

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 24, 2004

Mr. Kelly Parkhill
Director for Industry Support and Analysis, Import Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Herbert Clark Hoover Building, Room 3713
14th Street and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Re: Request for Comments on Steel Import Licensing System

Dear Mr. Parkhill:

We write today concerning the request for comments on the extension and expansion of the steel import licensing and monitoring system. This system provides steel producers and consumers, and the U.S. Government, with accurate and more timely information on imports of specific steel products. As such, this system is extremely important to many of our constituents in the State of Arkansas. Our state produces the entire spectrum of steel products, including flat, long and pipe and tube products.

First of all, it is critically important that the current import licensing system be made permanent. Such a program provides much-needed information on steel imports, while complying with our WTO obligations and without hindering trade flows. The program is similar to one which Canada has used for years. Such a program should be a permanent feature of our trade monitoring and enforcement efforts.

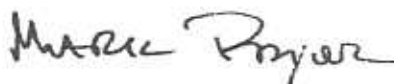
Second, we recommend that the program be expanded to include other types of products not currently covered. For example, Arkansas produces more steel beams than any other state in our country, and yet this product is not covered by the monitoring system because they were not included in the President's steel 201 remedy. However, these beams remain subject to surges of low-priced imports. An early warning will help protect workers in Arkansas, and anywhere else that companies face unfair import competition.

Third, we recommend that Commerce begin including port of entry information on its surge website. We understand that Customs already collects this data. Releasing it to the public would provide more accurate information, with no additional burden on importers.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these comments.



Blanche L. Lincoln,
United States Senate



Mark Pryor,
United States Senate