

November 4, 2009

The Honorable Hilda Solis  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Labor  
200 Constitution Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

Last week, Electrolux executives announced the closure of two production facilities in Iowa, resulting in the loss of about 850 jobs. Electrolux currently produces laundry equipment at production facilities in Webster City and Jefferson, Iowa. The announcement to close these two facilities will result in the loss of approximately 800 employees in Webster City and about 50 workers in Jefferson. The plants are expected to close in late 2010 and early 2011.

The closures will hit these two communities particularly hard. Webster City's population is less than 8,000, so the loss of 800 jobs equals approximately 10 percent of the community. The unemployment rate for the county already exceeds 8 percent.

It is my hope that the Department of Labor can take quick action to assist the displaced workers and aid the efforts of economic development leaders and local officials in response to these closures. The Mid Iowa Growth Partnership, a nine-county regional economic development organization, is seeking a Regional Innovation Grant (RIG). This grant would enable the region to plan and implement economic development strategies to assist displaced workers and attract new business to maintain these workers and create new jobs in this region. The RIG application was submitted to the Department of Labor in February. The loss of 850 jobs in this region further highlights the necessity for federal support through the Regional Innovation Grant. I would request that the Department of Labor take action and support the Mid Iowa Growth Partnership Regional Innovation Grant.

I would also request that the Department of Labor quickly consider all additional requests for assistance, including a National Emergency Grant or a request for Trade Adjustment Assistance to help workers and provide assistance to those affected by the Electrolux closures. The services and employment training provided by the Department of Labor will be critical in helping the affected workers get back on their feet and find suitable employment as quickly as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Grassley  
United States Senator