

## Michaud Announces Emergency Funding to Help Workers Affected by Layoffs at Wausau Paper in Jay

Friday, March 27 2009

WASHINGTON, DC &ndash; Today, Congressman Mike Michaud announced the release of a National Emergency Grant (NEG) of \$254,516 after receiving a call from Department of Labor Secretary Hilda Solis. Michaud sent a letter to the Department of Labor on December 5th supporting the application for NEG funding to help workers who lost their jobs at Wausau Paper. He also called the Secretary of Labor to push for the approval of the application earlier this week. Michaud's letter in support of the application is attached.

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&ldquo;National Emergency Grants are a vital lifeline to the people of Maine and the release of this funding is very welcome news,&rdquo; said Michaud. &ldquo;These are tough economic times and this funding will help provide additional assistance to the workers who have been impacted by this layoff. It will assist workers in their return to meaningful and productive employment.&rdquo;

According to the Department of Labor, National Emergency Grants are discretionary awards by the Secretary of Labor that temporarily expand service capacity at the State and local levels through time-limited funding assistance in response to significant dislocation events. Significant events are those that create a sudden need for assistance that cannot reasonably be expected to be accommodated within the ongoing operations of the formula-funded Dislocated Worker program, including the discretionary resources reserved at the State level.

&ldquo;I stand ready to help these laid off workers in anyway that I can. Nationally, we must refocus our efforts and pass policies that are good for the American worker rather than ones that promote shipping industries and jobs overseas.&rdquo;

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December 5, 2008

The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary

U.S. Department of Labor

200 Constitution Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Chao:

I am writing in strong support of the National Emergency Grant application for \$307,000 submitted on behalf of 146 workers at Wausau Paper Specialty Products, LLC in Jay, Maine, who are being displaced due to increased imports and foreign competition. This is a matter of great importance to the people of Maine, and I am writing to request that you do all you can to expedite the review and approval of this application.

The layoffs are a direct response to dramatically increased input costs and difficult market conditions. As a result, one of the two paper machines in Maine that serves the release liner market will be shutting down. This had a profound impact on the mill's continued viability and, especially, on the workers and families who, through no fault of their own, face uncertainty in their employment and financial security. Wausau Paper Specialty Products operates in the rural northern region of Maine and, due to the limited employment offerings in the area, these workers face a challenging and daunting task in finding alternative employment. Most will face agonizingly difficult choices relating to employment retraining and job relocation, which will be further exacerbated by the harsh economic challenges associated with record high gasoline, oil, and food prices. Thus, it is absolutely crucial that these workers receive this critical NEG funding.

National Emergency Grants are a vital lifeline to the people of Maine. These grants have provided much-needed assistance to people across my congressional district. Maine workers have been disproportionately impacted by job loss and need expedited assistance. The resources provided by the National Emergency Grants have provided Maine workers the opportunity to get back to work before and will continue to do so.

This funding will assist workers in their rapid return to meaningful and productive employment. Specifically, the National Emergency Grant funds will be used for readjustment, assessment, counseling, and training services. Reemployment and retraining services for dislocated workers are a top priority for the region. Additional emergency funding is needed to provide programs and services to transition workers to occupations in growing industries, including health and social services. In short, these resources are critical to assist workers as they look to find new employment opportunities in a very competitive local labor market.

Again, I wholeheartedly support this funding request, and I hope you will give it serious and immediate consideration.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Michaud

Member of Congress