

USW CITES TRADE COMMISSION VOTE TO KEEP DUTIES ON STEEL PLATE FROM KOREA, INDIA, INDONESIA; REVOKES ORDERS ON JAPAN, ITALY

Leo W. Gerard, president of the United Steelworkers, today confirmed the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) voted 6-0 to continue tariffs on cut-to-length steel plate imports from Korea, India and Indonesia for another five years, while revoking the orders for plate from Japan and Italy.

According to the ITC, the existing antidumping and countervailing duty orders on steel plate from the three countries is being maintained because ending the tariffs would likely lead to recurrence of material injury. The duties were first placed on steel plate imports from the seven countries in 1999 and a first sunset review was held in 2005. Today's vote was a second review as required by the Uruguay Round Agreements Act.

Gerard said each of the steel producing countries argued for ending the tariffs, but the strong vote by the ITC demonstrated the domestic industry is still trying to recover from a weak market. "Five American steel producers operating plate mills in seven states and employing about 4,000 steelworkers were threatened if the duty orders were not kept in place."

He commended the delegation of 17 USW steelworkers who make plate at mills in Pennsylvania and Indiana for attending the ITC sunset review hearing in Washington, D.C. this past October. ***He also praised the testimony presented before the trade commissioners by USW Local 6787 Vice President Pete Trinidad of the Arcelormittal plate mills in Indiana at Burns Harbor and Gary.***

Trinidad testified: "The last decade has been a real roller coaster ride for our members who make cut-to-length plate. They have faced bankruptcies, plant closures, layoffs, forced retirements, lost wages, and reductions in pension and health care benefits." He reported that plate orders gradually picked up in May 2010, demonstrating the importance of the import tariffs. He said in August of this year, a second crew was hired, but that new demand has not developed. "Every ton of dumped plate that is allowed to enter our market is a ton of plate that steelworkers at Burns Harbor won't get to make."