



INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA - UAW

SHAWN FAIN, *PRESIDENT* • MARGARET MOCK, *SECRETARY-TREASURER*
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May 14, 2026

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20230

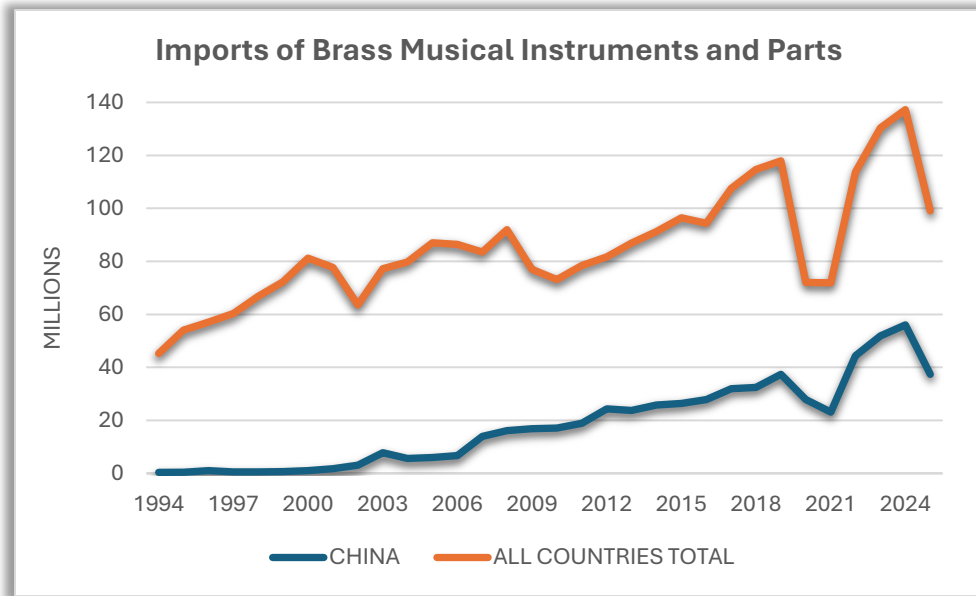
Dear Secretary Lutnick:

On behalf of the more than one million active and retired members of the UAW, we write to request urgent action to safeguard the U.S. production of brass musical instruments. Members of UAW Local 2359 build brass musical instruments in Eastlake, Ohio at Conn-Selmer, the country's largest manufacturer of band and orchestra instruments and the last remaining American manufacturer of brass musical instruments. Workers in Eastlake, Ohio have produced brass musical instruments for over 60 years. They have done their jobs, producing world-class products, winning a union contract with family-sustaining wages, and building the company into America's largest in the sector. Now, it is time for the federal government to do its job, by protecting our jobs, signaling to blue-collar workers across the country that their jobs will be safe too, and penalizing companies for attempting to offshore our jobs and decimate our communities. The Commerce Department has the power to immediately halt the offshoring of jobs at Conn-Selmer by making the company, and its billionaire owner, pay a price for leaving Eastlake behind. Brass musical instruments must be included as derivative products within the scope of the section 232 tariffs on copper imports.

Low-Cost Imports Undermine U.S. Production

In January 2026, Conn-Selmer announced plans to close the Eastlake plant and move production to China, stripping nearly 150 good union jobs away from the blue-collar community of Eastlake, Ohio.¹ China is the largest importer of brass musical instruments into the United States.

¹ Conn Selmer Announces Tentative Decision to Close Eastlake, Ohio Manufacturing Plant (Jan. 7, 2026), <https://connselmer.com/news/tentative-decision-to-close-eastlake>; UAW Statement on Conn-Selmer Announcement to Close U.S. Facility (Jan. 7, 2026), <https://uaw.org/uaw-statement-on-connselmerannouncement-to-close-u-s-facility/>



Source: USITC, Dataweb²

In writing, the company told us that all its top competitors “manufacture brass instruments exclusively in Asia”,³ that it could purchase the same instruments from Asia for “thousands of dollars less per unit”,⁴ and that its decision to offshore production to China “was primarily the result of unbridled foreign competition offering the American consumer virtually identical instruments at dramatically lower prices.”⁵ By June 2026, if Conn-Selmer is not stopped from offshoring production to China, the domestic production of brass musical instruments is effectively slated to end.

The end of U.S. production of brass musical instruments poses grave and irreversible consequences for the future of American manufacturing. First, nearly 150 good, family-sustaining union jobs will be lost, continuing the decimation of blue-collar communities by free trade. Second, America will forever lose the skilled workforce that makes domestic production possible. A single color buffer at the Eastlake plant is the last remaining worker in the United States skilled enough to produce both tubas and sousaphones.⁶ If the Eastlake plant is allowed to close, America will also lose the skilled workforce necessary to ever make these brass musical instruments again. Finally, a chilling effect is likely to pervade similarly situated workers across the country, who will also fear losing their jobs because nothing is stopping their employer from deciding that offshoring is better for the company’s bottom line.

Tariffs Necessary to Safeguard American Jobs and Production

The Commerce Department has both the power and the obligation to protect American jobs and prevent Conn-Selmer from offshoring production to China. We encourage the Commerce Department to

² U.S. International Trade Commission, Dataweb, selecting commodity codes 9205.10.00 and 9209.99.40.

³ Attachment, pg. 1.

⁴ Attachment, pg. 1.

⁵ Attachment, pg. 4.

⁶ [VIDEO] WOIO, Eastlake manufacturing plant floats potential shut down (Jan. 7, 2026), <https://www.cleveland19.com/2026/01/07/eastlake-manufacturing-plant-with-150-workers-shut-down-by-summer-uaw/>

immediately include brass musical instruments as derivative products within the scope of the section 232 tariffs on copper imports.⁷

The products produced at Eastlake fall under the following HTS codes:

- 9205.10.00 – Brass-wind instruments
- 9209.99.40 – Parts for other woodwind and brass-wind musical instruments

Brass imports are already covered by the copper tariff. Therefore, due to the substantial content of brass within brass musical instruments and because of the ongoing threat to domestic production, brass musical instruments are appropriate articles for inclusion. Further, it is clear that sufficiently high tariffs would protect domestic production. Conn-Selmer's only reason for offshoring production is to compete with low-cost imports. High tariffs would level the playing field. Conn-Selmer has invested \$21 million to manufacture instruments in China.⁸ This amounts to almost half the value of annual brass musical instrument imports from China, indicating that America's only brass musical instrument manufacturer has the capacity to invest in domestic production if it becomes reliably safeguarded.

Conclusion

The administration has taken real action to protect domestic manufacturing against unfair trade. From steel production to auto manufacturing and more, remedial tariffs have proven effective for driving investment back to the United States. But, the free trade system is pervasive and the administration must remain vigilant to correct imbalances that threaten American jobs and domestic manufacturing capacity in sectors big and small. The workers at Conn-Selmer refuse to be left behind as collateral damage of the free trade system. They need immediate protection against offshoring. We look forward to working with you to protect good union jobs in Eastlake, Ohio.

Sincerely,



Shawn Fain
President, UAW



David Green
Director, UAW Region 2B



Robert Hines
President, UAW Local 2359

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⁷ The President has authorized the Commerce Secretary and Trade Representative to include additional derivative articles within the scope of the copper tariffs on a rolling basis. See *Strengthening Actions Taken To Adjust Imports of Aluminum, Steel, and Copper Into the United States*, 91 Fed. Reg. 18201 at 18203 (April 9, 2026).

⁸ Conn-Selmer musical instrument production base launched in Qidong (July 12, 2024), <https://investinchina.chinaservicesinfo.com/s/202407/12/WS6690ec38498ed2d7b7eb2e73/conn-selmer-musical-instrument-production-base-launched-in-qidong.html>