

## U.S. Labor Department Awards Aid to SolarWorld Workers Laid off Because of Chinese Solar Imports

Company president: How many more factory jobs must U.S. industry lose to 'Big China Solar' before remedies are applied to offset illegal trade practices?

The U.S. Department of Labor has determined that all manufacturing employees laid off from SolarWorld Industries America Inc. as a result of the company's shutdown of its 35-year-old solar-panel production plant in Camarillo, Calif., in September are eligible for federal trade-adjustment assistance, including grants for education to retrain them for new work.

The determination that Chinese imports helped cause the shutdown resulted from an investigation earlier this year by the department's Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance, which announced the decision Friday in the [Federal Register](#). The decision means that many of the 186 laid-off SolarWorld employees can tap federal assistance with job placement; expenses for job searches, relocation and retraining; income support during full-time retraining; and a tax credit on health-insurance premiums.

According to U.S. law, the Labor Department may certify workers for trade-adjustment assistance only if it finds that an increase in competing imports "contributed importantly" to the decline in sales or production of a firm and to the cause for worker layoffs.

Though SolarWorld invested tens of millions of dollars automating the Camarillo plant after purchasing it in 2006, the company determined it needed to consolidate its U.S. manufacturing in Hillsboro, Ore., where it operates the Western Hemisphere's largest solar plant. Consolidation was required, according to SolarWorld, to contend with the illegally subsidized and dumped solar products of China's government-backed export drive. U.S. Department of Energy researchers have [concluded](#) that without state sponsorship, Chinese manufacturers would face a 5 percent cost *disadvantage* in producing and delivering solar products into the U.S. market.

The closure of the Camarillo factory was one of 12 plant shutdowns, layoffs or bankruptcies within the U.S. crystalline silicon solar manufacturing industry since 2010.

"We welcome the federal help that might ease the plight of our former factory workers in Camarillo," said Gordon Brinser, president of SolarWorld Industries America Inc. "But it will neither make them whole nor offset the loss of their pioneering know-how to the world solar industry.

"How many more U.S. manufacturing jobs must the United States lose in this most promising renewable-energy industry, which Americans pioneered, before adequate remedies are put in place to offset the illegal practices of Big China Solar?" Brinser asked.

In the first major ruling in the trade cases, the U.S. International Trade Commission issued a unanimous preliminary ruling on Dec. 2 that Chinese trade practices were injuring the domestic manufacturing industry. So far in its ongoing investigation, the Department of Commerce has determined 10 categories of Chinese subsidy programs to be illegal under U.S. and world trade law. In its next major ruling, the department will announce May 17 whether the Chinese industry has dumped solar cells and panels on the U.S. market at artificially low prices to drive out U.S. competition and, if so, by what percentage margins. Those margins would thereafter be assessed as duties on imports of Chinese solar products to offset illegal trade practices.

SolarWorld is one of the founding members of the Coalition for American Solar Manufacturing, a coalition of more than 190 U.S. employers of over 16,000 American workers that is advancing trade cases to seek anti-subsidy and anti-dumping duties against the government-underwritten Chinese manufacturers.