

**Testimony to Maine Citizen's Trade Policy Commission
Public Hearing on CAFTA and other International Trade Agreements
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Much attention has been given to CAFTA, however not much has been said about the Andean Free Trade Agreement. I am particularly interested in learning more about the impacts that this trade agreement will have in my community as well as the impacts that it will have in Ecuador, Colombia, and Perú. Who will benefit from this trade agreement? Is it the citizens from all these nations; is it the local communities, or the states and municipalities? Who is really benefiting from the outcome of these negotiations? Why are transnational corporations so interested in promoting these type of bilateral trade agreements? What is the benefit to them? What is the benefit to their employees? Are these international negotiations balanced and equitable even though it is clear that the nations involved dissimilar in terms of economic wealth, social, labor, and environmental standards; not to mention the differences in technology, infrastructure, and communications.

It is of concern to know that these negotiations are done without the input of citizens from here and abroad who are the ones that at the end are impacted by these agreements. These are the people that do not get the pleasure of experiencing the fruits of these trade agreements in terms of seeing their personal income and savings accounts grow; however they are the people that are impacted by job loss, dismemberment of communities, and democratic disempowerment. The common people of Maine, Colombia, Ecuador, and Perú have not been informed about this trade agreement and have not been invited to participate in the process. Who is holding the negotiators on all these countries accountable? Who are they accountable to? Why are citizens informed only after the negotiations have been completed? Why is this process done behind closed doors even though it is affecting the lives of millions of people across borders?

Thank you from allowing citizens to give input on these crucial issues,

Stefano Tijerina