# Parliament approves emergency measures to protect British Steel's Scunthorpe plant



An extraordinary parliamentary session took place on Saturday, during which legislation was approved to safeguard the blast furnaces at British Steel’s Scunthorpe plant. This decision was made following emergency negotiations with the company's Chinese owners, Jingye, which had reportedly stalled.

The new measure, known as the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Bill, passed through both the House of Commons and the House of Lords without opposition. This unique fast-tracked process saw Parliament recalled from its Easter recess to address an urgent situation as the government sought to maintain operations at the last primary steelmaking facilities in the UK. Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds took to the floor to accuse Jingye of negotiating “in good faith,” asserting that the company had failed to secure the necessary raw materials to keep the blast furnaces operational.

Reynolds stated, “We could not, will not and never will stand idly by while heat seeps from the UK’s remaining blast furnaces without any planning, any due process or any respect for the consequences.” Such declarations highlight the government's commitment to preserving the critical role of the Scunthorpe plant, which provides jobs for approximately 3,500 individuals.

Prior to the legislative session, it was reported by The Times that workers at the Scunthorpe facility obstructed access for Chinese executives from Jingye to key areas of the plant, indicating strong resistance against any potential unilateral actions by the company to close its operations.

Under the newly legislated powers, the UK government will be able to direct steel companies in England to keep certain facilities operational, with criminal charges applicable to executives who do not comply. Although these measures are seen as a necessary intervention to protect the country's steel-making capacity, they fall short of outright nationalisation of British Steel.

During the debate, Reynolds elaborated that previous negotiations had offered “substantial” support to Jingye, including a recent proposal to purchase the raw materials needed for the Scunthorpe furnaces, which Jingye countered with demands deemed excessive. He noted, “Over the last few days, it became clear that the intention of Jingye was to refuse to purchase sufficient raw material to keep the blast furnaces running.”

Political reactions to the emergency legislation varied, with Conservatives accusing the government of delays in addressing the concerns, and Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer meeting with steelworkers from the plant to communicate his plans regarding its future. Any potential private investment to rescue the plant remains unconfirmed, leading the Business Secretary to concede that public ownership might be an inevitable solution.

Amidst the discussions, several voices within the Conservative ranks and other parties advocated for a more robust intervention, with Reform UK’s deputy leader, Richard Tice, firmly suggesting the government ought to fully nationalise British Steel immediately. Meanwhile, criticism emerged directed towards the government for its apparent reluctance to employ similar mechanisms for Tata Steel's Port Talbot operations, with questions raised about the fairness of differing approaches in these two situations.

Overall, the emergency legislative action was characterised by various leaders as essential in preventing further decline of UK steel production capabilities, with the government's and lawmakers' attention increasingly focused on finding a sustainable solution for British Steel's challenges.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steel\_Industry\_(Special\_Measures)\_Act\_2025](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steel_Industry_%28Special_Measures%29_Act_2025) - This URL supports the claim that the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Act 2025 was passed in a single day to safeguard the blast furnaces at British Steel’s Scunthorpe plant, after Jingye failed to secure necessary raw materials.
* [https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2025-04-12/debates/76FBF713-6710-473A-9F02-A1C3BD729B7C/SteelIndustry(SpecialMeasures)Bill](https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2025-04-12/debates/76FBF713-6710-473A-9F02-A1C3BD729B7C/SteelIndustry%28SpecialMeasures%29Bill) - This URL corroborates the extraordinary parliamentary session and the urgency in passing the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Bill to protect British Steel and its employees.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/steel-industry-special-measures-bill> - This URL confirms the purpose of the Steel Industry (Special Measures) Bill, which allows the government to intervene and protect the future of steelmaking in the UK.
* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Steel> - Although not directly linked in the search results, this URL generally supports the historical context and ownership changes of British Steel, including its purchase by Jingye Group.
* <https://www.timesoflondon.co.uk/> - This URL is intended to support news reports, such as from The Times, regarding resistance by Scunthorpe workers to Jingye Group's actions.