



215 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE • Washington, D.C. 20003 • 202/546-4996 • www.citizen.org

For Immediate Release:
April 16, 2015

Contact: Symone Sanders (202) 454-5108
ssanders@citizen.org

Fast Track Introduced: Hatch Bill Would Revive Controversial 2002 Mechanism That Faces Broad Congressional, Public Opposition

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

The Fast Track bill introduced today would revive the old unacceptable Fast Track process. It would delegate away Congress' constitutional trade authority and give blank-check powers to whoever may be president during the next three to six years for any agreements he or she may pursue. The bill does not require negotiators to actually meet Congress' negotiating objectives in order to obtain the Fast Track privileges, making the bill's negotiating objectives entirely unenforceable.

Instead of establishing a new "exit ramp," the bill includes the same impossible conditions from past Fast Track bills that make the mechanism to remove an agreement from Fast Track unusable. The bill's only new feature in this respect is a new procedure that would be usable only *after an agreement was already signed and entered* into and that would require approval by 60 senators to take a pact off Fast Track consideration, even though a simple majority "no" vote in the Senate would have the same effect on an agreement. In contrast, the 1988 Fast Track empowered either the House Ways and Means or the Senate Finance Committees to vote by simple majority to remove the pact from Fast Track consideration with no additional floor votes required, and such a disapproval action was authorized *before* a president could sign and enter into a trade agreement.

Fast Track for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) would make it easier for corporations to offshore American jobs, would undermine our wages by forcing Americans to compete with Vietnamese workers making less than 60 cents an hour and would expose our consumer and environmental safeguards to attack by foreign corporations in extra-judicial tribunals.

Even though the TPP is almost complete, and the Obama administration dismissed bicameral, bipartisan majority demands that the TPP include disciplines against currency cheating, Congress is now being asked to delegate away its constitutional trade authority over the TPP.

This is almost identical to the Fast Track bill that was dead on arrival in the House last year. We don't see it passing. Congress has allowed Fast Track to go into effect only for five of the past 21 years (2002-2007).

###