

May 19, 2010

Washington, D.C. – Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-11) sent a letter today to Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis urging her to swiftly respond to applications for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) for workers at supplier companies who have lost their employment as a result of the closure of the New United Motors Manufacturing, Inc. (NUMMI) plant.

TAA is a program administered by the Department of Labor that aims to assist workers who have lost their jobs as a result of foreign trade. TAA offers a variety of services and benefits for eligible employees, such as income support, job training, and relocation and job search allowances. In order to be eligible for TAA benefits, an employer or group of employees must petition for assistance as a result of job loss from foreign trade. When TAA certification is approved, employees may begin applying for available benefits.

In the letter, Rep. McNerney notes that a number of employees of NUMMI suppliers have applied for TAA eligibility, but have not received a determination to date. Rep. McNerney concludes the correspondence by urging Secretary Solis to ensure a speedy and efficient determination of TAA assistance for employees of NUMMI suppliers and similarly affected companies.

The text of the letter appears below.

May 19, 2010

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

Dear Secretary Solis:

I am contacting you regarding the Department of Labor's response to petitions for certifications of eligibility for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) in the wake of the closing of the New United Motor Manufacturing, Inc. auto plant (NUMMI). More than six weeks have passed since production ended at the plant, and I urge you in the strongest terms to swiftly approve TAA certification for workers at NUMMI suppliers that have lost their employment as a direct result of the plant's closing. It is unacceptable that the administration would allow red tape to prevent much needed help for California workers.

California is facing a statewide unemployment level of more than 12 percent, and parts of California particularly affected by NUMMI's closure, such as San Joaquin County in the Central

Valley, are facing levels near 20 percent. As you know, California has experienced serious job losses over the past 18 months, and the closing of NUMMI cost our state nearly 5,000 jobs at the plant. Furthermore, estimates suggest that NUMMI's closure will indirectly cost California approximately 35,000 jobs due to the plant's extensive supply chain.

Your Department has taken the appropriate step of approving TAA for workers at the NUMMI plant, but employees of suppliers are also deeply affected by the plant's closure. I am informed, however, that a number of employees of NUMMI suppliers have applied for TAA eligibility but have not received a determination to date. It is imperative that workers at suppliers and other companies who face unemployment due to NUMMI's closure have access to TAA benefits.

Despite efforts by community leaders to keep the NUMMI plant open, the unfortunate fact remains that the plant's closure has resulted in thousands of workers facing unemployment and job searches in a tough market. At a time of economic rebuilding, I believe it is more important than ever to assure displaced workers who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own that assistance for job training and basic services will be available. I insist that you do all that you can to ensure a speedy and efficient determination of TAA assistance for employees of NUMMI suppliers and similarly affected companies.

I appreciate your attention to this letter. As you continue to process requests for TAA, I urge you to do everything in your power to help California communities address the impacts of NUMMI's closure. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 202-225-1947.

Sincerely,

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress