



## **LEGISLATIVE ALERT**

February 9, 2016

Dear Senator:

On behalf of the AFL-CIO, I write to urge you to oppose the conference report on H.R. 644, the Trade Facilitation and Trade Enforcement Act of 2015 (Customs Bill).

The Customs Bill, which when it emerged from the Senate had bipartisan support and included provisions supported by both labor and industry, was loaded up in the House with numerous controversial and partisan provisions that weakened or unacceptably altered it and would make it more difficult to negotiate trade agreements that are good for workers and the environment. Unfortunately, numerous of these unacceptable provisions remain in the bill that will be voted upon.

Stripped from the final bill is a critical bipartisan currency provision that would have made clear the U.S. can treat currency manipulation as a countervailable subsidy. The remaining currency provisions are a poor substitute, simply calling for “engagement” and with so-called “consequences” that simply won’t work—including the possible exclusion from OPIC funding, something the worst currency manipulators (including China and Japan) don’t receive anyway.

The conferenced Customs Bill also contains language that U.S. free trade agreements (FTAs) must not include obligations regarding greenhouse gas emissions. This will prevent the United States from making meaningful commitments on climate policy. It is incomprehensible how a 21<sup>st</sup> century trade agenda would ignore the reality of important climate issues.

This package also contains a harmful bill unrelated to trade. We strenuously oppose the inclusion of the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act (PITFA), which bans the authority of state and local governments to impose taxes on internet access. By restricting state and local government taxing authority, this bill reduces the ability of state and local governments to raise funds to invest in needed infrastructure, education, health care, job training and other vital public services. This unrelated harmful measure was unfortunately added at the last minute.

While the bill does contain Rep. Sanchez’s ENFORCE Act, which would address the circumvention of antidumping and countervailing duties and assist with addressing unfair trade, other provisions in this bill remain unacceptable.

The Customs Conference Report unfortunately too closely resembles the flawed House version of the bill and the AFL-CIO urges you to oppose it.

Sincerely,

William Samuel, Director  
Government Affairs Department