

**International
Association of
Machinists and
Aerospace Workers**



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Area Code 301
967-4500



OFFICE OF THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

May 11, 2020

Governor Jay Inslee
416 Sid Snyder Avenue, SW
Suite 200
Olympia WA

Dear Governor:

I am writing on behalf of over 600,000 active and retired members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), to request your assistance in preserving U.S. domestic aluminum production capability and saving 700 aluminum smelting jobs at Alcoa Intalco Works in Ferndale, Washington. On April 22nd, company leadership announced plans to shut down this strategically important aluminum smelting operation, one of only seven primary aluminum smelters remaining in the United States. Allowing this facility to close would do irreparable damage to our nation's capacity to produce aluminum domestically, severely weaken our domestic supply chain, and endanger our national security; particularly in times of national emergency or foreign conflict. Furthermore, this closure would leave nearly 700 hard-working men and women out of work and devastate the local economy and surrounding communities.

For generations, the highly-skilled, IAM-represented workforce at Alcoa Intalco has proudly produced high-quality aluminum ingots which are a vital component in nearly every sector of U.S. manufacturing, from aerospace and shipbuilding to transportation, infrastructure and medical equipment manufacturing. Despite the obvious strategic importance of producing aluminum domestically, the U.S. aluminum industry has been decimated in recent decades, as the heavily subsidized Chinese aluminum industry has come to dominate and control the world market. In 1979, there were more than 10 aluminum smelters in the Pacific Northwest. This facility in Ferndale is the last one remaining in the entire region, and there are now only seven primary aluminum smelters operating nationwide. All of the other producers have been forced out of business, unable to compete with cheap Chinese steel produced with severely deficient labor and environmental standards and dumped on the world market without regard for international trade laws. China has approximately 150 aluminum smelters and produces 44 million tons of aluminum per year. The U.S. produces only 1.8 million tons per year per year, which is less than half of our domestic demand. This discrepancy jeopardizes our national security by leaving the United States at the mercy of foreign producers, and in particular Chinese producers, for one of the most critical inputs to nearly all sectors of manufacturing. This reliance on foreign aluminum has become particularly apparent during the current COVID-19 epidemic,

where high-quality aluminum is needed quickly and seamlessly to manufacture ventilators, hospital beds, and other vital medical equipment.

The aluminum smelting operation at Alcoa Intalco Works is of particular strategic importance as it is the largest aluminum producer in the United States, producing more than 280,000 tons per year. It is also the last remaining facility in the Western United States, and is the only U.S. aluminum smelter with proximity to a deep water port and dedicated rail spur. Most importantly, the facility boasts a workforce of 600 highly-skilled, Machinists Union workers. Their level of skill, decades of experience and peerless dedication to their craft would be impossible to replicate if this workforce were to be disassembled.

In addition to the 600 IAM-represented workers at Alcoa Intalco, there are another 100 men and women working at this facility who are not represented by the Machinists Union. That is a total of 700 working families who would immediately lose their livelihood in a city of only 15,000 people. Alcoa Intalco Works has consistently been one of the largest employers in all of Whatcom County, and it is estimated that every job at Alcoa Intalco supports more than four indirect and induced jobs in the region. It is clear; the effect of this plant closure on these workers, their families, and the surrounding community would be immense.

The Machinists Union is ready and willing to work with all parties to save these jobs, keep this facility running, and resurrect this vital industry before it is too late. We respectfully request your assistance and ask that you work with us to save these jobs, this facility, and this strategically vital industry. Thank you for your attention to this critical matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Martinez, Jr." The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "R" and "M".

Robert Martinez, Jr.
International President