



Leo W. Gerard
International President

September 18, 2009

VIA FAX

United States Senate
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator/Representative:

On September 11, 2009, President Obama, under authority granted him by Section 421 of the Trade Act of 1974, imposed temporary duties on passenger vehicle and light truck tires from the Peoples Republic of China. We applaud this decisive action. The President's decision was the end point in a process begun by the United Steelworkers (USW) when we filed a petition seeking relief from an import surge in these goods that had led to more than 5,000 job losses and the closure of four plants across the United States between 2004 and 2008 with thousands more jobs at risk.

What is most remarkable about this decision is not the hope and assistance it gives to thousands of American manufacturing workers and their communities. That is an action that hard working citizens should expect from their government and is most welcomed. What is remarkable is that this is the first time a President has seen fit to utilize the authority given to him by Congress in 2000 as part of legislation to give China permanent normal trade relations with the U.S. What is remarkable is that despite imports from China more than tripling since the enactment of this law, it is the first time a President has stood with American workers to defend their jobs and livelihoods against the market disrupting trade practices of China.

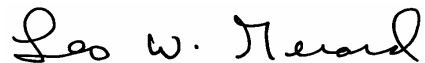
Those who criticize the President's decision as protectionist or provocative ignore the fact that China agreed to this provision as part of a series of commitments made to gain membership in the WTO. The President's decision is fully consistent, not only with the requirements of U.S. law, but with our international obligations as well. Indeed, enforcing trade agreements, far from being protectionist, is in the President's words, "part and parcel of maintaining an open and free trading system."

Many of those same critics were silent when more than 5 million manufacturing jobs disappeared this decade. They were silent when thousands of plants were shuttered and scores of communities were devastated in large measure due to misdirected trade policies and government inaction. And now they shout about protectionism. It should finally be clear that this debate is not about free trade or

protectionism, but rather about whose interests will be advanced. Does the U.S. act to protect the profits of multinational corporations who close plants here to produce offshore? Does it act to further enable the practices of Wall Street that have brought our nation close to ruin? Or does it work to advance the interests of workers and their families?

The President's decision is clearly important to thousands of tire industry workers. But it is also important for all American workers. We hope it signals a new assertiveness on the part of the Federal government to properly act on behalf of domestic manufacturing whose rebirth will serve as the foundation for the economic recovery our country so desperately needs. We look forward to working with you on our common goal of promoting sustainable growth, good jobs, and growing incomes for all Americans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leo W. Gerard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leo W. Gerard
International President

LWG/pak

Enclosure

WHY THE SECTION 421 TIRES DECISION MATTERS

- The President took a crucial step in changing the direction of the enforcement of our trade policy recently when he imposed tariffs on imports of Chinese passenger and light truck tires. Here's why it matters to the American people.
- Plain and simple, the President upheld U.S. law and held China accountable for disrupting our market. He did so based on the merits of the case and not because of base political concerns. An independent body charged with investigating Chinese tire imports found that they were flooding the U.S. market with their products causing over 5,000 workers to lose their jobs and four tire plants to close.
- This kind of harmful market disruption is precisely what Section 421, a safeguard measure, was designed to address. Had the President not done the right thing and enforced the law, three thousand more American tire workers likely would have joined those who had already lost their jobs producing tires as a result of China's actions. We have lost far too many manufacturing jobs to continue appeasing China as they continue their export-led mercantilist trade policy..
- The President's action in no way violates the WTO; it enforces the safeguard obligation China *agreed* to for entry into the WTO. Thus, any action China takes to unilaterally retaliate would be illegal under the WTO. Indeed, other WTO countries like India have applied the safeguard measure against China. So, those calling for no action really are saying treat China differently and do not make China abide by the rules (even though tires only represent a miniscule percentage of total imports from China).
- The American people will no longer be fooled. Trading with China cannot mean that we cower in a corner and continue to let our industries and workers suffer the consequences instead of enforcing the agreed-upon trading rules. The President sent the right signal to China; it cannot expect to engage in trade-distorting practices with impunity any longer.
- This is change the American people can believe in and the kind of action needed to begin to restore their confidence that trade can work for the benefit of the many, not just the few.