

A Second Open Letter From Poplar Bluff to the President Of the United States

Dear President Trump,

Best wishes on your trip to Kansas City tomorrow. We have a request: Please come visit us in Poplar Bluff. It's not far. You could come before or after your fund-raising luncheon.

You will see successful U.S. manufacturing workers. Against all odds, Mid Continent has beaten back unfair competition from Asia. We doubled our workforce in five years and became the largest U.S. manufacturer of nails.

Then on June 1, the U.S. enacted Section 232 tariffs that drastically increased the cost of the raw material we use to make our nails, forcing us to raise our prices by about 25%. Our orders dropped by 70%, and our workforce, once more than 500, is down to 400. Meanwhile, our foreign competitors earn windfall profits, shipping their nails to the U.S. without a tariff!

We know that killing jobs in Poplar Bluff was not your intention. As we said in our first letter on June 29, "More than any other president in our time, you have shown compassion for American workers."

Since that letter, things have gotten worse. Mid Continent applied for an exclusion a month ago, but a decision generally takes another 90 days. By then, the entire U.S. domestic nail sector may be gone.

At your side tomorrow will be Josh Hawley, candidate for Senate. He visited our plant on Saturday. Ask him whether our jobs are worth saving. He says Mid Continent "makes a good case for an exemption."

But see for yourself. Tour our plant. Shake hands with the people who still make nails in America. Please don't give up on us. You have it in your power, with the stroke of a pen, to save 400 jobs that are left and recoup the 100 jobs that have already been lost.

With sincere respect and hopefulness,

The Hard-Working People of Mid Continent Steel and Wire
2700 Central St., Poplar Bluff, Mo.