

Congressman Bruce Poliquin Visits AMI

Posted April 20, 2017



AMI CEO Kathie Leonard and plant manager Garrett VanAtta welcome Rep. Bruce Poliquin to our Auburn, ME manufacturing facility.

Auburn Manufacturing welcomed Congressman Bruce Poliquin to our advanced textiles factory during the spring Congressional break to meet our team and watch them produce amorphous silica fabrics. He was joined by representatives of **Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership**, which arranged the visit as part of a tour of Maine's manufacturing facilities. The Congressman was able to learn more about how manufacturing firms such as AMI work with the Maine MEP, challenges and opportunities in this market, and to celebrate AMI's recent win to protect the company from Chinese dumping.

AMI has worked with Maine MEP for a number of years to help implement the latest in best practices for manufacturing. We became ISO certified with their help, have adopted lean principles, and implemented a strategic planning process. In her opening

remarks, CEO Kathie Leonard commented on AMI's partnership with the Maine MEP. "Maine MEP has made us a better manufacturing company," says Leonard. "We live by what we have learned from Maine MEP, and we would not be in business without them."



Wayne Messer and Larry Robinson of the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership.

Larry Robinson, the Center Director for Maine MEP, notes that visits from Maine's congressional delegation help companies such as AMI be heard in Washington. "We welcome Congressman Poliquin's visit as a good opportunity for some one-on-one time to discuss the needs of manufacturing in Maine," says Robinson. He points out that recent growth in manufacturing in the state has highlighted a new challenge. "The new hot button is attracting a quality workforce. We continue to get the word out that there are good quality jobs in manufacturing in the state, including at companies such as Auburn Manufacturing."

While companies in the United States pay for consulting services from partners such as Maine MEP, the Chinese government

provides direct rebates to companies that export their products – primarily to the US. As AMI learned while preparing for the anti-dumping case, this is just one of over 20 such subsidies that the Chinese government offers to its manufacturers. These subsidies effectively lowered the price of their goods to the point where American amorphous silica fabric manufacturers could not compete. “China targeted our industry, and we got fed up,” says Leonard. “We had no choice but to fight back.” The effort resulted in duties of 200-300% on imported silica fabrics that are now in effect.



Members of the AMI team greet Rep. Poliquin and the Maine Manufacturing Extension Partnership.

Congressman Poliquin testified for AMI in its case, and congratulated the AMI team in his visit. "For far too long, Maine businesses have suffered and Maine jobs have been threatened because of unfair trade practices. I applaud Kathie Leonard for her commitment in standing up against unfair trade and proudly joined her in fighting to protect our Maine jobs. This final determination by the ITC is a huge and important win for these jobs and for our Great State of Maine," says Poliquin. "Well done Kathie; great job AMI!"

Kathie led the visitors from Maine MEP and Congressman Poliquin on a tour of the facility in Auburn, Maine, one of our two factories where we make amorphous silica fabric. The factory was in full operation to fulfill orders – business is up substantially this year. During the tour, Kathie was able to talk with the Congressman about a number of issues, including her request that the US government continue to pursue a Made in America policy for all government contracts.

Auburn Manufacturing extends our thanks to the Maine MEP for including us on its tour of manufacturing facilities in Maine, and to Congressman Poliquin for hearing our concerns and advocating on our behalf in Washington DC.