

Cole Applauds Trade Commission's Tire Import Ruling

WASHINGTON – Congressman Tom Cole (OK-04) today welcomed the decision by the International Trade Commission (ITC) that a surge of imported tires from China has damaged the domestic tire industry and its workers. The ITC ruled in favor of the American tire industry by a 4-to-2 vote. Cole testified on behalf of the domestic tire manufacturers during a hearing at the International Trade Commission earlier this month.

“Many hardworking Oklahomans are employed by tire manufacturers,” Congressman Cole said. “While I am an ardent supporter of free trade, I also believe there are occasions where domestic producers are subject to unfair, non-competitive trade practices. This is one of those cases. Trade laws have not been enforced - and now American companies are struggling. It's clear that Chinese-made tires are flooding our domestic markets. The surge of these tires is leading to significant job losses in our state, as well as around the country.”

“The ITC made the right decision today. In a few weeks I expect that they will explicitly recommend the temporary import relief American tire manufacturers need. President Obama would be well-served to take their recommendations into consideration and follow-through with his commitment to enforce trade rules that support our country's tire-workers.”

The ITC investigation is a result of a petition filed under Section 421 of the Trade Act of 1974. Under section 421, companies or groups of workers can petition the government with evidence that import surges are having an adverse effect on them and to seek import relief. Today, the ITC announced an "affirmative decision" - in other words - that an injury to the domestic tire industry has occurred. Specifically, they determined that a surge of imports of passenger vehicle and light truck tires imported from China between 2004 and 2008 has led to sharp declines in domestic production and job losses across the country.

As the representative of the Fourth District of Oklahoma, Cole represents tire manufacturers and their employees at a Goodyear facility in Lawton and a Michelin factory in Ardmore. Cole testified before the ITC on June 2nd and noted that there are over 4,200 workers in Oklahoma linked to the domestic tire manufacturing industry.

In early July the ITC's findings and recommendations will be passed onto President Obama. The President will have the opportunity to decide whether or not to provide import relief to the domestic tire industry and set the terms and duration of such relief. The ITC expects the President's decision about whether or not to administer a remedy in mid-September.

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