

## January 24, 2007 Eljer Workers Eligible for Trade Adjustment Assistance

For Immediate Release

Jan. 24, 2007

Eljer workers eligible for trade adjustment assistance

Ford City, PA - Congressman John Murtha announced today that the U.S. Department of Labor deemed all workers of Eljer Plumbingware Inc. in Ford City, who became unemployed after Oct. 5, 2006, are eligible to apply for trade adjustment assistance under Section 223 and alternative trade adjustment assistance under Section 246 of the Trade Act of 1974.

The programs - Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance (ATAA) - are provided for workers who have become unemployed because of increased imports or shifts in production to foreign countries. Services under TAA include two years of eligibility for income support, relocation and job search allowances, a health coverage tax credit and occupational training. For workers age 50 and older who find new, lower-wage jobs with 26 weeks of separation, ATAA helps bridge the salary gap by providing subsidies of up to half of the difference between the old and new wage levels.

"The ceramics industry in Southwestern Pennsylvania has been hit hard by foreign imports, and many hard-working employees lost their jobs in the recent past," Murtha said. "I know this was a huge setback for these workers and their families, but I'm hopeful that these programs will help relieve some of the financial and emotional stress they're experiencing and provide them with the opportunities they need to get back on their feet."

Eljer Plumbingware Inc. laid off approximately 140 workers as it completed a strategic refocusing of the 86-year-old Armstrong County manufacturer in the face of foreign competition. Dallas-based Eljer had operated out of Ford City since 1918, when its founders bought a former pottery factory from PPG Industries founder John B. Ford. The company left the home products market where it made sinks and toilets and while also focusing on commercial products.