

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1104

The Honorable Tom Perez
Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Re: Workers of Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company (HC&S), Puunene, HI - Petition for Trade Adjustment Assistance and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance – Petition Case #ETA-9042

Dear Secretary Perez:

I am writing in strong support of the petition filed by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 142 seeking Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Alternative TAA in case **#ETA-9042; Hawaiian Commercial and Sugar Company (HC&S), Puunene, HI**. The expedient consideration of this petition is requested for TAA and ATAA benefits for the trade-impacted workers at the HC&S.

On January 6, 2016, HC&S's parent company Alexander & Baldwin announced its intention to cease all sugar production and gradual layoff of 675 workers as the 2016 harvest is completed. The impact of this announcement is already being felt, as 88 workers were laid off on Monday, March 7. HC&S is Hawaii's last remaining sugar operation and its closing ends a 145-year history of a mainstay of the local economy. HC&S's facility has been a major employer in the County of Maui, and the loss of economic activity at the facility will impact the community deeply.

Alexander & Baldwin has stated the company could no longer continue the sugar operations due to its economic losses. The federal government has also recognized unfair competition as a serious concern for the sugar industry. On October, 2015, the U.S. International Trade Commission determined that imports of sugar to Mexico – subsidized by the Mexican government – materially injured the U.S. sugar industry. All six commissioners voted unanimously in support of this conclusion. (Investigation Numbers 701-TA-513 and 731-TA-1249).

The petition filed by ILWU Local 142 seeks Trade Adjustment Assistance under the group eligibility criteria established by the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2272). Specifically, the firm's decision will create a significant number of workers losing their jobs, and increased imports or global production shifts contributed to the worker separations. In addition, many of the impacted workers are above age 50 and have specialized skills that may not easily transfer to other jobs. These workers should receive Alternative TAA to help make up the difference between wages at their current jobs and new wages.

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Again, I urge you to expeditiously consider the ILWU's petition and hope that you will reach a favorable TAA and ATAA determination for the workers at the HC&S sugar production facility.

Mahalo nui loa for your prompt and fair consideration of this request.

Aloha,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mazie K. Hirono". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Mazie K. Hirono
U.S. SENATOR