

**CERTAIN PASSENGER VEHICLE AND LIGHT TRUCK TIRES FROM CHINA  
INV. NO. 421-7**

**PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE  
UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION**

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**TESTIMONY OF JIM A. WANSLEY  
FORMER PRESIDENT, LOCAL 746L  
UNITED STEEL, PAPER AND FORESTRY, RUBBER, MANUFACTURING, ENERGY,  
ALLIED INDUSTRIAL AND SERVICE WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION**

Chairman Aranoff, Vice Chairman Pearson, members of the Commission, good morning. My name is Jim Wansley, and I was the president of our USW local at the Goodyear plant in Tyler, Texas when the plant was shut down in 2006.

I worked in the Tyler plant for 39-and-a-half years, my entire adult life. I started out in a number of different production positions in the plant, got a degree and some additional training, and eventually became an electrician in the plant. At the time the plant closed, I had been the local union president for seven years. I want to give you a little background on why Goodyear shut our plant, what we did to try to save it, and how the closure has affected my former co-workers and the community of Tyler, Texas. I am here today in the hopes that my brothers and sisters at other plants around the country will not have to suffer the same fate our plant did. Imports from China closed our plant, and they will close more if the industry does not get relief.

From the very beginning, Goodyear told us the Tyler plant was at risk because of low-priced imports. As Tom already mentioned, in presentations to us the company repeatedly identified imports from Asia, including fast-growing imports from China, as a threat to our plant. The reason our plant was vulnerable was because we made the lower price-point, smaller sized

tires. These were wholesale, private label tires. This is where China entered the market first – they’ve already begun to climb up the value chain, but we were at the front lines.

At Tyler, we were lucky to have a culture of strong employee participation. We worked very closely with local management to make Tyler a cutting edge facility. We came up with our own improvements to convert our machines to make larger, more value-added tires. Our plant became a leader within the company in all of the categories Goodyear tracked – productivity, safety, waste, etc. We were the second most technologically advanced plant in the company.

The problem wasn’t the plant. The problem was that the tires we were making were directly competing with imports from China. As the public staff report shows, the average unit value of tires from China seemed to be only slightly above raw material costs. As Tom discussed, Goodyear opened the 2006 negotiations by citing the threat posed by imports and insisting that Tyler had to close as result. After a protracted battle, the plant was eventually shut down in several phases, with most workers gone by the end of 2007.

The closure put hundreds of workers, many of whom had given decades of service to the plant, out of work. To understand how difficult it is for these workers to recover, it is important to understand a little bit about Tyler, Texas. Tyler has a population of about 100,000. Like many small and medium-sized towns that depend on manufacturing for middle class jobs, the loss of these jobs over the past ten years or so has taken its toll. A local company some of the Commissioners may be familiar with, Tyler Pipe, which made pipe fittings, cut jobs dramatically. Other plants have also lost jobs, or closed. We are fortunate to have a very active economic council, and they are hoping to transform Tyler into a retirement community and focus on medical services. But these transformations take time.

The Goodyear plant, and the skilled jobs it provided, were vital to the economic health of Tyler and the surrounding area. The plant had a direct impact in terms of the suppliers it used and services it paid for – small businesses in the area depended on the plant as an important part of their customer base. Jobs at the plant also paid good wages and benefits, enabling workers to lead decent middle class lives, buy homes, send their kids to college, and save for retirement. These are the kind of jobs that support an entire community as families are able to pay their medical bills, buy school supplies, get their car serviced, even spend a little here and there on a restaurant meal or a movie. The plant and its workers were also an important source of tax revenue for the city, the county, and the state, supporting everything from school teacher salaries to road construction.

The Tyler Economic Development Council commissioned a study of the economic impact of the Goodyear plant to build support for the facility when it was threatened with closure. The study is available in our pre-hearing brief. Among the findings of the study was the fact that each job at the Tyler plant was estimated to support three to five more jobs in the community.

The Goodyear workers who were laid off have struggled to find anything even comparable to the jobs we had at Goodyear. A lot of people went back to school and are still getting training; some of them signed up for training to work in the oilfield in Kilgore, but that has since closed. A few of our workers were able to get jobs at other manufacturing facilities in the area – but virtually all of those plants have had layoffs as well. A number of people just moved away in the hopes of finding better opportunities elsewhere. The real impact of the closure has been cushioned by the severance and unemployment benefits we have been drawing

down. But once those benefits run out, the economic reality will really start to sink in for the rest of the community.

I don't know what the future holds for Tyler, but I do believe that other plants and other communities can avoid the pain we have suffered. Our industry can compete and it can thrive, but it cannot do so if the surge of imports from China is allowed to continue at its current pace. With a small window of relief, the kinds of improvements we were making at our plant can start to take hold elsewhere, investments can have the time they need to reap their return in the marketplace, and the industry can get back on its feet. Without relief, however, I am afraid that the story of our plant in Tyler Texas will be doomed to repeat itself in communities across this country. With the help of the Commission, we can avoid that outcome.

Thank you for your attention.