

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 15, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur Ross
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

We write to express our concern about the delay in the Section 232 investigation into steel imports and the corresponding surge of steel imports entering the U.S. market. We urge you to complete your investigation and publish your final report with conclusions and recommendations as quickly as possible to prevent further damage to the U.S. steel sector.

Steel imports continue to flood into the U.S. as a result of unchecked steel overcapacity in China and other countries. In the first six months of this year, steel imports increased 25 percent compared to the first six months in 2016. Unfortunately, since the Commerce Department began the investigation, import volumes have increased even more as foreign producers seek to export steel product to the U.S. before the Administration imposes any Section 232 remedies.

Rebar imports, for example, spiked 84 percent in June compared to May, while cold-rolled steel sheet saw a 32 percent increase over the same period. Oil country tubular goods imports were up 19 percent in June over May and have increased by an astounding 248 percent over the first six months of the year. In addition, grain-oriented electrical steel imports from Japan, Korea, and China have increased 155-195% in the first five months of this year. These import levels are unsustainable for U.S. companies and their workers. Unfortunately, the steel sector expects them to continue to increase unless a conclusion of the Section 232 investigation is reached immediately.

We know that this Administration understands the consequences of global steel overcapacity and the flood of steel imports for U.S. steel producers. Further postponement of the Section 232 investigation will invite a growing deluge of steel imports into the U.S. and cause even greater damage to the U.S. steel sector. We urge you to conclude the Section 232 steel investigation expeditiously to prevent the idling of additional U.S. steel facilities and the layoffs of more U.S. steelworkers.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Rob Portman
United States Senator