

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 25, 2017

The Honorable Wilbur L. Ross
Secretary of Commerce
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Ross:

We are writing to urge an expedited conclusion to the Department of Commerce's Section 232 National Security Investigation into imports of steel and aluminum.

The domestic production of steel and aluminum is critical to the American economy. American manufacturing supplies the foundation for our nation's infrastructure, construction, and national security industries while providing millions of jobs to hard-working men and women across the country.

In late April, you opened an investigation under section 232(b)(1)(A) of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 "to determine the effects on national security" of steel and aluminum imports.¹ The Section 232 investigation is essential to ensuring a level playing field for an industry that is susceptible to unfairly subsidized foreign imports. Unfortunately, statements by the President and officials in the Department of Commerce have caused confusion as to when the investigation will ultimately conclude. Other countries have taken advantage of this uncertainty and increased the rates at which they dump steel into the United States, flooding the market with inferior products and harming U.S. workers that the investigation was meant to protect.

We are especially concerned by statements from the Administration which indicate that the Department will not conclude the investigation until other top-priority issues have been addressed – including healthcare, tax reform, and "maybe even infrastructure."² Linking the outcomes of a national security investigation to unrelated and complex legislative and administrative actions is inappropriate and will likely lead to additional harm as the U.S. steel and aluminum industries further await a decision.

¹ "Section 232 Investigation on the Effect of Imports of Aluminum on U.S. National Security," *Department of Commerce* (Apr. 27, 2017) (online at <https://www.commerce.gov/page/section-232-investigation-effect-imports-aluminum-us-national-security#memo>); "Presidential Memorandum Prioritizes Commerce Steel Investigation," *Department of Commerce* (Apr. 20, 2017) (online at <https://www.commerce.gov/news/press-releases/2017/04/presidential-memorandum-prioritizes-commerce-steel-investigation/>).

² Jeffrey Neeley and Katherine Stubblefield, "Trump Administration Delays Findings on Section 232 Steel Investigation," *Husch Blackwell* (Jul. 27, 2017) (online at <http://www.tmtindustryinsider.com/2017/07/trump-administration-delays-findings-on-section-232-steel-investigation/>).

The domestic steel industry faces a more tilted playing field than before the announcement of the investigation. Steel imports have spiked 25 percent compared to the first half of 2016, and since your administration announced the investigation in April, imports have soared 21 percent as foreign producers have rushed to beat the clock.³ The longer this investigation takes, the more American industry suffers.

The workers and businesses injured by these unfair trading practices depend on the Commerce Department's prioritization of the Section 232 investigation. It is absolutely vital that the Administration now fulfill its promise and act.

We encourage you to protect American workers and our economy by swiftly concluding your investigation and publishing your final report. Thank you for your attention to our request.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator

³ "Steel imports up 25 percent year to date," *Chesterton Tribune* (Jul. 27, 2017) (online at http://chestertontribune.com/Business/steel_imports_up_25_percent_year.htm).