



A FEW REASONS TO CHOOSE FAIR TRADE OVER FREE TRADE

Free trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) are global agreements to govern the rules of trade among multiple countries. Unlike the recent global climate agreement which focuses on one topic and is essentially non-binding, free trade agreements cover many topics, some not strictly about trade, including environment, health care, agriculture, intellectual property rights, among others, and are legally binding. Governments, along with their trade advisors and corporate lobbyists, spend years negotiating these agreements. The TPP text, for example, was finalized in fall of 2015 after six years of secret negotiations.

These are clearly massive agreements of great importance to governments and corporations. Yet we've noticed that some people's eyes glaze over when we talk about TPP and TTIP. We agree these topics can sound dry and remote. For that reason, we've compiled a list to clarify who may be personally impacted by these agreements.

You do not need to worry about how free trade agreements will affect you, UNLESS:

- **You value access to local food.** It has been widely reported that the agriculture sector will benefit from the TPP. But it is only the industrial agriculture system that pollutes the planet and provides unhealthy food that will gain. It is not the organic, regenerative, biodiverse farmer who provides your CSA or morning coffee who will benefit.
- **You have a job.** One study showed that the TPP would mean a pay cut for 90% of U.S. workers.
- **You have been affected, directly or indirectly, by climate change.** Our current trade system drives the industrial food system, which in turn drives climate change. We cannot break our reliance on the industrial food system without first breaking our reliance on "free trade."
- **You prefer to eat food that you know is safe and free of chemical residues.** The TPP and the TTIP would require countries to accept food that meets only the lowest safety standards of the collective participants.
- **You would like your local government or school to adopt a "buy local" policy giving preference to local farmers and producers.** The TPP would outlaw such preferential buying clauses.
- **You want more information about where and how your food was grown, not less.** Last year, Congress announced it would repeal Country of Origin Labeling (COOL) for meat products after it was challenged under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules. COOL is a popular labeling rule that simply requires consumer packaging to list where products and their components are produced.
- **You are a small business owner.** Free trade agreements allow large corporations to sue governments over perceived profit losses. For example, TransCanada sued the U.S. for \$15 billion after President Obama blocked the Keystone XL pipeline deal. This not only undermines environmental regulations, it undermines fair competition for small and mid-sized businesses.

So, after reading this, if you are confident that you are not affected by free trade agreements, then you can rest easy. But if you are or will be affected, then now is the time to take action!

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