



Dear Member of Congress,

On behalf of our members, we are writing to express our strong opposition to the Panama “Free Trade Agreement” (FTA). International trade can and should be a tool for fostering development as well as economic growth, but need not come at the expense of human rights and environmental stewardship.

In November 2008, the American people voted for change. President Obama has committed to a new approach on trade policy. This change in course provides a unique opportunity to ensure that U.S. trade agreements spur equitable and sustainable development while creating good jobs and protecting the environment and natural resources. Pending bilateral free trade agreements, such as the Panama FTA, as currently negotiated, do not achieve these objectives and should not serve as the starting point on a new direction for trade policy.

Despite the inclusion of important improvements to the labor and environment chapters on May 10, 2007, significant concerns regarding the investment and procurement chapters as well as the capacity to meaningfully enforce the improved environmental and labor provisions remain. We therefore urge that the Panama FTA be shelved until a comprehensive review of our trade policy, including the impacts on development, workers rights, human rights and the environment has been undertaken and necessary changes made.

We look forward to working with you in concert with the new Administration in the development of a new trade policy that lives up to the needs and expectations of the American people as well as the citizens of our trading partner nations while protecting our environment for generations to come.

Please declare your opposition to the Panama FTA and any other pending FTA that might be brought to Congress before a meaningful review has taken place.

Sincerely,

Amazon Watch
Center for International Environmental Law
Earthjustice
Friends of the Earth US
Greenpeace USA
Rainforest Action Network
Sierra Club