From: Robyn Doherty
Sent: Thursday, 8 April 2004 11:58 AM
To: FTA, Committee (SEN)
Subject: FTA

Dear Sir / Madam

I have studied the NAFTA quite extensively and found it to be a retrogarde step for Mexico and Canada as well as for many sections of the USA.

Having studied our FTA with USA, I find many similarities but with some extra problems for Australia.

weakens price controls on medicines by allowing drug companies to seek reviews of decisions by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee, sets up a new joint policy committee which gives the US government a voice in Australian medicines policy based on US trade policy, not on the Australian policy of access to medicines for all.

It limits Australian content rules for new forms of media, and allows the US government to challenge these rules as a barrier to trade.

It adopts US copyright law, leading to higher costs for libraries, schools and universities,

It "binds" or freezes many areas of state and local government regulation at existing levels and limits the ability of governments to make new laws and policies on essential services like water,

It limits the powers of the Foreign Investment Review Board to review investment in the national interest, so that 90% of US investment will not be reviewed,

It sets up joint committees based on US trade policy to give the US government a say in quarantine and regulation of food labelling,

It outlaws government purchasing policies that give preference to local products or require US contractors to form links with local firms to support local employment.

It has a disputes process which enables the US government to challenge many Australian laws and regulations before a trade tribunal on the grounds that they are too burdensome for business or a barrier to trade.

Before Australians make the terrible mistake of being locked into an agreement that we will be bound to, I urge you to object to this agreement. Very few Australians ans Americans for that matte, will benefit.

Yours faithfully
A J Doherty