

Congressman Peter J. Visclosky
U.S. International Trade Commission
Investigations Nos. 731-TA-753, 754, and 756 (Second Review): Cut-to-Length
Carbon Steel Plate from China, Russia, and Ukraine
September 9, 2009
Testimony

Thank you Chairman Aranoff and members of the U.S. International Trade Commission for the opportunity to testify before you today with respect to this extension of anti-dumping orders on cut-to-length steel plate from China and an extension of the suspension agreements for the same imports from Russia and the Ukraine. I also would like to thank each member of the Commission for your steadfast efforts to ensure the efficacy of our trade laws. I truly value the hard work and the serious consideration you place in all of your cases and, as always, I appreciate your willingness to hear my position at public hearings such as this.

Today, I stand before you as the United States Representative for the First Congressional District of Indiana and as the Chairman of the bipartisan Congressional Steel Caucus. As part of the Steel Caucus' efforts to shed light on the concerns of steelworkers and steel manufacturers, we held a hearing on June 16, 2009, which received testimony from steelworkers and steel industry representatives regarding the state of the steel industry. Richard McCormack, who testified at the hearing and is the editor of Manufacturing and Technology News, summed up the tone of the hearing well by picking out several phrases used throughout the hearing, including "scary time," "devastation," "can't survive," and "lowest point in the history of the nation."

There is no doubt that this is a most critical time for our steel industry, as it was also highlighted at the hearing that the steel industry has never seen such a precipitous decline in orders from one year ago. While the steel industry is currently at 55 percent capacity utilization, one year ago it was at 90 percent, and on average this year the industry is at 46 percent.

My district includes an ArcelorMittal plant at Burns Harbor that makes cut-to-length steel plate, and that plant has laid off more than 250 employees this past year. As you know, steel plate's primary use is in construction, bridges, railroad equipment, line pipe, and energy infrastructure like wind towers. The use of this product is a critical component to revitalizing our economy, ensuring the safety of our infrastructure, and providing stable jobs for American workers.

That is why I offered the Buy American Amendment to the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This Amendment requires that American steel be used in all stimulus projects, ensuring that American steel plate is used to strengthen our bridges, our railroads, our infrastructure, and our economy.

You also are in a position to ensure that American steel is the foundation of our economic recovery with this case. The issue before you today is that China, Russia, and the Ukraine are violating our trade laws, and we must protect our industries and their employees from their injurious practices. If we are to maintain a manufacturing base in the United States, we must have zero tolerance for unfair and illegal imports.

As we work to rebuild our economy, we cannot leave ourselves vulnerable to illegally subsidized imports from others who will be tempted to dump their steel here, and we must ensure that the letter and spirit of our laws are followed and, when appropriate and necessary, to impose warranted sanctions under the law.

Therefore, I strongly urge you to maintain the anti-dumping orders on cut-to-length steel plate from China, and the suspension agreements from Russia and the Ukraine. I thank you again for the opportunity to testify, I applaud your vigilance against illegal trade efforts in all types of steel and in all sectors of our economy.