

Timothy Kehrer  
Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee  
120 Maryland Ave, NE  
Washington DC 20002

Freedom of Information Officer  
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative  
1724 F St. N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20508

September 8, 2009

**Re: Freedom of Information Act Request**

To Whom It May Concern:

I am requesting documents pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. §552 et seq. ("FOIA"), involving correspondence and other information regarding Robert Portman, during his service as U.S. Trade Representative (2005-2006).

Specifically, I am seeking copies of any correspondence or emails received or sent by Mr. Portman regarding:

- The importation of steel pipe from China.
- The imposition of any quota, tariff-rate quota, or other safeguard measure on the importation of steel pipe from China.
- U.S. International Trade Commission Investigation No. TA-421-6.

I also request that you state the specific legal and factual grounds for withholding any documents or portions of documents, should you withhold any. Please identify each document that falls with scope of this request but is withheld from release.

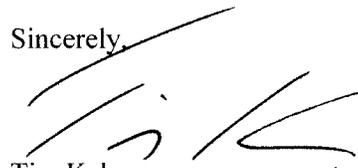
If requested documents are located in, or originated in, another installation or bureau, I would request that you please refer this request or any relevant portion of this request to the appropriate installation or bureau.

To the extent that the information is available in electronic format, I would prefer to receive it via email or CD, particularly if providing the information reduces the time or expense involved. Otherwise, I will expect to receive the information in paper form.

To help assess my status for copying and mailing fees, please note that I am gathering information for research purposes and not for commercial activities. I am willing to pay all reasonable costs incurred in locating and duplicating these materials. Please contact me prior to processing to approve any fees or charges incurred in excess of \$150.

Thank you for your cooperation with this request. I am willing to discuss ways to make this request more manageable to your office. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 485-3147 or at Gooden@dscc.org

Sincerely,

  
Tim Kehrer  
Researcher

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

April 30, 2010

Mr. Timothy Kehrer  
Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee  
120 Maryland Ave., N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr Kehrer:

This letter is USTR's response to your Freedom of Information Act request "copies of any correspondence or emails received or sent by Mr. Portman regarding the importation of steel pipe from China, the imposition of any quota, tariff-rate quota, or other safeguard measure on the importation of steel pipe from china, U.S. International Trade Commission Investigation No. TA-421-6.

Please be advised that, after a search of our files, we have located six (6) documents within the scope of your request.

Inasmuch as this constitutes a complete response to your request, I am closing your file in this office.

In the event that you are dissatisfied with USTR's determination, you may appeal such a denial, within thirty (30) days, in writing to:

FOIA Appeals Committee  
Office of the United States Trade Representative  
1724 F Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20508

Both the letter and the envelope should be clearly marked: "Freedom of Information Act Appeal". In the event you are dissatisfied with the results of any such appeal, judicial review will thereafter be available to you in the United States District Court for the judicial district in which you reside or have your principal place of business, or in the District of Columbia, where we searched for the records you seek.

Timothy Kehrer  
Page 2

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact the FOIA office at (202) 395-3419.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carmen Suro-Bredie".

Carmen Suro-Bredie  
Chief FOIA Officer

Case File # 09100951

01/05/2006 THU 15:44 FAX  
JAN. 5. 2006 3:04PM

SEN BLANCHE LINCOLN

BLANCHE LAMBERT LINCOLN  
ARKANSAS

300 DODDSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
TELEPHONE: (202) 224-4949

www.senate.gov/lincoln

LACORR  
NO. 3723 P. 2/2 40001  
COMMITTEES:  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY  
FINANCE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

126323

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 5, 2006

684132

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW 20500

*A. Stratford*  
*C. Broadbent*  
*Mendenhall*  
*Wronmeyer*

EW/LACORR 1/5

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to express my disappointment with your recent decision not to grant Section 421 import relief for our domestic steel pipe industry and its workers. Arkansas is home to four steel pipe production plants: Wheatland Tube in Little Rock, IPSCO Tubulars and Maverick Tube in Blytheville, and Allied Tube in Pine Bluff. These companies are the most efficient in the world, yet they are struggling to compete with the flood of Chinese imports which have increased from 100,000 tons in 2002 to approximately 400,000 tons in 2005.

When Congress extended permanent normal trade relations to China in 2000, we included critical safeguards meant to protect American workers from import surges that have a devastating impact on our domestic industries. At a time when so many Americans question the benefits of free trade, it is as important as ever that the Administration express its willingness to stand up for American workers and enforce our existing trade laws. Our own U.S. International Trade Commission agreed that Chinese pipe imports have unfairly surged in the past three years and issued a formal recommendation that the domestic pipe industry receive Section 421 relief in this case.

Of even broader concern to me is the fact that this decision marks the fourth time that you have decided not to impose trade limits under Section 421. With this decision and a consistent pattern of these types of decisions, American workers are beginning to wonder whether you are fighting on their behalf or that of Chinese workers.

Mr. President, it would be helpful if you could provide me with further explanation for this decision at your earliest convenience. Unfortunately, my phone calls to your Chief of Staff prior to this decision were never returned. I had hoped to convey the concerns of steel pipe workers in Arkansas before you sided against them. Several plants in Arkansas are already operating at decreased capacity, and without import relief, I fear that job security is on the line for many of these workers. I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

*Blanche L. Lincoln*  
Blanche L. Lincoln

2006 JAN 26 PM 12:30

OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
U.S. SENATE

# S F W G

Steel Fastener Working Group

OFFICE OF UNITED STATES  
TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

~~2006 APR 13 PM 2:06~~

March 8, 2006

The Honorable Rob Portman  
United States Trade Representative  
600 17<sup>th</sup> St., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20508

Via email: [contactustr<at>ustr.ecp.gov](mailto:contactustr@ustr.ecp.gov)

RE: U.S.-People's Republic of China Steel Dialogue

Dear Ambassador Portman:

RE/U.S. – Peoples Republic of China Steel Dialog

This is in response to your recent request for comments on the April 11, 2006 steel discussions with China during the U.S.- China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade (JCCT). The discussions are of considerable concern to fastener manufacturers from a number of different perspectives, but our primary concern is the potential for the discussions to negatively impact our ability to obtain steel at global prices.

U. S. manufacturers are finding it increasingly challenging to compete successfully in the global market, and one critical factor in their ultimate success or failure is the ability to obtain adequate, stable supplies of high quality, globally priced raw materials. U.S. trade law and policy are not always helpful in that regard.

We recognize and support the right of U.S. steel producers and others to seek the protections against unfair imports afforded by U.S. trade law. However, when those trade laws are used to dampen legitimate competition, as is increasingly the case in the U. S., particularly with regard to steel, the burden of that protectionism falls unfairly on the customers of the domestic steel industry. We strongly suggest that any trade remedy designed to protect U. S. steel producers must take into account the welfare of the vastly larger U.S. manufacturing segment that uses steel in its production processes, and needs access to world-priced, high-quality steel to be competitive in a global economy.

Recognizing the needs of domestic steel consumers also protects the American public from paying unnecessarily high prices for goods made with steel components, and from forcing the public to turn to foreign produced imported goods due to their cost not being distorted by arbitrarily high steel prices.

The Steel Fastener Working Group (SFWG) is a subgroup of the Industrial Fasteners Institute (IFI) which represents the North American manufacturers of industrial, automotive and aerospace fasteners – the nuts, bolts, screws, rivets and specialty formed parts that hold together everything we use in every day life. This includes the cars we drive, the planes we fly, the bridges we cross, the buildings we work in, the desks we sit at and the computers we use every day. The fastener industry could be the poster child of those critical basic industries that consume steel and have their products included in the components, assemblies and end products whose price is directly determined by their access to world-priced raw materials.

As an example, the industry uses Cold Heading Quality wire rod (CHQ) to produce fasteners for a variety of safety-critical applications. CHQ is a separate product, so unique that a special ASTM standard, F2282, developed by the fastener industry and its suppliers, governs its production. There is only one full-time producer of CHQ in the U. S.

Yet when a group of wire rod producers, none of whom make CHQ, filed a dumping action against all wire rod from a number of countries in 2002, the International Trade Commission declined to remove CHQ from the scope of the petition, despite the fastener industry's strong protests.

The result has been that U. S. fastener manufacturers are paying tens of millions of dollars in duties on imports of a product that is not made in sufficient quantity in the U. S. to supply demand, and there appears to be no mechanism for correcting this result.

That is why careful attention to the "downstream effects" of trade decisions that in any way constrain U.S. industry's access to globally priced materials is so critical. To ignore these effects insures that U.S. manufactured products won't be competitive in U.S. markets, certainly won't be competitive as exports and likely will result in a continuing and accelerating exodus of manufacturing capability to offshore sites. Ultimately, of course, that exodus negatively affects the domestic steel industry, since its customer base will continue to erode.

This effect extends to national defense and homeland securities considerations as well. Imagine what it would be like if, due to constraints on American industry's access to globally priced raw material, more and more basic metalworking industries are forced offshore and the U.S. is forced to depend on potentially hostile offshore sources to supply the parts needed to assemble M-16's, Abrams tanks, or F-18's?

There is an unfortunate history of such misguided actions being taken to placate the interests of the very vocal but relatively small steel-producing segment of U.S. industry. Most recently, Section 201 steel safeguards were enacted in 2002, only to be removed 18 months later, due in large part to the unintended collateral damage done to steel consumers. In the 1980's, Voluntary Restraint Agreements (VRA's) limited Japanese steel exports to the U.S., and the unintended result was that steel was converted to fasteners and other metal products, which were exported unconstrained to the U.S., seriously damaging those industry segments with which they competed. The IFI believes that about 30 percent of all U. S. fastener manufacturing capacity closed as a direct result of those actions.

We favor the appropriate use of U.S. trade laws to protect domestic industries against unfair trade practices, but we also caution against artificial blanket constraints on the offering of imported steel, including Chinese steel, in the U.S. at globally competitive prices. Trade laws should not be used to support artificially high prices, which is often the case today in the U.S. For example, wire rod averages around \$600/ton in the U.S. vs. \$360/ton in China and \$450 in Europe, due largely to antidumping and countervailing duties on products that are not made in sufficient quantity in the U. S. The downstream effects of such protectionism can decimate other industry segments that are steel consumers.

China's internal expansion will consume much of the steel it produces. Last year, the U.S. was exporting steel to China, and no one complained about that. Now, as seasonal and market adjustments occur in Chinese consumption, U.S. producers are warning that the U. S. must impose constraints to prevent "flooding" of the U. S. market by Chinese steel.

Our industry is concerned, as are many U. S. industries, about the growing trade deficit with China. We favor strong measures to ensure that China lives up to its obligations under the WTO, and we support the appropriate use of U. S. trade law remedies in the event Chinese goods are traded unfairly.

Our request is simply that steel consumers' interests be considered and respected in the U.S. – China steel dialogue, and that U. S. policy reflect the true national interest, not that of one industry segment. Otherwise, the unintended consequences and downstream effects will do far more harm than good to the ability of U. S. manufacturers to compete in the increasingly global economy.

On behalf of the Steel Fastener Working Group, we would welcome the opportunity to meet with you or appropriate members of your staff to discuss our concerns further.

Thank you for your consideration of our input.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Brunner, President  
Global Automotive Fastener Businesses  
Illinois Tool Works Inc.  
3600 W. Lake Avenue  
Glenview, IL 60026

124602

OFFICE OF UNITED STATES  
TRADE REPRESENTATIVE

2005 DEC 16 AM 10: 2 (Translation for reference only)

December 9, 2005

Washington D.C.  
U.S. Office of Trade Representatives  
Ambassador Robert Portman

*al Briza*  
*C: Stratford*  
*Broadbent*  
*mendenhall*

Your Excellency Ambassador Robert Portman,

I am writing to express the concern of the government of China over the application of the product-specific safeguard mechanism by the U.S. government to certain Circular Welded Non-alloy Steel Pipe imported from China. I hope through our communication, the U.S. government will not provide any product-specific safeguard remedy for the U.S. steel pipe industry.

The government of China attaches significant importance to this Section 421 case. We have held two consultations with USTR and met with relevant U.S. government agencies for this matter. As reiterated for many times by the Chinese side, Article 16 of China's WTO Accession Protocol can only be used under extraordinary or emergent circumstances. The Chinese side opposes the discrimination against Chinese products by abusing product-specific safeguard measures. As you know, being discriminatory to China, product-specific safeguard mechanism is a departure from and exception to the principle of Most-Favored-Nation (MFN) treatment of WTO and is not a substitute for conventional trade remedy measures of WTO. Only when other remedy measures are exhausted, could WTO members invoke product-specific safeguard on a conditioned basis. Otherwise, the discriminatory treatment against Chinese products will not be an exception, but rather a rule, which would be in contravention of the permanent MFN treatment provided for China by U.S.. The fact that U.S. industries frequently initiate Section 421 petitions shows that there exists obvious misunderstanding about this mechanism.

According to the ITC report, although the subject imports from mainland

China increased since 2001, the increase in the imports from China is almost equal to the decrease in the imports of the subject product from Korea and Taiwan. Moreover, the report shows that the domestic U.S. industry has been profitable throughout the period of investigation. The domestic industry registered record high profit margin of 17.1% in the first half of 2004 and continued growth in profit in 2005. The prices of U.S. domestically produced product increased dramatically 74% over the last 18 months. Therefore, the domestic U.S. industry did not suffer from market disruption. If the U.S. side provides Section 421 remedy for U.S. steel pipe industry which deserves no remedy at all, it will bring serious adverse impact to the bilateral economic and trade relationship.

Out of the previous five Section 421 investigations, President Bush finally made the decision to impose remedy on none of the three investigations that ITC found market disruption, which is appreciated by the Chinese side. The government of China attaches great importance to the trade and economic cooperation with the U.S.. Thanks to the concerted efforts of both sides, the bilateral economic and trade relations have scored remarkable progress with a consistently increasing trade volume. It is hoped that the U.S. side can fully acknowledge the sensitivity of product-specific safeguard measures and continue to make a decision not to impose product-specific safeguard remedy.

I believe that you, in your capacity as the U.S. Trade Representative, will be able to play a key role in ensuring a correct decision made by the US government on this case. I am willing to work with you in making unremitting efforts to promote the healthy development of our bilateral trade.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

Bo Xilai (Signature)

Minister of Commerce  
People's Republic of China

中华人民共和国商务部  
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

华盛顿  
美利坚合众国贸易代表办公室  
罗伯特·波特曼大使

尊敬的波特曼大使阁下：

我写此信旨在表达中国政府对美国拟对中国环状焊接钢管采取特保措施的关注，并希望通过我们之间的沟通，美政府不对美钢管产业采取救济措施。

中国政府对此 421 特保案高度重视，先后两次与美贸易代表办公室举行磋商，并与美政府相关部门进行了对话。中方一再重申，《中国加入 WTO 议定书》第 16 条只有在特殊或紧急情况下才能采用，中方反对 WTO 成员滥用特保措施歧视对待中国产品。正如您所知，特保作为对中国的歧视性条款，是对 WTO 最惠国待遇原则的违背和例外。特保并不是对 WTO 一般贸易救济措施的替代，只能在穷尽其他救济手段之后才能有条件的使用。否则，对中国产品的歧视待遇将不是例外，而是常态，这与美国给予中国永久最惠国待遇是相悖的。美国产业对中国产品频繁提起特保申请，显然是对该条款存在误解。

根据 ITC 报告，2001 年以来中国钢管对美出口虽有所

增长，但增量相当于同期美国从韩国和台湾地区进口钢管减少的量。ITC 报告还指出，美国内产业在调查期内都有赢利，2004 年上半年利润率达创记录的 17.1%，2005 年利润依然增长；美自产产品价格过去 18 个月增幅超过 74%。因此，美国内产业并未遭受市场扰乱。如果美方对并不需要救济的美钢管产业采取特保措施，将给两国经贸关系造成严重负面影响。

在前五起特保调查中，布什总统对 ITC 裁定存在市场扰乱的全部三起案件均做出不采取救济措施的决定，中方对此表示赞赏。中国政府重视与美国的经贸合作。在双方的共同努力下，经贸关系发展良好，贸易规模不断扩大。希望美政府充分认识到特保措施的敏感性，继续做出不采取救济措施的决定。

我相信，您作为美国贸易代表，对于美国政府在本案中做出正确决定将发挥关键作用。我愿同您一起为推动中美经贸关系的健康发展而不懈努力。

顺致敬意！



中国商务部部长 薄熙来

二〇〇五年十二月九日

682825

**SHERROD BROWN**  
THIRTEENTH DISTRICT  
OHIO

COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

RANKING MEMBER,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE INTERNET

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, TRADE,  
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

COMMITTEE ON  
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

December 29, 2005

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
Washington, DC 20515

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FAX: (202) 225-2289

<http://www.house.gov/sherradbrown/>

cc: Stator  
C: Broadbent  
Mendenhall  
Niemeyer  
cc: Bhatia

LACORR  
BK

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush:

On November 28, 2005, I joined 61 of my colleagues in the House of Representatives asking you to protect the American steel industry and American working families by implementing Section 421 trade relief (S. 103 of PL106-286). Implementing Section 421 at this time is essential to protect the U.S. steel industry from a flood of illegal steel pipe imports from China. As the December 30 deadline for action is imminent, I urge you to enact Section 421 relief immediately.

A failure to stop these illegal imports will only encourage companies to outsource even more steel jobs to nations that don't play by the rules like Communist China.

Our letter was written following the International Trade Commission's (ITC) determination that surging imports from China were causing significant disruption to the American circular welded non-alloy (standard) pipe industry.

As part of China's participation in the WTO, in 2000, Congress authorized you to extend 421 relief to protect from illegal surges in foreign imports. This is specifically the type of situation where 421 must be utilized to protect American industry and signal to our trading partners that illegal actions will not be tolerated.

As you are aware, it is not only Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Pennsylvania and the Midwest that are affected, but a broad cross section of America, including Oregon, Louisiana, Arizona, Arkansas, California, and Tennessee.

The manufacturing sector in America has always been the backbone of the U.S. economy. Unfortunately, because trading partners such as China refuse to play fair, it has become necessary to implement these protections.

-more-

2006 JAN -9 PM 3:31  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

RECEIVED BY  
DEC 29 2005  
LACORR

12/29/2005 15:49 FAX

-2-

As the previous letter noted, in 2004, imports of standard pipe from China surged by over 2,600 percent; from 10,000 tons in 2002 to 270,000 tons in 2004.

In 2005, these illegal imports are expected to exceed 380,000 tons. I ask again that you follow the ITC recommendation and immediately extend Section 421 relief, and limit Chinese imports to only 90,000 tons of standard pipe per year.

American working families and American steel industry are counting on you to assist them in this time of need.

Sincerely,



SHERROD BROWN  
Member of Congress

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT  
THE UNITED STATES TRADE REPRESENTATIVE  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20508

FEB - 8 2006

The Honorable Blanche L. Lincoln  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Blanche -

The President has asked me to reply to your letter expressing disappointment regarding his decision not to grant import relief in the recent investigation of imports of circular welded non-alloy steel pipe from China pursuant to the China-specific safeguard mechanism set forth in Section 421 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended.

On December 30, the President determined that imposing import restrictions was not in the U.S. national economic interest, given the particular circumstances of the steel pipe case. Under Section 421, the President is required to consider how import restrictions would affect the national economic interest and, specifically, whether the adverse impact on the U.S. economy would be clearly greater than the benefits. In determining not to impose import restrictions, the President explained that, based on the ITC analysis, import relief was unlikely to provide a meaningful benefit to domestic producers.

The facts in this case indicated that imposition of China-specific import relief would likely be ineffective because of the extent to which imports from third countries would replace curtailed Chinese imports. A large number of third countries – the ITC documented more than 50 of them – supplies the U.S. market with standard pipe, many of them at low prices. Although antidumping duties currently apply to imports from eight of those countries, there are many other countries currently supplying standard pipe to the U.S. market that could fill the void created by curtailed Chinese imports. At the same time, the President explained that the ITC analysis demonstrated that import relief would cost U.S. consumers as much as five times more than the increased income that could be realized by domestic producers.

Although the President decided against imposing import relief in this particular case at this time, the Administration continues to consider the authority granted under Section 421 to be a valuable and important trade mechanism to be used when the facts and circumstances of a particular case warrant it. The Administration is also determined to defend and promote the rights of U.S. manufacturers, including when they face unfair or injurious trade from China. The Administration has taken full advantage of another China-specific safeguard, which it has imposed on 19 different categories of textiles and apparel products. These actions recently lead to a broad agreement with China restricting 34 categories of textiles and apparel products through the end of 2008.

The Honorable Blanche L. Lincoln  
Page Two

The Administration has also continued to actively pursue antidumping cases against unfairly traded Chinese imports. Since the end of 2001, when China joined the World Trade Organization, the Bush Administration has put in place 18 different antidumping orders covering Chinese imports. There are currently more antidumping orders in place against China than against any other country's imports.

At the same time, the Administration continues to work aggressively to open markets for U.S. manufactured and other goods in China and these efforts have met with some success. U.S. exports to China increased by 22 percent in 2004 and are up another 18 percent the first three quarters of 2005. Overall, since China joined the WTO in December 2001, U.S. exports to China have increased five times faster than U.S. exports to the rest of the world. As a result, China has risen from our ninth largest export market four years ago to our fourth largest export market today. Nevertheless, as you are aware, U.S. companies continue to face significant trade barriers that we believe China should have eliminated or reduced when it joined the World Trade Organization. As you can see from our 2005 Report to Congress on China's WTO Compliance, issued in December, we will continue to work hard to address these matters on a number of fronts and through a number of different means.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to my attention. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you or your staff have further questions. Please keep in touch.

Sincerely,



Rob Portman

01/05/2006 THU 15:44 FAX  
JAN. 5. 2006 3:04PM

SEN BLANCHE LINCOLN

LACORR NO. 3723 P. 2/2 001  
COMMITTEES:  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION, AND FORESTRY  
FINANCE  
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

BLANCHE LAMBERT LINCOLN  
ARKANSAS

126323

365 DIRKSEN SENATE OFFICE BUILDING  
TELEPHONE: (202) 224-4048

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 5, 2006

684132

www.senate.gov/lincoln

The Honorable George W. Bush  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW 20500

*a: stratford  
c: Broadbent  
Mendenhall  
Nemeyer*

EW/LACORR 1/5

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to express my disappointment with your recent decision not to grant Section 421 import relief for our domestic steel pipe industry and its workers. Arkansas is home to four steel pipe production plants: Wheatland Tube in Little Rock, IPSCO Tubulars and Maverick Tube in Blytheville, and Allied Tube in Pine Bluff. These companies are the most efficient in the world, yet they are struggling to compete with the flood of Chinese imports which have increased from 100,000 tons in 2002 to approximately 400,000 tons in 2005.

When Congress extended permanent normal trade relations to China in 2000, we included critical safeguards meant to protect American workers from import surges that have a devastating impact on our domestic industries. At a time when so many Americans question the benefits of free trade, it is as important as ever that the Administration express its willingness to stand up for American workers and enforce our existing trade laws. Our own U.S. International Trade Commission agreed that Chinese pipe imports have unfairly surged in the past three years and issued a formal recommendation that the domestic pipe industry receive Section 421 relief in this case.

Of even broader concern to me is the fact that this decision marks the fourth time that you have decided not to impose trade limits under Section 421. With this decision and a consistent pattern of these types of decisions, American workers are beginning to wonder whether you are fighting on their behalf or that of Chinese workers.

Mr. President, it would be helpful if you could provide me with further explanation for this decision at your earliest convenience. Unfortunately, my phone calls to your Chief of Staff prior to this decision were never returned. I had hoped to convey the concerns of steel pipe workers in Arkansas before you sided against them. Several plants in Arkansas are already operating at decreased capacity, and without import relief, I fear that job security is on the line for many of these workers. I appreciate your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

*Blanche L. Lincoln*  
Blanche L. Lincoln

2006 JAN 26 PM 12:30

OFFICE OF THE CLERK  
U.S. SENATE