

Congress Voices Bipartisan Opposition to Fast Track

Fair Trade Advocates Praise Congressional Demands for Oversight Over the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)

Portland, OR — Fair trade advocates praised the release of a new letter today voicing Congressional opposition to Fast Track, a policy-making process that allows trade pacts to circumvent ordinary Congressional review, amendment and debate procedures. Today's letter, spearheaded by Representatives Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and George Miller (D-CA), was signed by three quarters of the House Democratic Caucus including Oregon Congressmen Kurt Schrader and Peter DeFazio. Representatives Earl Blumenthal and Suzanne Bonamici also signed onto another letter signaling concerns over Fast Track. Taken together, the letters demonstrate a strong demand from Oregon's delegation for better oversight over the pending Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Free Trade Agreement than Fast Track would allow.

"With trade negotiators rushing to conclude the massive Trans-Pacific Partnership, it's heartening that so many Members of Congress are standing up and demanding that each provision of the pact be scrutinized to ensure that it is in the best interests of working families," said **United Brotherhood of Carpenters General President Douglas J. McCarron**. "The middle class cannot afford for the TPP to become a 'NAFTA of the Pacific,' and at this stage in the game, only real Congressional oversight and intervention will prevent that from occurring."

"The Trans-Pacific deal will affect working families, environmental protections, energy policy, food safety and more," said **Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune**. "Congress is right to want to do its job and have oversight over expansive trade pacts. Using Fast Track is like removing the seat belts and airbags from a vehicle and racing it toward its final destination. It's an egregious way to speed up trade deals, which all too often put foreign corporations before families and communities."

[The 151-signature DeLauro-Miller letter](#) sent to the President today states, "we will oppose 'Fast Track' Trade Promotion Authority or any other mechanism delegating Congress' constitutional authority over trade policy that continues to exclude us from having a meaningful role in the formative states of trade agreements and throughout negotiating and approval processes." Signers include 18 of 21 Ranking Members from the full committees and 73 from subcommittees, as well as other important members of Democratic Party leadership.

While seven members of the Ways & Means Committee did sign the DeLauro-Miller letter, an [additional a letter](#) led by Representatives Mike Thompson (D-CA) and Earl Blumenauer (D-OR), that was also sent to the President on Friday, stating that any new trade authority "must reflect the changing nature of international trade and ensure that Congress plays a more meaningful role in the negotiating process than in the 2002 TPA [Trade Promotion Authority]."

Republicans have also expressed opposition to Fast Track, including through two letters signed by 27 members. [One letter, led by Representative Walter Jones \(R-NC\)](#) and signed by diverse GOP House members from Representatives Don Young (R-AK) and John Mica (R-FL) to Michele Bachmann (R-MN) and Steve Stockman (R-TX) to Frank Lobiondo (R-NJ) and Frank Wolf (R-VA), stated, "we do not agree

to cede our constitutional authority to the executive through an approval of a request for 'Fast Track Trade Promotion Authority.'"

"After four years of negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the Administration still refuses to tell the public what is being negotiated in our name. Fast Track is inappropriate under any circumstances - but under the current policy-making it exacerbates the extreme lack of transparency," said Oregon Fair Trade Campaign Executive Director Elizabeth Swager. "All of Oregon's Congressional Delegation should add their voices to the chorus opposing Fast Track's outrageously anti-democratic type of policy making."

The Obama administration and various corporate lobby groups have urged Congress to pass new Fast Track legislation for the TPP and other pending trade agreements. The administration has said they are pushing to complete the TPP negotiations by the end of this year, although few observers believe they will meet that deadline. Chief TPP negotiators for the twelve-nation pact will be meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah from November 19 to 24.

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