

Altmire Praises ITC's Decision to Place Duties on Chinese Steel

(Washington, D.C.) -- U.S. Congressman Jason Altmire (PA-04) today released the following statement on the U.S. International Trade Commission's (ITC) ruling that it will place duties for up to five years on heavily-subsidized Chinese imports of circular welded pipe (CWP). The U.S. Department of Commerce recently found that these Chinese pipes were being sold in the U.S. at 69 to 85 percent below market price, putting U.S. manufacturers at a significant disadvantage.

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On May 13, Congressman Altmire testified before the ITC in support of Wheatland Tube's and other steel companies' petition for higher duties on Chinese pipe imports. The petition does not need to be approved by the president.

"It took years of hard work by the steel industry's workers and management to secure this favorable ruling from the International Trade Commission today," Altmire said. "This is a true victory for America's steel industry and will finally provide our manufacturers with the level playing field they deserve."

"In May, I testified before the International Trade Commission to push for this favorable decision because for far too long, U.S. steel companies have been railroaded by a flood of heavily subsidized and grossly underpriced Chinese imports," Altmire continued. "Now that China is being forced to play by the rules, I have no doubt that America's manufacturers will be able to show that they can offer a superior product at a competitive price."

The U.S. Steel Industry could have received relief years earlier had legislation recently introduced by Congressman Altmire and Congressman Phil English (PA-03) been in place. Wheatland Tube Company and other steel companies initially filed a complaint for more immediate, short-term assistance under Section 421 of the U.S. China Relations Act of 2000. Although the ITC accepted the companies' petition for assistance and recommended the implementation of tariffs in December 2005, President Bush refused to grant it. The United Steelworkers has said that had Bush accepted the ITC's recommendation, hundreds of pipe workers at Sharon Tube might still have jobs.

Congressmen Altmire and English's legislation, the Supporting America's Manufacturers Act (H.R. 5960), establishes Congressional review of the president's acceptance of the ITC's decisions on whether to provide temporary relief under Section 421 — in the form of import duties or quotas — to American companies facing market disruptions caused by Chinese imports. This would ensure that in the future, the president cannot unilaterally deny American companies the assistance they need.