

Testimony  
Congressman Peter J. Visclosky  
U.S. International Trade Commission  
Hearing on Hot-Rolled Steel Flat Products from Australia, Brazil, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Turkey,  
and the United Kingdom  
August 4, 2016

I want to thank Chairman Williamson and all other members of the Commission, and the dedicated staff, for the opportunity to testify today in the case involving hot-rolled steel flat products from Australia, Brazil, Japan, Korea, Netherlands, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

Hot-rolled steel is made in Northwest Indiana. Hardworking men and women in my district work every single day to manufacture the product we are discussing, and they are doing it more efficiently than anyone else in the world. Today, I want to convey to the Commission the concerns I hear when I talk to steelworkers and steel industry officials in my district. They know they are doing their part to remain competitive, but in the back of their minds, the threat of illegal imports is unrelenting. When our foreign competitors cheat and choose to continually disregard our trade laws, they are threatening the existence of the American steel industry and good-paying jobs that allow our workers to support their families.

Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to tour the steel mills in my district. Each time I visit, I am always deeply impressed by how quickly steelworkers are able to evolve their skill set and operations to keep up with new technology. In the early 1980s, it took an average of 10.1 man hours to produce a finished ton of steel. Today it is only 1.9 man hours.

Yet despite being on the cutting edge of technology, American steel companies are faced with constant layoffs, idling, and closures. It is clear to me that these wounds are not self-inflicted. The problem is not that our workers can't keep up with the capabilities of other countries, it's that they're being cheated out of the opportunity to compete fairly.

I also am seriously concerned that the countries being investigated in this case are not first-time offenders. There have been eight new steel cases considered by the Commission and the Department of Commerce this year. Of these eight cases, Korea has been investigated in five. China has been investigated in four. Turkey, Brazil, and Japan, have been investigated in three. The United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, and India have been investigated in two. While I appreciate that the Commission has in some of these cases acted to hold countries accountable by issuing affirmative determinations, we must stop this dangerous trend. The world is watching to see if the United States will send an irrefutable message to these repeat offenders that illegal trade will not be tolerated. It is past time to stop illegal trade.

I strongly urge the Commission to recognize the material injury caused by these illegal trade practices, and to fully enforce our laws. The steelworkers and steel companies in my district and throughout the nation are playing by the rules. They are following international trade laws. They are following labor and environmental laws. They are ensuring their workers are safe, efficient, and earn a fair wage for the work they do. They deserve to know that foreign competitors who cheat and circumvent our laws will be held accountable.

I thank you all for the opportunity to testify here today and appreciate your thorough investigation of the facts of this case.