



The Honorable Ron Kirk
United States Trade Representative
600 17th Street, NW
Washington DC 20508

8 May 2012

Re: Exclusion of Tobacco and Alcohol and their Products from Negotiations on the Trans Pacific Partnership Trade Agreement

Dear Ambassador Kirk:

On behalf of the members of the Human Rights and Tobacco Control Network (HRTCEN), I am writing to comment on the proposed Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP).

HRTCEN strongly urges you to ensure that tobacco products are excluded from all provisions of the TPP and any other Free Trade Agreements. Accordingly, tobacco control measures would be exempted from trade rules protecting intellectual property including trademarks as well as from any investor-state dispute resolution processes. Exclusion of tobacco would also not force trading partners to reduce or eliminate their current applied tariffs on these products. US trade negotiators should not ask any nation to weaken its current anti-smoking or tobacco control strategies in the interest of promoting free trade. Moreover, in order to help your office safeguard health while promoting economic growth, we and our colleagues in public health would benefit from being well informed about trade policy such as by full public health representation on trade advisory committees.

Tobacco currently claims almost 6 million lives per year and this is predicted to climb to 10 million around 2025, with about 70% of these deaths in developing economies. The United States is home to one of the leading tobacco transnational tobacco corporations. We should not be in the business of supporting and exporting a preventable cause of death and disease.

Thank you for consideration of these public health concerns.

Sincerely,

Carolyn M Dresler, MD, MPA
Human Rights and Tobacco Control Network
19 Indian Trail
Little Rock, AR 72207

Enclosure