

A Bad Deal, Not a Done Deal

We can still defeat the Trans-Pacific Partnership



On February 4th in New Zealand, US Trade Representative Michael Froman and the trade ministers of 11 other countries signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a massive international trade deal, over the objections of environmental, human rights, food justice, labor, and other groups.

Here's why public interest advocates oppose the TPP:

The TPP promises a race to the bottom: An acceleration of jobs to the countries with the lowest wages, the right of multinational corporations to veto any law or regulation their executives do not like, the end of your right to know what is in your food, higher prices for medicines, and the subordination of Internet privacy to corporate interests. There is a reason it has been negotiated in secret, with only corporate executives and industry lobbyists consulted and allowed to see the text as it took shape.

The TPP is an unprecedented corporate giveaway, going well beyond even the North American Free Trade Agreement, which has hurt working people and farmers in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Already, higher standards in health, the environment and consumer protections are under sustained assault under NAFTA.



More than 300,000 manufacturing jobs in the U.S. alone may be eliminated by the passage of the TPP. *The Wall Street Journal*, in an article celebrating victory for multinational capital, nonetheless estimates that losses in manufacturing and automobiles would add an estimated \$56 billion to the national trade deficit. The international president of United Steelworkers, Leo Gerard, using a U.S. Department of Commerce estimate that 6,000 jobs are lost for every \$1 billion of added trade deficit, calculates that would lead to the loss of 330,000 manufacturing jobs.

Under the TPP, corporations would be elevated to the level of national governments and could be said to be elevated above governments. The TPP text mandates that “customary international law” be applied for the benefit of an “investor”—that law is not found in any statutes, but rather has been established by previous decisions of secret tribunals interpreting NAFTA and other “free trade” deals. Worse, the TPP places essentially no limits on who qualifies as an “investor” eligible to be compensated for potential profits that may not materialize due to a regulation or safety rule.

Although the rules codifying favors for multi-national capital are written in firm language, there is no such language for protections. The Sierra Club reports that the TPP mandates that only one of the seven environmental agreements found in previous “free trade” deals be fulfilled, an alarming development as previous environmental requirements have been routinely ignored. Rather than prohibiting trade in illegally taken timber and wildlife, the TPP only asks countries ‘to combat’ such trade. “Rather than obligating countries to abide by [rules to] prevent illegally caught fish from entering international trade, the TPP merely calls on countries to ‘endeavor not to undermine’ [fisheries-management protocols]— a non-binding provision,” a Sierra Club analysis reports.

There are no enforceable provisions for environmental, health, safety or labor protection. Public Citizen, in its analysis of the TPP text, reports that “The language touted as an ‘exception’ to defend countries’ health, environmental and other public-interest safeguards from TPP challenges is nothing more than a carbon copy of past U.S. free trade language that ‘reads in’ to the TPP several World Trade Organization (WTO) provisions that have already been proven ineffective in more than 97 percent of its attempted uses in the past 20 years to defend policies challenged at the WTO. In two decades of WTO rulings, [the articles purporting to protect laws necessary to protect human, animal or plant life or health] have only been successfully employed to actually defend a challenged measure in one of 44 attempts.”

The TPP fails to even mention the words “climate change”! More than 9,000 corporations would be newly empowered to sue governments because a law or regulation hurt their profits. Worse, the TPP would mandate that the U.S. Department of Energy automatically approve all exports of liquefied natural gas to all TPP countries. This would guarantee more fracking; already under NAFTA the province of Québec has been sued in an effort to overturn its fracking moratorium. The TPP would give fossil fuel companies the ability to sue local governments that try to keep fossil fuels in the ground or place a moratorium on fracking.

You’ll have no right know what you eat. The TPP’s race to the bottom would require that the lowest inspection standards of any country be applied, forcing a lowering of other countries’ standards, and end protections against untested genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in your food. Food & Water Watch reports that the TPP would give the food industry a powerful new weapon to wield against the nationwide movement to label GMO foods. Rules that make it harder to defend domestic food safety standards from international trade disputes is in the TPP due to demands by industry. Agribusiness and biotech seed companies can’t now more easily use trade rules to challenge countries that ban GMO imports, test for GMO contamination, do not promptly approve new GMO crops or even require GMO labeling.

Health care will also come under direct assault. Other countries will be forced more toward the U.S. system, under which health care is a privilege for those who can afford it rather than a human right. Government programs to hold down the cost of medications are targeted for elimination in the TPP. After caving in to multi-national drug company demands, the price of medicines for millions will increase by unnecessarily extending monopolies and further delaying price-lowering generic competition.

The threat from the TPP extends beyond the 12 negotiating countries — the TPP is intended to be a “docking” agreement whereby other countries can join at any time, provided they accept the text as it has been previously negotiated. Moreover, the TPP is a model for two other deals: the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership between the United States and the European Union, and the Trade In Services Agreement, an even more secret “free trade” deal being negotiated among 50 countries that would eliminate any controls on the financial industry.

TPP CAN STILL BE STOPPED!

The task may be difficult but it is not impossible— there is still time to defeat the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Even though the US has already signed TPP, to go into effect, Congress must vote to implement it. We must call and email Senators and Representatives TODAY to demand that they publicly denounce TPP and commit to voting against it. You can find out who represents you at <http://tradejustice.net/leg> or by calling (718) 218-4523

Together we can win! Join the fight against the TPP!

TRADEJUSTICE NEW YORK METRO

Phone: (718) 218-4523 * Email: info@tradejustice.net * Web: <http://tradejustice.net> * Donate: <http://tradejustice.net/donate>
Facebook Page: <http://tradejustice.net/fbp> * Facebook Group: <http://tradejustice.net/fbg>
Youtube Channel: <http://tradejustice.net/yt> * Twitter: <https://twitter.com/OWSTradeJustice>
Email List Signup: <http://tradejustice.net/emails> * Photo Gallery: <https://tradejustice.shutterfly.com/>
Causes.com Campaign: <https://www.causes.com/stoptpp> * Causes.com Profile: <https://www.causes.com/tradejustice-ny-metro>