

Dear Senators,

I wish to express my opposition to the USFTA in its current form, and to encourage you to reject legislation enabling the agreement.

In general, I find the agreement a threat to our democratic rights to determine future policies in the public interest. In particular, I am concerned about foreign, trade-biased interests having input into quarantine policy, and about the limitations to control service providers for commercially-provided but none-the-less vital services such as water, education and health, not to mention energy providers, where it may be in our global interest to provide disincentives to consumption of their products. I am unconvinced about the economic benefits, and feel they are far outweighed by the very likely risks. I believe the net economic result will be to increase the exporting of profits and disenfranchise small business (including farmers) and consumers. I am sure you have been given detailed arguments on these issues repeatedly, so I will not expand.

As an overall observation, I would like to suggest that we are entering a period of increasing uncertainty and volatility of both the environmental and political context on which our social and economic standards depend. It would be prudent to focus on maximizing resilience for those parameters that really matter - those that determine our quality of life. When change is imposed, as it will be, arrangements that are locked in place put more pressure on those which are unprotected to accommodate the change. In this agreement, we are locking in corporate profits and underwriting them with our social fabric.

I am all for globalisation and increasing international cooperation. But let our first and most binding treaties be on increasing environmental standards, civil and labour rights and public health. The FTA reflects some badly misdirected priorities.

Yours sincerely,

Jane O'Sullivan