

No to Fast Track!

Make Trade Clean, Green, and Fair

The health and safety of our environment are threatened by new trade agreements that aim to undercut environmental protections. Now, President George W. Bush wants "fast track" trade negotiating authority that could be used to expand these environmentally damaging policies throughout the Western Hemisphere.

Across the country, citizens are mobilizing to take trade *off* the "fast track" and move it *onto* the "right track" that protects our environment and working families.

Dirty Water: The Price of "Free" Trade?

Today, trade agreements promote international commerce by undercutting high environmental, health and safety standards. In California, Gov. Gray Davis decided to phase out the gasoline additive MTBE because the suspected carcinogen was leaking from gasoline stations into ground water and wells. Many homeowners first learned about MTBE when their water began to smell and taste like turpentine.

In response to the MTBE phase-out, the Methanex Corporation, a Canadian company that makes the methanol that goes into MTBE, used a little-known NAFTA provision to sue the United States government for nearly \$1 billion. Methanex charged that California's decision to protect its water had hurt the company's business prospects.

The MTBE case is just the latest in a growing string of trade challenges to environmental, health and safety protection:

- The United States weakened standards to prevent endangered sea turtles from drowning in shrimp nets after the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled the standards were a trade barrier;
- The WTO ordered Europe to lift its ban on beef grown with artificial hormones. Europe is still resisting the ruling. Eventually these same WTO rules could be used to undercut US food safety standards, such as our stringent standards for pesticide residues on fresh fruits and vegetables; and
- Under NAFTA, the United States has been forced to admit trucks from Mexico that do not meet our safety and pollution control standards. Already, increased truck traffic along NAFTA highway corridors is pushing up levels of air pollution.

No Globalization



Without Representation!

Originally, NAFTA's investor rules were intended to protect foreign investors from the seizure of their assets by host governments. In practice, the rules expose virtually all domestic laws -- including pollution controls, smart growth programs, and work place safety rules -- to challenge as NAFTA violations.

Now President Bush wants fast track authority to expand NAFTA throughout the Western Hemisphere, establishing the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). A leaked draft text of the FTAA shows that it contains rules like those in NAFTA empowering foreign investors to attack environmental, health, and safety laws. Under the FTAA, for instance, US mining companies with holdings in the Amazon would be able to sue Brazil for tightening protections for the rainforest or for the indigenous people who live there.

From Fast Track to Right Track

Under "fast track", Congress would give up the power to fix trade deals made by the President--even if those deals threaten the environment and workers' rights. But hundreds of corporate lobbyists still have plenty of access to US trade negotiators through closed-door trade advisory committees. Fast track circumvents normal democratic legislative procedures, thereby paving the way for trade deals that undercut our environmental, health, and safety laws.

Congress already rejected fast track in 1997 and 1998 over labor and environmental concerns. The Sierra Club believes that Congress must reject fast track again and instead promote an alternative "right track" trade negotiating authority. Right track would:

- Make sure negotiators develop trade rules that don't undercut environmental laws;
- Make sure negotiators include environmental and labor provisions in future trade deals that are enforced in the same way as commercial provisions; and
- Preserve Congress's full powers to debate and amend trade deals.

Take Action to Stop Fast Track

To stop "fast track":

- Write to your congressional representatives and to the editor of your local newspaper.
- Join the Sierra Club's Responsible Trade network to obtain weekly action updates. Contact dan.seligman@sierraclub.org; or
- Contact the Sierra Club Responsible Trade Coordinator in your state through our web site at www.sierraclub.org/trade.

