READERS LETTERS

TARIFF OBJECTION

This open letter to Donald Trump from Mike Appling of LiftHigh Crane & Rigging in the USA, speaks for many US crane rental companies.

September 08, 2025

President Donald J. Trump

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500 via email: president@whitehouse.gov
Reference: Section 232 Tariffs on Mobile Cranes

Dear Mr. President,

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and to consider our strong concerns about the §232 steel tariff on mobile cranes. I am writing as a long-term CEO in the crane service industry. At my former company, my team and I grew TNT Crane & Rigging from $30 million to over $500 million in revenues and into one of the top five largest crane companies in North America. I have formed a new company this year, LiftHigh Crane & Rigging. Our company is committed to supporting critical construction, infrastructure, and energy projects. We have a tremendous team with collective industry management experience spanning over 100 years. As part of our endeavor to be an industry leader, we are pro-American production and fully support fair trade. However, as outlined below, §232 steel tariff on mobile cranes does NOT advance either of these objectives, is currently inflicting significant pain on crane companies, and in fact will have potentially dire consequences on both the crane industry and the U.S. economy as a whole.

All-terrain ("AT") cranes are required for capital and maintenance work on foundational infrastructure (e.g. bridge beams, hospitals, schools and apartments) as well as other commercial and industrial facilities that are critical to our economy such as power plants, refineries, petrochemical plants, cell towers, LNG plants, data centers and chip plants. With less than 3% of global AT cranes manufactured in the U.S., imports from Germany and Japan are not just necessary, but vital to support the demand for these highly specialized pieces of equipment. Further, the high-tensile steel required for AT cranes is not even manufactured in the U.S. and therefore, § 232 imposition of a tariff on steel required for the manufacture of mobile cranes does not progress any buy-American or trade balancing objectives.

My experience, along with discussions with many of my industry peers and colleagues indicate §232 will have the following unintended and highly detrimental consequences. To be clear, the crane business is virtually unanimous in feeling significant current pain and the only people saying the tariff is a good thing are those that buy Chinese (see related point below):

1. Shutdown of imports - Imports of cranes to the U.S. are basically shutdown because §232 tariffs make the cranes simply unaffordable.

2. Project delays/cancellation -

* Revenue projects relying on those cranes are being delayed or cancelled and the crane operators and supporting crew that would have worked on those projects are not being hired.

* Delays would subject projects to liquidated damages and other penalties, while impairing the timely support of customer ongoing maintenance and facility operations.

3. Inflation - Each of the factors noted above directly inflates project costs and timelines. Projects that are not delayed or cancelled must compete for limited crane availability, driving prices and overall project costs higher. Inflation is the unavoidable result. The crane market was already constrained by large-scale infrastructure build-out projects such as chip plants and data centers, and the lack of new equipment entering the country is now placing tremendous upward pressure on the domestic used-equipment market. For example, we were recently offered a 7-year old, 200-ton, 2018 crane for a price more than what a brand new crane would have been a few months ago.

4. Conflict with critical infrastructure and domestic manufacturing goals - The expressed goals of a great American infrastructure build-out and an American manufacturing renaissance inherently rely heavily on cranes. However, the imposition of §232 and other tariffs literally take away the tools to achieve those goals, substantially delay completion and/or make them vastly more expensive. Additionally, despite thinking that the tariffs are simply a short-term impact, it is definitely a long-term disruption that will negatively impact the goals stated here for many years.

5. Critical supply chain disruption - With crane imports shutdown, foreign manufacturers who schedule crane production for global demand, will allocate less production for U.S. sales. In fact, currently Liebherr and Tadano, the two largest manufacturers, are not sending any cranes to the U.S. that we are aware of. Current inventory otherwise meant for the U.S. will be redirected to other markets around the world. Together, this will create a literal gap in supply chain to the U.S. for both short-term and long-term horizons.

6. Chinese benefit and gain ground - U.S. companies under pressure to maintain projects and keep their businesses running will be forced to purchase cranes manufactured in China which will result in further aggravation of the trade imbalance with China. Chinese cranes were previously available at a 50% discount to models from competing manufacturers, but due to the safety and quality concerns were not gaining a large amount of market share. We are seeing that sentiment change very rapidly as our industry does not feel they have a choice.

7. Safety suffers and injuries and/or casualties result -

a. Significant amounts of new cranes supply the U.S. market annually. Aging U.S. crane equipment, without the affordable option to replace with new equipment, will result in safety issues that cause injuries.

b. Chinese cranes gaining ground in the U.S. will allow their long-documented safety issues to surface and inevitably cause injuries and/or casualties. The negative impact of §232 tariff on the crane industry is real and personal. My company has had to cancel orders on four cranes because the cost of those cranes at conservatively $12.5mm would turn into $17.5mm assuming that 80% of the cranes are steel and a 50% tariff. We had jobs and people ready to be hired that relied on those cranes and now we are in limbo. We are scrambling to find assets, and they are either unavailable or have prices that have gone up substantially. This is a loss of jobs which affect hard working American families.

I respectfully urge your Administration to reconsider the application of Section §232 tariffs on mobile cranes and related equipment. Exempting these tariffs on this specialized equipment would not only prevent small businesses like mine from losing critical opportunities, but also strengthen our ability to serve domestic projects, create jobs, and contribute to the U.S. economy.

Thank you for your leadership and for consideration of this appeal. I would welcome the opportunity to provide further details on how these tariffs directly affect my company, my employees, and the communities we serve. We can also discuss the impact on the industry overall. I am happy to come to Washington even for a 15-minute meeting. If you can accommodate a 15-minute meeting, then I can personally guarantee you will have at least 5 leaders from our industry (manufacturers, distributors, trade associations and owners) in that meeting to provide a better understanding that leads to better outcomes for all of us.

Respectfully,

Mike Appling Jr.
Owner and CEO
LiftHigh Crane & Rigging, LLC

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JCB TELEHANDLERS

Hi, I read with interest your article on telehandlers, altho' I never had anything to do with them. Last year I did the JCB Factory Tour, the guide stated their bestselling machine, 520 Loadall, 96 units were made that day! At Vertikal Days this week I was informed that it's now around 120 per day. I hope they continue to have a large share of the market.

Brian Finnie, Carnoustie (82) retired,

One time mobile crane operator

VERTIKAL DAYS FEEDBACK

We received a lot of positive feedback from Vertikal Days this year, way too much to reproduce in full here, so here are a few lines from each one.

- *What a great event thank you!*
- *Congratulations for the great event in UK!!! Next year I will also join the Wednesday!!*
- *Great event again - do you have dates for next year?*
- *Cheers and enjoy some rest*
- *Great show - have you announced dates and venue for next year?*
- *Thank you for a Great Day at Newark as it was VG show and well organised*
- *Hi Leigh Thanks for a great show and a lovely evening thank the other Lee also!*
- *Best show yet - will be going next year, well done*
- *Hello Leigh, another great show this week, well done to you and the team. Do you have a date for next year's show and is it still at Newark we want to get ahead of the game with our planning.*
- *Best show yet - you just need to sort the weather, and it will be perfect*
- *We had our best show so far… day one in particular was fantastic for us - just brilliant well done to you all.*

JAMES RICHARD HAGAN 1943-2025

UK/Saudi Arabian crane rental industry veteran Jim Hagan passed away on Thursday 25th September at the age of 82 following a period of ill health. He leaves behind his wife Olga and children Elisha and Sean.


Jim Hagan

Born in Liverpool he graduated from university in 1964 but did not enter the crane industry until 1970 when he joined BCHC - the British Crane Hire Corporation, a rebrand of Richards & Wallington - as a sales representative. After a few years with the company, he moved to a similar role at Roadcraft Crane and Plant Hire.

In 1978 he joined G.W. Sparrow and Sons and was posted to Damman, Saudi Arabia as contracts manager on a major port handling contract. The contract sparked off a long standing joint venture with Saudi Arabia based Rezayat Group - Razayat Sparrow Arabian Crane Hire.

Once the contract was completed and the venture running smoothly, he returned to the UK as director of Sparrows Heavy Cranes, remaining until the company was acquired by BET in 1985.

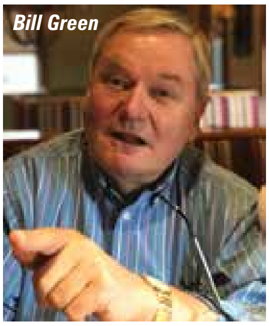
The following year he joined two former colleagues, Gordon Sparrow and Derek Flatley to acquire Coventry Crane Hire, followed by the formation of Gordon Sparrow Crane Hire in Bristol.

When the financial crisis hit in the late 1980s/early 1990s, the partners agreed to major restructuring of the business and Hagen returned to Dammam, initially working as general manager for Crescent Transportation. In 2002 he rejoined the Rezayat group as general manager of Rezayat Projects, adding Rezayat Sparrow to his responsibilities in 2006. He finally retired in 2009 and returned to Bath.

One of those who worked closely with him said: "Jim was a competent manager and will be remembered for his no-nonsense management abilities, loyalty to his staff and friends and his wonderful sense of humour."

WILLIAM 'BILL' NORMAN GREEN 1942-2025

UK crane industry veteran Bill Green passed away on Sunday 28th September having struggled with his health of the past few years, he was 83. He leaves behind his wife Pam and two children Wendy and Steve, along with five grandchildren and nine great grandchildren.


Bill Green

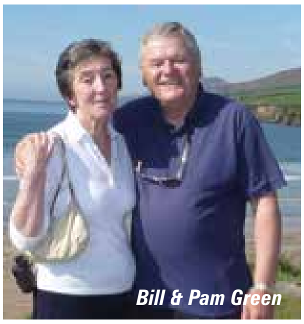
Born in Ipswich, Suffolk in 1942, he began his career as an engineering apprentice at UK crane and equipment manufacturer Ransome & Rapier, working on the crane product lines. During his time with the company, he was sent to Hong Kong for six months to supervise the installation of a sluice gate.

In the mid to late 1960s he left Ransomes & Rapier and the crane industry for Bostitch selling staplers and staples. In 1969 he won the company's Salesman of the Year award, having clearly discovered that selling was his metier.

He then returned to Ransomes but in a crane sales role rather than manufacturing and did very well, to the point that he was noticed by other crane manufacturers, leading to him being recruited by Oxford based Grove UK, to cover one of its larger territories in central and southern England. He remained with the company through numerous changes and management regimes, including the acquisition of Coles in 1985, its acquisition by Hanson in 1987 and Keystone in 1998.

That same year he decided to branch out on his own and set up PLC Sales, which stood for Previously Loved Crane Sales. He bought and sold used cranes and in 2002 he also sold new Effer loader cranes with Rob Gilbert, trading as Effer UK and later acted as an independent agent for Amco Veba loader cranes, using his industry contacts.

In 2007 he heard that we were considering setting up an event - Vertikal Days - and played an important role in bringing Tadano's UK dealer at the time - Cranes UK and its owner Joe Lyon - on board, which provided encouragement to others. He was an ardent supporter of Vertikal Days in those early years and later became an exhibitor in his own right.


Bill & Pam Green

A major change also came in 2007 when he spotted an outrigger mat producer at Bauma in Germany. On discovering that the company had no distribution in the UK, he negotiated an exclusive dealership, and his business really took off, becoming a significant player in the market, helping change attitudes to the use of proper mats. In 2013 he accepted a takeover offer from IPS but remained on board as a consultant to the new owners, finally retiring in 2016.


Bill Green in Venice

However, it was not all work and no play, he loved fishing - angling if you prefer - no matter what type - deep sea fishing, course fishing, rivers and lakes, he just loved to fish and joined an industry group of likeminded friends, including Tony Mort, Jim Daintith and others. We covered a number of their escapades from following in Hemmingway's footsteps in Jardines de la Rheina 60 miles off the coast of Cuba in 2006 and 2010, the Kola Peninsula of Northern Russia in 2007, and the Agua Boa river in the Amazon basin in 2011.

Bill Green was one of a kind, with a perpetual smile, so often seeing the funny side of things. He was good company, always professional, serious when necessary and extremely knowledgeable. He retained his crane industry contacts and managed to keep his finger on the pulse of the UK crane industry until the last few weeks. He would often tip us off about an interesting development.

He will be remembered by many and missed by most.

JAMES 'JIM' QUINN 1937-2025

Jim Quinn of Q Crane Hire/Q Crane & Plant Hire in the UK passed away suddenly in hospital on September 5th at the age of 88. He leaves behind daughters Jeanette and Yvonne and sons Sean and Anthony, along with 11 grandchildren. He was predeceased by wife Teresa and son Jimmy.

Q Crane - based in Oldham, Greater Manchester - was registered as Q Plant Hire in 1972. The company established its specialist crawler crane rental operation in 1998, and built an all Kobelco lattice crawler crane fleet, but more recently has added Liebherr telescopics and lattice crawlers. Jim was a civil engineer, a job that it seems he loved. While fascinating by the developments in crane design and capability he was happy to keep his hand in on the civil engineering front and leave the crane rental business to his son Anthony, who was largely responsible for building it into the company it is today.

A company statement said: "Jim's influence on the industry extended well beyond his own company. He was widely respected for his integrity, professionalism and generosity, often providing guidance and support to others in the field. His remarkable work ethic and passion for helping others set a standard that continues to inspire those who follow in his footsteps. Jim was a mentor and friend to many, whose long and dedicated career in civil engineering reflected his unwavering commitment to excellence. He proudly served as Northwest chairman of the Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors on two separate occasions, a testament to his leadership and dedication. Jim's values and the legacy he created will be forever part of Q Crane & Plant Hire."

WENDELL ANTHONY 'TONY' PHILLIPPI 1945-2025

Minnesota based crane sales and rental veteran Tony Phillippi passed away on Saturday September 6th at the age of 79, he would have been 80 at the start of December. His wife Toni died in 2014. He leaves behind two sons, Vess and Chris.

Phillippi was born into the crane industry, his father Vess Phillipi started the Phillippi crane business in or around 1940, while he and Tony went on to establish Truck Crane Services as a subsidiary in 1975. The Truck Crane Services crane fleet was sold at a private auction in 2017. Tony also co-founded Elke Corporation, an early software company in 1978 with Bob Nelson.

Phillippi was also well known for his used crane sales operation and flying giant flags from crane booms at the company yard in Egan Minnesota on September 11th each year to commemorate those who died in the destruction of the World Trade centre's twin towers in 2001.

Tony Phillippi was also an enthusiastic aviator, owning a number of historic war time aircraft, and supporting the Fagen Fighters WWII Museum in Granite Falls, Minnesota.

SUMIT MAZUMDER 1948-2025

Sumit Mazumder, past chairman and managing director of Indian crane manufacturer TIL (Tractors India Limited) passed away at his home in Kolkata on Sunday, August 31st, he was 77. He leaves behind his wife and former co-director Manju Mazumder.

Sumit Mazumder graduated from St Xavier's College, Kolkata, and went on to gain a Masters in Business Administration from the Sam Houston State University in Texas, followed by the Advanced Management Programme at Harvard University. After completing his extensive education, he joined TIL, which was managed by his older brother Bobby Mazumder. He took over from him as managing director in 1995.

During his time as managing director of TIL he made numerous changes and improvements, especially in the area of employee care and management, oversaw the production of the company's 5,000th crane at its Kamarhatty plant and was responsible for the construction and opening of a second production facility in Kharagpur, Bengal in 2011.

He eventually took over from Bobby Mazumder, as executive chairman, remaining as chairman and managing director until the business was acquired last January by Indocrest Defence Solutions, a business within the Gainwell Group. Gainwell owns a Caterpillar distributor. Tractors India was established as a Caterpillar distributor in 1944, adding the Coles Crane distributorship in 1950 and becoming a Coles licensee in 1960. It sold the Caterpillar dealership in 2018.

In his resignation letter he said: "Although I have been active longer than my retirement age, but as they say, it's never too late. Consequently, I am tendering my resignation as there is no successor to continue business operations after me."

Sumit Mazumder was also chairman of the Bengal Chamber of Commerce & Industry from 2002 to 2003. A statement from the organisation this morning said: "He was a respected voice in national economic policy as national leader of chambers of commerce and spokesperson for industry."

He was also president of the Confederation of Indian Industry - CII - from 2015 until 2016 and sat on the boards of several industry associations. A CII statement added: "A visionary leader, he made outstanding contributions to Indian industry and to strengthening institutional leadership. His legacy will continue to inspire generations to come."

"But more than these achievements, what we will miss most is the person he was - warm, generous with his time, and always willing to listen. Sumit had a rare ability to connect with people, whether in boardrooms or in quiet conversations, and that left a lasting impression on everyone who knew him. The CII family joins in mourning his passing, and we know that his ideas and his jovial spirit will continue to guide our work for years to come.

Rest in peace, Sumit."

It is with profound sorrow and a deep sense of loss that I share the news of the passing of our former Chairman, Mr. Sumit Mazumder. To our company, he was one of the tallest visionaries who laid the very foundations on which we stand tall today.

To the state of West Bengal and to our country, he was one of the most prominent industry doyens who richly contributed to the shaping of industrial policies and practices.

To me, he was far more - my worthy predecessor and former CMD, a mentor, a guide, and above all, a cherished friend and an affectionate elder brother. His wisdom shaped my journey and his warmth touched my heart in ways words cannot fully express.

Mr. Mazumder's leadership was about building people, nurturing values, and leading with compassion. His absence leaves a void that can never truly be filled. As we grieve this immense loss, we rededicate ourselves to the extraordinary legacy he leaves behind - one of vision and kindness that will continue to inspire us for decades to come.

Rest in peace SMR, Sir. We will miss you, forever.

Sunil Chaturvedi

Gainwell