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STATE LEGISLATORS FROM ACROSS NATION SIGN LETTER URGING CONGRESS REJECT FAST TRACK TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY
Bipartisan group of 110 state legislators from 41 states oppose Fast Track bill; raise concerns about secret trade negotiations, private investor remedies that threaten progressive state environmental and energy policies

State legislators from across the country have sent a [letter](#) to Congressional leadership and Senate and House members urging a "no" vote on the Trade Promotion Authority legislation as voted out of committee. The letter was circulated by Iowa State Representative Charles Isenhart and Vermont State Senator Virginia Lyons, both of whom are members of the National Caucus of Environmental Legislators (NCEL) and environmental leaders in their states and nationally. The letter was signed by 110 legislators from 41 states.

"Congress has a unique opportunity to protect our democracy, environment, and workers by rejecting fast track authority. Free trade negotiations go beyond tariffs and include policies that can threaten state environmental regulations," said Lyons, who serves on the Vermont Legislature's Joint Energy Committee and is Co-Chair of the state's Commission on International Trade and State Sovereignty.

"Emerging local renewable energy and other businesses lose when large multinational organizations determine rules of trade and rules of regulation - all behind closed doors," Lyons stated. "So-called 'fast track' authority limits Congressional oversight over a process that lacks transparency and threatens the fabric of our democratic system of state sovereignty. "

Rep. Charles Isenhart echoed these concerns. "Trade agreements are negotiated in secrecy and state legislators are not at the table," he said. "While virtually every investor group is well represented among the USTR's more than 600 'citizen' advisors, almost no legislators are. Yet these agreements can put at risk important state initiatives including clean energy policies and advanced biofuel incentives."

Isenhart is the Ranking Member of the Iowa House Environmental Protection Committee and also serves on the Economic Growth Committee and Ways and Means Committee. He added, "Changes in the current Trade Promotion Authority legislation fall far short of fixing fundamental flaws in both the negotiation process and the agreements themselves, including the system of private justice that sidesteps our courts and gives foreign investors greater authority over policy than elected officials. Whatever the promises of the current administration, there are no guarantees that future administrations will follow through on the commitments of this one. In other words – as state legislators, we have no say, we can't see, and we reap what others sow."

Among the signers of the letter was Massachusetts State Representative Denise Provost, who spoke to negotiators of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) during the 9th round of negotiations in New York City in April.

"As an elected official, I am particularly concerned about provisions in these agreements that subordinate our domestic legal systems to Investor State Dispute Settlement tribunals, which betrays constitutional principles, and represents the worst kind of corporate domination," Provost said.

The legislators' letter raises concerns not only about the pending Trade Promotion Authority legislation but also about likely provisions in the TTIP, the Transpacific Partnership (TPP) and the Trade in Services Agreement (TISA) with the potential not only to undermine existing state environmental laws and regulations but also to chill future state policies inconsistent with the terms of these agreements. All would be covered by the speeded-up review and approval process known as Fast Track.