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| **1.SIERRA CLUB**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:Thursday, April 16, 2015Contact: Dan Byrnes, 202-495-3039 or daniel.byrnes@sierraclub.org[View Sierra Club Pressroom](http://sierraclub.pr-optout.com/Tracking.aspx?Data=HHL%3d8471%408-%3eLCE5%3a2%3c5%3d%26SDG%3c90%3a.&RE=MC&RI=4227984&Preview=False&DistributionActionID=20329&Action=Follow+Link" \t "_blank) **Sierra Club: “Fast-track bill is toxic”*****Legislation would rush trade deals that harm the environment through Congress*** **WASHINGTON, DC** - Today, Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and House Ways and Means Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) introduced legislation that would grant “fast track” authority for trade deals including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). If this legislation is approved by Congress, the President would be able to send already signed trade pacts to Congress for straight up-or-down votes -- with no room for amendments and limited floor debate. This legislation will face stiff opposition from environmental organizations, among others in a large coalition opposing fast tracking the environmentally-destructive TPP. In January, more than 40 top environmental groups [sent a letter](http://sierraclub.pr-optout.com/Tracking.aspx?Data=HHL%3d8471%408-%3eLCE5%3a2%3c5%3d%26SDG%3c90%3a.&RE=MC&RI=4227984&Preview=False&DistributionActionID=20328&Action=Follow+Link" \t "_blank) to Congress denouncing fast track.  ***In response, Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune issued the following statement:*** “This fast-track bill is toxic for Congress and for our air, water, and climate. We’ve seen this all before. This bill replicates an old, failed model of trade authority that rushes deals through Congress and strips out the vital protections and oversight that ensure trade pacts benefit American communities, workers, and the environment. Americans who care about clean air and clean water won’t support a bill that takes away the ability of those we elected to protect our basic needs. Members of Congress need to carefully evaluate the costs and consequences of trade deals on our economy and environment -- not to haphazardly push pacts over the finish line. That’s why we are calling on members of Congress to take back the reins on trade and toss aside the failed fast track model.” ### *About the Sierra Club**The Sierra Club is America’s largest and most influential grassroots environmental organization, with more than 2.1 million members and supporters nationwide. In addition to creating opportunities for people of all ages, levels and locations to have meaningful outdoor experiences, the Sierra Club works to safeguard the health of our communities, protect wildlife, and preserve our remaining wild places through grassroots activism, public education, lobbying, and litigation. For more information, visit [http://www.sierraclub.org](http://sierraclub.pr-optout.com/Tracking.aspx?Data=HHL%3d8471%408-%3eLCE5%3a2%3c5%3d%26SDG%3c90%3a.&RE=MC&RI=4227984&Preview=False&DistributionActionID=20327&Action=Follow+Link" \t "_blank).* |
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**2. NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Elizabeth Heyd, 202-289-2424, eheyd@nrdc.org

[http://www.nrdc.org/media/2015/150416.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/media/2015/150416.asp%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

**"Fast Track’’ Trade Bill Would Undercut Health, Environmental Safeguards**

NRDC: Congress Should Reject the Proposal

WASHINGTON (April 16, 2015) – Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) today introduced “fast track’’ legislation that would allow President Obama to obtain expedited congressional approval of international trade agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the E.U.-U.S. trade agreement called Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership.

The following is a statement by Peter Lehner, executive director of the Natural Resources Defense Council:

“These trade agreements would allow foreign corporations to challenge our chemical safeguards, climate protections and food safety laws at special trade tribunals outside our normal legal system. Congress should reject any fast track legislation that allows expedited approval for trade agreements that can undercut our public health and environmental safeguards.”

# # #

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 1.4 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City; Washington, D.C.; Los Angeles; San Francisco; Chicago; Bozeman, Montana; and Beijing. Visit us at[www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) and follow us on Twitter [@NRDC](https://twitter.com/%22%20%5Cl%20%22%21/nrdc%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

**3. LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS**

For Immediate Release
April 16, 2015

Contact: David Willett, 202-454-4598, david\_willett@lcv.org

**LCV Statement on Fast Track Trade Bill**

**Washington, DC:** In response to the introduction of “fast track” legislation in the Senate to give the administration expedited approval for international trade agreements, the League of Conservation Voters issued the following statement from Legislative Representative Madeleine Foote:

“The public has a right to know what is in these massive trade deals before they are finalized. Trade agreements have enormous implications for environmental protections around the world, and they deserve real debate, a transparent process, and strong enforcement provisions.  Unfortunately, this legislation fails to meet those goals.”

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**4. AMERICAN SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS COUNCIL**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 16, 2015

Contact: Bob Keener, 617-610-6766, bkeener@asbcouncil.org

**Business Group Opposes Fast Track Trade Authority**

WASHINGTON, DC – In response to “Fast Track” trade authority legislation introduced today by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), the American Sustainable Business Council (ASBC), which represents member organizations that span more than 200,000 businesses, released a statement opposing the move. The following statement is by Richard Eidlin, Vice President of Policy for ASBC:

“Many businesses have not benefited from past trade deals. Instead, they end up absorbing much of the costs, such as the loss of revenue from lower consumer demand and unfair competition. Trade, we agree is essential to American economic development. However, American trade policy must serve the needs of all businesses, as well as ensure high environmental, worker and labor standards. That is why we urge the U.S. Senate to reject providing the administration with Fast Track authority.

“The legacy of trade deals dating back to NAFTA will likely be repeated under the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP), which is geared toward the needs of multinational companies. We are concerned that the TPP contains many incentives such as the off-shoring of U.S. capital and jobs and restrictions including limits on the ability of states and municipalities to support ‘Buy American’ provisions that will undermine the success of domestic businesses. We also worry that the TPP would allow foreign companies to challenge U.S. laws—and potentially to receive huge payments from taxpayers—without ever stepping foot in a U.S. court.

“It is because trade policy is so important, a full and transparent discussion in Congress is needed.”

ASBC has a business sign-on letter calling on Congress to reject fast track authority for the TPP. The letter may be found here: [http://asbcouncil.org/action-center/campaigns/no-fast-track-tpp](http://asbcouncil.org/action-center/campaigns/no-fast-track-tpp%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

The **American Sustainable Business Council** and the **ASBC Action Fund** represent member organizations that span more than 200,000 businesses nationwide, and more than 325,000 entrepreneurs, executives, managers and investors. The Council [www.asbcouncil.org](http://www.asbcouncil.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) informs policy makers and the public about the need and opportunities for building a vibrant and sustainable economy. The Action Fund [www.asbcaction.org](http://www.asbcaction.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) advocates for legislative change.

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**5. 350.ORG**

**April 16, 2015**

### 350 Responds to Introduction of TPP Fast-Track Legislation

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 16, 2015
Contact: Karthik Ganapathy, (347) 881-3784

In response to introduction of legislation fast-tracking approval of the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, 350.org Executive Director May Boeve issued the following response:

“This bill is a climate disaster, and amounts to nothing more than a taxpayer-funded handout to corporations. We’ve seen leaked text showing that TPP would allow fossil fuel companies like Exxon to sue any member country that dares to act on climate, and hold up any law or regulation that hurts their bottom line. That’s an irresponsible giveaway that lets Big Oil handcuff our political systems even more, and would be a giant step backwards in the fight against climate change. Throw in TPP’s total disregard for workers’ rights, health, and safety, and this one’s a no-brainer — it’s a corporate power giveaway that our movement will rise up to stop.”

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**6. CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LAW (CIEL)**

 **Fast tracked trade deals rush us toward a toxic partnership**

Today, Senators Hatch (R-Utah), Wyden (D-Ore.), and Ryan (R-Wis.) introduced the Trade Promotion Authority legislation (TPA-2015), which would extend “fast track” negotiating authority for trade deals, including the controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP). With fast-track, Congress would lose its ability to ensure that trade pacts benefit workers, the environment, and communities around the United States. Modern agreements like TTIP are not simply about trade; they are about regulation, with wide-ranging effects on environmental, health and safety standards designed to protect the public interest.

**Carroll Muffett, President of the Center for International Environmental Law, issued the following statement on the introduction of the bill:**

*Trade agreements like the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership and the TransPacific Partnership, negotiated out of sight and with no meaningful public input, reflect the wish-lists of industry lobbyists, not the needs of the American people.  Increasingly, these agreements deal less with inconsequential border taxes than with critical issues of public policy.  Chemical safety, consumers and workers rights, and the power of federal and state governments to protect the public from hazardous substances and products all will be affected by the deals being negotiated.  These deals would grant new rights to corporations and investors to undermine democracy and public policy in the name of private profit. Deals like TTIP and TPP demand public scrutiny and careful Congressional review.  Fast track fails that standard and fails the American people.*

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Contact: Amanda Kistler, Communications Manager, 202-742-5832, akistler@ciel.org

*The Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) uses the power of law to protect the environment, promote human health, and ensure a just and sustainable society. CIEL is a non‐profit organization dedicated to advocacy in the global public interest, including through legal counsel, policy research, analysis, education, training and capacity building.*

**7. GREENPEACE**

# Greenpeace Response to Introduction of Fast Track Legislation

[http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/media-center/news-releases/Greenpeace-Response-to-Introduction-of-Fast-Track-Legislation/](http://www.greenpeace.org/usa/en/media-center/news-releases/Greenpeace-Response-to-Introduction-of-Fast-Track-Legislation/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Media release - April 16, 2015

Statement by Greenpeace Legislative Representative Kyle Ash

Washington, DC - Today, Senators Hatch (R-Utah), Wyden (D-Ore.), and Ryan (R-Wis.) introduced “fast track” legislation that guarantees Congress won't request changes to trade deals brought to them by the President, instead allowing the Obama administration to negotiate deals in secret.

Greenpeace Legislative Representative Kyle Ash issued the following statement on the legislation:

“The fast track legislation introduced in the U.S. Senate today is bad for democracy and bad for the climate. By supporting this legislation, the Obama administration is advocating against transparency and accountability for international trade deals negotiated on behalf of corporations like Exxon. Unfortunately, it took leaked documents to find out what our democratically elected leader is promoting on behalf of transnational corporations. Congress should do its job and represent the people by killing this bill immediately.”

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Contact: Perry Wheeler, Greenpeace Media Officer, P: 202-319-2461

**8. OIL CHANGE INTERNATIONAL**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 16, 2015

Contact:
Stephen Kretzmann, steve@priceofoil.org, 202-497-1033
David Turnbull, david@priceofoil.org, 202-316-3499

This release can also be found here

*[http://priceofoil.org/2015/04/16/oil-change-international-fast-track-places-interests-corporations-people/](http://priceofoil.org/2015/04/16/oil-change-international-fast-track-places-interests-corporations-people/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)*

**Oil Change International: Fast-Track places interests of corporations over people**

Today, Senators Hatch (R-Utah), Wyden (D-Ore.), and Ryan (R-Wis.) introduced the Trade Promotion Authority legislation (TPA-2015), which would extend “fast track” negotiating authority for trade deals, including the controversial Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP).

In response, Stephen Kretzmann, Executive Director of Oil Change International released the following statement:

"Trade agreements like TTIP and TPP undermine our democracy, our rights as citizens, and our environment by placing the interests of large corporations and investors above all else. To deny the American people their right to a full and informed debate on these agreements, as the bill introduced today would do, is just a terrible idea. The fact that free trade advocates feel the need to short-circuit democracy in order to ensure their victory really says it all. We vigorously oppose granting fast track negotiating authority for these trade deals. The voice of the people is our last line of defense against Big Oil’s assault on our climate and our future. We will not be silenced."

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**9. BLUE GREEN ALLIANCE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASECONTACT:Erin Bzymek, erinb@bluegreenalliance.org, 202-706-6916

**BLUEGREEN ALLIANCE STATEMENT: Fast Track is Bad for the Environment and Working Families**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (April 16, 2015) – Today, Trade Promotion Authority—also known as Fast Track legislation—was introduced in Congress. Under Fast Track, Congress gives up its traditional power to amend bad trade deals and it cannot send the agreement back to the executive branch with instructions for improvement. BlueGreen Alliance’s Executive Director Kim Glas released the following statement:

“Yesterday on Capitol Hill a broad coalition of over 1,200 union members, environmentalists and allies called on Congress to deny Fast Track authority for trade deals because it removes critically important checks and balances.

“Trade agreements should be fair, uphold labor standards that protect workers and their jobs, preserve environmental protections, and ensure consumer safeguards aren’t weakened. Fast Track would deny the ability of Congress to amend deals to achieve those things.

“The BlueGreen Alliance supports fair, transparent trade that doesn’t engage the U.S. in a race to the bottom. Fast Track is the opposite of that. That’s why it is wrong for our workers, economy and environment.”

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*The BlueGreen Alliance is a strategic partnership that brings together major U.S. labor unions and America's most influential environmental organizations and unites nearly 16 million members and supporters in pursuit of good jobs, a clean environment and a clean economy.  Visit [www.bluegreenalliance.org](http://www.bluegreenalliance.org/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).*

**10. US CLIMATE PLAN**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Trade Promotion Authority An Unnecessary Concession to Polluting Corporations**

Contact: Hayden Higgins, hayden@usclimateplan.org, (925) 858-8264

Evan Weber, evan@usclimateplan.org, (808) 224-0644

Michael Dorsey, mkdorsey@professordorsey.com, (734) 945-6424

April 16, 2015, *Washington, DC*,  - Today, Congress introduced a so-called “fast track” bill that restricts its abilities to review the Trans-Pacific Partnership, leaving workers, communities, and the environment vulnerable to the massive corporations who negotiate the trade deal in secret. These corporations include some of the nastiest polluters on the planet, and overall the deal would subvert national efforts at addressing climate change by promoting corporate sovereignty and trade in fossil fuels. Leaked drafts of the text showed that domestic climate and environmental regulations and laws could be undermined by the interests of foreign companies.

This sprawling Asia-Pacific trade deal has been underway for several years, but at no point has the negotiation process been open to the citizen scrutiny that any American public policy deserves. Instead, it has been bargained sub rosa by multinational corporations out of the public eye. A “fast track” bill leaves Congress with little recourse for protecting American workplaces and environments.

“Communities, not corporations, should remain sovereign when it comes to determining the safeguards appropriate for workers and the environment,” said Hayden Higgins, Outreach & Communications Coordinator. “This trade deal is a bad bet for the climate and for anyone concerned about corporate overreach into our political processes.”

The Trans-Pacific Partnership will elevate corporate power to unseen levels, as demonstrated by the [recent](http://action.sierraclub.org/site/DocServer/0999_Trade_Bilcon_Factsheet_04_low.pdf?docID=17481" \t "_blank) *[Bilcon v. Canada](http://action.sierraclub.org/site/DocServer/0999_Trade_Bilcon_Factsheet_04_low.pdf?docID=17481" \t "_blank)* [case](http://action.sierraclub.org/site/DocServer/0999_Trade_Bilcon_Factsheet_04_low.pdf?docID=17481" \t "_blank) tried in a private tribunal. The “investor-state-dispute-settlement” tribunal—packed with arbitrators picked in part by corporations—ruled that Canada’s democratically chosen environmental regulations were too damaging to the foreign fossil fuel company, and required Nova Scotia to roll back its protections against the dangers of open-pit mining. The Trans-Pacific Partnership would expand the use of such tribunals that allow companies to sue countries for threatening their corporate profits, as [Quebec was for banning fracking](http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/ottawa-sued-over-quebec-fracking-ban-1.1140918%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank).

Dr. Michael K. Dorsey: “The TPP is a retrograde trade plan. American leadership must bend toward justice, not greed."

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**11. FOOD AND WATER WATCH**

April 16, 2015

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Kate Fried, Food & Water Watch, (202) 683-4905, kfried@fwwatch.org**

**Same Old Fast Track Would Unravel Consumer Protections**

***Trade deals will weaken consumer protections and increase imports of potentially risky food***

**WASHINGTON—Today, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) introduced their Fast Track trade promotion legislation (The Bipartisan Congressional Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015, TPA-2015) that includes provisions that would weaken consumer protections, undermine U.S. food safety standards and prevent commonsense food labeling. The legislation is nearly identical to the measure Senator Hatch introduced last year that failed to garner Congressional approval. It replicates the provisions of Fast Track bills from bygone eras (in 1991 and 2002 in the buildup to NAFTA and CAFTA) and deprives Congress of its constitutionally mandated role in setting U.S. policy in a more complex international commercial landscape.**

**“Congress should reject this retrograde Fast Track trade legislation that is designed to usher in the secret Trans-Pacific Partnership – a trade deal that is a raw deal for consumers,” said Wenonah Hauter, executive director of Food & Water Watch. “The fine print in Fast Track contains an all-out attack on America’s consumer protection and food safety laws.”**

**The legislation dismisses the importance of food safety and consumer protection in trade negotiations, although unsafe imported foods and products have deluged consumers over the past twenty years of corporate-driven globalization. The bill specifically only allows trade negotiators to “take into account” (not “obtain” or “ensure”) the “legitimate health or safety [and] consumer interests,” relegating these safeguards to second class status behind mandatory objectives for business interests and allowing unelected trade negotiators to decide which U.S. consumer protections are “legitimate” (Sec. 2(a)(13)).**

**“Fast Track allows U.S. trade negotiators to trade away vital consumer safeguards to win giveaways and protections for big business in the TPP or other trade deals,” said Hauter. “The safety of American consumers is up for sale under Fast Track.”**

**Several provisions of the Fast Track bill would** erode food safety oversight for imported food and threaten sensible food labels. Fast Track requires the United States to approve the food safety systems of exporting countries even when domestic oversight is stronger (Sec. 2(b)(3)(A)(ii)). This forced “equivalence” of foreign food safety systems can expose consumers to imported foodborne hazards and it is how the U.S. imported 2.5 million pounds of *E. coli* tainted ground beef from a Canadian plant that replaced most of its government safety inspectors with its own employees. Fast Track also identifies some consumer labels as “unjustified trade restrictions” that would be targeted for elimination (Sec. 2(b)(3)(I)(ii)).

“Consumers coast-to-coast are fighting for the right to know what is in the food they are feeding their families, but Fast Track would make it even harder to get commonsense food labels,” said Hauter. “This approach to trade could eliminate country of origin labeling and GMO labeling and weaken imported food inspection to satisfy the corporate interests who are writing these trade deals.”

Fast Track is being pushed to seal the TPP trade deal with 11 Pacific Rim nations, but the deregulation in Fast Track and the TPP could expose consumers to more dangerous imported foods. Surging imports under free trade deals have overwhelmed U.S. food safety inspectors at the border. For example, only about 2 percent of the 5.4 billion pounds of imported fish and seafood are inspected. Fish farmers in TPP nations Vietnam and Malaysia often use veterinary drugs and fungicides that are banned in the United States because the residues can cause cancer, allergic reactions and contribute to the development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

“The TPP will bring a tidal wave of dangerous fish imports that will swamp the border inspectors that cannot keep up with the tainted aquaculture imports today,” said Hauter. “Congress must reject the Fast Track bill that is designed to seal the deal on TPP.”

Food & Water Watch works to ensure the food, water and fish we consume is safe, accessible and sustainable. So we can all enjoy and trust in what we eat and drink, we help people take charge of where their food comes from, keep clean, affordable, public tap water flowing freely to our homes, protect the environmental quality of oceans, force government to do its job protecting citizens, and educate about the importance of keeping shared resources under public control.

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**12. FRIENDS OF THE EARTH**

**Hatch, Wyden introduce same old Fast Track model**

**Plan would close the hatch on democracy and widen income inequality**

[http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2015-04-hatch-wyden-introduce-same-old-fast-track-model](http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2015-04-hatch-wyden-introduce-same-old-fast-track-model%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

Posted Apr. 16, 2015 / Posted by: Kate Colwell

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senators Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), introduced a plan to grant expedited Executive authority on trade deals. Called “Fast Track,” the plan announced today, is almost identical to the Fast Track bill rejected by Congress and the public in 2014. If approved, Fast Track would expedite congressional approval of two massive trade deals without amendment or proper consideration. The Trans Atlantic and Trans Pacific trade agreements, both of which are currently under negotiation by the Obama administration, would allow big oil companies and Wall Street financiers to sue for millions in compensation for the cost of complying with environmental and other regulations. More generally, the Atlantic and Pacific trade deals would trump sensible safeguards related to food safety, toxic chemicals, and global warming. If Fast Track is approved, these trade deals could be rammed through Congress.

The Hatch-Wyden bill would grant the executive branch powers the Constitution’s framers intended for Congress to exercise, including:

* The power to circumvent ordinary congressional committee review and directly submit the legislation for mandatory and expedited floor votes in the House and Senate;
* The power to override House and Senate control of their schedules for floor votes; and
* The power to ban any amendments to a trade agreement.

Friends of the Earth President Erich Pica offers the following statement on the introduction of the Hatch–Wyden bill for trade promotion authority:

This is the latest in a series of blatant moves which reveal that Congressional Republican leadership represents only the will of the richest one percent of individuals, big business and their donors, not we the people. Amid a litany of giveaways to the super rich, and aggressive assault on bedrock environmental laws and unabashed disdain for unions and workers, this plan is a deal in name only.

The Hatch–Wyden Fast Track bill is the same old model of closed door trade promotion legislation. Congress must not give away its constitutional authority and facilitate the ratification of environmentally destructive trade plans like the Trans Pacific Partnership trade agreement. There is no excuse for Senator Wyden, given widespread opposition to the bill within his home state of Oregon, to sell out the environment and workers in this way.

Fast tracking these powers allows Congress to abdicate its responsibility, effectively shutting the hatch on democracy and widening income inequality.

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Expert contact: Bill Waren, (202) 222-0746, wwaren@foe.org

Communications contact: EA Dyson, (202), 222-0730, edyson@foe.org

- See more at: [http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2015-04-hatch-wyden-introduce-same-old-fast-track-model#sthash.uyc6AA3k.dpuf](http://www.foe.org/news/news-releases/2015-04-hatch-wyden-introduce-same-old-fast-track-model%22%20%5Cl%20%22sthash.uyc6AA3k.dpuf%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

13. Joint Release By: ***Delaware Riverkeeper Network ~ Aquashicola/ Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy*** ***~ Brandywine Watershed Regeneration ~ Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy ~*** ***Environment New Jersey ~ Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition of Luzerne County*** ***~Harmony Hill Lodging and Retreat Center ~ Kickapoo Peace Circle*** ***~ PA Interfaith Power & Light ~ Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens*** ***~ Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter ~ South River Federation*** ***~ WESPAC Foundation ~ Waterkeeper Alliance***

**For Immediate Release**

April 16, 2015

**Contacts:**

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Bob Holliday, Founder, Brandywine Watershed Regeneration Initiative, 610-717-2265

Cricket Eccleston Hunter, Director, PA Interfaith Power & Light, 814.876.2597

Peter Cleary, Waterkeeper Alliance, 707.633.6002

Chris Rosenthal, owner and operator, Harmony Hill Lodging and Retreat Center, 607-28-6609

Joanne Kilgour, Chapter Director, Sierra Club PA Chapter, 412-965-9973 (cell)

Diana Muller, South RIVERKEEPER & Director of Scientific Research South River Federation,  410-224-3802

Jim Vogt, President, APWC, 570-992-5125

***Fast Track Legislation Introduced***

***To Rush Trade Deals Without Appropriate Congressional Input or Oversight***

***Environmental Organizations Strongly Oppose Bill***

***Washington, DC***:  Monday, April 16, 2015 Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and House Ways and Means Chairman Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) proposed the Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 that would fast track presidential and congressional approval of trade deals.  If this legislation were to pass it would give President Obama the authority to finish negotiating trade deals like that Trans Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement (TPP), sign them, and send them to Congress for a simple up and down vote with no amendments and limited debate.

Secret trade negotiations between the United States and 11 other countries to secure a Trans-Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement (TPP) are nearing an end. Leaked texts and news reports show that the TPP would weaken our environmental standards, open the floodgates to more fracking, mandate LNG exports to a growing number of countries, and empower corporations to attack climate policies and environmental protection laws in secret trade tribunals.   Other secret deals such as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership are also under negotiation and would benefit from the fast tracking of Congressional approval that prevents detailed congressional review and oversight prior to approval.

            The Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Aquashicola/ Pohopoco Watershed Conservancy, Brandywine Watershed Regeneration, Catskill Citizens for Safe Energy, Environment New Jersey, Gas Drilling Awareness Coalition of Luzerne County,Harmony Hill Lodging and Retreat Center, Kickapoo Peace Circle, PA Interfaith Power & Light, Peach Bottom Concerned Citizens, Sierra Club Pennsylvania Chapter,South River Federation, Waterkeeper Alliance, WESPAC Foundation, have issued the following statement:

*At a time when Americans are looking for Congressional leadership, we can't afford to tie the hands of Congress on the most important trade issues of the day.   Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 replicates the old failed model of fast track that enables the President to send already signed trade pacts to Congress for limited floor debate, no amendments, and a straight up-or-down vote. With fast track, Congress loses its ability to ensure that trade pacts protect communities and the environment.*

*This is particularly concerning given what we know about the Trans-Pacific Partnership.  Leaked TPP drafts and news reports show that the trade agreement would have a big impact on our climate. The TPP would weaken our environmental standards, open the floodgates to more fracking, grease the wheels for increased LNG exports, and empower corporations to attack climate and other policies in secret trade tribunals.*

*On a whole range of issues, the TPP simply falls short. We need a Congress that is fully engaged to ensure trade agreements like this reflect our values. Fast track would send the wrong message that Congress is asleep at the wheel when Americans are looking for leadership.*

*We urge all of our congressional leaders to Trade Priorities and Accountability Act of 2015 and to ensure they are fully engaged in the review of trade deals that affect both present and future generations of our nation.*

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