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This release contains sensitive economic data not to be released before 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 24, 2004

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Preliminary: U.S. Imports for Consumption of Steel Products
January 2004

The U.S. Census Bureau, through the Department of Commerce, announced today that preliminary January steel imports were **\$1.0 billion (2.1 million metric tons)**. This was an increase of \$0.2 billion (0.6 million metric tons) from the preliminary December 2003 totals of \$0.8 billion (1.5 million metric tons).

The December to January change in steel imports, based on metric tonnage, reflected increases primarily in blooms, billets, and slabs; and wire rods. Monthly changes in steel imports reflected increases primarily with Brazil, Korea, Japan, and Turkey.

The year to date final statistics through December 2003 showed steel imports of 21.0 million metric tons, a decrease of 8.7 million metric tons from the 29.7 million metric tons through December 2002. The largest commodity decreases were in blooms, billets, and slabs; hot rolled sheets; and wire rods. The largest country decreases were with Brazil, and Russia.

Notes:

The data in this report are preliminary and subject to revisions.

Analysis of recent months for steel product imports indicates the value of preliminary data should equal about 96 percent of the final value reported in the regular monthly trade statistics report. Preliminary data reported for individual steel categories and at the individual country of origin level have been less consistently predictive of the final data reported in the regular monthly trade statistics. For further details visit the Foreign Trade Division web site at: www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www/. On the web site you can access product by country and country by product tables.

The next release is March 30, 2004