

# Citizens Trade Campaign

*Exposing a Major Corporate Power Grab*

## The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

The **Trans-Pacific Partnership** (TPP) is a massive new international trade pact being pushed by the U.S. government at the behest of transnational corporations. The TPP is already being negotiated between the United States, Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam. Just among those countries, it would be the largest Free Trade Agreement in U.S. history, covering approximately 40% of the global economy, but the TPP is also specifically intended as a “docking agreement” that other Pacific Rim countries would join over time, with Thailand, the Philippines, South Korea and others already expressing some interest.

Here are examples of what corporations want with the Trans-Pacific Partnership:

- **Cheaper Labor Costs.** Many corporations are looking for ways reduce labor costs and undercut worker power in the United States and throughout the world. The TPP would grant corporations easier access to labor markets in countries such as Vietnam, where the average minimum wage is just a third of what it is in China. Whether or not corporations decide to move their production to these lower-paid countries, the threat of moving there (or of being undercut by competitors who have already done so) can be used suppress employee compensation virtually anywhere.
- **Special Powers to Attack Environmental Laws.** A wide range of transnational corporations, including especially extractive industries, have pushed for investment provisions in the TPP that would enable them to challenge virtually any new law, regulation or even court decision that adversely affects their expected profits as an “indirect expropriation” through international tribunals that circumvent domestic judicial systems. Similar provisions under past trade pacts have already been used to weaken portions of the Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act in the United States, as well as the environmental and consumer safety protections of developing countries throughout the world.
- **Longer Drug Patents.** The leaked U.S. proposal for an intellectual property chapter within the TPP would have the effect of extending monopoly drug patents for big pharmaceutical companies, making it harder for countries to produce or procure low-cost generic medications for people with HIV, tuberculosis and other life-threatening diseases.
- **Further Financial Deregulation.** Wall Street banks, insurance companies and hedge funds want the financial services provisions of the Trans-Pacific Partnership to handcuff the steps governments can take to protect against “too big to fail,” regulate trade in toxic assets, erect firewalls between different financial service firms and control the flow of short-term capital into and out of economies.
- **Caps on Food Safety Protections.** So-called “life sciences” corporations that produce pesticides, food additives and genetically-modified organisms use trade pacts to erect barriers making it harder for countries to adopt and maintain strong food safety regulations based on the precautionary principle.



- **Concentration of Global Food Supplies.** Big agribusiness middlemen want the TPP to enable them to “buy low” and “sell high” throughout the Pacific Rim, a practice that increasingly concentrates global food supplies in their hands, undercutting family farmers and often leading to wild fluctuations in food prices for consumers.
- **Dismantling of “Buy Local” Preferences.** A range of corporations want the TPP’s public procurement provisions to prevent governments from instituting public purchasing preferences designed to keep taxpayer dollars circulating in local economies. They also want to prevent government contracts from being used to advance a variety of other environmental, social and human rights goals.
- **Lower Taxes.** Corporations that have already offshored their production to countries throughout the Pacific Rim are also looking to avoid tariffs on merchandise they’ve been importing back to the United States.



***The Public Is Being Kept in the Dark***

For years, the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations have taken place behind closed doors. Since negotiations began in 2008, none of the negotiating documents have been officially released for public review (although some have been leaked).

In the United States, approximately 600 corporate lobbyists have been named as official advisors, granting them steady access to the negotiating texts, as well as the negotiators. This includes representatives of companies like Walmart, Cargill and Chevron.

Most civic groups, journalists and those whose lives will be affected by the negotiators’ decisions have no right to see the texts until the negotiations have concluded — at which point, it is more-or-less impossible to change them. An international “Release the Texts” campaign has, thus far, not been answered.

***We Must Prevent “Fast Track” for the TPP***

Fast Track “trade promotion authority” is a Nixon-era trade negotiating and approval process that strips power to influence the terms of trade agreements away from the public and our elected representatives in Congress, while amplifying the influence of the U.S. Trade Representative and large corporate interest groups. Fast Track would allow the TPP and other trade agreements to be signed before the public sees any proposed texts and then rushed through Congress, bypassing ordinary Congressional review, amendment and debate procedures.

Stopping Fast Track is the absolute best way for Americans to ensure that we aren’t saddled with a major corporate power grab. Fast Track expired in 2007 and would need to be passed into law again by a majority vote of the U.S. Congress in order for the TPP to be approved under Fast Track processes. Over 400 U.S. organizations, together representing more than 15 million Americans, have already urged Congress to oppose Fast Track for the TPP. Members of Congress must now hear opposition to Fast Track directly from their constituents.

**TAKE ACTION NOW**

Please call your Member of Congress now at (202) 224-3121 and leave this message:

***“My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I’m calling from \_\_\_\_\_ to urge my Representative to publicly oppose Fast Track for the TPP.”***

Local U.S. Representative’s Name:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Local Phone Number:  
\_\_\_\_\_