SOUTHERN WINDOWS
more than just windows

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Australian Trade Remedies Commissioner
Australian Trade Remedies Commission
GPO Box 2013
Canberra ACT 2601

Dear Commissioner,

Re: Case 691 — Aluminium windows and doors from China

I support the findings in the Statement of Essential Facts and believe effective final duties are needed to give Australian window and door manufacturers a fairer chance to compete. If nothing is done, I fear this issue could lead to the financial collapse of our industry and open the door for other industries to follow, leaving Australia increasingly reliant on Chinese manufacturing.

Southern Windows is a small manufacturer operating in and around the Shoalhaven region of New South Wales. We fully manufacture aluminium windows and doors, which are our entire business. Most of our work is for architectural residential projects, although we also work on basic residential and small commercial projects. We commonly use Alspec and Thermeco systems.

We are seeing larger buildings, such as apartments, sourcing windows from China at a fraction of the price we can manufacture them for. We are also seeing more customers sourcing windows and doors directly from China for much smaller jobs. Some customers travel to China, purchase windows, doors and other products for their homes, and then have them shipped back to Australia. Builders we work with have told us about customers purchasing whole containers of products for their builds.

In most of these cases, we don't even get a chance to quote. I can't point to a particular job that we quoted and directly lost to an imported product, and we still try to win every job we quote. But customers appear to be becoming more confident about importing, and we are seeing Chinese suppliers establish showrooms in Australia while importing their products from China.

The Commission's finding that dumped and subsidised imports have displaced Australian production opportunities reflects our concern about work going offshore before local manufacturers get a chance to compete (Statement of Essential Facts, p. 18). As a regional manufacturer, we feel these effects are only starting to ramp up in our area compared with the capital cities. Our concern is what happens as that trend continues.

We also have concerns about compliance. While I understand that quality and compliance are outside the scope of this dumping case, I believe non-compliant products further damage the industry and undermine a level playing field. A fairer market means products competing on equal and ethical terms, while allowing Australian manufacturers to protect their financial future.

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The confidential information below explains what these market conditions could mean for our business and employees.

CONFIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL INFORMATION PROVIDED TO THE COMMISSION

I ask the Commissioner to recommend effective and durable measures so that businesses like ours have a fair opportunity to continue manufacturing in Australia.

Yours sincerely,

Martin Lopes
Southern Windows

