Wyden supports ITC review of hardwood plywood abuses

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2,000 Oregonians work in the hardwood plywood industry; International Trade Commission review would investigate unfair Chinese trade practices

U.S. Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon applauded Senate Finance Committee Chairman Max Baucusâ€™ decision to formally request that the International Trade Commission (ITC) conduct a review of the U.S. hardwood plywood and wood flooring industry. Nearly 2,000 Oregonians work in the hardwood plywood industry.

â€œI applaud Chairman Baucusâ€™ decision to request an International Trade Commission study to investigate unfair Chinese trade practices that are hurting U.S. hardwood plywood manufacturers and threatening family wage jobs in Oregon and around the country,â€• Wyden said. â€œI am confident that the results of the investigation will give the Administration and industry additional leverage to use to curb these troubling practices and protect American jobs.â€•

Baucus requested the review, called a â€œSection 332 Review, Wednesday. â€œ332â€• is a reference to section 332 of the Tariff Act of 1930, which authorizes the ITC to carry out general fact finding investigations on matters involving international trade, including the conditions of competition between U.S. and foreign industries.

In late November 2006, Wyden sent letters to the U.S Trade Representative, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Homeland Security and the Customs and Border Protection Commissioner expressing his serious concerns regarding a number of Chinese hardwood plywood industry trade practices, which were relayed to him by members of the hardwood plywood industry and others. Practices discussed in the Wyden letter included Chinese hardwood plywood dumping, illegal subsidies, tariff misclassification, fraudulent stamping, and illegal logging.

Since then Senator Wyden has held multiple meetings with Administration officials to discuss the allegations made in his letter and to urge them to investigate and take action to address them. On February 2, 2007, USTR filed a World Trade Organization subsidies case against the Chinese that specifically targets the illegal practices of the Chinese hardwood plywood industry.

On February 22, 2007, Wyden met with Joe Gonyea III, COO of Timber Products Company, other industry leaders, and workers in Eugene to discuss the effects of the Chinese trade practices and the progress of the case.