

Testimony
Congressman Peter J. Visclosky
International Trade Commission
Hearing on Certain Steel Wheels from China
March 8, 2012

I would like to thank Chairman Okun, Vice Chairman Williamson, and all of the members of the Commission for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important hearing involving anti-dumping and countervailing duties on steel wheels from China. I applaud your work on this case and on all of your initiatives to enforce our trade laws.

For this specific case, as you are well aware, the Commerce Department has determined in its preliminary decisions a countervailing duty rate in the range of 26 percent to 47 percent, and an anti-dumping duty rate of 112 percent to 191 percent. I would encourage you to follow in the direction of these preliminary decisions. Our shores been the grounds for manipulative Chinese trading practices for too long, and we have a responsibility to send the message to the Chinese that unfair trade will no longer be tolerated.

Three weeks ago I testified before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission during their hearing on Chinese state-owned enterprises, and I will repeat to you what I told them. As a leader of the Congressional Steel Caucus, and as the Member of Congress representing generations of steelworkers in Northwest Indiana, I have seen the devastation that unfair Chinese trading practices have wrought on our manufacturing base, and I have no reason to believe that Chinese actions through their state-owned enterprises will be any less unfair. The steel industry in China is essentially state-owned enterprises, and we must keep in mind that their motives can be the aims their government, their pocketbook can be bottomless, and their actions can be devastating to American workers.

Across the board, China has a proven record of cheating the rules. I firmly believe that they are manipulating their currency. Specific to worker safety, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, in 2010 a total of 48 individuals died in coal mining accidents in America. In the same year, the Chinese government estimates that a total of 2,433 individuals died in coal mining accidents, and some international labor organizations say that number could be as high as 20,000. There are reports that Chinese pollution reaches our shores in California, not to mention countless cases of intellectual property rights stolen by Chinese companies. We cannot reward Chinese companies that abide by these types of practices.

This past month, the National Science and Technology Council stated that the United States has either lost or is on the verge of losing a number of vital defense and national security technologies, such as aircraft landing gear, large rotor disks for turbines, and rocket engine parts. We have an obligation to the future of our country and to working men and women that we do our utmost to ensure that we continue to make things in our country. We can start that process in this room by telling China that they can no longer dump their products and provide illegal subsidies to their state-owned steel industry. The American worker deserves no less.

I thank you again for your fair, deliberate, and thorough consideration of this case, and again appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to you today.