



1615 Capitol Ave., Suite 73.771
P.O. Box 997377, MS 7003
Sacramento, CA 95899-7377
<http://www.cclho.org>

PHONE: 916.440.7594
FAX: 916.440.7595
Roberta.Lawson@cdph.ca.gov

Roberta Lawson
RDH, MPH
Executive Administrator

October 30, 2013

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Dr. Ellen Shaffer
Co-Director, Center for Policy Analysis on Trade and Health/CPATH
San Francisco Presidio
P.O. Box 29586
San Francisco, CA 94129-0586
Phone 415-922-6204

Dear Dr. Schaffer:

In response to your request for advisement on tobacco control and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement, the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) recommends support for strong tobacco control measures in this agreement to protect the public's health.

In May 2012, the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) announced a proposal that would protect a nation's sovereignty in carrying out tobacco control efforts and would recognize the unique, harmful effects of tobacco. It is disappointing that this proposal has since been abandoned. Instead, the new USTR proposal would leave the administration's commitment to reduce tobacco use and ability to implement the Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act vulnerable to international trade challenges. Additionally, the new proposal would undermine the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the world's only public health treaty, and threaten the global health effort to reduce tobacco use worldwide.

Malaysia recently offered a proposal for a complete carve-out of tobacco control measures from the trade agreement, which would grant real protection for participating countries to enact and maintain tobacco use reduction efforts. We recommend encouraging the USTR to work with Malaysia and others to support a proposal that provides the greatest protection against future acts of subversion.

As you know, tobacco use continues to be the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. and worldwide, accounting for six million deaths around the world every year. Tobacco use costs our nation \$96 billion in direct medical spending and \$97 billion in lost productivity annually. The TPP agreement provides us with the opportunity to lead the world in reducing the burden of tobacco use-related deaths and diseases here and abroad, and we recommend encouraging the administration to ensure that the strongest possible public health measures are included in the trade agreement.

CCLHO was established in statute in 1947 to advise the California Department of Health Services (now California Department of Public Health), other departments, boards, commissions, and officials of federal, state and local agencies, the Legislature and other organizations on all matters affecting health. CCLHO membership consists of all legally appointed physician health officers in California's 61 city and county jurisdictions.

Thank you for your request. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at Muntu.davis@acgov.org or (510) 267-8010.

Sincerely,

Muntu Davis, MD, MPH
President, California Conference of Local Health Officers