U.S. Solar Firms File Trade Complaint Against China

WASHINGTON (AP) — A group of seven U.S. solar panel companies filed a federal trade complaint Wednesday against Chinese companies they accuse of "dumping" solar products on global markets to depress prices.

The U.S. solar companies filed their case with the Department of Commerce and International Trade Commission. The complaint asks the government to impose tariffs of "well over 100 percent" on Chinese solar imports, said Greg Stanko, a spokesman for the U.S. companies.

The group of U.S. solar manufactures said in a statement that China is unfairly subsidizing its industries with "an arsenal of land grants, contract awards, trade barriers, financing breaks and supply-chain subsidies to advance its pricing and export aggression."

The Chinese Embassy did not respond to a message seeking comment Wednesday.

The U.S. companies also accused China of illegally dumping its products on the global market, a trade violation in which a country sells goods below the price of production to wipe out competition.

"China's wrongful tactics run systematically across the board ... China actually has no production cost advantage," Gordon Brinser, president of SolarWorld Industries America Inc., said in a statement.

The U.S. solar industry is struggling against stiff competition from China as well as weak demand in key markets, particularly recession-battered Europe.

Those struggles were underscored by the collapse in Solyndra LLC. The solar panel maker based in Fremont, Calif., was the beneficiary of a half-billion-dollar federal loan but filed for bankruptcy in August and laid off its 1,100 workers.

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