



Washington Fair Trade Coalition

606 Maynard Ave S, Suite 102 – Seattle, WA 98104 – (206) 227-3079

March 30, 2015

Dear Mayor Murray and Seattle City Council Members:

We support the decision of the Committee on Planning, Sustainability and Land Use to bring forward a resolution opposing Trade Promotion Authority “Fast Track” legislation and expressing concerns about the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement.

As participants in civil society – labor unions, environmental groups, community organizations, small businesses – we oppose NAFTA-style trade agreements that have cost the US, and Washington state jobs, increased income inequality, and contributed to stagnating wages.

We are in favor of trade, and take pride in exports from Washington State. But NAFTA-style trade policies have increased imports faster than exports, resulting in large chronic trade deficits, loss of manufacturing capacity, substantial job loss, and movement of production to countries with low wages and weak environmental regulations. Negotiations for TPP are being conducted in complete secrecy, without meaningful participation from civil society. The resulting provisions will worsen working conditions, and threaten policies for environmental sustainability. Moreover, Investor-State Dispute Settlement provisions allow transnational corporations to sue government if economic and environmental policies such as minimum wage and clean energy programs lower their profit margins.

Fast Track was initially intended to give the president authority to negotiate with trading countries, while keeping Congress and the American people informed about exactly what was being negotiated. With past trade agreements, regular draft texts have been released for public review – not so with the Trans-Pacific Partnership. Only under strict national security rules can our elected officials access the texts of the TPP. Members of Congress are forbidden from telling voters what they know about the language.

Fast Track has three possible purposes:

- Congress can show our negotiators what they want in a deal.

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- Congress can signal to foreign countries what our national interests are.
- Fast Track can shield an unfavorable deal from public attention, and slip it through Congress with the least possible public engagement.

TPP is 95% complete. It's too late for Congress to state its objectives or influence other countries. The only remaining function of Fast Track is to run TPP through Congress with as little public engagement as possible.

TPP would cover 40% of global commerce and set global standards for how we manage trade. This is too big, too important, to rush through without a thorough and thoughtful process.

US Trade Representative (USTR) Michael Froman has said his next objective is to bind cities and states to the provisions in trade agreements. Jay Inslee, Governor of the most trade dependent state in the union, recently wrote to the USTR, saying provisions in TPP will limit his options as governor when he deals with health care and climate change. To him, the threat of those provisions outweighs any potential benefit.

The people of Seattle are impacted by trade agreements. They affect the likelihood of jobs being offshored, they impact small businesses both when workers don't have income to spend and when cheap products flood the market. Businesses committed to local communities, who want to keep production in America, are put at a disadvantage. TPP also casts a shadow over regional initiatives to deal with climate change, threatening green jobs and clean energy policies.

We urge the Seattle City Council to take a stand in favor of the workers, local businesses, the environment, and the safety of products that come into our homes and onto our tables. Pass the resolution before you from the Planning, Sustainability, and Land Use Committee. Any amendments that weaken this language further are untenable to our organizations.

Sincerely,

Stan Sorscher, President

Washington Fair Trade Coalition

Dave Freiboth, Executive Secretary

ML King Central Labor Council

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Lynne Fitz-Hugh, President
Emily Johnston, Vice-president
350 Seattle

Kathleen Ridihalgh, Senior Regional Organizing Manager
Sierra Club

Jeff Johnson, President
Lynne Dodson, Secretary-Treasurer
Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO

Bruce Herbert AIF, Chief Executive
Newground Social Investment

Paul J. Bachtel, President
Amalgamated Transit Union Local 587

Steve Kofahl, President
American Federation of Government Employees Local 3937

Tracy Lai, Co-President
Kimberly McRae, Co-President
American Federation of Teachers Local 1789, Seattle Community Colleges

Greg Pallesen, Vice President
Association of Western Pulp & Paper Workers

Hilary Stern, Executive Director
Casa Latina

KC Golden, Senior Policy Advisor
Climate Solutions

Gregg Sherwood, President
Communications Workers of America Washington State Council

Heather Day, Executive Director
Community Alliance for Global Justice

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Sean O'Neill, West Coast Organizer

Community in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador

Shawn McManus, President

Deep Sea Fishermen's Union

Elise DeGooyer & Paul Benz, Co-Directors

Faith Action Network

Jill Mangaliman, Executive Director

Got Green

Michael Ramos, Executive Director

Greater Church Council of Seattle

James Pfeiffer, Executive Director

Health Alliance International

Rich Austin, President

ILWU-Pacific Coast Pensioners Association

Terri Mast, Secretary-Treasurer

Inlandboatmen's Union of the Pacific

Sal Ponce, President

International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees Local 15

Jon Holden, President

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District Lodge 751

Sean Bagsby, President

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 46

Lou Walters, Business Manager

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 77

MoveOn.org

Motter Snell, President

Musician's Association of Seattle, Local 76-493, AFM

Mark Lowry, President

Northwest Washington Central Labor Council

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Rich Stolz, Executive Director
One America

Helene Lustan, Coordinator
Philippine U.S. Solidarity Organization

David McLanahan, Coordinator
Physicians for a National Health Plan, Western Washington Chapter

Joseph L. McGee, Executive Director
Professional and Technical Employees Local 17

Robby Stern, President
Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action

Dan McKisson, President
Puget Sound District Council, International Longshore and Warehouse Union

Rebecca Saldaña, Executive Director
Puget Sound SAGE

Vince O'Halloran, Seattle Branch Agent
Sailor's Union of the Pacific

Rev. Dr. James Kunal-Komoto
Saltwater Unitarian Universalist Church

Monty Anderson, Executive Secretary
Seattle Building & Construction Trades Council

Mary Hanson, Chair
Seattle Chapter Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation

Jonathan Knapp, President
Seattle Education Association

Sergio Salinas, President
Service Employees International Union Local 6

Adam Glickman, Secretary-Treasurer
Service Employees International Union Local 775

Ryan Rule, President
Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, IFPTE Local 2001

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Linda Parrish

Tacoma Dominican Sisters & Associates

Rick Hicks, President

Teamsters Joint Council 28

Tracey Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer

Teamsters Local 117

Erik Van Rossum, President

UNITE HERE Local 8

David Parsons, President

United Auto Workers Local 4121

Dave Schmitz, President

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 21

Gaylan Prescott, Sub-District Director

United Steelworkers, District 12, Sub-District 3

Jackie Boschok, President

Washington State Alliance for Retired Americans

Lee Newgent, Executive Secretary

Washington State Building & Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO

Stephanie Celt, WA State Policy Coordinator

Washington BlueGreen Alliance

Will Pittz, Executive Director

Washington Community Action Network

Gregg Sherwood, President

Washington State Council Communications Workers of America

Shaunie Wheeler, President

Washington Young Emerging Labor Leaders

Bruce Pruitt-Hamm, Chair

Western Washington Fellowship of Reconciliation

Charlie Best, Executive Director

Worker Center, AFL-CIO