

Are you ready for 'Made in the World' labels?

By Roger Simmermaker

June 8, 2012

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is moving closer to eliminating country-of-origin labels and replacing them with their 'Made in the World' initiative because they say we need to "reduce public opposition to free trade" and "re-engineer global governance." An America that prides itself on independence and celebrates that independence every year on July 4<sup>th</sup> should want absolutely no part in allowing the advancement of global governance that aims to eliminate the one thing that allows American consumers to know from where the products they buy originate: The 'Made in USA' label. To be sure, the "Made in USA" label alone does not tell the entire story where all the jobs are located for every product that is made, since it does not include where jobs such as engineering, research & development, design, testing, administration, advertising, marketing, etc. are located. It also doesn't indicate who owns the company making a given product, which would reveal where the profits go, where the taxes are paid, and, a good indication of which country has many of the jobs types listed in the previous sentence. But the answer to the incompleteness of what the current 'Made in USA' label *does* reveal is not to scrap country-of-origin labels like the 'guided-by-global-governance' World Trade Organization wants to do altogether, but rather to keep and strengthen our current country-of-origin labels and supplement them with even more information. For example, it was not until vehicles were required to display the percentage of domestic content, as well as where the engine and transmission comes from (largely due to the efforts of the Made in USA Foundation) that consumers became armed with more information so that they could make more-informed purchasing decisions when buying a new automobile. As the saying goes, information is power, and at a time of increased globalization when an increased number of products are imported to America from countries few of us would consider friends or allies, Americans should be able to steer the global economy in a direction that best benefits America with the consumer power that would come with more information on product labels – not less. The World Trade Organization apparently sees a problem with the widely-held American view that we are far too immersed in imports as a country these days. Yes, the WTO says there is a problem with the nationalistic view that "I must try to reduce my imports and increase my exports" even when our record trade deficits continue to impede economic growth, kill American jobs, and slow the economic recovery. Furthermore, WTO Deputy Director General Alejandro Jara sees a problem with the American outlook that says "It is wrong to think uni-dimensionally of imports sucking jobs out of the economy and exports creating them." At a time when republicans and democrats agree on very little, a large number of members from both political parties – and an even larger number of independents – agree that Ross Perot was right when he predicted a "large sucking sound" of American jobs to Mexico would occur if and when the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was passed. The WTO wants to replace country-of-origin labels with a World Input-Output Database – an initiative that is being funded by the European Union's 'Seventh Framework' program. Americans should be concerned and seriously question the involvement of the European Union in watering down or wiping out the 'Made in USA' label. There is a smorgasbord of non-American entities involved in a global-governance strategy that over-reaches and intrudes in our treasured right to know which products are 'made in USA' and which ones are not. These non-American entities include the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, France; the Institute of Communication and Computer Systems, Greece; the Conference Board Europe, Belgium; the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, Spain; and the University of Groningen, Netherlands. Thankfully, there are ways to fight back. The Buy American Project ([www.buyamericanproject.org](http://www.buyamericanproject.org)) and the Made in USA Foundation ([www.madeusafdn.org](http://www.madeusafdn.org)) are two non-profits created to support the American right to buy American so there will always be American left to buy. So let's defend our cherished right to know where the products we buy come from, and therefore save and build upon the American jobs that accompany good and well-informed buying decisions.

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