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## Petri joins fight to protect autoworkers

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WASHINGTON — Rep. Tom Petri added his voice Tuesday to the chorus of Wisconsin lawmakers and public officials railing against Chrysler's plan to close its engine plant in Kenosha, affecting 800 employees.

Petri, R-Fond du Lac, endorsed a letter to Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner and National Economic Council Director Larry Summers urging President Barack Obama's administration to reconsider the auto giant's restructuring, revealed in its April 30 bankruptcy filing. Also signing the letter were Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., and Reps. Gwen Moore, D-Milwaukee, and Paul Ryan, R-Janesville.

The lawmakers expressed concern over Chrysler's plan to build the Phoenix V6 engine at factories in Michigan and

### Chrysler plans to close engine plant in Kenosha, affecting 800 employees

Mexico instead of Kenosha, while seeking an additional \$8 billion in federal help on top of the \$4 billion the company received in December.

"These restructuring plans, if approved, use taxpayer funds to consolidate and relocate existing U.S. operations to foreign countries and undermine the federal government's duty as a faithful steward of taxpayer dollars," the lawmakers wrote, referring to the Mexico plans.

Petri said he signed the letter, even though the Kenosha plant is outside his district, to support Ryan and, because the plant "is important to our whole state."

Since it surfaced that the Kenosha plant was among eight factories Chrysler marked for closing by 2010, a crescendo of

opposition has formed.

In a statement on May 1, Sen. Herb Kohl, D-Wis., said the decision was "incomprehensible to me at a time when jobs are disappearing in our auto industry."

The next day, Gov. Jim Doyle expressed a feeling of betrayal, saying the plan was "contrary to what Chrysler had been telling us all along." He called the closures "outrageous."

On the floor of the Senate, Feingold told his colleagues on May 7 the restructuring plan "is not acceptable to me or my constituents. The taxpayer dollars that are propping the industry up should be used to preserve family-supporting jobs in Wisconsin and around the country."

Rep. James Sensenbren-

ner Jr., R-Menomonee Falls, devoted his weekly column Monday to the issue, contending that the 800 Kenosha workers are in effect subsidizing their own demise because of the federal bailout money going to the automaker.

Sensenbrenner took a swipe at Obama's campaign mantra of "change" and his economic recovery initiatives. He headlined his column: "Not the change Kenosha was hoping for."

But at least one member of the Wisconsin delegation expressed support for Obama despite being disappointed by Chrysler's plan.

Rep. Ron Kind, D-LaCrosse, said he was confident the administration "will ensure proper use of taxpayer funds, preservation of Wisconsin jobs, support for working families and a strong American auto industry in the long run."