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## **Motion to Advance Fast Track Legislation Fails in Senate**

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

The Fast Track train went off the rails today. The U.S. Senate vote was supposed to generate momentum for Fast Track in the U.S. House of Representatives, where it's in deep trouble, with almost every House Democrat and a significant bloc of GOP lawmakers opposing it.

The only reason to upend the required procedures for a "revenue bill" and bring up Fast Track in the Senate first was to get a huge victory to build momentum in the House. But that strategy backfired and Democrats in the House remain committed to standing up for their beliefs that the trade package would do a lot more harm than good.

President Barack Obama would now enjoy broad support for a forward-looking trade agenda if only he had implemented the reforms he announced as a candidate, including to "replace" the Fast Track procedure created by Richard Nixon with a more inclusive, democratic mechanism. Instead, Congress is unlikely to revive the 1970s Fast Track trade authority Obama seeks.

Congress has denied Fast Track for all but five of the past 21 years, with 171 Democrats and 71 GOP rejecting President Bill Clinton's request in 1998. Since 1988, only Presidents Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush have persuaded Congress to delegate Fast Track authority.

Fast Track for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is an especially bad idea. After six years of negotiations, the text is almost complete. Yet under the Hatch-Wyden-Ryan Fast Track bill, the pact would remain secret from the public until 30 days after its text is locked. That the text would be made public 60 days before the formal signing ceremony is irrelevant, because it would be too late to fight for needed changes.

The rhetoric being used to sell the trade package is really far off from the reality of what is in it. It is like being in the twilight zone. Thanks to WikiLeaks, we know the TPP includes an expanded version of the investment provisions found in the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) that incentivize the offshoring of high-wage American jobs and the investor-state dispute settlement system that exposes U.S. policies to attack in foreign tribunals.

The administration chose to use the weak labor and environmental standards that President George W. Bush included in his last trade deals. It was the 2007 Peru Free Trade Agreement, not the TPP, that was the first U.S. trade agreement to have labor and environmental standards in core text enforceable by the same terms as the commercial provisions. A 2014 Government Accountability Office investigation found these labor and environmental standards now also used for the TPP failed to improve working conditions.

What has leaked out already is deeply troubling. Many members of Congress who – unlike the public – are allowed to read the TPP are warning us that this is a bad deal.

At Nike, President Obama said that those concerned about the TPP rolling back food safety, environmental or financial regulation “are making stuff up” and no trade agreement can do that.

In fact, these rollbacks have happened repeatedly under past pacts. The “sovereignty” provisions found in Section 8 of the Hatch-Wyden-Ryan Fast Track bill are nothing new and appear in implementing legislation for past U.S. trade agreements under which U.S. food safety and environmental policies have been rolled back already. Examples of rollbacks due to trade deals include:

- Gutting rules about importing only food that “meets or exceeds” U.S. safety standards, so we now import food that does not meet U.S. standards; and
- Rolling back environmental laws and regulations – from Clean Air Act regulations to U.S. labeling of dolphin-safe tuna and more.

Please see the [top reasons to oppose Fast Tracking the TPP](#) and the [Myths vs. Facts](#) about the Fast Track legislation.

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