I am Dan DiMicco, Chairman, CEO, and President of Nucor Corporation. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today, and thank you for all that the Congressional Steel Caucus does in supporting the domestic steel industry.

As you have just heard, this is the greatest economic challenge that we have faced since the Great Depression. At Nucor, every one of our 22,000 employees and their families are being hit hard by this crisis. Our plants are operating near half of their capacity. Our workers and their families have suffered tremendously over the last few months where we have seen production drop by 40--50 percent or more.

The good news is that Nucor and the rest of the industry are ready to lead the way out of this economic crisis. And the way to do it is quite simple – we need to put Americans back to work. The best way to do this is with a strong stimulus package that focuses on rebuilding our nation’s infrastructure – including our roads, our bridges, our schools,
and our buildings as well as our energy infrastructure—both conventional and alternative.

We can all agree that the best way to stimulate economic activity is to invest in ourselves. Rebuilding our nation’s infrastructure IS an investment in our country and its future. Any economist will tell you this infrastructure investment has a multiplier effect – it creates more jobs, and it creates them faster, than other types of stimulus.

Therefore, Congress should pass, and the President should sign, an economic recovery and stimulus package that includes substantial funding for infrastructure investment. Nucor is ready to get back to work, and to help get America back to work as well.

Importantly, this economic recovery package must maintain strong Buy America provisions that continue to ensure that all the iron and steel used are produced here in the United States. I applaud Chairman Visclosky for his efforts in getting this key provision into the House stimulus bill. This will keep money and jobs at home where they belong, but the benefits will extend to suppliers, customers, and consumers, both here in the United States and around the world. Without
these provisions, we are simply using U.S. taxpayer dollars to bail out other countries – and throwing away the important benefits of infrastructure investment!

The Buy America laws have been on the books for decades and reinforced in 1982. All they require is that federally funded transportation projects use American iron and steel made by American workers, if it is readily available. And believe me – it is available – just ask any of us! Our American steel is available, competitively priced, and the highest quality in the world. The Buy America laws are consistent with our international obligations. They have not, and will not, start a trade war. What are we worried about, anyway? Retaliation from Mercantilist China on our exports? Friends, China has never signed on to any government procurement code, and it has committed flagrant violations of the international subsidies code. We have to wake up! Others are looking out for themselves. We have to stand up for America. No one else will.

The fact is, we are already in a trade war – a war by some foreign governments on the American working family – where foreign
protectionist governments and companies are using illegal and mercantilist trade practices every day, and the rules are not being enforced. It is time for our American leaders to stand up for working Americans and insist on law and order. That is why the next most important thing that Congress and the President can do is to enforce our trade laws, especially against China. There is no better example of this than on currency. For years, China has manipulated its currency, which is undervalued by as much as 50 percent. This has caused tremendous harm to U.S. exports and all U.S. manufacturing, including the steel industry and our customers. As a result, our trade deficit with China last year reached more than $250 billion.

You now have an opportunity to fix this problem. Years of diplomacy—really more like the appeasement that failed the world prior to WWI and WWII than diplomacy—have failed to end these illegal trade practices – we have to take strong yet reasonable action. Congress should enact legislation that treats China’s currency manipulation as a subsidy under our trade remedy laws. We have a new President, who endorsed this legislation by cosponsoring it when he was in the Senate.
And just last month, Treasury Secretary Geithner made the Administration’s position clear, when he stated that “President Obama – backed by the conclusions of a broad range of economists – believes that China is manipulating its currency.” Ladies and gentlemen, what more do you need? Let’s enforce our trade laws, and hold China accountable for its unlawful currency manipulation.

Thank you again for your time and your support of the steel industry and the tens of thousands of steel and manufacturing workers across our country. We will get through this economic crisis, and get America back to work, but only if we heed the call for fairness and accountability in our trade relations and agreements.