



# DON DAVIES, M.P.

## VANCOUVER KINGSWAY



July 10, 2014

Hon. Ed Fast  
Minister of International Trade  
Ottawa, Canada

Dear Minister Fast:

As you are well aware, the stakes of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) negotiations are high for Canada. These talks present an important opportunity for Canada to build stronger, sustainable trade linkages with countries that represent 40% of the world economy.

On the table are important issues affecting the Canadian economy, public policy and our international standing. Diversifying and deepening our trade relationships must be a priority for Canada – but agreements must be carefully negotiated if they are to benefit Canada's interests in the long term.

As the Official Opposition, the New Democratic Party wishes to highlight three major themes that we believe should guide Canada's positions throughout the TPP negotiations:

1. increasing the transparency of TPP negotiations;
2. promoting and defending important Canadian interests; and
3. supporting strong human rights, labour and environmental standards.

It is our view that Canada ought to aspire to a high degree of openness and accountability in conducting our trade policy. Broad stakeholder consultation is necessary to provide Canadian negotiators with the most comprehensive information possible. We believe that a culture of transparency is essential to obtain the support of Canadians.

We are concerned that the Government has failed to consult adequately with provinces, municipalities and First Nations throughout the TPP process. Public interest, labour, human rights and environmental groups have been ignored, as have academics, trade experts and key commercial and industrial sectors.

Furthermore, there needs to be greater transparency with elected officials. We are advised that Members of Congress in the United States have access to the TPP negotiating text. In the European Union, a public consultation process has been launched into the investment chapter of CETA and TTIP with text of that draft chapter publicly available. In contrast, in Canada we have a virtual absence of information regarding the TPP in general, and the Ottawa Round of negotiations specifically.

Accordingly, we call on your Government to release the draft text of the TPP to Parliamentarians on appropriate confidentiality terms; to implement a program of broad consultation with a full complement of significant Canadian

stakeholders; and to establish a regular reporting process to inform the Canadian public of the issues engaged by, and progress made in, the TPP negotiations.

Second, we call on your Government to advance and protect important Canadian interests vital to our economy and country.

We are aware that there are serious pressures being applied in the TPP negotiations to weaken Canada's supply managed sectors, our intellectual property regime, and our health care system. The ability of Canada to enact and enforce domestic legislative and regulatory frameworks is being challenged.

We believe that it is in Canada's interests, and reflects Canadians' desire, to maintain an agricultural policy that supports a strong farming sector in healthy rural communities, with a stable system that produces safe, healthy and affordable food. Canadians want fair trademark and copyright laws to ensure we have a free and open internet, a balanced creator-user structure and timely access to cost-effective prescription medicines. We believe it is critical to preserve unequivocally the ability of municipal, provincial, First Nations and federal governments to legislate in the public interest, particularly in the areas of social policy, environmental regulation and resource development.

We urge the Government to maintain these vital Canadian interests throughout the TPP talks.

Third, we would emphasize the importance of human rights in these negotiations. While we believe that human rights and democratic development must be important features of all economic pacts, the TPP engages these issues in a particularly concerning manner.

In a number of countries involved in the TPP negotiations, there is a lack of democracy, and an absence of normative freedoms including expression, press, religion, assembly and association. Child labour, forced labour, detention of political dissidents and draconian laws targeting the LGBTQ community are among the human rights violations that have been identified. All of these violate Canadian values and minimal standards of international conduct.

In our view, the Government ought to ensure that Canadian representations publicly advance democracy and respect for human rights, and require meaningful improvements as a condition of participation in the TPP.

Finally, we call on the Government to place any final agreement before Parliament and the Canadian public for a comprehensive analysis of its benefits and costs prior to formal commitment by Canada.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Davies', written in a cursive style.

Don Davies, MP

Official Opposition Critic for International Trade