

April 18, 2016

Dear Member of Congress,

We write to you as development, faith-based and sustainable agriculture organizations concerned about the potential impacts of the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP) on food security and sustainable development in the member countries and around the world. Many of us work closely with partners in developing countries and have witnessed the devastating impacts of previous free trade agreements on small-scale farmers and their communities. We urge you to reject the TPP.

The TPP would expand many of the worst features of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Under NAFTA, more than two million Mexican farmers were driven from their lands after a dramatic increase in dumped corn imports from the United States. NAFTA has led to increasing corporate concentration in agricultural production, leaving farmers with fewer options of where to buy and sell goods and a decline in the number of family farmers in Mexico, the U.S. and Canada. The TPP would replicate those problems, opening fragile markets for basic grains and other foods even further.

The TPP also requires countries to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants 1991 (UPOV-91), an international treaty protecting plant breeders. UPOV-91 requires 20-25 years of intellectual property protection to be provided for all plant varieties. It stops farmers and breeders from saving and exchanging protected seeds, common practices of farmers in many countries around the world. Brunei, Chile, Malaysia, Mexico and New Zealand have not yet ratified UPOV-91, but will be required to do so under TPP—as will any country who may join the TPP in the future.

In general, the TPP would lock member countries into a path that has proven to be unsustainable and unsupportable. Rather than encouraging knowledge sharing and local control, the TPP would enshrine the UPOV-91 system. Rather than adopting a precautionary approach to hazardous chemicals and novel genetic modification, TPP's provisions on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Standards would judge food, plant and chemical safety based on scientific studies provided by industry and not subject to scientific peer review. Provisions in the Annex on Agricultural Biotechnology in TPP's chapter on National Treatment and Market Access would impose new rules on how countries assess Low Level Presence of GMOs and contaminants in imports—all designed to facilitate trade. In contrast to the binding rules on these issues, hortatory language in the chapter on Development acknowledges the importance of encouraging inclusive growth, but only commits to establish a committee to discuss it.

We share the concerns raised by hundreds of civil society organizations and legal experts over TPP's Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism, which allows corporations to sue governments over measures that limit their expected profits. Existing ISDS cases over mining and natural resource rules have already undermined small-scale farmers' access to healthy soils and water. Extending this unnecessary provision in TPP would increase the possibility of similar suits, as well as others involving innovative local foods system reforms even more directly. Given all of these problems, it is alarming that the provisions on Accession to the TPP would direct other countries to sign on to this flawed agreement without changes. Rather than

allowing new prospective members to negotiate provisions that respond to their particular situations—much less correcting the various problems in TPP—developing country governments would be expected to simply accede to the existing agreement.

Our organizations support fair trade, sustainable development and democratic practice. The TPP fails to support any of those principles. We urge you to reject the TPP.

Sincerely,

National and Regional Organizations  
ActionAid USA  
Agricultural Missions, Inc. (AMI)  
American Jewish World Service Center for Food Safety  
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach  
Dean's Beans  
Equal Exchange  
Fair World Project  
Food & Water Watch  
Grassroots International  
GMO Free USA  
Heal the Planet  
Holy Cross International  
Justice Office  
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy  
Institute for Responsible Technology  
International Development Exchange  
LabelGMOs.org  
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns  
Medical Mission Sisters Alliance for Justice  
Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate  
Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office  
National Family Farm Coalition  
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby  
New England Sustainable Agriculture Working Group  
Network for Environmental & Economic Responsibility  
Oxfam America  
Presbyterian Church (USA)  
Rural Coalition/Coalición Rural  
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur  
Justice and Peace Office  
Sisters of the Holy Cross  
Congregation Justice Committee  
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas, Institute  
Justice Team  
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries  
United Methodist Church, General Board of Church and Society  
WhyHunger  
State and Local Organizations  
American Federation of Government Employees, Local 3354, St. Louis, Missouri  
Berkeley Fellowship of Unitarian Universalists, California  
Birchwood Café, Minneapolis, Minnesota  
Citizens for Sanity.com, Inc., Florida  
Community Alliance for Global Justice, Washington  
ConnFACT, Connecticut  
Crawford Stewardship Project, Wisconsin  
Earth in Brackets, Maine  
Faith Action Network, Washington  
Farm Life Foundation, Florida  
Farms Not Arms, California and Tennessee  
GMO Free Florida  
Jubilee Oregon  
Kaleo Center for Faith, Justice and Social Transformation @ United Theological Seminary,  
Minnesota RRBG Farm LLC, Ariton Alabama

NaVera Farms, Florida

NH Right To Know GMO, New Hampshire

St. Leo Church, Tacoma, Washington

Social Services Office, Catholic Charities CNM, Diocese of Jefferson City, Missouri The Second

Chance Foundation, New York

Washington Fair Trade Coalition