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Richmond, CA City Council Votes No to Fast-Tracking Corporate-Friendly Trade Deals

Declares Richmond a TPP-TAFTA-TiSA Free Zone

On Tuesday evening, February 17, the Richmond, CA City Council in an almost unanimous vote passed ["A Resolution Opposing the Fast-Track of Trans-Pacific Partnership \(TPP\) Agreement, TAFTA and TiSA" and declaring the City of Richmond a TPP-TAFTA-TiSA-Free Zone.](#)

The Resolution calls on President Obama and US Trade Representative Michael Froman to cease TPP, TAFTA, and TISA negotiations, to make all related text and processes public immediately, and to refrain from "Fast-Tracking" any trade agreement, in the interests of democracy, the people and the planet.

Councilmember and former Mayor Gayle McLaughlin introduced the Resolution with the co-sponsorship of Mayor Tom Butt and Councilmember Eduardo Martinez._

The Resolution cites specific ways these agreements are less about trade than about massive expansion of transnational corporate control, establishing rules which are enforced by corporate challenges to domestic laws before unaccountable tribunals, thus stripping decision-making from citizens and usurping democracy locally and globally.

During discussion, Councilmember McLaughlin stressed that only 5 of the 29 Chapters of the Trans-Pacific Partnership cover traditional trade issues, while the remainder "rob the city of protections and of democracy." Citing the local impacts of the TPP on land use, food safety, and economic policy such as "Buy Local" and "Sweatshop Free," she emphasized that trade agreements that give more power to corporations make it imperative for cities to pass resolutions to oppose "fast-tracking" secretly negotiated trade agreements.

Also during discussion, Council Member Eduardo Martinez stressed that corporations have an advantage over nation states in that they have no boundaries, can move around the world and exist to make profits. But, he said, the interest of the City Council and local government "is in our people." He emphasized that ours is a government "of, for, and by the people," and that when Congress is abdicating its responsibility, it is the responsibility of the Council to "stick up to protect ourselves" by passing the Resolution.

The Richmond resolution builds on similar resolutions passed by Dane County and Madison WI, and by Berkeley CA and under consideration by New York City. "This local resistance to corporate-friendly agreements that would trade away community rights and our democracy sends a strong message to Congress not to approve fast track trade authority expected to be introduced in Congress any time in the next few weeks," noted Nancy Price, Co-chair of the Alliance for Democracy. "

The Trans-Pacific Partnership being negotiated by the Pacific Rim countries represents 40% of world GDP. TAFTA, known formally as the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, covers the US and EU. TiSA, the Trade in Services Agreement, covers 70% of world trade in services, including financial services, which is being negotiated in secret by 50 countries outside of the stalled World Trade Organization negotiating framework.

For background on TPP-Free Zones visit www.tppfreezone.org