

July 18, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary of Commerce
US Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross,

The undersigned organizations wish to express to you their strong support for action to protect the US domestic steel and aluminum industries under Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962. We represent millions of families engaged in manufacturing and agriculture and believe this investigation is a crucial opportunity to protect national security, rebuild the US economy and counter strategic economic tactics of foreign countries.

The US manufacturing and agriculture industries have been undermined by years of public policies that failed to neutralize foreign mercantilism and enabled decay of many important US industries. US defense capability is heavily dependent upon the resources, production capabilities and research capabilities of a strong and diverse civilian manufacturing industry. Global trade has been nonreciprocal, in part, because past administrations have wrongly viewed enforcement of trade rules as protectionism even as other countries made full use of those rules.

We disagree with objections by some importing industries that oppose the US protecting its national security interests. Vague speculation about trade retaliation is unwarranted. The 1994 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Article XXI allow countries to protect national security. Many countries make use of that provision. Uncontrollable trade retaliation for doing so has not erupted and indeed is prevented by the World Trade Organization (WTO) system.

We also disagree with a July 12th letter signed by former White House economists opposing any action under Section 232. Their predictions of diplomatic harm are unwarranted because other countries' use of national interest provisions has not produced such harm. Many of the signatory economists supported past trade agreements, in part, because of promises to reduce trade distortions and foreign government subsidies. The administration's Section 232 investigation is a chance to neutralize the trade distorting harm of foreign subsidies that have directly caused damaging overcapacity in the target industries.

As a leader among nations, the US has the responsibility, indeed the obligation, to revise and adjust its policies to match the needs of the modern world. The institutions of the global trading system have broken down, unable to address global overcapacity, imbalances and distortions.

We urge you to take strong action to remedy the problems that Section 232 was designed to solve.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Coalition for a Prosperous America

Committee to Support U.S. Trade Laws (CSUSTL)

Manufacturing Association of Central New York

National Farmers Union

Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund – United Stockgrowers of America

Rochester Technology and Manufacturing Organization

Technology & Manufacturing Association (Illinois)

Tooling Manufacturing & Technologies Association

US Business and Industry Council