



CHELLIE PINGREE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES
1ST DISTRICT, MAINE

December 9, 2015

Senator Amy Volk, Co-chair
Representative Robert Saucier, Co-chair
Maine Citizen Trade Policy Commission
State House Station #13
Augusta, ME 04333-0001

Dear Senator Volk and Representative Saucier,

Thank you for the opportunity to offer my feedback on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). I appreciate that you are collecting public input on a trade agreement that would have many consequences for Maine and its economy.

I have grave concerns with the TPP, which, if passed, would become the largest free-trade agreement in history. I fear that its efforts to remove “non-tariff barriers to trade” will hamper our ability to enact protections in a number of different areas—including worker protection, public safety, and the environment—by allowing foreign companies to sue if those regulations hurt their profits. Our country needs to be able to respond to the emerging needs and issues of our citizens without this threat of foreign litigation.

I am also skeptical of the TPP’s benefits to the American economy. When the North American Free Trade Agreement was passed 20 years ago, there were many similar arguments that it would grow American jobs. The opposite has been true in Maine, with thousands of jobs being sent overseas over the past two decades. Having reviewed the language of the TPP, I believe that it would have an even more devastating impact.

Finally, I have been troubled by the lack of transparency in the process that has led to this agreement. Negotiations were held in secret without input from the public. In Congress, I voted against giving the President fast-track authority to negotiate this agreement and am extremely disappointed that we will not be able to propose amendments when it comes to a vote.

While I believe international trade is an important area of opportunity for Maine businesses, I do not think the TPP is the right path forward. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. Please keep me posted of your findings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chellie R" followed by a long horizontal line.

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress