

CPTPP: Harper's trade deal with a new name



The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) began as a large multilateral trade agreement that was being negotiated by 12 countries bordering the Pacific Ocean. These countries included: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, Vietnam, and the United States. TPP negotiations concluded during the final days former Prime Minister Stephen Harper was in office, and the Trudeau government eventually signed the deal in 2016.

The deal was extremely controversial. In the U.S., presidential candidates opposed it, and Nobel Prize economist Joseph Stiglitz called it “the worst trade deal ever.” After being elected into office, U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order, pulling the U.S. out of the deal in 2017.

However, the remaining countries continued their negotiations. In Canada, in an effort to make Harper’s deal more appealing to Canadians, the agreement was renamed the “Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership” (CPTPP). The new name was one of the only things to change – much of the TPP and the CPTPP is the same.

Here’s how the old TPP and the new CPTPP agreements compare:

Job losses - same



This is still the agreement that Tufts University predicted would lead to 58,000 job losses in Canada. The Trudeau government still has not conducted an independent economic study of the CPTPP’s effects on the economy.

For example, according to [Unifor](#), auto rules favour the export of Japanese cars into Canada at the detriment of Canadian auto plants. The CPTPP has lower rules of origin than NAFTA and will permit Japanese cars with high quotients of auto parts from China and other low-wage countries to compete with Canadian automobile and parts companies.

Food sovereignty - same



The TPP and the CPTPP both threaten farmer’s livelihoods, rural communities, and the ability of our communities to have access to local, healthy food. Canada was pressured to give over some of its [supply managed market](#) to the CPTPP countries. The supply management program applies to turkey, chicken, egg, and dairy industries in Canada, and is the envy of farmers all over the world.

[Supply management](#) is a program that sets quotas based on the demand of the market. With supply being taken by foreign producers, Canadian farmers’ livelihoods and their ability to run family farms will be in jeopardy.

The CPTPP also prevents [food labelling laws, has provisions that accelerate the acceptance of GMOs, and creates processes where industry can change regulations on food safety, pesticides, environmental](#) provisions and more.

Threats to public services - same



The TPP and the CPTPP have “negative list” and “ratchet” provisions that encourage the privatization of public services. Under these provisions, anything that is public can be made private. However, once a service is privatized it cannot be brought back into public hands.

As well, foreign companies in the CPTPP must be allowed to bid on our public services. Provisions on state-owned enterprises limit Crown Corporations, which must be treated like private businesses. Procurement provisions also prevent federal government entities from implementing “buy local” or “buy Canadian” policies. We also cannot discriminate against CPTPP countries in order to protect our Canadian cultural industry in its national, Indigenous, and multicultural diversity.

Gender and Indigenous clauses - same



There are no gender or Indigenous clauses in the CPTPP or the TPP. The Trudeau government touted its progressive ideas for trade, including gender and indigenous chapters which it promised to insert in both the CPTPP and NAFTA, but neither made it in. The only mention of gender equality and Indigenous rights is in the [preamble](#) of the CPTPP, which is symbolic and not legally binding.

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples requires “free and prior informed consent” of First Nations. This is not the case with the CPTPP.

Corporate courts for the 1 per cent - same



The TPP and the CPTPP both contain [investor-state dispute settlement \(ISDS\) provisions](#). These provisions allow companies to bypass domestic courts in order to sue governments over environmental or public policy regulations that get in the way of their corporate profits.

Under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), Canada has become the most sued developed country in the world thanks to these special investor courts. Right now, Canada is facing \$2.6 billion in corporate lawsuits.

With the CPTPP, Canada will be vulnerable to – and have to defend – corporate lawsuits from seven more countries that it currently does not have ISDS agreements with.

Strangely, Canada has defended having ISDS provisions in the agreement. New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern sought to get around ISDS by [inking side agreements](#) where countries agreed to not use ISDS provisions between each other. Australia, Brunei, Darussalam, Malaysia, Peru, and Vietnam agreed. Canada did not. Canada said it would use ISDS responsibly, however, it has no control over whether corporate Canada uses these provisions or not.

Access to drugs - different in the CPTPP



Without the pressure of U.S. pharmaceutical interests, the remaining countries decided to eliminate the provisions that would extend pharmaceutical patents, resulting in higher drug prices for a longer period of time. The original TPP extended patents on biologics – the kind of drugs made out of human or animal tissue – which help people living with arthritis, Crohn's and other diseases. Extending the patent protections on those drugs by two years would have made them unaffordable to many.

Labour and the environment - same



Many labour and environmental groups have condemned the absolute lack of enforcement mechanisms in these chapters. These chapters do not bind countries to maintaining their Paris Climate Accord commitments, nor do they do more than just aspire to protect the environment and labour. The chapters do not set standards to meet. The environment chapters do not use the word "climate change" and only refer to [four international multilateral climate agreements](#). Only one agreement on endangered species is binding.

But don't we need to diversify our trade?

With the looming uncertainty of NAFTA talks, many people will argue that we need to diversify trade – and that might be true.

But there is no evidence that entering into a trade agreement like the CPTPP actually benefits trade.

Canada has an unprecedented number of free trade agreements, but exports have grown more quickly to countries not covered by such agreements. According to economist Jim Stanford, Canadian exports to South Korea actually [declined](#) after a bilateral trade agreement came into force. The federal government has not conducted any independent analysis of the CPTPP's economic benefits and costs.

The rules set out in the CPTPP are designed to empower corporations. As the power of corporations continues to grow globally, causing unprecedented inequality and creating roadblocks to fighting climate change, we cannot sign yet another agreement to empower the one per cent.

18,000 Canadians said "no" to this trade deal

According to an [Access to Information request](#) made by the Council of Canadians, 99 per cent of more than 18,000 participants told the government that they oppose the TPP In Global Affairs Canada's own consultations. [According to an Angus Reid poll, only 32 per cent](#) of Canadians support the deal.

The TPP – and now the CPTPP – was negotiated completely in secret without proper review or true public debate. Like most trade deals, the CPTPP will benefit corporations and the richest 1%.

A progressive trade agreement would improve conditions for workers, farmers, Indigenous peoples and others. It would enforce global action on climate change and provide protections for the environment, public services and our diverse cultures.

The Council of Canadians is calling on Members of Parliament and the Senate to stop the ratification of the CPTPP in order to conduct additional public consultations and economic analysis of its merits.

