

Dear Member of Congress:

The members and officers of CWA Local <XXXX> urge you to oppose Trade Promotion Authority (“Fast Track”) S. 1900/HR 3830 recently introduced in Congress. The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) also known as “NAFTA on Steroids” is poised to become the largest free trade agreement ever using the Fast Track process if approved by Congress. Since the outset of negotiations the TPP has been shrouded in secrecy. All journalists and public interest groups, and the majority of Congress have effectively been denied access to the negotiating texts; while 600 corporate advisors - representing the giants of Wall Street - have practically crafted the agreement themselves. Now, TPP supporters are seeking authority to “Fast Track” the agreement through Congress and bypass the American public without debate or amendment.

Unfortunately, due to the secretive nature of negotiations, we have no idea whether the TPP will empower or erode our economy - which is still recovering from a recession. Further, with a reported 29 chapters covering numerous topics and issues, this is not a traditional trade agreement simply covering tariffs and trade quotas. With so many critical issues from food and drug safety, country of origin, labor and environmental standards, intellectual privacy and even surgical procedures reportedly being addressed in this massive agreement, it is more critical than ever that Congress exercise its oversight role on behalf of the American people that is spelled out in the Constitution. If “Fast Track” authority is granted for the largest trade agreement in history, Congress and the public will have very little time to review the proposed text before the bill is automatically discharged out of Congressional committees. This is not democracy.

Article I, Sec. 8 of the Constitution grants Congress exclusive authority to “regulate commerce with foreign nations.” But by delegating that authority to the Administration you are all but renouncing that power, and with it the voice of your constituents, the American people. The TPP may be a stellar agreement poised to empower labor standards, the environment, and global health, etc.; but the theme set by 600 corporate advisors secretly negotiating the agreement causes most – including us – to be highly skeptical of its merit. That is why we urge you to oppose “Fast Track” authority as spelled out in S. 1900/HR 3830 so the American public and its elected representatives may properly review and debate this secret, massive agreement.

Sincerely,