

Statement of the Honorable Rubén Hinojosa
Texas 15th District
Before the International Trade Commission
Steel Concrete Reinforcing Bar from Mexico and Turkey
September 15, 2014

Good morning Chairman Broadbent and Members of the Commission. It is my honor to appear before you today on behalf of the hard-working people of the Fifteenth Congressional District of Texas. I am here to support the efforts of CMC Steel Texas, and especially their workers, to gain much needed relief against unfairly traded rebar from Turkey and Mexico.

Manufacturing and steel production are vital to the economy and well-being of my district and this nation. The jobs they support provide the foundation for growing communities. They give workers the opportunity for advancement and the ability to give their children good educations and stable households. The Fifteenth District is home to CMC Steel Texas, a world-class rebar facility in Seguin, Texas. Established in 1947, CMC Steel Texas has been a bedrock of the District for decades. This mill provides good wages for hundreds of workers and is a significant contributor to our local economy.

While you will hear testimony today from CEO's like Joe Alvarado and others, this isn't about them. This is about workers and their families. It's about making sure that we strictly enforce our trade laws. Our workers and their families have a right to expect that we give them a fair chance and level playing field to compete and grow.

As the Commission is aware, manufacturers in the United States were hard hit by the recession. CMC and other domestic rebar producers are no exception. These producers have been desperately trying to get back on their feet ever since and, by now, they should have succeeded. Although they were well positioned to take advantage of the bumpy recovery in demand, they have been unable to do so. Instead, the domestic industry and its workers were quickly faced with an onslaught of unfairly priced rebar imports from Turkey and Mexico.

As you know, in the past few years, rebar shipments from these countries have nearly doubled. This surge has occurred even though the U.S. industry has been operating at low capacity. By trading unfairly, these imports have deprived our workers of their right to participate in the growing U.S. economy. Frankly, it makes no sense to me why we would not do all we can to ensure the growth of more manufacturing and steel jobs, rather than let unfairly traded imports take over our market.

Rebuilding our manufacturing sector must be a priority. We should be making more products in Texas and throughout America. Manufacturing is critical to the health and vitality of our nation. It is the fabric of our communities, creating strong and stable middle-class jobs, and providing opportunities for upward mobility to a broad and a diverse work force. It fosters innovation and boosts America's short and long-term global competitiveness. Particularly at this time, we should be doing all that we can to promote U.S. manufacturing. It is unacceptable to lose these good-paying manufacturing jobs to foreign producers that sell dumped and subsidized products in the United States.

In conclusion, I want to thank you again for welcoming me here today. On behalf of the hardworking families of the 15th district of Texas and across the country, I urge you to carefully consider the evidence before you and to make an affirmative determination in this case. We need to seize this time of economic growth and jealously guard against others that would unfairly take away opportunity from our workers and their families. An affirmative vote is a vote for U.S. manufacturing, U.S. job creation, fairness, and the economic prosperity of our nation.