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U.S. Department of Commerce Initiates Section 232 Investigation into Titanium Sponge Imports

Trade enforcement

Today, U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross accepted the Section 232 petition filed on September 27, 2018, by domestic producer Titanium Metals Corporation (TIMET) and launched an investigation into whether the quantity or circumstances of titanium sponge imports into the United States threaten to impair the national security. Secretary Ross sent a [letter](#) to Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick

Shanahan informing him that he has initiated an investigation in response to this petition. The Department of Defense supports the initiation of this 232 investigation on titanium sponge.

“Titanium sponge has uses in a wide range of defense applications, from helicopter blades and tank armor to fighter jet airframes and engines,” said Secretary Ross. “The Department of Commerce’s Bureau of Industry and Security will conduct a thorough, fair, and transparent investigation before we make a recommendation to the President.”

Background:

Titanium sponge is the primary form of titanium metal from which almost all other titanium products are made. Titanium is used in the production of strategic articles such as military aircraft, space vehicles, satellites, naval vessels, missiles, and munitions. It is also widely used in critical infrastructure and commercial applications such as civilian aircraft, chemical plants, oil and gas plants, electric power and desalination plants, building structures, automobile products, and bio-medical devices.

Imports account for more than 60 percent of U.S. titanium sponge consumption. Currently

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only one facility in the United States has the capacity to process titanium ore into the sponge used in manufacturing. Titanium sponge is difficult to stockpile for long periods as it degrades, rendering the sponge unsuitable for the most demanding military and aerospace applications.

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