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Obama's 'Regulatory Cooperation' Executive Order Is a Smokescreen for Deregulation

Note: Today, the Obama administration announced an executive order on the need for international harmonization of regulations. Below, please find reactions from two Public Citizen experts.

Statement of Amit Narang, Regulatory Policy Advocate, Public Citizen's Congress Watch Division:

With this executive order, the administration once again has decided that appeasing big business is more important than vigorously defending the importance of public protections to our country. The public and small businesses believe, as demonstrated in [poll](#) after [poll](#), that strong regulatory standards are essential and can be achieved while growing our economy. The administration should stop catering to big business and should move quickly to finalize the numerous workplace safety, food safety, consumer product safety and environmental protections that have been under review at the Office of Management and Budget for months, and in some cases, years.

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

Unfortunately, international "regulatory cooperation" largely has been a smokescreen for deregulation, which typically involves trade pact rules setting ceilings on consumer, environmental, financial, health and other public interest standards that no country is permitted to exceed.

Deregulators have been trying for years to use the claim of maximizing trade flows as a reason to gut sensible public interest regulations and impose lowest common denominator standards internationally on food safety, environmental protection and financial regulation.

Whether you call it harmonization, deregulation or international regulatory coherence, this controversial agenda of using “trade” pacts to set a ceiling on health, safety, financial and environmental standards stalled out in the WTO Doha Round of trade talks, and now is being resisted in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade deal. This recent executive order appears to be the latest effort to introduce by stealth what has been rightly rejected elsewhere.

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