



February 4, 2025

Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

The American-based companies in this letter operate dozens of food processing or steel can making facilities across the U.S. employing tens of thousands of workers. We understand your efforts to use tariffs and other broad trade tools to level the global economic playing field and make our country's economy great again. However, the unintended consequences of these measures – if not properly tailored and implemented – are extremely detrimental to American food producers, farmers, and metal can makers and, hence, our nation's food security.

Our industry has seen firsthand the unintended consequences of Section 232 tariffs, quotas, and tariff rate quotas (TRQs) on tin mill steel, used in producing nearly 19 billion metal cans domestically. Contrary to the intent of Section 232 national security tariffs, U.S. steelmakers have shut down nine tin mill lines since the 2018 imposition of Section 232; only three domestic production lines remain today. Tin mill steel is a niche substrate, and its production makes up less than 1% of total steel production. The domestic supply squeeze of tin mill steel precipitated exponential price hikes and inflated the cost of canned foods for American consumers. While it is essential for making steel food cans it is not used in infrastructure projects, construction or for national defense.

As a result, our industry has become more dependent on foreign steel imports due to the severe curtailment of U.S. tinplate steel production, which has forced us to buy steel from allied countries. Today we must import at least 70% of our tin mill steel needs to make the cans necessary to feed the 330 million Americans who rely daily on our products. Sourcing imported tin mill steel is extremely challenging today as 232 tariffs, quotas, and TRQs create supply and delivery impediments that may curtail manufacturing production and the idling of skilled, highly paid American workers. The hundreds of 232 exclusions granted by the Commerce Department and a recent ITC bipartisan, unanimous ruling affirm that tin mill imports do not hurt U.S. steel makers.

Given the devastating impacts on the American canned food industry, we request a broad exemption for tinplate steel from Section 232 and other trade restrictions your administration may pursue. Unless this exemption is granted, cheaper imports of canned products from Asia – especially China – and elsewhere will undercut U.S.-produced canned foods. This reality is evidenced by the 1.7 billion imported food cans purchased in 2023 that in some cases are procured by U.S. government Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars. Most alarming is the growing dependence on canned foods from

China and other low-cost Asian food canners, leaving our nation's food security at the mercy of sometimes unstable supply chains and adversarial countries. It cannot be in the national security interest that America has become a net food importer. We need to ensure that steel food cans and the products packaged into those cans are both "Made in America."

If U.S. can manufacturers are to continue making food cans in this country for iconic American brands, an exemption from Section 232 and other trade measures for tin mill steel will be required. Doing so would help safeguard the American food supply and the tens of thousands of jobs in this critical sector. We stand ready to discuss this matter further and provide any additional information.

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent issue. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

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Chippewa Valley Bean
[Menomonie, WI](#)

Mark Howell
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