



**Summary Notes: Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE)
Statement on The Transpacific Partnership to Canada's Committee on International
Trade**

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videoconference from Yellowknife*

The social and ecological determinants of health have a much greater impact on an individual's overall health status than the healthcare system does. The World Health Organization now calls climate change "the greatest threat to global health of the 21st century"(1) and the Lancet says that "tackling climate change could be the biggest global health opportunity of the 21st century."(2)

In order to provide a soft landing to Canadians in the health emergency that is climate change, we need to leave at least 80% of economic fossil fuel reserves in the ground,(3) undertake a full-scale low-carbon transition,(2) and develop a laser-focus on water security, food security and pharmaceutical security. (2) This means that all mitigation and adaptation policies are public health measures.

CAPE is concerned that the TPP's "Technical Barrier to Trade" provisions could place trade concerns ahead of standards to protect environmental health, and that the determination of a "legitimate" public welfare objective (Annex ar.3.b) will be made by a tribunal comprised of three investment lawyers with no training in public health. The inclusion of the voluntary exclusion from investor-state claims against any tobacco control measure in the agreement suggests that others too are concerned that other public health exceptions are inadequate. (4) The extension of pharmaceutical patents will also provide barriers to generic competition access which will cost Canadians more money and prevent access to affordable medicines worldwide.(5)

CAPE recommends strongly against Canada ratifying the TPP as it is currently written.

References:

1. Chan M. World Health Organization Call to Action on Climate Change. 2015. <http://www.who.int/globalchange/global-campaign/cop21/en/>
2. Watts N. The Lancet Commissions. Health and climate change: policy responses to protect public health. The Lancet. 2015. <http://www.thelancet.com/commissions/climate-change-2015>
3. Christophe McGlade PE. The geographical distribution of fossil fuels unused when limiting global warming to 2 °C. Nature. 517, 187–190
4. Ronald Labonte and Arne Ruckert P. POLICY BRIEF: The Trans-Pacific Partnership and Health: Potential Risks and Benefits University of Ottawa. 2016. <http://www.globalhealthequity.ca/sites/default/files/imce/Policy%20Brief%20TPP%20and%20Health.pdf>
5. Ronald Labonté AS, Arne Ruckert*. The Trans-Pacific Partnership: Is It Everything We Feared for Health? International Journal of Health Policy Management. 2016(5):1-10. http://www.ijhpm.com/article_3186_0.html