Thank you Chairman Visclosky and Chairman Murphy for calling this important oversight hearing of the Steel Caucus. My name is Greg England, and I am a staff representative for the United Steelworkers and also the Rapid Response Coordinator for the USW in Alabama. I grew up in Birmingham and have spent my entire life there. For thirty-five years I worked in a merchant foundry producing coke. For the last nine years I have worked for the USW to help secure and grow good manufacturing jobs for my members in Alabama.

As we all know, the country is in the grips of one of the most severe economic downturns we have ever experienced. Alabama is no different. Thousands of Alabamians depend on the steel industry for their livelihoods. In Fairfield, Alabama there is a U.S. Steel plant, which produces several steel products, including Oil Country Tubular Goods (OCTG), which is used to extract oil or gas from a drill well. This Fairfield plant has been in operation for over 100 years.

The Fairfield plant faces the same terrible economic conditions as the steel industry is facing around the country, but it also faces another serious challenge — unfair import competition from China. Demand has all but dried up as a result of a tremendous surge in Chinese OCTG imports. It’s been devastating. In fact, the plant
is set to be shutdown in about one month unless and until we get orders to produce. There are 1,400 workers that have been laid off at the plant already with another 311 headed for lay off at the end of this month. All these lay-offs are indefinite in time – and part and parcel of the grim reality we are dealing with in Alabama and across the country.

But the negative fallout from the economic downturn and such unfair trade does not end at the plant or with the workers. It has been like a tsunami ripping apart families and the Fairfield and Birmingham communities. When plants aren’t operating, companies are not contributing to the tax base local communities need to survive and thrive. And workers are not spending money in the local community for local services and goods. That’s what’s happened in Fairfield and in Birmingham. The Birmingham area will lose an estimated 5,500 to 6,000 jobs due to the shutdown at the Fairfield plant. This includes truck drivers that supply goods and materials to the plant and deliver products produced at the plant, vendors that supply the plant and outside contractors that do work at the plant. It also affects the coke plant at Sloss Industries, which supplies the coke to make the steel and, of course, the miners that supply the coal for the coke plants. To make matters even worse, the ABC Drummond plant, which is a supplier for GM, has shutdown. It’s a vicious downward cycle that we must end.

The union is fighting back. In early April we filed a petition with several domestic OCTG producers, including U.S. Steel, against dumped and subsidized imports from China, which tripled from 750,000 tons in 2006 to 2.2 million tons in
2008. This caused the idling or closure of our facilities – like the Fairfield facility -- and the loss of thousands of our good-paying jobs -- like the jobs in Fairfield.

Congress needs to ensure vital trade remedy tools work for American workers and are enforced fully by the new Administration, especially against China, which has 600 outstanding orders worldwide. Congress also needs to strengthen the trade laws, especially in applying the anti-subsidy law to China.

Lastly, I want to thank-you for putting a Buy America provision in the stimulus law and to let you know that we need more investment in infrastructure projects to get our manufacturing base up and running again. Other efforts, like the Cash for Clunkers legislation sponsored by Congresswoman Sutton, that just passed the House, also would be helpful to our workers and steel manufacturers, as they provide about one-third of their steel output to the U.S. auto industry.

Thank-you.