

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION OF THE BELLINGHAM CITY COUNCIL OPPOSING TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY ("FAST TRACK") FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP (TPP) AGREEMENT, CALLING FOR A DRAFT OF THE TPP TO BE MADE AVAILABLE TO CONGRESS, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, AND THE PUBLIC BEFORE THE CONCLUSION OF FINAL NEGOTIATIONS, AND ASKING THAT THE FINAL AGREEMENT SUPPORT THE ABILITY OF ITS SIGNATORIES TO ESTABLISH AND ENFORCE STANDARDS TO PROTECT THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, LOCAL ECONOMIES, AND THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF ITS CITIZENS

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham is committed to international trade that fosters economic growth and high standards for labor, our environment, and public health; and

WHEREAS, trade rules should promote the creation of family-wage jobs, encourage shared prosperity, protect our environment, ensure the safety of food and other products, facilitate the revitalization of U.S. manufacturing, set reasonable protections on intellectual property, and ensure local governments can regulate for high standards; and

WHEREAS, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is being negotiated in secret between the United States and eleven Pacific Rim nations, with minimal consultation with the U.S. Congress, and no consultation with our local governments, either directly, or through the US Conference of Mayors or the National Association of Counties; and

WHEREAS, although Washington is a trade-dependent state in which at least one-third of jobs in the state are directly or indirectly related to international trade, only five of the 29 TPP chapters relate to traditional trade issues, such as lowering tariffs; and

WHEREAS, the TPP will involve policy matters related to intellectual property, labor, human rights, agriculture, natural resources, the environment, government procurement, financial services, healthcare, telecommunications, energy, and others – all important to our city, other local jurisdictions, and Washington State; and

WHEREAS, the Investment Chapter of the TPP, leaked in 2012, includes “Investor-State Dispute Settlement” provisions that could undermine current local and national environmental safeguards and constrain future climate policy by allowing foreign corporations to sue the U.S. for damages over any law or regulation which they believe would reduce their future profits, and

WHEREAS, the City of Bellingham would have no right or ability to represent our interests before the tribunals that would hear cases brought by corporations under the Investment Chapter of the TPP, and such rulings could require the federal government to pay

City of Bellingham
City Attorney
210 Lottie Street
Bellingham, Washington 98225
360-778-8270

damages using taxpayer money, or remove important health, safety and environmental laws, thus harming Bellingham citizens and our democratic process; and

WHEREAS, local, state, and federal food safety rules could be challenged by foreign corporations as "illegal trade barriers," thus threatening the health of our residents; and

WHEREAS, similar investment rules in other trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) have allowed foreign corporations to challenge sound and democratic policymaking; and

WHEREAS, Bellingham residents could be harmed by the intellectual property sections of the draft TPP providing international pharmaceutical firms and others with longer, tighter control of patents, possibly increasing medicine prices and limiting access to cheaper generic drugs; and

WHEREAS, the President has urged Congress to approve the TPP under Trade Promotion Authority ("Fast Track") procedural rules, which limit our Congressional representatives' ability to adequately review the TPP and make a determination as to whether the TPP is in the best interests of the American people and our local residents, and which prevents Congress from offering any changes or amendments to the agreement;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELLINGHAM:

Section 1. The City of Bellingham declares its opposition to the granting of Trade Promotion Authority ("Fast Track") by the U.S. Congress for its consideration of the Trans-Pacific Partnership. We do not believe it is sound democratic process to bind congress to an up-or-down vote, particularly on a wide-reaching and controversial agreement written behind closed doors;

Section 2. The City of Bellingham calls on the U.S. Executive Branch to make a full copy of the negotiating draft available to members of Congress and the general public for consultation and comments before the creation of a final agreement;

Section 3. The City of Bellingham will convey this resolution to our Congressional delegation, to President Obama, and to U.S. Trade Representative Michael Froman along with a call for a new model for trade and investment that safeguards the ability of local and national governments to safeguard our environment, protect communities, domestic businesses and workers, and tackle climate change;

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Section 4. If these principles are not adequately addressed in the final Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement, the Bellingham City Council reserves the right to urge our Congressional delegation to vote to reject this agreement.

PASSED by the Council this _____ day of _____, 2015.

Council President

APPROVED by me this _____ day of _____, 2015.

Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Finance Director

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Office of the City Attorney

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