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For Immediate Release:
June 10, 2015

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At Export Council, Obama Expected Push New Fast Track Powers That Congressional Democrats, Obama's Base Oppose

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

In his quest for Fast Track trade authority, President Barack Obama is expected to paint the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as a new kind of trade deal for the 21st century at today's President's Export Council meeting. But, without the evidence to support the claims, very few people are taking the president at his word. Obama continues his Fast Track push in the face of growing opposition from his entire political base, almost every House Democrat and a sizable block of House Republicans.

If 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 In the past 21 years, Congress has allowed the outdated procedure to go into effect only for five years.

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