TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

BEWARE: 'FREE' TRADE AGREEMENT

Corporations are trying to undermine America's food system through secrecy, speculation, and by giving themselves power over American laws.

The corporate power grab

Trade officials from the U.S. and 11 Pacific Rim nations — Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam plus 600 corporate representatives have secretly written a trade agreement that will affect all of us.

This "trade" agreement will be the largest multi-national deal ever. Of Trans-Pacific Partnership's 29 chapters, only five deal with traditional trade issues – most set over-reaching rules on non-trade matters like food safety, domestic environmental and financial regulation, intellectual property, and more.

No COOL

In 2016 American meat producers lost a decade-long battle to label their meat as American born, raised, and processed. A country-of-origin labeling law (COOL) was passed by Congress in 2008, but, once implemented, it was challenged by Canada and Mexico as a violation of NAFTA. As a result, the World Trade Organization's corporate courts penalized U.S. taxpayers $1.9 billion to keep the law, forcing Congress to revoke it.

Ag's decline from NAFTA

Just like the TPP, industry groups promised ag producers that NAFTA would do away with high tariffs and open huge new markets for ag products. Instead, NAFTA opened up the American markets to Canada and Mexico, and American producers couldn't compete for their own domestic markets.

Since NAFTA was implemented in 1997, Canada has sent $30.4 billion more in ag goods – grains, meat, livestock, fish, wood, and fur – south than America has sent north.

Mexico has sold the U.S. $9.6 billion more in food and farm goods over the same 18-year period than U.S. farmers and ranchers sold to Mexico.

In total, that's a $40 billion trade deficit on Canadian and Mexican farm and food goods, despite promises that NAFTA would actually boost American agriculture. Even worse are the numbers from other "free trade" deals since NAFTA (Jordan, Australia, Bahrain, Morocco, and Chile) which have, cumulatively, brought $1.6 billion more imported food and farm goods here than we exported there.

3/16

TPP is NAFTA on steroids

Threatens food safety and food labeling

TPP would require us to allow food imports if the exporting country claims that its safety regime is allegedly "equivalent" to our own, even if it violates the key principles of our food safety laws. These rules would effectively outsource domestic food inspection to other countries.

Under TPP, food labels could also be challenged as "trade barriers." TPP would impose limits on labels providing information on where a food product comes from and would endanger labels identifying genetically modified foods and labels identifying how food was produced.

Empowers corporations to attack laws and demand compensation

Multinational corporations want to expand a set of extreme foreign investor privileges and rights through the "investor-state" system. Under this system, foreign firms can skirt domestic court systems and directly sue governments for cash damages (our tax dollars) over alleged violations of their new rights, or "expected future profit" before World Bank and U.N. tribunals staffed by private sector attorneys who rotate between serving as judges and bringing cases for corporations.

Over $3 billion has been paid to foreign investors under existing U.S. trade and investment pacts, while over $14 billion in claims are pending under such deals. Even when governments win, they waste taxpayer dollars defending national policies against these corporate attacks.

Destroys family farms and forces migration

TPP is expected to continue allowing U.S.-subsidized corn, wheat, soy, rice, and cotton to be dumped on other countries, while also allowing the import of cheaper (and often less safe) fruits, vegetables, beef, and seafood from other countries — further consolidating global food supplies, while forcing more and more family farmers off their land and exposing consumers to wild food price fluctuations. This phenomenon under NAFTA is already a driving force behind migration from Mexico to the U.S., and is the reason why farmers in many countries are adamantly opposed to TPP.

Keep informed! Take action!

Northern Plains Resource Council is a conservation and family agriculture group that organizes Montana citizens to protect our water quality, family farms and ranches, and unique quality of life.

We're stronger with you as a member.

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