



Small Manufacturer Hopeful G-20 Agenda Includes Free-Trade Talks

Marlin Wire chief executive and others in the manufacturing community seek voice on key issues in two-day summit

By [Jonathan Katz](#)

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Drew Greenblatt says he has two primary issues he would like to see addressed at the Group of 20 summit taking place in Pittsburgh this week. The first has to do with pending free-trade agreements with South Korea, Panama and Columbia, says Greenblatt, president of [Baltimore-based Marlin Steel Wire Products LLC](#).

"We want a lot of exports. We need [factories](#) exporting like crazy," Greenblatt says. It's imperative that we set the tone for the world that we're pro free trade."

The small manufacturer of [wire baskets](#) with sales estimated at \$4 million in 2008 has thrived on [international sales](#), says [Greenblatt, who purchased the company in 1998](#) and has [testified in front of Congress](#) on small-business issues. Within the past month, the company has exported to as far away as Belgium, Singapore, Ireland and Brazil.

President Obama has pledged to move forward with the trade deals signed under the Bush administration but left unratified over concerns relating to alleged human rights abuses in Columbia and Panama and access for U.S. automakers to the South Korean market.

Senator Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, has been a staunch critic of existing and pending free-trade agreements, including those in South Korea, Panama and Columbia. Brown addressed some of his concerns in a news conference he called to prior to the G-20 summit.

"The U.S. cannot only be the world's consumer," he said on Sept. 22. "Manufacturing will lead the way for U.S. economic recovery, and that also means we need to abide by

trade rules. At this week's summit, leaders of the G-20 nations have an opportunity to clarify that legitimate governmental actions, like trade enforcement, are not acts of protectionism."

Brown praised Obama for his recent decision to impose tariffs on Chinese-made tires, a move made after union leaders claimed imports of cheap tires from China had tripled over the last five years.

While the move garnered praise from fellow Democrats and labor leaders, it has concerned Chinese leaders who fear it will lead to more tariffs on other goods. China's concerns appear to have some merit, as three U.S. coated paper manufacturers and the United Steelworkers of America said Sept. 23 they had filed anti-dumping and countervailing duty petitions addressing imports of certain coated papers from China and Indonesia.

Chinese President Hu Jintao met with Obama at the United Nations Sept. 22 to discuss the tire dispute, and the two are scheduled to meet again during the summit.

Penalizing Chinese imports will only make the products more expensive for U.S. consumers, says [Greenblatt](#), who also serves as a director with the National Association of Manufacturers' Small and Medium Manufacturers department. But Greenblatt acknowledges that China needs to play by the rules by ending government subsidies to its steel industry and currency manipulation.

The other issue Greenblatt hopes U.S. leaders will address is the pending cap-and-trade legislation being debated in Congress. Greenblatt would like to see a moratorium placed on the issue until China and India agree to reduce their emissions.

"It's causing American factories to reconsider expanding in America," he says. "We can't have unilateral uncompetitive disadvantages thrown at us over and over again. Once they're on board, then we can talk about it again."

The American Iron and Steel Institute, an association representing U.S. steel makers, also has called on all nations to make environmental commitments during the G-20 summit.

"The American Iron and Steel Institute hopes that world leaders at the G-20 summit will find consensus on avenues to achieve global financial stability and sustained economic growth and development for coming generations," wrote AISI President and CEO Thomas Gibson in an e-mail response to IndustryWeek. "It is also important for leaders to recognize that climate change is a global issue that requires global solutions, thus all nations need to participate in reducing the world's environmental footprint."

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