



*“The whole purpose of the stimulus package is to stop the bleeding of jobs and to create new jobs here in America, not overseas, not in China, not in Europe.”*

~ Dan DiMicco

In February of 2009, Congress passed a stimulus package that included the clause “Buy American.” The inclusion of this slogan was, in large part, a direct response to the steel industry’s extensive fight for this stipulation. In a nutshell, the clause states that any infrastructure project paid for with stimulus dollars will have to utilize materials that are made in the United States, rather than cheaper imports from competing countries. On February 19th, Nucor’s CEO, Dan DiMicco, appeared on 60 Minutes to defend the industry’s stance on “Buy American.”

Mr. DiMicco is a firm believer in the “Buy American” stance and has never been afraid to position himself, as well as Nucor, as an ardent advocate for the concept. In the interview on 60 Minutes with Lesley Stahl, he states “The whole purpose of the stimulus package, and it’s the right purpose, is to stop the bleeding of jobs and to create new jobs here in America, not overseas, not in China, not in Europe.” Dan DiMicco believes that if the clause “Buy American” had not been included in the stimulus agreement, many businesses would continue to buy from international competitors and would, therefore, not stimulate the business economy in the United States.

It is no secret that Americans feel the sting from the current financial conditions and are in need of an economic boost. Many people across the United

States from all walks of life have become unemployed, and several businesses that haven’t already dissolved are struggling to maintain a status quo. Mr. DiMicco and those sharing his viewpoint feel that pulling together and adopting the policy to “Buy American” will give the U.S. economy a much-needed boost and generate more jobs – jobs that so many Americans desperately need. Opponents to the idea of “Buy American” feel that, if the United States were to embrace this stance, it could further empower already dominant companies and result in trade wars with other countries.

Dan DiMicco is well aware of the opposition’s perspective. This said in his interview on 60 Minutes, “What we’re saying is, ‘Listen, yes ‘buy American’ benefits the steel industry in the United States. Absolutely.’ But what we’re saying also is, might that concept not also benefit the U.S. economic engine, get it started again?” He also addresses the counter argument that “Buy American” will generate trade retaliation by other countries, by stating “It’s all garbage. People can say what they want. What we have around the world, all right, is a trade war against the United States

that we have not showed up for. We are the largest consumer in the world of Chinese-made products. They need us as much as we need them.”

The fact that China has been subsidizing its steel industry is the real hostile act according to Dan DiMicco, claiming that this business practice allows China to dump or sell its steel below cost. Dumping and subsidizing are both illegal according to international trading practices. “The only trade war that’s going on is being waged on us,” DiMicco said. “And when you don’t hold people accountable for playing by the rules they agreed to, that have access to your market, you’re basically saying anything goes. That’s garbage. That’s baloney. And the American people won’t stand for it.”

With the passing of the economic stimulus package on February 17th, the advocates of “Buy American” within the steel industry won their battle with the government and the clause was added as a stipulation for the stimulus package. For steel companies across the U.S. and the people connected to them, the clause mandates that American steel be used in all projects paid for with stimulus dollars unless it violates U.S. trade agreements. Therefore, steel from Canada and Europe can still be used, but the stimulus dollars cannot be used to purchase steel from some major competitors like China and Russia.

