

the fabricator® blog

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Chinese steel targeted

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Everyone knew that the Aug. 1 collapse of the I-35W bridge in Minneapolis would spark plenty of scrutiny into the state of this country's infrastructure and the construction methods used in these projects. But who knew that China would fall smack dab in the middle of the investigations?

On Sept. 10, Rep. Gene Green, D-Texas, called for federal hearings to discuss the importation of low-quality hollow structural sections from China. He wants U.S. officials to examine Chinese steel for quality before it enters this country and works its way into U.S. infrastructure projects.

"China has a problem with quality," he told Steel Business Briefing. "They have a problem with standards. That's something that our country needs to be very concerned about. If those pipes don't meet the specs that we have, then we're going to fail."

Local media quoted Gary Stein, president of Triple-S Steel Supply Co., a Houston-based steel service center, as saying that his company refuses to ship any more Chinese-made steel. The company even is leaving some of it at the Port of Houston, so that it can be shipped back.

In Michigan, an importer of Chinese-made cast iron soil pipe and fittings has been barred from supplying state construction projects. The Michigan Construction Code Commission on Sept. 12 unanimously backed the decision of the Michigan Plumbing Board that denied MWI Import Products from participating in any more state jobs. Apparently, MWI was unable to produce documentation that its pipes and fittings met Michigan plumbing code standards.

That's two relatively small strikes against Chinese-sourced steel, but will the next strike lead to a series of more strikes? With the state of Chinese-U.S. trade relations, Chinese officials definitely don't want more negative publicity.

To be honest, the Fabricators & Manufacturers Association, the parent organization of *The FABRICATOR*, received a phone call several weeks ago from a tube and pipe manufacturer wondering if we had heard anything from other members about the increase of low-quality steel coming from overseas sources. Apparently, the phone call was a harbinger.

About The Fabricator®

The FABRICATOR® is North America's leading magazine for the metal forming and fabricating industry. The magazine delivers the news, technical articles, and case histories that enable fabricators to do their jobs more efficiently. *The FABRICATOR* had served the industry since 1971.