



## Thailand Scrap Steel Imports See Sharp Cut in 2015

The latest import statistics indicate that the scrap imports by Thailand during December 2015 declined heavily over the previous year. The imports by the country totaled 67,000 tons during the month. This is significantly down by over 20% when compared with the imports during the same month a year before. Thailand had imported 85,000 tons of scrap steel during December 2014.

Thailand's scrap steel imports have been on a decline for several months now. This is the fifth month in a row that the country's scrap steel imports have registered decline.

The largest scrap exporter to Thailand during December '15 was Australia. The scrap imports by Thailand from Australia totaled 30,000 tons. The scrap imports from



the country accounted for nearly 45% of the total scrap imports by Thailand during the month. The Australian scrap exports to Thailand surged higher significantly by over 900% year-on-year. The second largest scrap exporter to Thailand during the month was the US. The imports from the country totaled 27,000 tons, accounting for more than 40% of the total scrap imports by Thailand during the month. The scrap imports from the top two

destinations contributed more than 85% of the country's monthly imports.

The country's scrap imports during the whole year 2015 totaled 949,000 tons. The imports during this year dropped heavily by 31.3% when compared with the previous year. The average monthly scrap steel imports by the country stood at 79,000 tons, dropping below 1 million tons for the first time in history.

## Obama Pledges more Aggressive Enforcement of Steel Rules

President Obama told Government Mark Dayton that his administration has been more aggressive in enforcing actions against countries accused of dumping steel into the U.S. market.

"You're going to see firm, tough enforcement of our existing trade laws," said Obama, taking questions from U.S. governors at the White House.

Dayton's push was the latest in an all-out effort by Minnesota's politicians to get Washington to address what they call a crisis on the Iron Range. More than 2,000 workers have been laid off since last year mostly due to a glut of steel in the global market and the slowdown of the Chinese economy.

State and local politicians have worked to extend unemployment benefits and other assistance to those experiencing job losses. But federal politicians have been more aggressive in pushing the Obama administration to do more to crack down on international trade practices.

They say some countries, like China, are reacting to their own economic slowdowns by selling excess steel in the global market for less than it costs to make, squeezing out local producers.

China makes about half the world's steel, more than the U.S., Europe and Russia combined. During the boom years, China's steel industry could barely keep up with surging demand. But the recent and wide-



reaching economic slowdown has the country's steel producers flooding the world market.

Late last year, at the urging of Dayton, U.S. Sens. Amy Klobuchar, Al Franken and Rep. Rick Nolan, Obama dispatched his chief of staff Denis McDonough to the Iron Range to hear from those who had been laid off.

Attending the National Governors Association meeting in Washington over the weekend, Dayton said he spoke to the president twice about the hardship on the Iron Range.

"We'll see what happens, but I think it's a very promising step forward and the trade ambassador spoke to me and assured me that these steps are important to them," Dayton said.

Obama also told Dayton he was about to sign a measure approved by Congress that will make it easier to enforce existing trade rules put in place by Commerce and the International Trade Commission.

"What is important is that we don't get confused by thinking that we should close off trade as an enforcement tool, because that is not possible," Obama said. "What is possible is making sure that everybody is playing on a level playing field and that people are operating fairly. And frankly, I don't think it's any secret that China in the past has not always operated fairly."

Other countries have taken tougher steps. In recent months, the European Union announced it would impose new tariffs on Chinese and Russian steel, which is used to make everything from cars to power lines to home appliances.

Klobuchar said the only thing that will really matter is enforcement of existing trade rules.

"I have long called for the administration to take tougher action to address the illegal dumping of Chinese steel on our shores, including placing more inspectors at our ports," she said.

Nolan, a Democrat representing the Eighth Congressional District, said he secured promises from administration officials about a "multifaceted plan of action" to address foreign steel dumping.

"I am pleased to have the White House working with us to clamp down on trade cheater nations, reverse this crisis and start putting our miners back to work where they belong," Nolan said.