

How the TPP Threatens the Environment

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is a massive new trade and investment pact that has been negotiated behind closed doors for over five years between the United States and eleven other Pacific Rim countries. **The TPP would provide corporations with new tools for attacking environmental and consumer protections, while simultaneously increasing the export of climate-disrupting fossil fuels.**

While the American people have been explicitly barred from knowing what negotiators proposed in our names, hundreds of corporate lobbyists — including many representing the fossil fuel and chemicals industries — were given special “cleared advisor” status and access to the secret texts throughout the negotiating process. A final TPP deal was announced on October 5, 2015, but cannot be enacted without Congressional approval.

Even with the extreme secrecy, we still know a lot about the TPP due to leaked documents and admissions made by negotiators. While it is impossible to judge all aspects of the TPP until the text is finally released, it is already clear that the TPP will hurt the environment in a variety of ways.

- We know that the TPP includes **investor-state dispute resolution (ISDS)** provisions that enable transnational corporations to challenge environmental laws, regulations and court decisions in international tribunals that circumvent the U.S. judicial system and any other country’s domestic judicial system.

Under the World Trade Organization (WTO), portions of the Clean Air Act, Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act have already been rolled back under similar “trade” provisions that grant this type of power to foreign governments. The TPP would go beyond the WTO by giving individual corporations the power to initiate challenges.

Right now, a number of smaller Free Trade Agreements and Bilateral Investment Treaties already grant these powers to transnational corporations — and they are being used to attack clean air rules in Peru, mining laws in El Salvador, a provincial fracking moratorium in Canada and a court decision against the oil giant Chevron in Ecuador, among many other examples. Expanding this system throughout the Pacific Rim would only increase the commonplace of these challenges.

- We know that under the TPP exports of **fracked natural gas** would automatically be deemed in the public interest, bypassing certain environmental and economic reviews, if going to any of eleven TPP countries throughout the Pacific Rim — including Japan, the world’s largest importer of natural gas. The TPP is likely to increase energy costs for U.S. consumers and manufacturers, while simultaneously exposing Americans to the localized environmental consequences of fracking and the world to increased global warming pollution.

- We know that the TPP includes **procurement provisions** requiring that certain government purchasing programs afford foreign bidders “national treatment” and “non-discrimination,” effectively barring Buy Local preferences and rolling back the policy space needed for “Green Economy” programs useful for jumpstarting a sustainable economy.

In addition to just limiting environmental protections, the TPP is expected to contain numerous provisions that expand the unsustainable, fossil fuel economy.

- The TPP contains a variety of provisions — including investor-state, quota prohibitions and more — that are likely to encourage increased **“rip and ship” export** of raw materials throughout the Pacific Rim, meaning more logging, drilling and mining in some of the most biodiverse ecosystems left on earth.
- The offshoring of production enabled by the TPP would also have direct environmental consequences. The **carbon footprint** and other emissions of overseas factories and mills is often much higher than it is in the United States. While typically not as high as the production-related emissions, the pollution associated with shipping products across the Pacific Ocean to reach U.S. markets is also not inconsequential.
- More so, access to sweatshop labor and lax environmental enforcement overseas also effectively subsidizes the production of certain consumer products — including, particularly, consumer electronics — thus enabling the sale of short lifecycle products that contribute massively to e-waste and **throw-away consumer culture**.

According to [Sierra Club](#) executive director Michael Brune: *“The Trans-Pacific partnership would empower big polluters to challenge climate and environmental safeguards in private trade courts and would expand trade in dangerous fossil fuels that would increase fracking and imperil our climate.”*

According to [Friends of the Earth](#) president Erich Pica: *“The TPP as a whole is a frontal assault on environmental and climate safeguards. The TPP investment chapter would allow firms to sue governments for billions if climate or environmental rules interfere with corporate profits. The TPP would stymie effective regulation of chemicals and food safety. It would expand U.S. fossil fuel exports across the Pacific.”*

According to [350.org](#) executive director May Boeve: *“TPP makes climate change worse. By handing even more power to Big Oil, letting massive corporations throw tantrum lawsuits at governments who dare to scale back emissions, and spreading fracking further around the world, there’s no question that TPP is an absolute disaster for our climate.”*

Urge Congress to stand up for constituents and defend the environment by voting NO on the Trans-Pacific Partnership.