

Western Organization of Resource Councils
2401 Montana Avenue, #301
Billings, Montana 59101
406.252.9672 • billings@worc.org

**CAFTA Vote Continues Outsourcing American
Jobs and Agriculture
Region Strongly Opposes CAFTA**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: *Thursday, July 28, 2005*
CONTACT: *Kevin Dowling, 406.252.9672*

MEDIA STATEMENT ON HOUSE CAFTA VOTE

The U.S. House of Representatives narrowly approved the Central American Free Trade Agreement last night by a vote of 217 to 215. In response, Reed Kelley , Co-chair of WORC 's Trade Team, issued the following statement. Kelley is a cow/calf producer from Meeker, Colo.

Based in Billings, Mont., WORC, the Western Organization of Resource Councils, is a network of grassroots organizations representing farmers, ranchers, consumers, and communities in Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wyoming.

STATEMENT BY REED KELLEY ON BEHALF OF WORC

The U.S. House of Representatives has completed another step to outsource American workers and agriculture by passing the Central American Free Trade Agreement. This agreement also jeopardizes national sovereignty and local control.

The close vote reflects the strong opposition to this trade pact in the region and around the country. Fourteen of the 18 representatives from Colorado, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, and Wyoming voted against CAFTA. Earlier this month, 11 of the 14 senators from these seven states opposed the agreement.

This part of the country is not buying into this trade agenda. We particularly object to trade policies that ignore the value of cattle and sugar beet production in our states. The heavy opposition to CAFTA should serve as a warning to promoters of this so called 'free trade' agenda, especially when those representatives and senators closest to the land and the food produced from it recognize the damage CAFTA will do to our country.

In an unprecedented circumstance, it's taken the administration well over a year and a lot of last minute arm breaking to get CAFTA passed.

CAFTA weakens U.S. cattle producers' position in the global market and opens the gate for more harm in future trade agreements. CAFTA encourages Central American investors to increase beef export capacity to this country, and it does not allow the U.S. to control sudden increases of imports of beef and live cattle from these countries. In comparison, the U.S.-Australian Free Trade Agreement contains such a provision. Moreover, CAFTA will also allow non-CAFTA countries like Brazil and Argentina to ship beef to CAFTA countries for slaughter and export product to the U.S. This trade pact enables multi-national corporations to take advantage of lower labor and environmental standards.

CAFTA gives special rights to foreign investors to sue if protections for human health, food safety, clean air and water hurt their expected profits in another CAFTA country. Not even U.S. corporations have this special right in this country.

The U.S. instead should foster a trade policy that strengthens, not weakens, the public health, environment, food sovereignty, working conditions, labor rights, and transparent competitive market principles of this country and our trading partners. U.S. trade policy should respect the right of every country to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its people.

WORC thanks the many allies across the country in various coalitions who have worked hard to defeat CAFTA. We applaud the following representatives in our WORC region for opposing this misguided and unfavorable trade policy: Representatives John Salazar, Mark Udall, Tom Tancredo, and Diane DeGette of Colo.; Representatives Mike Simpson and Butch Otter of Idaho; Representative Denny Rehberg of Mont.; Representative Earl Pomeroy of N.D.; Representatives David Wu, Earl Blumenauer, Peter DeFazio, and Darlene Hooley of Ore.; Representative Stephanie Herseth of S.D.; and Representative Barbara Cubin of Wyo.