

News From \_\_\_\_\_

U.S. Senator  
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For immediate release:

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WASHINGTON, D.C....U.S. Senators Robert C. Byrd and Jay Rockefeller, both D-W.Va., Monday evening led Weirton officials and Weirton Steel Corporation representatives to a meeting at the White House with Vice President Al Gore to urge action to prevent further layoffs at Weirton Steel.

"I told the Vice President that I was not interested in helping Weirton Steel to go out of business. I did not want to hear about retraining programs. I want to keep those people in their jobs. I am interested in keeping Weirton Steel in business," Byrd said.

Senator Rockefeller said, "This meeting was part of our ongoing, all-out fight to get fast and tough action to end the steel crisis. I told the Vice President that steps must be taken immediately in order to stop the increasingly painful toll that the crisis is taking on West Virginia families."

Byrd, the Ranking Member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, presented Gore with a letter that calls on the Clinton Administration to address the "full-fledged crisis in the U.S. steel industry." In that letter, Byrd suggested that the Administration include in its upcoming budget package an appropriate emergency relief package for the steel industry.

"That package should include a request for additional funds wherever necessary in existing programs as well as the creation of any new programs that could be of assistance to American steelworkers and to the U.S. steel industry," Byrd wrote.

"At the meeting, I suggested that the Clinton Administration include emergency funding in its upcoming budget request. We are at a critical point in the steel industry –

not only in Weirton but across the country. Thousands of families are facing layoffs. I want the Administration officials, when they are looking at emergency assistance for other countries, to consider emergency assistance for steel communities like Weirton," Byrd said.

"I made it clear at this meeting that only the Administration has the power to immediately attack steel imports, and save the jobs of so many people in our state who rely on the steel industry. I will continue seeking every opportunity to push the Administration to take effective action to end the crisis," Rockefeller said.

Attending the meeting with Byrd and Rockefeller were Weirton Mayor Dean Harris, City Manager Vince Azzarello, Weirton Steel President Richard "Dick" Riederer, and Weirton Steel Executive Vice President of Human Resources David Robertson.

"Weirton is a steel town, and anyone who has ever lived in a steel town knows what it means to experience layoffs and economic uncertainty at the mill. When the plant is injured, the whole community hurts. Weirton has been injured and needs help to heal," Byrd said.

Byrd, a member of the Senate Steel Caucus, has offered a number of pieces of legislation to address the rising levels of steel imports. Most recently, Byrd added language to an appropriations bill that calls on the Clinton Administration to offer a plan by January 5, 1999, on how it intends to deal with the flood of steel imports. During a Steel Caucus hearing two weeks ago, Administration officials assured Byrd that the program will be comprehensive and delivered on time.

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