

No Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, Action Meeting Los Angeles, Koreatown's Immigrant Workers Alliance

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The 13th round of negotiations for the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) will be held in San Diego, CA July 2-10th. Often referred to as the "NAFTA of the Pacific," the TPP is what Obama describes as a "landmark, 21st Century Trade Agreement" that improves on and rectifies past problems in U.S. trade and investment treaties. If concluded, the TPP will be the largest free-trade agreement ever. Nine countries are currently negotiating the TPP: the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Peru, Brunei, Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore. Despite large protests at home against accession into the TPP, Japan, Canada, and Mexico have also expressed interest in joining. Although the negotiations are being held in secret, leaked documents confirm that contrary to democratic practice, the documents connected to the negotiations will remain secret for four years after being signed or dismissed.

The United States is leading the negotiations and has a great deal of influence over the outcome of the agreement, which covers a vast range of subject matters. Chapters include the tariffs on goods, trade in services, access to medicines, intellectual property, energy, labor, environmental, many sectors that will have a direct negative impact on consumers, labor and environmental resources-- not just in the U.S.-- but the cooperating countries and small economies around the Pacific.

As Pacific Islands continue to be dominated by the large economies of Australia, New Zealand, Chile, France, Indonesia and the U.S. these large economies have been exploiting many small Pacific island resources for their own economic gain for generations, and as it will be the smallest economies that are hit the hardest, we invite Pacific islanders to stand in protest of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement.

NAFTA policies have crippled many Mexican local farmers and family industries and created conditions of both poverty and violence. NAFTA coupled with US subsidies to agri-business gives them an unfair advantage that has driven an increasing number of campesinos to migrate to the cities or risk their lives en-route to El Norte. Large corporate financial, GMO, and Pesticide product firms like Monsanto and Cargill have bullied small farmers by using their financial advantage in courts to harass farmers for insidious trademark infringement to bankrupt small farms. Mexico is lining up with Japan

and Canada and we ask that the Latino/Chicano activists stand in solidarity to prevent this "NAFTA on steroids."

One of the most egregious chapters is what is technically called "investor-state rights," which allows for corporations to sue governments in third-party courts. When governments are sued, it is the taxpayers who are liable and the people who are most affected. Investor-state dispute settlements can be described as the 1% suing the 99% in foreign non-juried courts, since the TPP consolidates corporate power by giving rights to the 1%, investor stakeholders.

Indigenous peoples will be most impacted by the TPP, as a result of further deregulations of federal environmental protections. Because these trade agreements are internationally binding in what can be referred to as supra-national investor agreements that take place between nations or economies (as within APEC), resource exploitation by transnational corporations are not bound by the same regulatory framework as "local" investments. This means, for example, that transnational mining companies, funded by the large international banks, will be able to dispute federal environmental regulations in third-party foreign courts. Hypothetically, if investors have greater rights to sue governments in international courts, then it stands to reason, that investments that are negotiated between corporations and governments-to-governments could find themselves drowning in international legal fees and paying damages for loss of profits resulting from environmental regulations. In the WTO, international courts often rule in favor of the rights of investors.

Already in Japan, New Zealand and Australia, activists have successfully drawn attention to the disadvantages of the TPP. Here in Southern California, we have the largest representation of diversity among Latinos, Asians, indigenous peoples and Pacific Islanders, communities that will be hit the hardest by the TPP.