

Opening Statement
Chairman Tim Murphy
Congressional Steel Caucus
“2016 State of Steel” Hearing
April 14, 2016

Good morning, I now call the 2016 Congressional Steel Caucus “State of Steel Hearing” to order.

American steel has built our nation from the ground up, supplying the needs to our nation’s defense, energy, and transportation and infrastructure sectors. American-made steel is of the highest quality and made by the most talented workforce in the world. With exceptional operational efficiency, a skilled workforce, and abundant energy resources, the fundamentals of the American steel industry are strong.

We need steel for our transportation, construction, military and consumers. But we have a tremendous challenge ahead of us. And despite the abilities, talents and needs, we are in real danger of losing this industry and becoming dependent on foreign countries.

We won’t let that happen. We can’t let that happen.

The American steel industry now faces the greatest import crisis in modern history. Mills are closing their doors and companies are laying off thousands. Pittsburgh’s US Steel is tightening the belt to maximum efficiency because we’re at the tipping point, with U.S. mills averaging only 70 percent of capacity utilization, a level that is unheard of in recent years and is simply just not sustainable.

Vigorous and decisive actions are needed if steel is to have a bright tomorrow.

Congress has taken very important action towards this goal and this Caucus, in particular, has done tremendous work since we last convened.

The Congressional Steel Caucus achieved legislative victories in shepherding historic trade enforcement legislation such as the Trade Preferences Extension Act and the Trade Facilitation & Trade Enforcement Act through Congress and to the President’s desk for signature. Our efforts mark the first time in over 20 years Congress has made such dramatic upgrades to our nation’s trade remedy laws to protect American steel workers and industry from the onslaught of foreign illegal trade cheats.

To keep the forward momentum, two weeks ago today Vice-Chairman Visclosky and I sent a letter to President Obama urging full use of the newly enacted trade enforcement tools delivered by Congress and to aggressively implement the law to combat illegal trade practices of foreign competitors through the Department of Commerce and the United States Trade Representative.

I'm pleased to announce this morning the Congressional Steel Caucus will again take action to ensure China's status as a Non-Market Economy remains in full effect, so long as they remain a government-subsidized non-market economy. It's simple: China's actions have not changed; therefore their status should not either. The Steel Caucus will be sending letters to the Administration and Ambassador O'Sullivan of the European Union today to weigh in on this critical issue.

The Congressional Steel Caucus has achieved real victories in recent months but we can't rest on our laurels. The steel crisis is not only hurting our economy and upending the job market, it is a direct hit to our national security. We can never fall into a position of relying on foreign government-owned enterprises to meet American steel needs. We will continue fighting for American steel.

I thank our witnesses for being here today and now recognize the Vice-Chairman of the Steel Caucus, Representative Pete Visclosky of Indiana.

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