



Citizens Trade Digest, June 24, 2005

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1) CAFTA bill introduced into Congress, vote timing uncertain

The White House formally submitted the CAFTA implementing legislation to Congress June 23. This starts the Fast Track clock ticking. The next step for the legislation is the formality of markups in the House Ways and Means and Senate Finance committees. Once those are completed the bills (HR3045 and S1307) will be discharged onto the floors of the two houses. At that point floor votes have to occur within 15 legislative days.

The Senate Finance Committee is scheduled to hold a markup on Tuesday, June 28th making it more likely that the Senate floor vote will occur next week. The timeline for a vote in the House is still unclear.

2) Time for Action!

We are now definitely in the final stage of the CAFTA fight. It is time to pull out all stops and activate all networks to generate calls and letters to Congress in opposition to CAFTA, and to create as much public CAFTA awareness as possible via letters to the editor, op-eds, talk radio, etc.

Assuming that the votes do not occur in June, the coming July 4 Congressional recess (July 1-11), when many members of Congress will be back in their district, provides exactly the opportunity we want to show them that their constituents strongly oppose CAFTA. For undecided members, it is a time to phone bank, take cell phones into workplaces, do street-corner cell phone actions, picket at their events, etc. The United Steelworkers have provided a toll-free number for general use to call Congress about CAFTA. It is **866-340-9281**. It will connect the caller to the Capitol Switchboard, and at that point the caller simply asks the operator to be connected to the Congressional office of their choice. Urge your family, friends, and community to make this call; a strong showing over the recess strengthens our hand to stop CAFTA.

2) Deals For Trade Votes Gone Bad

Public Citizen released a shocking report citing only 16 of the 93 promises made in order to win trade votes have been upheld. Florida's tomato and winter vegetable industry is just one of the many areas that have suffered because of the flood of cheap produce from Mexico because of broken promises of the administration. According to the report, during 1994 to 2003 tomato imports from Mexico grew by 137 percent, and the number of tomato growers in Florida significantly shrunk. The winter vegetable industry lost \$ 1 billion in sales and 300 winter vegetable operations have gone out of business. This is a clear signal that any promises made in hopes of gaining CAFTA votes will not be respected.

<http://www.citizen.org/documents/tradewars.pdf>

3) CAFTA is a Right to Life Issue

Catholics for Faithful Citizenship released a letter to Congress laying out their opposition to CAFTA as a moral and religious obligation. "Trade agreements are more than economics. They are life issues that affect the human person's like and livelihoods."

Letter to Congress: http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/catholics_lettertocongress_06222005.pdf

4) Thousands of U.S. Businesses Urge Bush to Scrap CAFTA

The U.S. Business and Industry Council, representing 8,500 companies across the nation, circulated a letter throughout Congress presenting CAFTA as an outsourcing agreement that would only agitate the U.S. economy further into crisis. The letter calls for a total re-evaluation of trade policy to seek new ways of combating the changing dynamic of global competition.

Letter to the President: http://www.americaneconomicalert.org/USBIC_Manufacturers_Letter.pdf

Press Release: http://www.citizenstrade.org/pdf/pr_usbicletteragainstafta_06212005.pdf

5) CAFTA's Impact on U.S. Ethanol Market

The Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy released a report showing how agribusiness companies pre-meditated their strategy to expand their ethanol markets to Central America and Brazil in conjunction with the advancement of CAFTA. U.S. ethanol facilities have boomed tremendously in recent years as the debate around renewable energy has become more popular. However, the passage of CAFTA threatens to permanently open up U.S. markets to tariff free foreign ethanol challenging domestic and environmental interests.

Report: <http://www.tradeobservatory.org/library.cfm?refid=73232>

Press Release:

http://www.iatp.org/iatp/library/admin/uploadedfiles/CAFTA_Would_Increase_Ethanol_Imports_New_Repor.pdf