



LAND  
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PROJECT

# Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Free Trade Agreement

## The Largest Corporate Power Grab You've Never Heard Of

Fact Sheet

Updated: August 2014

A top priority for many multi-national corporations is the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Trade Agreement, which encompasses 12 countries located around the Pacific Rim: the United States, Canada, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Japan and Brunei. Although the TPP is presented as a way to increase exports by eliminating trade barriers, the reality is that this trade agreement goes far beyond that by granting unwarranted privileges to huge corporations, undermining local safeguards and threatening our food system.

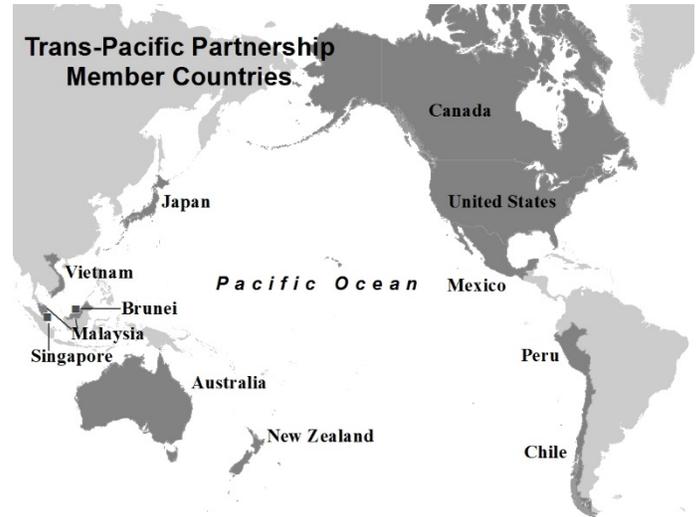
### Why is LSP Opposing the TPP?

The Land Stewardship Project believes that if we want vibrant local economies and food systems, as well as a healthy environment, then people who are directly concerned with those issues need to have a say. Currently, the TPP is being negotiated in secret. None of the text has been made publicly available by the negotiators involved — details have only come out through leaked documents. Only government trade officials and some 600 mostly “corporate advisers” have access to the text. To make matters worse, this year President Barack Obama is seeking “**fast track**” authority to speed up negotiations and further limit public input. Fast track would remove Congress’ ability to change the TPP, if it’s ever finalized, and only allow for a “yes” or “no” vote on whatever is developed, with almost no public scrutiny.

One of the most troublesome aspects of TPP is a clause called the “**investor state dispute resolution.**” Through this clause, corporations could be granted standing, just like a country, to file a lawsuit or challenge other countries’ governing bodies if they felt local laws impeded “expected future profits.” This clause undermines our local democracy and gives multi-national corporations increased power over the rights of citizens. The corporate suing mechanism described above was first passed in the North American Free Trade Agreement. Since 1993, more than 500 cases have been filed by corporations as a result of this mechanism, with a record number filed in 2012. Under TPP, this will only get worse.

### TPP is a Threat to Human Rights

Some countries involved in TPP blatantly violate human rights and shouldn’t even be allowed to take part in the discussions.



In Vietnam, for example, workers are not paid fair wages and instances of forced child labor are present. The 2014 minimum wage in Vietnam is 28 cents per hour. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the textile industry in Vietnam utilizes “forced child labor in garment production,” and the Worker’s Rights Consortium found that textile factories pay rural parents \$50-\$100 to sell their children to the industry.

In May the country of Brunei implemented a new Penal Code which allows for cruel and inhumane punishments, including stoning to death, whipping, and amputation. The new Penal Code also contains a range of provisions that will restrict the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and which discriminate against women. This Penal Code has been condemned by organizations throughout the world, including the UN, Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch. The U.S. shouldn’t be expanding trade options in these countries.

### Status of Fast Track & TPP

Even with heavy pressure from corporations like Cargill and Monsanto, as well as from elected officials like President Obama and Speaker of the House John Boehner, a majority of the House and Senate members, both Democrats and Republicans, are **not** supporting this trade deal, or the fast track process — at least right now. Increased pressure to advance fast track and TPP will come between now and the end of the calendar year.

### More Information

For more information, see LSP’s TPP web page at [www.landstewardshipproject.org/organizingforchange/tpp](http://www.landstewardshipproject.org/organizingforchange/tpp).