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America's Watchdog on Foreign Trade Remedies

Trade Remedy Compliance Staff proactively strives to keep the playing field level for U.S. exporters subjected to foreign trade remedy measures.

by Michael Rollin

In recent years as U.S. exporters expanded their markets around the world, the International Trade Administration has taken more proactive steps to address unfair practices hindering U.S. trade. To that end, Congress has provided resources and a mandate for increased monitoring of other countries' trade policies and practices, as well as strengthening of U.S. trade law enforcement.

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Members of the International Trade Administration's Trade Remedy Compliance Staff celebrate their Department of Commerce Silver Medal Award. The team earned the award for its efforts to address trade remedy actions taken by foreign governments in order to support U.S. industry efforts to compete on a level playing field in the international marketplace. (U.S. Department of Commerce photo)

The Trade Remedy Compliance Staff (TRCS) of the Import Administration (IA) is an important contributor to that initiative. It serves as the U.S. government's watchdog over foreign trade remedy practices. TRCS, with its team of local and overseas experts, monitors trade remedy actions (i.e., antidumping, anti-subsidy, and safeguards) taken by foreign governments in order to support U.S. industry efforts to compete on a level playing field in the international marketplace.

TRCS's Role and Service

IA has built on its law enforcement duties by instituting a variety of import monitoring and subsidies enforcement activities that are designed to help U.S. industry deal more effectively with a broader range of unfair trade problems. TRCS is the latest extension of this commitment. It provides assistance to U.S. businesses that feel that their export markets are jeopardized by the improper application of trade remedy measures by foreign governments.

TRCS achieves its mission through an aggressive program of monitoring, outreach, and education. The foundation of its monitoring efforts is a comprehensive system for tracking every trade remedy action that potentially involves U.S. exports. That information allows TRCS to provide timely alerts to U.S. companies about pending investigations. It further relies on its tracking system to develop a detailed understanding of the trade remedy regime for U.S. trading partners. Hence, the tracking system enables TRCS to evaluate U.S. partners' consistency with World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.

TRCS actively seeks out U.S. companies that are faced with foreign trade remedy actions to help them understand the potential impact on their business and the available options. When warranted, TRCS

coordinates with other U.S. government agencies to engage foreign administrators to advocate for fair and WTO-consistent application of trade remedy actions involving U.S. companies.

In addition, TRCS regularly organizes bilateral technical exchanges with foreign trade remedy administrators and takes advantage of multilateral events as a broader means to encourage transparency, due process, and procedural fairness in trade remedy actions. Such activities also help pinpoint and analyze problematic policies so that governments have an opportunity to avert trade frictions and to prevent harm to U.S. interests.

IA officers abroad bolsters those efforts by providing TRCS better access to various sources of information, which allow for more effective identification and understanding of potential trade remedy problems, and by giving TRCS the ability to quickly focus on such problems through technical assistance and discussions with government counterparts.

Preserving Lucrative Export Markets

Because of the efforts of TRCS, U.S. exporters have accessed markets worth more than \$750 million that otherwise would have been unfairly denied to them. For example, in 2006, TRCS capped an intensive advocacy effort with the Chinese government that resulted in China terminating its contentious antidumping measure on kraft linerboard and reopening a \$100 million market to U.S. exporters.

Success has not been limited to China. Following the U.S. victory at the WTO against Mexico's antidumping measure on U.S. rice exports, Mexico abandoned the measure, which reopened a \$20 million market for U.S. producers.

TRCS continues to engage trading partners, such as Brazil, China, the European Union, India, Mexico, and South Africa, to ensure that U.S. exporters are treated fairly in trade remedy actions that are consistent with every country's WTO obligations.

Michael Rollin is the director of the Trade Remedy Compliance Staff with the International Trade Administration's Import Administration.

For More Information

For more information on TRCS activities and initiatives, please visit the [Trade Remedy Compliance Web site](#).