

From: Lois Katz <loiskatz@hotmail.com>
Sent: Friday, 13 December 2013 11:50 AM
To: Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement
Subject: POSSIBLE SPAM TPPA submission: Lois Katz - Private citizen

I am writing as a private citizen. I am concerned that the details of the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement are being decided in secrecy. The few details which are now emerging were leaked. The lack of openness with these very important negotiations is extremely disturbing and now that some of the details have emerged, the reason for this lack of transparency are revealing.

The TPP Agreement is linked to a proviso that US pharmaceutical companies be allowed to have longer patents on medicines sold in Australia. This would result in higher prices for longer periods of time on medicines. This cannot be in the best interest of the people of Australia. It would however, result in more profits for the United States pharmaceutical industry. The United States Trade Registry, in 2009, received public submission from US industry groups stating that they wanted further changes to Australian policies on the price controls on medicines through the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme. US corporations dictating our national policies would be a very bad outcome for Australia. Australian interests would come a poor second to these large companies.

There is also the worry that foreign corporations would have the right to bring charges against the Australian government if our laws interfere with their profits. The chance of corporations suing the Australian government for damages would become a reality. Why would Australia want to subject itself to this threat? We have the world's best legislation on tobacco and cigarette health warnings. If these warnings could be proven to reduce profits on tobacco sales in Australia, big tobacco would then be able to sue our government for loss of revenue. Given the track record of the tobacco industry and its penchant for law suits when its profits are endangered, this could be a big problem.

There is talk about the TPPA creating jobs. However, I would like to see proof of that. To date there is no proof of this. And, while the proposed agreement remains secret, we have no way of knowing whether there will be any significant economic benefits. Australia already has bilateral free trade agreements with the ten ASEAN (Association of SouthEast Asian Nations) and with four the TPPA governments.

The whole agreement should be put out in the public domain and openly debated in parliament and in the public media. If this fails to happen, we can only assume that the trade off in things like affordable medicine or the right of our government to be allowed to carry out its duty to govern Australia as it sees fit, will be sacrificed with nothing gained.

Lois Katz
Australian Citizen