

TPP, TTIP, & Fast Track:

Monsanto's Stealth Attack on Our Food, Family Farms, & Bees

Food safety laws and pesticide regulations will be swept away if the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, and the Trans-Pacific Partnership are passed



Your ability to control what you eat, or even know what is in the food you eat, will be gone if the Trans-Pacific Partnership and Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership free trade agreements currently being negotiated in secret sessions are passed. The Obama administration, guided by industrial agriculture and “life sciences” companies such as Monsanto, is pushing for the most draconian rules.

The TTP is being negotiated among 12 Pacific Rim countries, including the United States, and is referred to as “NAFTA on steroids.” The TTIP is being negotiated between the U.S. and the European Union and is aimed squarely at overturning Europe’s rules against GMOs and cutting off attempts to replicate those consumer laws in the U.S.



The texts of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) are classified as a state secret — even members of Congress have highly restricted access — but the Obama administration has granted over 500 corporate executives inside track access to the negotiations as part of Industry Trade Advisory Committee. These corporate advisers are allowed to read the secret TPP and TTIP negotiating in texts to allow them to ensure that US negotiating positions reflect their interests. Negotiating on behalf of the United States is the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR), headed by former Citigroup executive Michael Froman. From 2010 to 2013, USTR's lead agriculture negotiator was Islam Siddiqui, a former executive for CropLife, Monsanto's industry lobbying group.

Part of this plan involves companies like Monsanto inducing the U.S. to put their preferred intellectual property, environmental, food safety and capital-markets laws into force. This will benefit only Big Ag and Big Pharma by allowing the cultivation of genetically modified organisms in all TPP and TTIP countries and will also act to prevent mandatory GMO labeling in order to integrate GMOs into the food supply while removing traceability and accountability. As a result, “inconvenient” U.S. environmental, food safety and labeling laws and rules will be overruled by Monsanto without a direct democratic vote on any issue.

The TPP and TTIP threaten to water down FDA and USDA rules and regulations, and force globalized commodified food of uncertain and unsafe origin, dangerous pesticides and untested genetic and molecular content on consumers. Choice will be gone, and even a meaningful glance at a label will be either pointless or will deliberately misinform consumers. There will be no alternative to your lack of choice.

In anticipation of TPP and TTIP being sent to Congress President Obama and Congress passed legislation in the spring that will help rush these agreements through Congress and that further attacks our right to pass GMO labeling laws. According to a press release by Rep. Pete DeFazio:

“a provision buried in trade promotion authority (TPA) legislation that could help a government or multinational corporation attack state or national laws that require the labeling of genetically engineered foods. TPA, also known as “fast track” would give President Obama the authority to push through major trade deals with little to no input from Congress. The Obama administration is asking Congress for fast track authority in order to negotiate the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), a free trade agreement with the European Union.

'Call it the smoking gun,' said DeFazio. 'Proof that fast track and massive free trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership are written by and for multinational corporations such as agriculture giant Monsanto. Instead of using trade deals as an opportunity to protect and strengthen consumer rights by joining the countries which require genetically engineered food to be labeled, this administration wants to benefit wealthy corporations at the expense of the public.'

The provision, included in Section 2, Trade Negotiating Objectives, requires that U.S. negotiators fight for rules in trade agreements that eliminate so-called “barriers” to markets such as the labeling of genetically engineered foods. Currently 64 countries require genetically engineered food to be labeled including some of our largest trading partners like Japan, China, Brazil, and the countries of the European Union.”

A primary purpose of GMOs, which have lower yields per hectare than traditional methods of agriculture, is to force farmers to buy more Roundup, a pesticide made by Monsanto. Increased use of Roundup has pollutes streams, aquifers, drinking water, encouraged “super weeds” to develop genetic resistance to glyphosate, and posed uncertain health risks to humans and others. Genetically engineered foods have not been adequately tested, nor have the Monsanto pesticides that are sold along with GMO seeds. The TPP and TTIP will result in increased pesticide use, environmental and food contamination.

The FDA does not require safety assessments of GMO foods and does not review all GMO products hitting the market. FDA guidelines are entirely voluntary and the patent holders themselves determine whether their products “warrant analytical or toxicological tests.”

Under the TPP, a world market concentrated in the hands of a few multinational corporations will supplant the democratic process. Pressure from U.S. corporations in previous bilateral trade negotiations has already caused India, China, Vietnam and Bangladesh to back down or remove GMO import restrictions. Big Ag has also demanded the U.S. government use the proposed TPP to force other countries such as New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Peru, Chile, Malaysia and the Philippines to allow field testing of GMOs and removing labeling restrictions that disclose GMO content.

The U.S. biotechnology lobby led by Monsanto is pushing for no GMO labeling. “It is well known,” a diplomatic cable released by WikiLeaks reports, “that Monsanto does not like New Zealand’s genetically modified organism regulations,” which the U.S. government has actively lobbied against on Monsanto’s behalf.

All TPP and TTIP member countries will be required to standardize sanitary measures. This does not mean the best or safest standard, but the one that will commodify food the most to remove production and labeling standards disclosing GMOs, country of origin, and compliance with environmental, safety and minimum-wage laws. The race to the bottom will mean that the lowest food safety and environmental standards will be the standards adopted — anything stricter would be eliminated as “barrier” to “free trade” and would constitute an illegal “confiscation” of corporate profits.

Although a handful of multinational corporations are already attempting control the world’s food supply, the TPP and TTIP would accelerate this process. The “investor-state provision” contained in them — requirements that corporate profits be given the highest priority in any dispute with a rule, law or regulation — would enable multinational corporations to challenge the laws and rules of signatory governments directly. Any regulation that a multinational corporation claims will reduce the profits it expects from an “investment” will be challenged in secret arbitration tribunal controlled by corporate elites and in which lawyers who represent corporations in investor-state disputes sit in judgment!

An example under NAFTA is Big Pharma corporation Eli Lilly’s suit against the Canadian government to invalidate Canada’s standards for granting drug patents. Eli Lilly claims the denial of a patent is an illegal “expropriation of its property rights” under NAFTA. The proposed rules of TPP are even more tilted in favor of multinational corporations than are the rules of NAFTA. The TPP would allow more of these lawsuits that can invalidate federal and state regulations, with no restrictions on what constitutes an “investment.” TTIP rules are likely to be no different.

Already weak U.S. environmental and consumer-safety laws would be further weakened. Some GMO foods are already allowed in some TPP countries but not yet allowed in the U.S. because federal regulators have not determined that these GMO foods are “safe” for human consumption. Once the U.S. signs the TPP, the authority to regulate or prohibit GMO foods not demonstrated as safe will be undermined by the ability of multinational corporations to invalidate host country’s environmental- and consumer-safety laws and regulations.

One of the 12 countries in TPP negotiations, Vietnam, has some of the last untouched rainforest on Earth. Allowing GMO crops will result in clear-cutting much of that forest to grow GMO crops upon principals of economies of scale. The risk of cross-pollination of GMO pollen with wild flora will occur and have unknown consequences on the plants and animals that eat them in fragile ecosystems. Already, in the U.S. and Canada, farmers report contamination of their crops from GMO strains being used on neighboring lands. Incredibly, Monsanto then sues these farmers for illegal use of their patents!



Monsanto already controls about 90 percent of the global GMO seed market — giving it a tremendous monopoly power to control supply and set prices. The monoculture caused by the standardization of crops from GMO seeds will devastate rural communities, biodiversity and the environment, and leave GMO crops immunologically exposed to crop viruses. Under the TPP, Monsanto would be allowed to add other crops such as alfalfa to the line of its “Roundup Ready” products — these are crops that are genetically engineered to be able to withstand heavy application of Monsanto’s Roundup pesticides. As insects become increasingly immune to Roundup, farmers drastically increase the amount of Roundup pesticides they apply to their lands. This not only degrades the soil, it send more pesticide runoff into groundwater and downstream rivers, creating environmental devastation.

The elimination of protective tariffs will drive small farmers and peasants off their land because they will not be able to pay the finance costs of GMO seeds or sell non-“standardized” crops and this will destroy heirloom brands and biodiversity. Access to “local grown” food will end. Big Ag has already started a “land grab” to consolidate its control over both production and distribution.

Croplife is also using TTIP to attack regulations on neonicotinoid pesticides, a class of pesticide produced by companies including Monsanto that is believed to be linked to mass bee die-offs. According to Walter Haefeker, President of the European Professional Beekeepers Association:

“In May 2013 CropLife America sent a letter to the US Trade Representative, who is responsible for the free trade negotiations around TTIP and TPP. In the document, the neonicotinoid ban was cited as an example of the ‘abuse of the precautionary principle by the EU’ and describing as ‘highly problematic’ the ‘categorisation of chemicals as endocrine disruptors currently taking place’ as ‘this runs counter to the science-based risk assessment approach used by the US Environmental Protection Agency’. The reason this message was addressed to the US Trade Representative was, that the corporations are seeking to attack the EU’s application of the precautionary principle at a time when the free trade agreement is still under negotiation by EU and the US.”



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Contact your US Representative and Senators and urge them to vote and TPP and TTIP. Let them know that “free-trade” agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership will ensure that a handful of corporations, led by Monsanto, will obtain their goal of controlling the world’s food. You can find out who represents you at <http://gjae.org/leg> or by calling TradeJustice New York Metro at (718) 218-4523.

For additional information or to volunteer contact:

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