

## News Release

For Immediate Release  
1/25/16

Contacts: Pete Dolack (NY) (718) 349-2141 Adam Weissman (NJ) (718) 218-4523  
Harriet Heywood (FL) (352) 476-5809

### **In Wake of Trump' Executive Orders, Announcement of NAFTA Renegotiation, Activists Welcome Death of TPP, Insist NAFTA Fix Must Not Follow TPP Template, Denounce Anti-Immigrant and Anti-Environment Measures**

Following Donald Trump's executive order ending US participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), recommitment to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and his executive order to construct a border wall, Trade Justice Alliance expressed support for ending US involvement in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), cautioned that they will oppose Trump's NAFTA renegotiation if it follows the TPP model, and expressed unequivocal condemnation for the proposed border wall.

The Alliance called on Trump to cancel the border wall and to end the hypocritical practice of simultaneously denouncing NAFTA and demonizing Mexican immigrants while failing to acknowledge that Mexicans since 1994 have been forced to cross the border as a consequence of the damage NAFTA has done to their country. Trump's hate speech directed at Mexican immigrants and "America First" rhetoric has led fair trade activists to question whether Trump will advance NAFTA reforms that benefit the people of all member nations or merely reforms that narrowly benefit some US manufacturers.

"NAFTA has been devastating to working people in all three countries. NAFTA has destroyed Mexico's economy and displaced millions of farmers, leading to a horrifically violent drug war and mass migration across the border as displaced people seek money to be able to feed their families. Building walls and deporting migrants does nothing to address the massive economic dislocation NAFTA has inflicted. If NAFTA is to be re-negotiated instead of abolished, it must be amended to protect small farmers and working people in all three countries – including strengthening NAFTA's labor side agreement and adding it to core text – and allow Mexico to rebuild its agricultural base and economy instead of forcing it to be a low-wage haven for manufacturers and forcing it to import food from U.S.-based multi-national corporations because its own farmers have been wiped out," said Pete Dolack of Systemic Disorder, a Trade Justice Alliance member group.

Treasury Secretary nominee Steve Mnuchin's comment during his confirmation hearing last Thursday that TPP should serve as the starting point for NAFTA renegotiation renewed fears by trade justice activists that Trump's NAFTA agenda will prioritize corporate profits over environmental protection, food safety, access to affordable medicines, labor rights, and other public interest concerns.

While Mnuchin's potential post at Treasury will keep him at a distance from trade negotiations, activists are concerned about the leadership Trump intends to put in place to renegotiate NAFTA. Fair trade advocates view Trump's nominee for US Trade Representative (USTR), Robert Lighthizer, as an improvement over current US Trade Representative Michael Froman, a former Citigroup executive who took a \$4 million golden parachute deal when he left Citi for USTR – where he spent years negotiating sweetheart deals for Citi and other major corporations. But Trump has clarified that Commerce Secretary nominee Wilbur Ross, not Lighthizer, will be his lead on trade policy. According to a Reuters report released last week, Ross has offshored 2,700 jobs since 2004. Ross originally supported TPP, but later reversed his position. At Ross' confirmation hearing last Wednesday, two protesters were arrested for chanting holding a banner behind Ross that read "Ross Supported TPP and Offshored Jobs."

Given Trump's executive orders reversing President Obama's on the Keystone XL Pipeline and Dakota Access Pipeline, environmentalists are skeptical that he will negotiate planet-friendlier trade deals. "In greenlighting the Keystone XL pipeline, Trump is caving to corporate extortion under NAFTA's investment chapter. After President Obama blocked KXL, Transcanada brought an 18 billion NAFTA suit demanding compensation for loss of expected future profits. NAFTA renegotiation must eliminate extreme rights for corporate investors to attack environmental laws; end the energy proportionality rule that led to the environmentally devastating Athabasca Tar Sands Project in Alberta, Canada; and strengthen and enforce NAFTA's environmental side agreement or environmentalists will fight it tooth and nail," said Adam Weissman of Global Justice for Animals and the Environment, a TJA member group.

According to Harriet Heywood of Trade Justice Alliance member group People Demanding Action, "While Trump is now pounding the final nail into TPP's coffin, it was a six year campaign by grassroots activists that put it there, culminating in an election where both party's candidates pledged to sink the deal. Even before Trump's election, Congressional leaders announced that they lacked the votes to pass TPP – a testament to the years of calls, lobby visits, protests, letters, and petitions members of Congress received from their constituents urging them to vote down this rotten deal. We welcome TPP's demise, but refuse to let Trump renegotiate NAFTA into another TPP. NAFTA does need to be fixed – or abolished altogether, but a NAFTA that reflects Trump's climate denying, pro-deregulation, anti-worker agenda is one we will fight as hard as we fought TPP."

Trade Justice Alliance is a network of grassroots activists and groups fighting for trade policies that protect workers, consumers, family farmers, and the environment. On February 26<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 PM EST, the Alliance will hold a webinar addressing NAFTA's detrimental impacts with expert speakers from all three member nations. Details are available at <http://tradejustice.net>.