

**Oakland City Council
Oakland, California
November 16, 1999**

**Oakland City Council Resolution No. 75345 C.M.S.
A RESOLUTION TO OPPOSE EXPANSION OF THE POWERS OF THE WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION DURING THE SEATTLE MINISTERIAL MEETING**

WHEREAS, the World Trade Organization (WTO), established in 1995 and with a current membership of 134 nations, will be meeting in Seattle from November 30 through December 3, 1999 for their third annual ministerial to decide whether or not to launch a "Millennium Round" of international trade negotiations; and

WHEREAS, the negotiations of the WTO are conducted by Trade Ministers and Trade Representatives and other officials charged with promoting trade, to the exclusion of officials charged with the representation of other interests such as public health, labor rights or environmental protection; and

WHEREAS, trade and investment disputes are resolved at the WTO by non-elected panels in secret process that have the authority to override local, state and federal law, is outside and above U.S. courts; and

WHEREAS, in all cases decided by the WTO in the last four years, the dispute panels have favored corporate interests over public interests and have overruled domestic laws protecting the environment, human health, endangered species and local economies; and

WHEREAS, the "National Treatment" concept of the WTO could prohibit the use of domestic procurement preferences and subsidies and other benefits to local businesses for the purpose of encouraging local economic development; and

WHEREAS, the "Most Favored Nation" concept of the WTO could prohibit Congress, state legislatures, and city councils from using trade sanctions to punish nations such as Burma for human rights abuses, violations of labor standards, and political persecution;

WHEREAS, South African President Nelson Mandela might still be in prison today if the WTO had existed when governments, including Oakland's, were passing divestment ordinances against South Africa's former apartheid regime; and

WHEREAS, even the mere threat of WTO sanctions has already interfered with local lawmaking and led Governor Davis to veto a bill that would have provided a five percent preference to California businesses in the state's government procurement process; and

WHEREAS, by attacking domestic laws, the WTO is actually dismantling the democratic process under the guise of a trade pact, and

WHEREAS, a broad and growing global movement has formed to challenge the WTO's ability to establish free trade rules that threaten human health, fragile ecosystems, labor and human rights, democratic institutions and local economies; and

WHEREAS, the City of Oakland is the home to a major seaport and is actively interested in the promotion of international trade as a means to improve the quality of life for all people and not as a means for creating a race to the bottom on public health standards, environmental protection and labor rights; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Oakland to oppose the further expansion of the powers of the WTO to overrule the sovereign policies of nations, states and local governments; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that November 30, 1999 be proclaimed a day of protest against the sweeping powers of the World Trade Organization.