

Domestic Fixed Income Performance



Source: Bloomberg, JP Morgan.

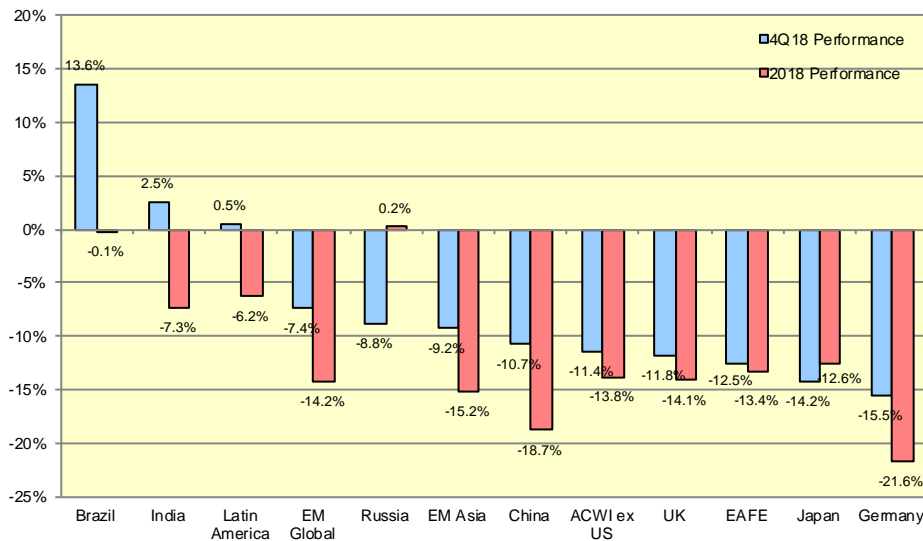
International Capital Markets Snapshot: Trade War and Brexit Uncertainty Brought Negative Returns to 2018



Source: Bloomberg, HFRI.

Note: All returns in USD.

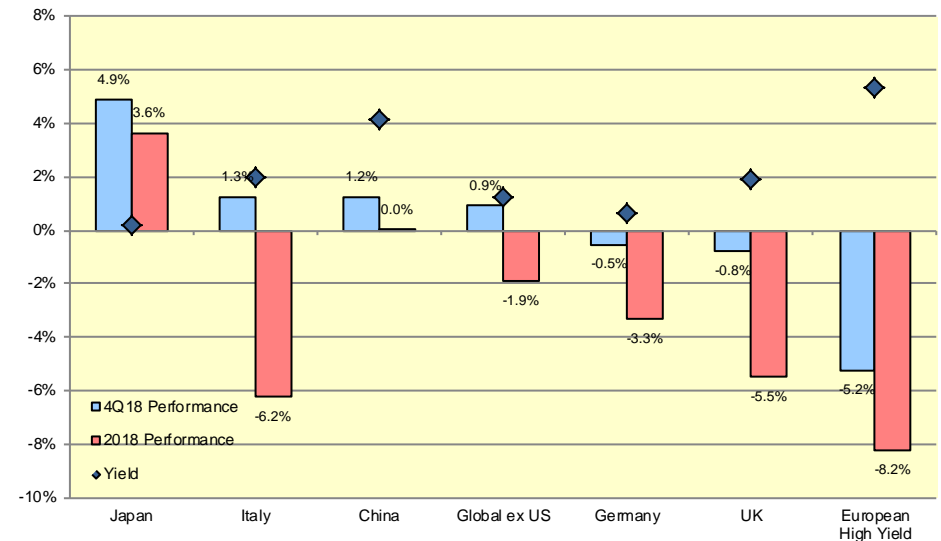
International Equity Performance



Source: Bloomberg

Note: All returns in USD.

International Fixed Income Performance



Source: Bloomberg, JP Morgan. Country returns and yields represent those of Aggregate indices.

Note: All returns in USD.

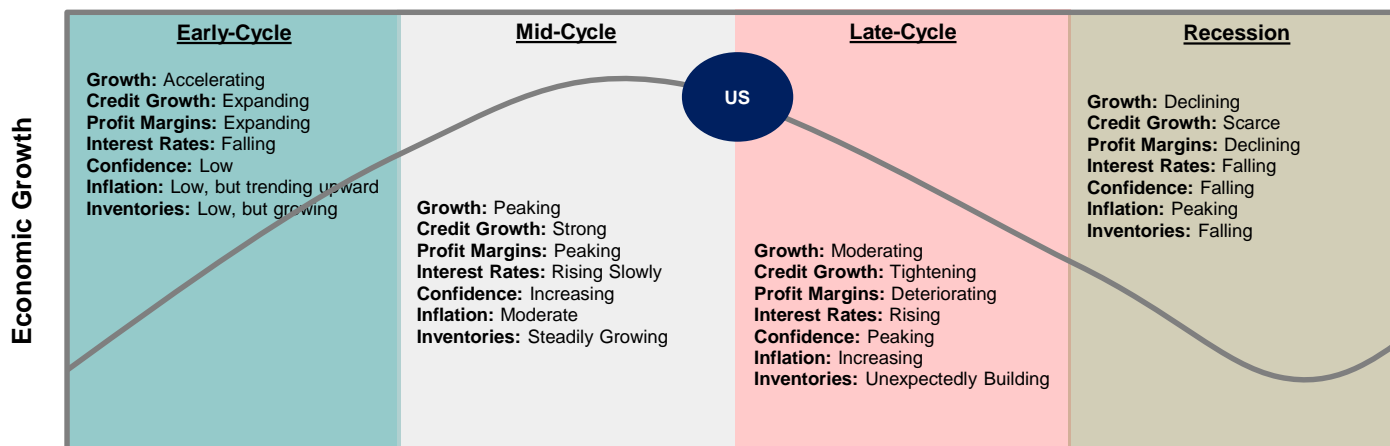
Key Market Themes

- (1) Late Cycle Dynamics
- (2) Tightening Global Liquidity
- (3) China Transactions
- (4) Globalization Backlash

Source for entire section: NEPC. Additional sources, if any, are listed at bottom of pages.

(1) Late Cycle Dynamics

U.S. economy has transitioned to a late cycle environment

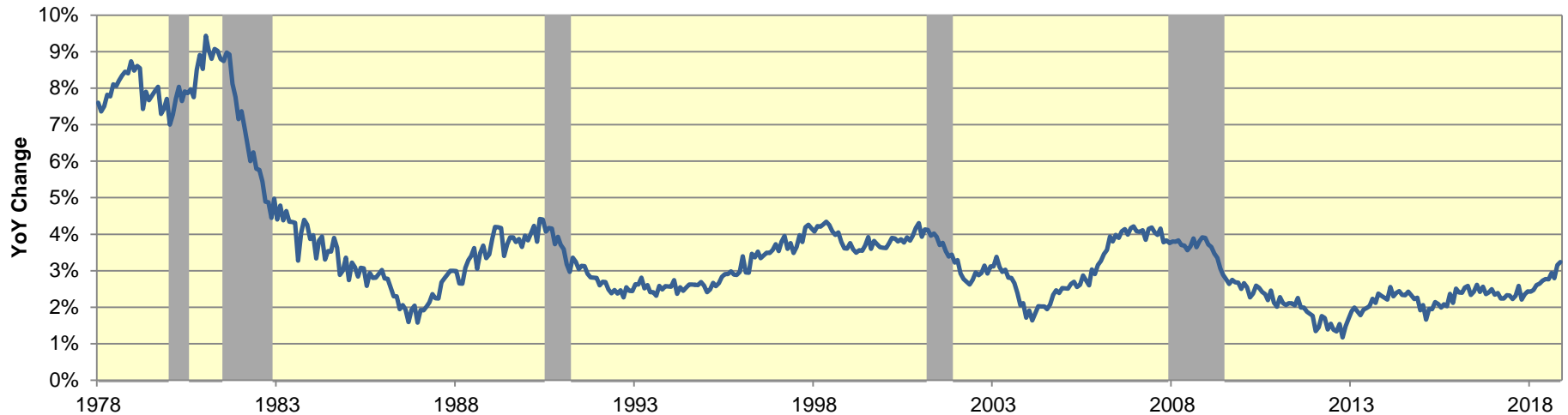


Late Cycle Checklist

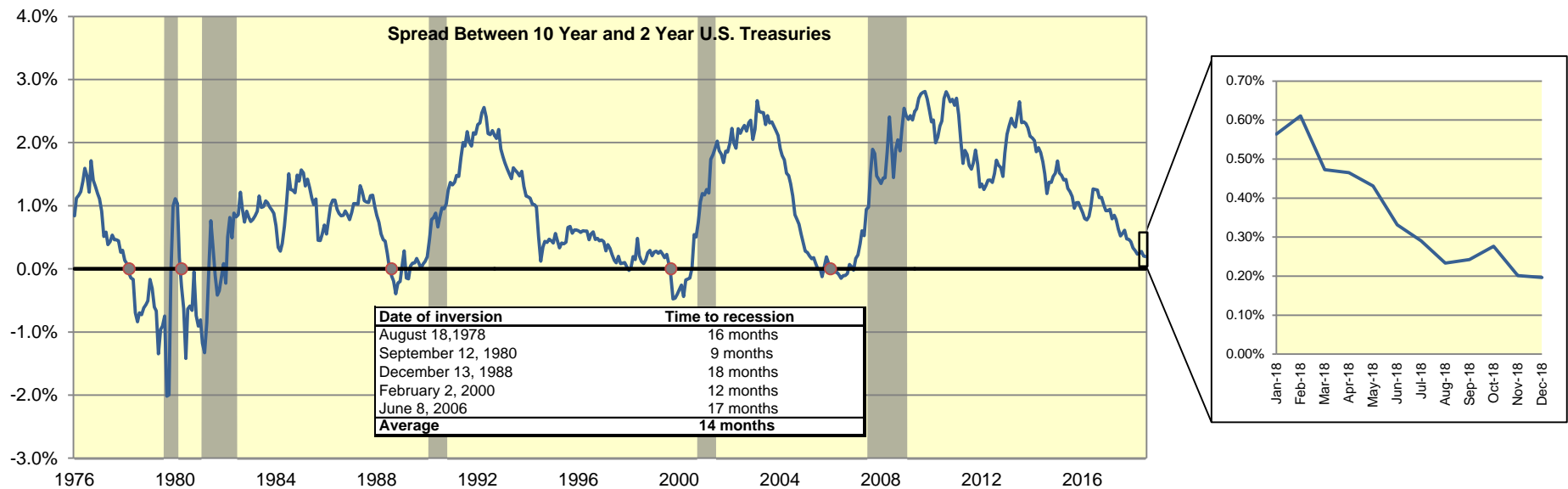
Indicators	Expected Late Cycle Behavior	Current State
Yield Curve	Inverting	Close
Inflation	Rising	Yes
Equities	Peaking/Rolling Over	Yes
Rates	Rising	Yes
Growth	Choppy, Dipping 12-24 months Ahead	Yes
Credit Spreads	Stable to Rising	Yes
Output	Near or Above Potential	Yes
Unemployment	Declining/Bottoming	Yes

(1) Late Cycle Dynamics – Key Indicators

U.S. Average Hourly Earnings Peaked Prior to Recessions: Indicates Potential Lower Profit Margins, Rising Inflation

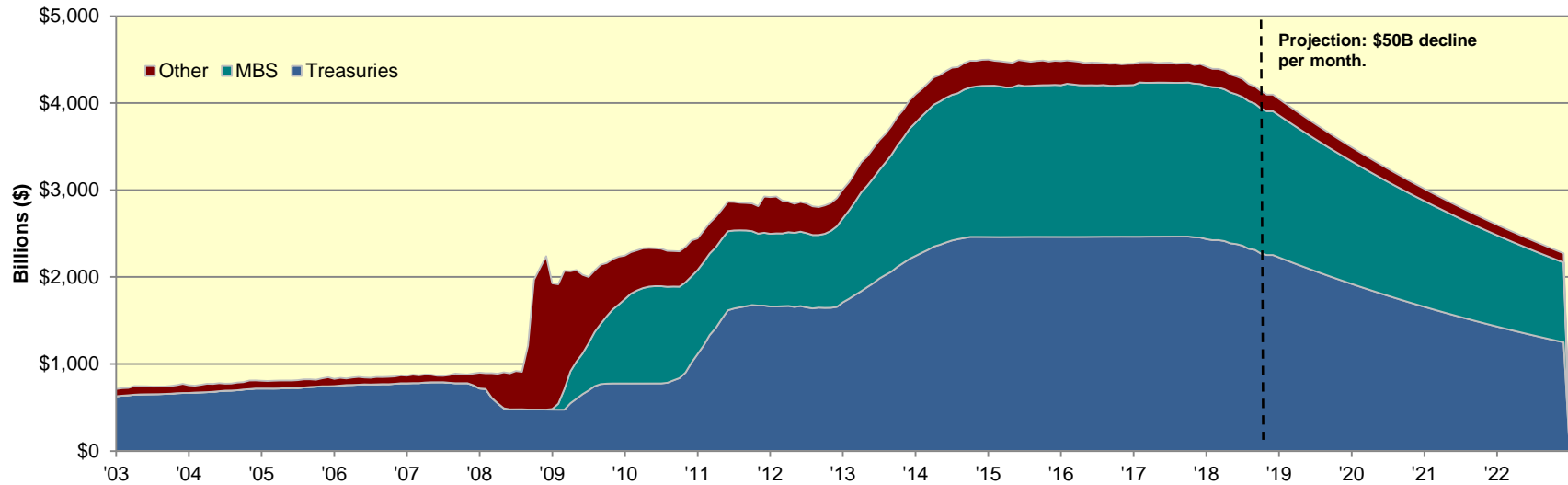


Inverted Yield Curve is Normally a Precursor to a Recession: Spreads Continue to Tighten

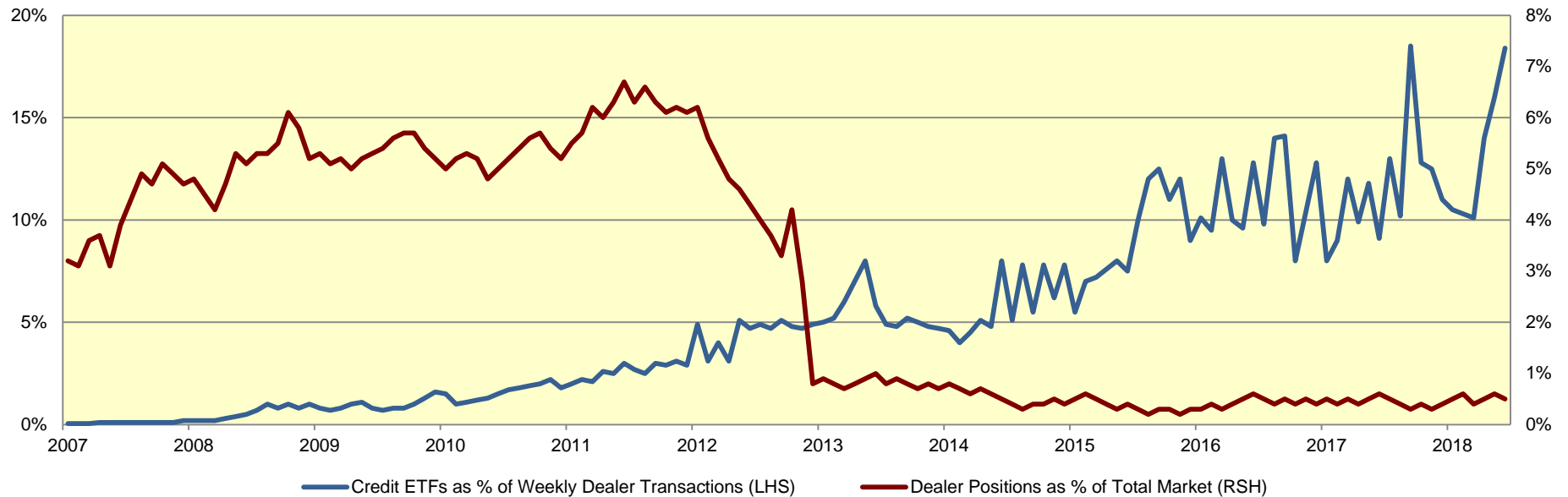


(2) Tightening Global Liquidity

Federal Reserve Balance Sheet Assets: QE Reversal Has Already Commenced



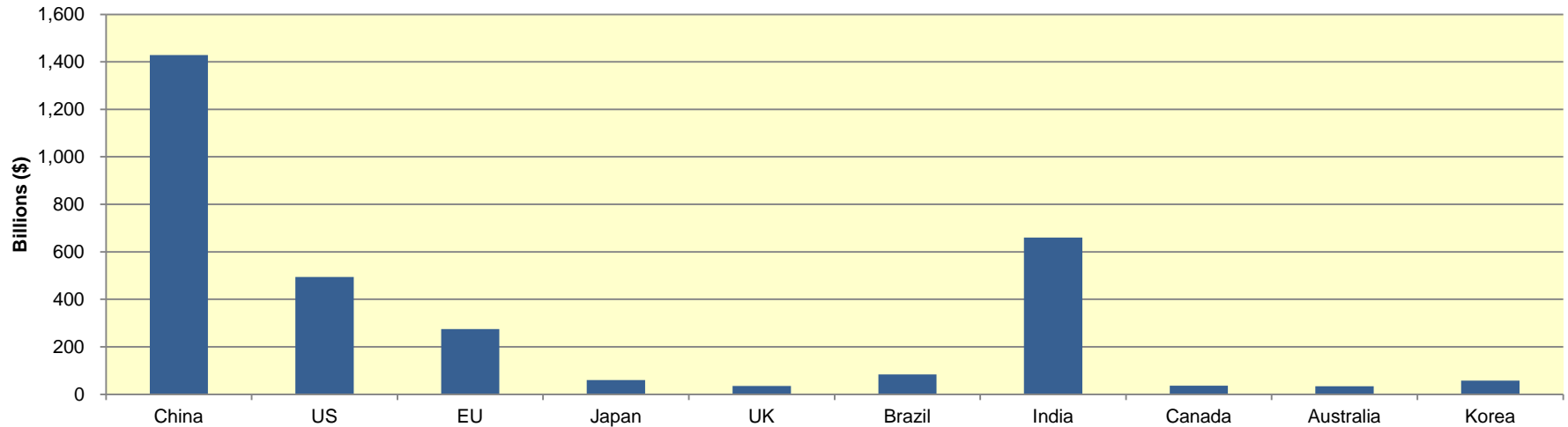
Credit Supply/Trading: Credit Market Liquidity Could Prove To Be a Problem



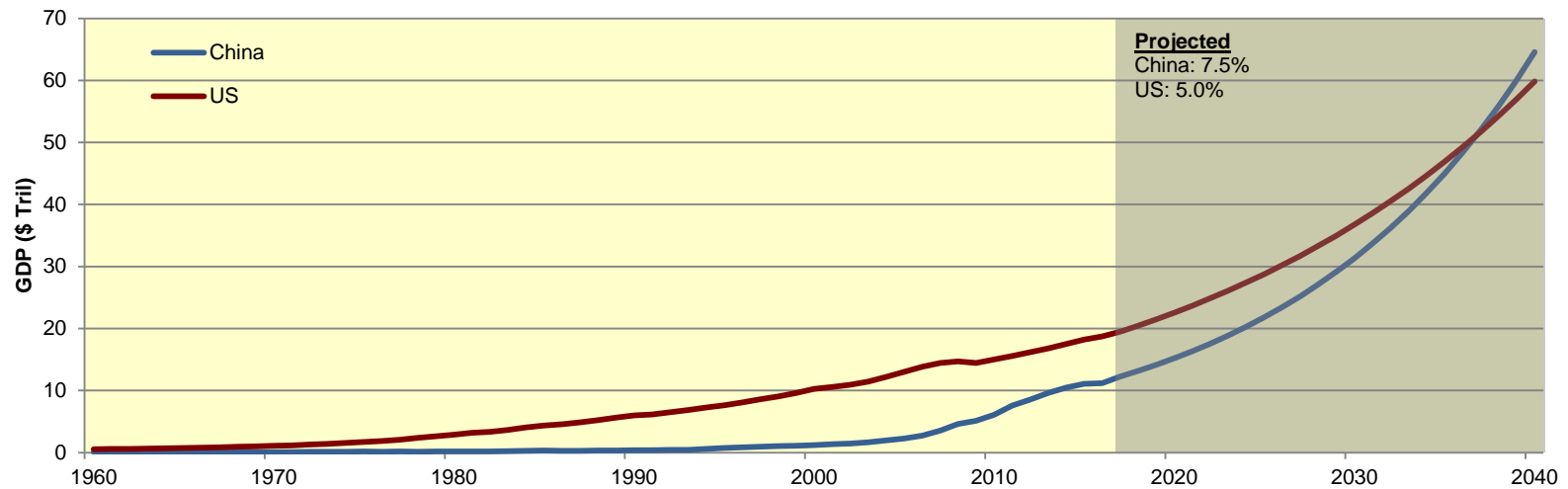
Source: Bloomberg (Top).

(3) China Transitions: Navigating as a World Leader

2019 Projected Real GDP Growth: China Outpaces the Rest of World

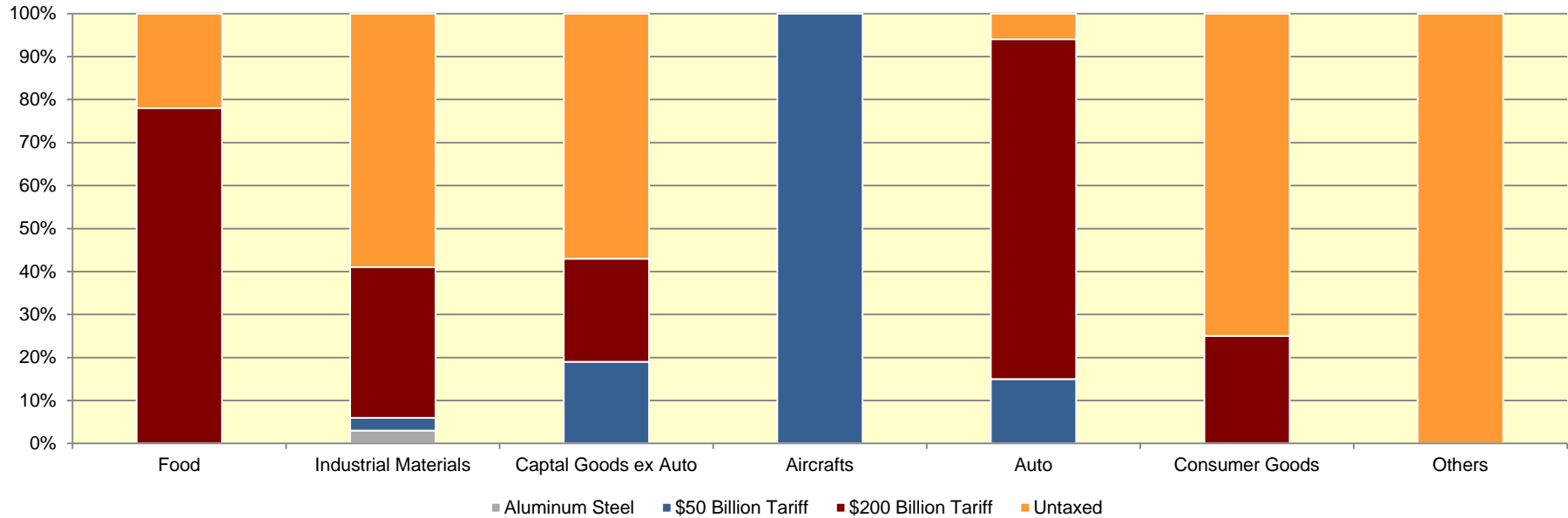


Nominal GDP Growth: China Projects to Surpass U.S.

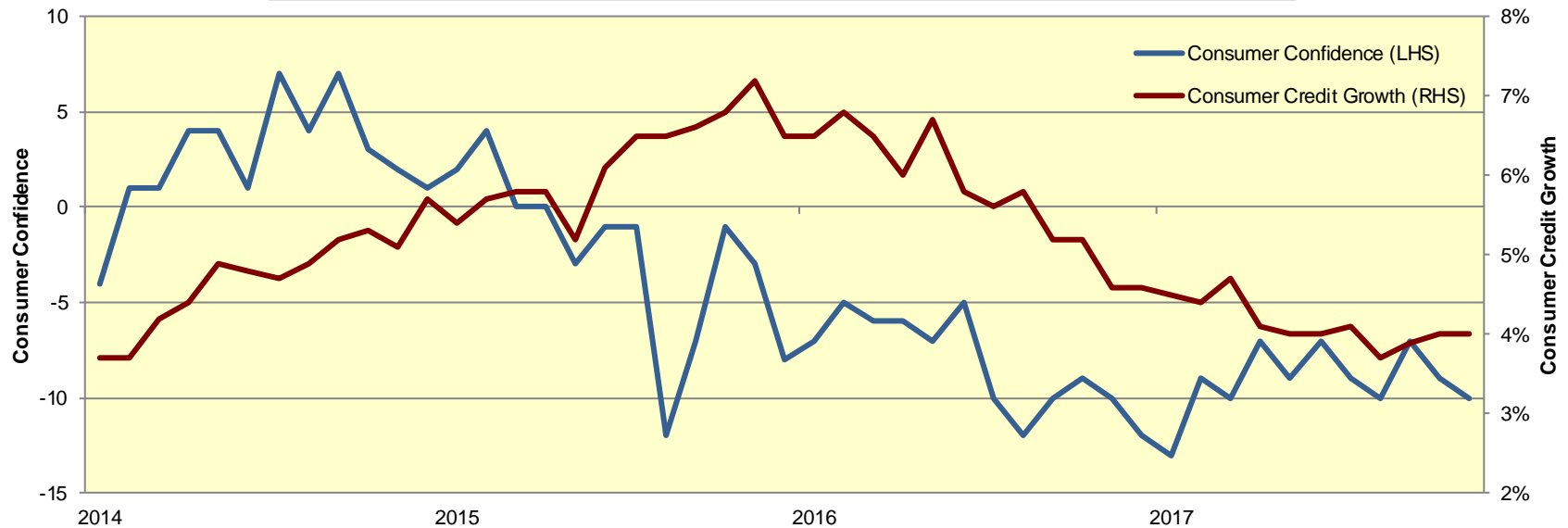


(4) Globalization Backlash: Fallout From Brexit, Trade War

U.S. Tariffs on China: Many Goods Impacted By Trade War



U.K. Consumer Confidence vs. Credit: Will We See a Brexit Referendum?



Source: Bloomberg (Top); Bloomberg (Bottom).

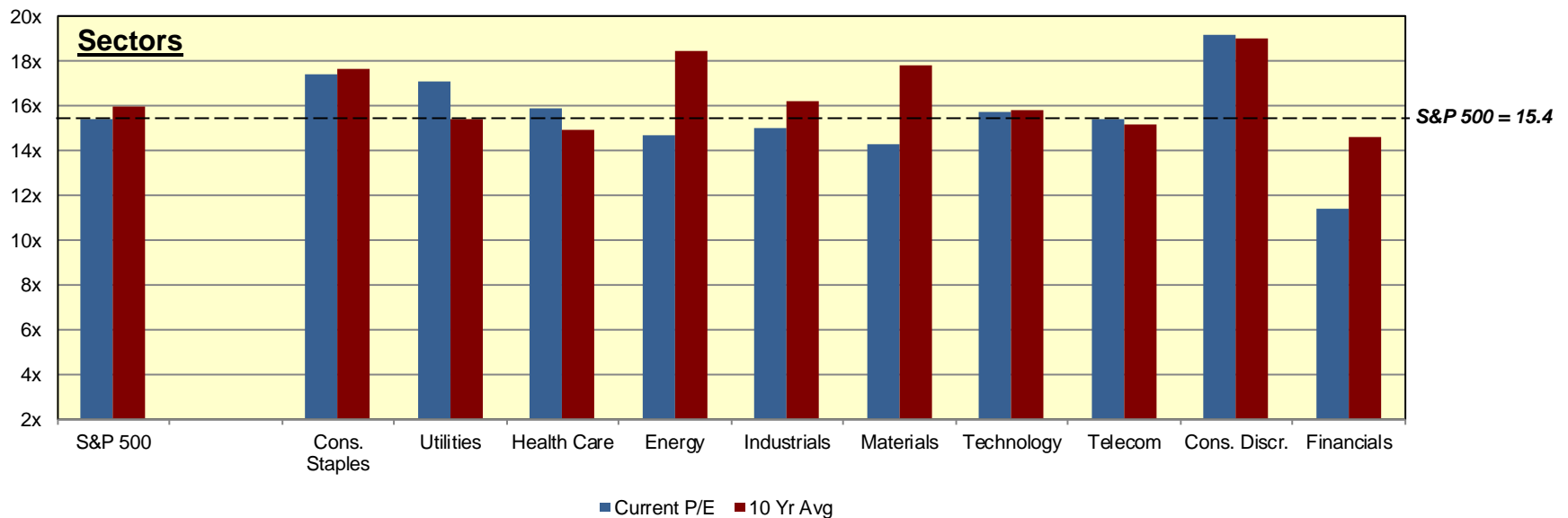
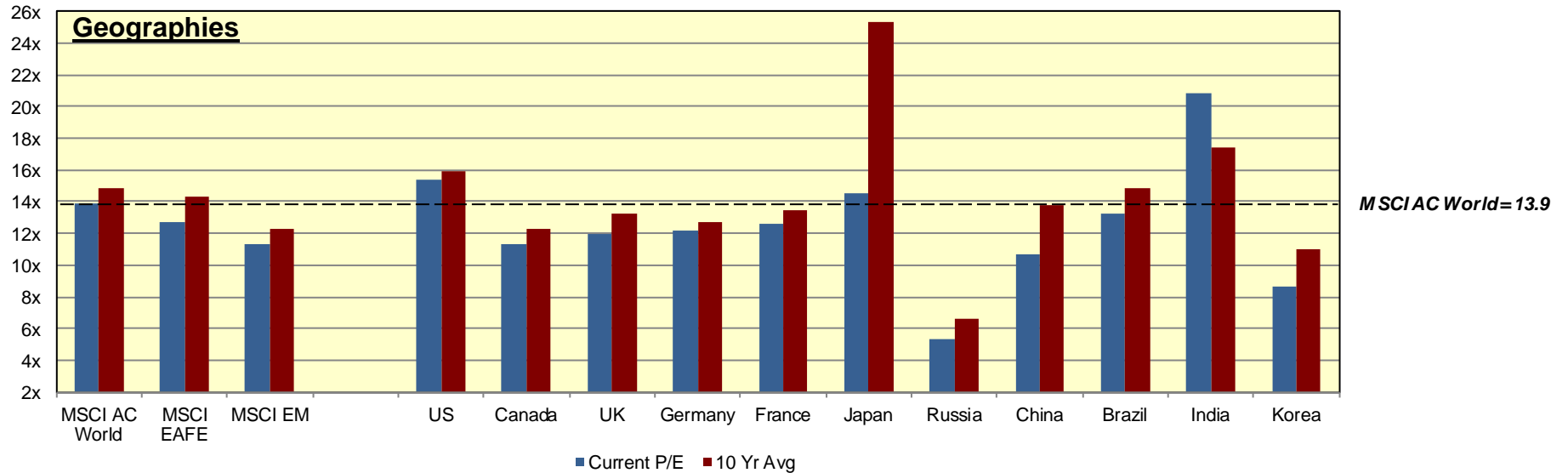
2019 Opportunities

- (1) Take Advantage of Equity Valuations
- (2) Maintain Emerging Market Overweight
- (3) Raise Low Risk Fixed Income Exposure
- (4) Allocate to Midstream Energy

Source for entire section: NEPC. Additional sources, if any, are listed at bottom of pages.

(1) Take Advantage of Equity Valuations

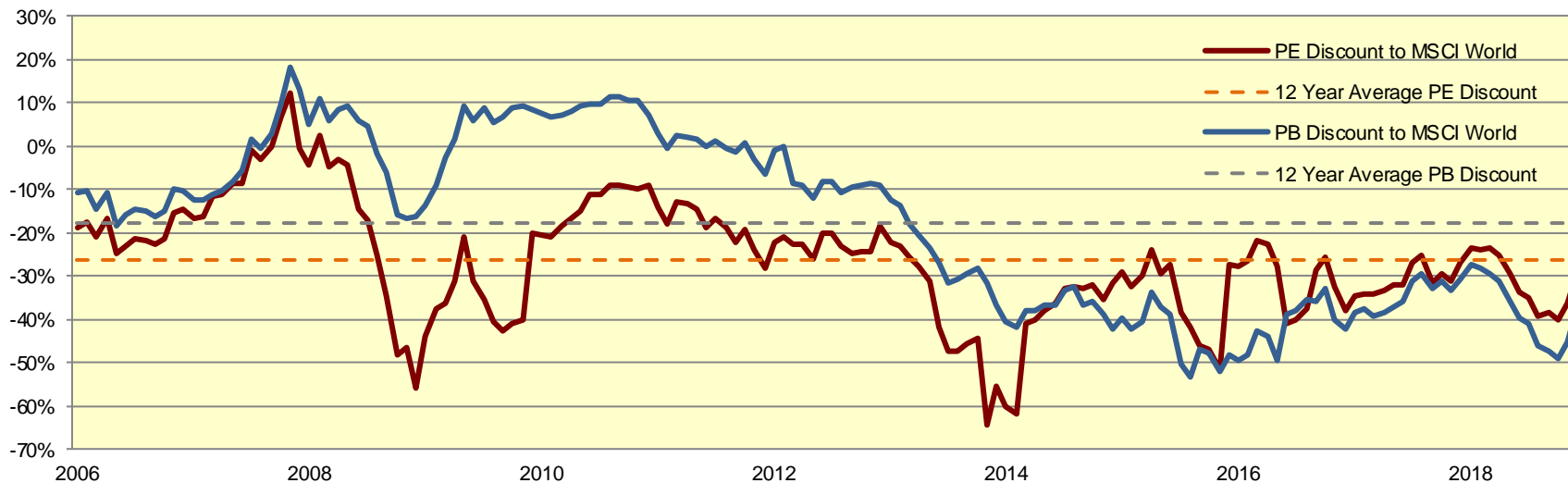
Current Price / Earnings Ratio vs. 10 Year Average: Opportunities Across Geographies and Sectors



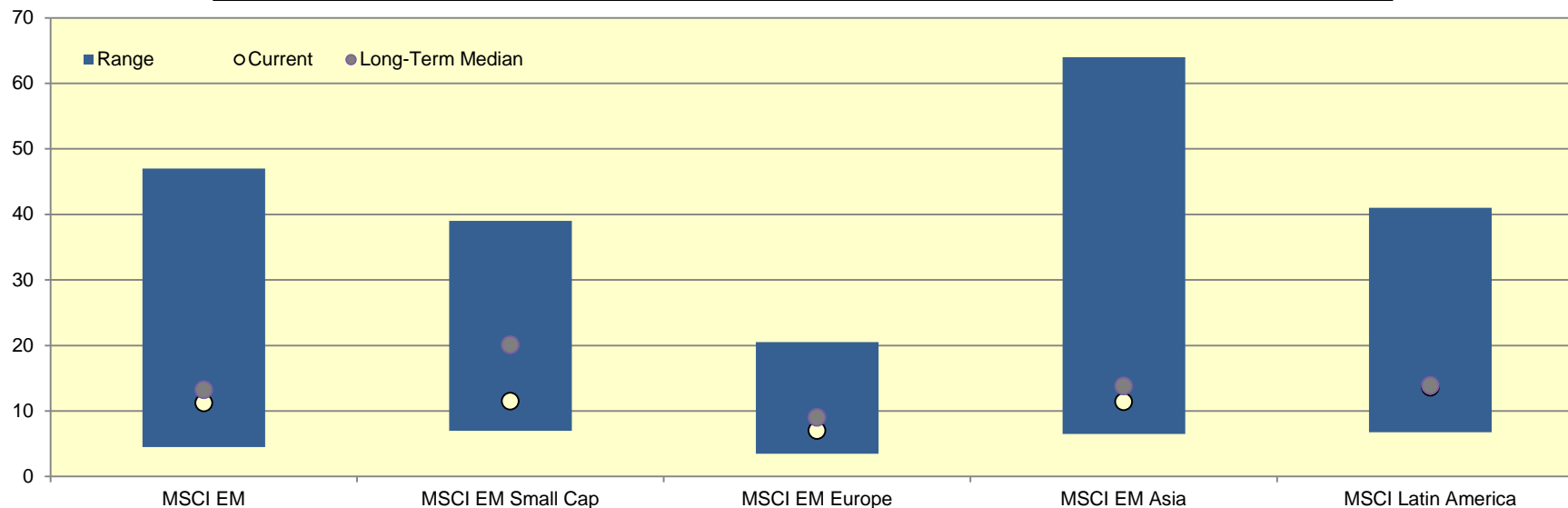
Source: Bloomberg. Price to earnings is price divided by Bloomberg consensus forward 12 month earnings estimate

(2) Maintain Emerging Market Overweight

Relative EM Equity Valuations: Current Valuations Below 12 Year Averages

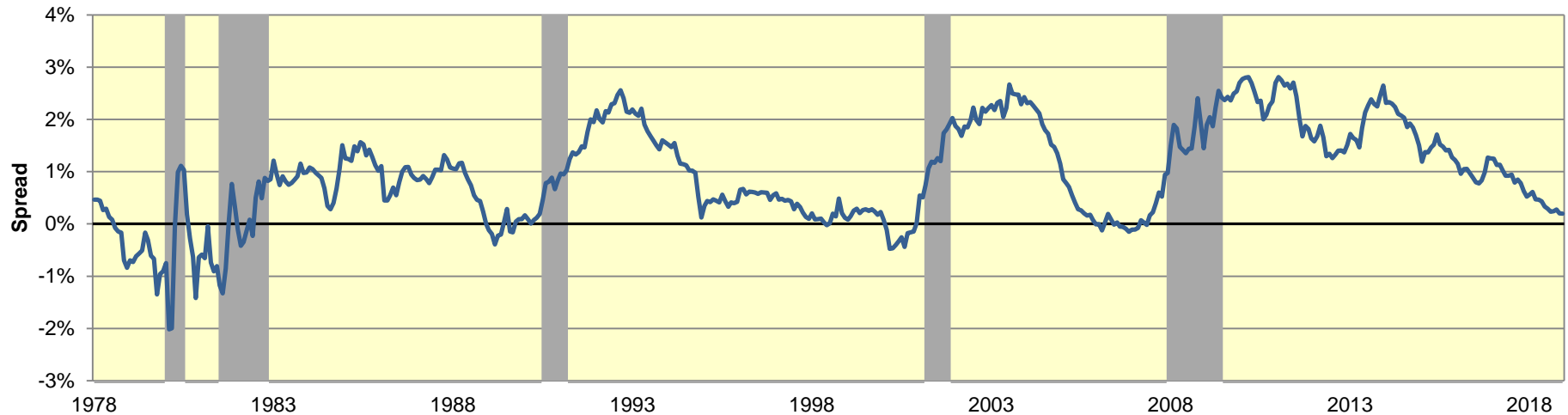


EM Forward PE Ratios: Attractive Prices Across EM Sectors and Geographic Regions

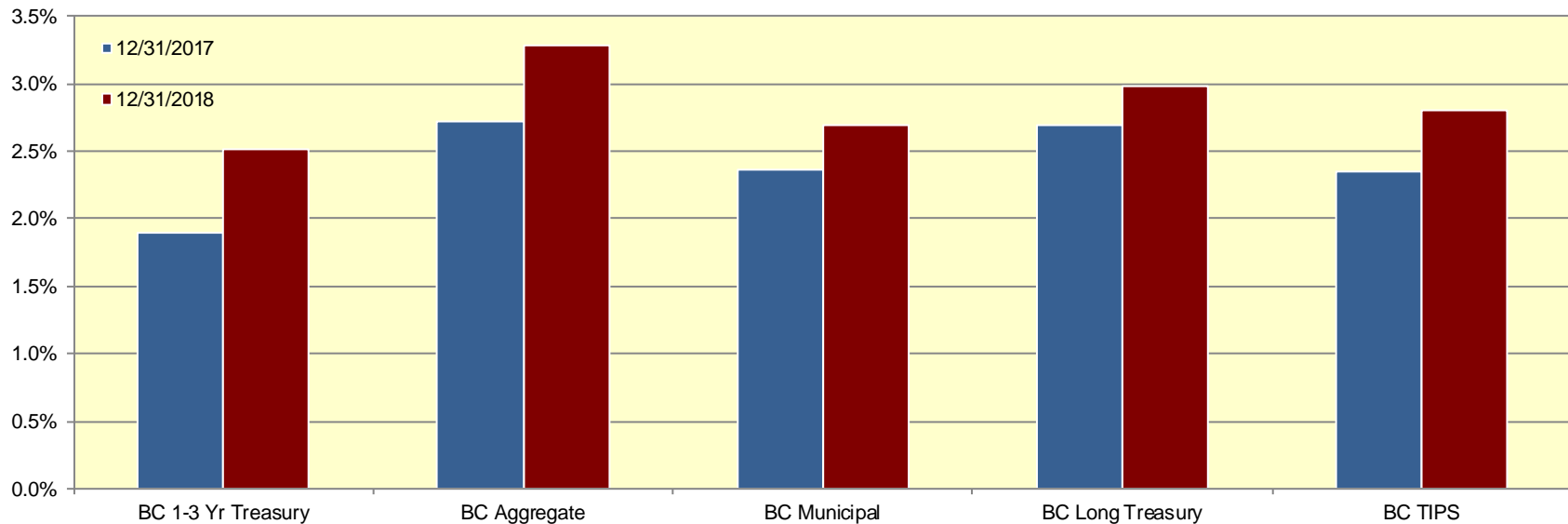


(3) Raise Low Risk Fixed Income Exposure

Treasury Yield Curve (10 Year vs. 2 Year): As Spreads Narrow, Reward For Taking on More Risk Diminishes



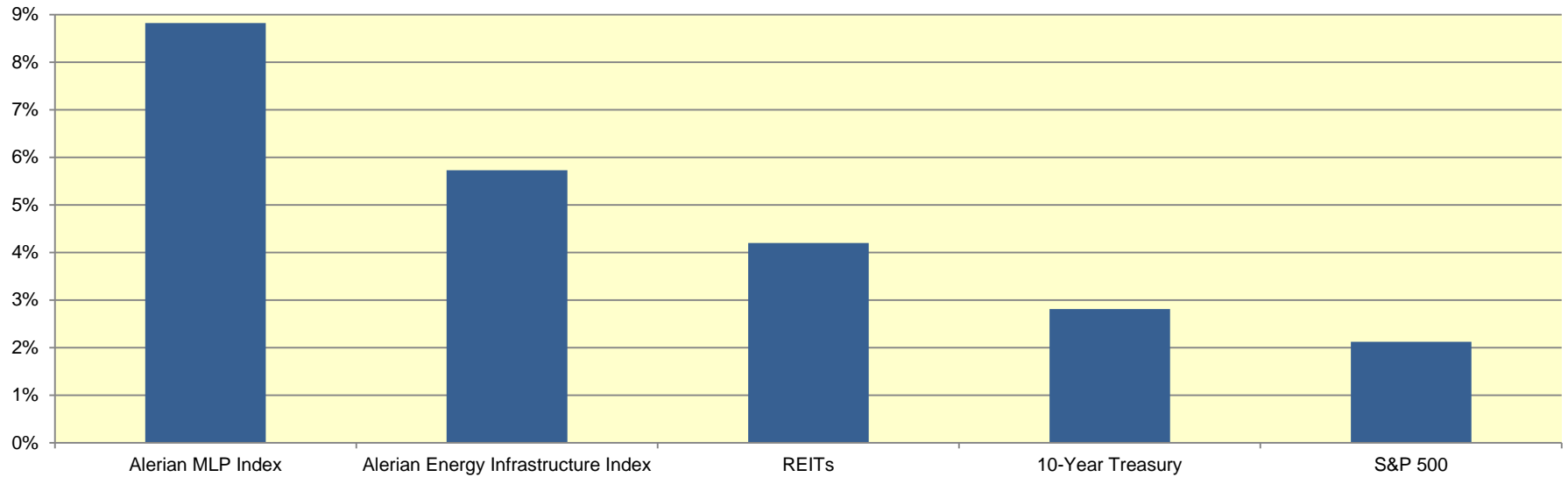
Low Risk Bond Yields Are On The Rise



Source: Bloomberg (Top); Bloomberg (Bottom).

(4) Allocate to Midstream Energy

Asset Class Yield Comparison: Elevated Energy Sector Yields



P/EBITDA Multiple: Low Valuations Make Energy Attractive



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