



Representative Brad Witt, Chair

Representative Sal Esquivel, Vice Chair

Written Testimony From:

Dana Geffner

Fair World Project

PO Box 42322

Portland, OR 97242

Phone: 800-631-9980

Fax: 503-914-1919

Email: [info@fairworldproject.org](mailto:info@fairworldproject.org)

May 21, 2013, 8:30 AM

Informational Hearing on the Trans-Pacific Partnership

My name is Dana Geffner, I live in Portland, Oregon. I am submitting testimony to express my strong concern over the lack of transparency in negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the potential negative impact of this policy on the people who produce our food. Family farmers and farm workers in North America and Europe are often confronted with unfair volatile prices, wages and working conditions like their counterparts in the Global South; we need to bring fair trade criteria home with “Domestic Fair Trade”.

Family-scale farmers in the Global North, including North America and Western Europe, face numerous challenges from corporate agribusiness, unfair domestic policies and so-called “free trade agreements.” Maintaining family farmers’ livelihoods is essential to national food security, rural community development and a safe and nutritious food system. Holding government agencies accountable, enacting fair trade policy and purchasing products from certified farmers contribute to efforts to support family farmers.

Past “free trade agreement” contain the NAFTA-style agriculture trade rules that have simultaneously undermined U.S. producers’ ability to earn a fair price for their crops at home and in the global marketplace. Multinational grain-trading and food-processing firms have made enormous profits, while farmers on both ends have been hurt. If this model continues with the Trans-Pacific Partnership, instead of establishing new agriculture terms, it would intensify the race to the bottom in commodity prices, pitting farmer against farmer and nation against nation to see who can produce food the cheapest, regardless of labor, environment or food-safety standards.

All policies and partnerships should be a tool to help end global hunger, support family farmers and encourage farming practices that protect public health and the environment. Judging from the legacy of past “free trade agreements,” and the extreme secrecy in trade negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership, this trade deal is likely to do just the opposite in an effort to expand exports at the expense of people and the environment. Agriculture and food systems are too important for the public to be kept in the dark. We need to create trade rules that ensure food sovereignty, livable wages for family farmers and farmworkers, and sustainable practices.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light blue background. The signature reads "Dana Geffner" in a cursive, flowing script. The first name "Dana" is written in a simple, rounded cursive, while the last name "Geffner" is more elaborate, with a large, stylized 'G' and a long, sweeping tail that extends to the right.

Dana Geffner