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Contact: Symone Sanders, (202) 454-5108
Lori Wallach (202) 454-5107, lwallach@citizen.org

Squeaker of a Vote on Fast Track in Senate Highlights Troubles Ahead in House

Statement of Lori Wallach, Director, Public Citizen's Global Trade Watch

The Fast Track bill's unexpected troubles in the U.S. Senate, capped by today's squeaker vote by lawmakers to end debate and proceed with a vote on the legislation, certainly did not create the intended momentum for consideration in the House, where Fast Track is known to be in trouble. If President Barack Obama had only followed through on his 2008 campaign promise to replace the Nixon-era Fast Track mechanism with a more inclusive, democratic process, his prospects for obtaining trade authority would not be so dim. Since 1988, only Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush have persuaded Congress to provide the multi-year, open-ended Fast Track delegation that Obama seeks. In the past 21 years, Congress has allowed the outdated procedure to go into effect only for five years.

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