

Oakland Leaders Call for a New NAFTA Benefiting People and the Planet *Town Hall to Challenge Trump Administration on Corporate Trade Policies*

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Oakland — Despite President Trump’s heated rhetoric against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), recently leaked administration plans to revamp the agreement bear a striking resemblance to the same job-killing, corporate-led trade agenda he claimed to oppose during his campaign. In response, the California Trade Justice Coalition and Oakland leaders are challenging Trump to broker a new NAFTA that puts people and the planet first.

At a community Town Hall to be held this evening, April 20th at 6 pm at the Citizen Engagement Lab in downtown Oakland, local leaders will speak out against backroom trade deals, and outline their vision of a new NAFTA that protects working families, empowers youth, expands access to medicines, and improves environmental health across North America.

For decades, corporate trade deals like NAFTA have had disproportionate impacts on low-income communities, negatively affecting their livelihoods and health. “The people of West Oakland, particularly communities of color, continue to suffer from freight-related pollution coming out of the Port of Oakland,” said Margaret Gordon, co-founder of the West Oakland Environmental Indicators Project. “Such communities and the workers in those industries are paying with their lives. As a matter of justice, future trade agreements must include tough enforcement of environmental air quality rules that protect our communities.”

President Trump often portrays Mexico as the clear winner under NAFTA. But Americans aren’t the only ones who lost good-paying jobs since it was enacted in 1994. The agreement also displaced millions of Mexicans from their farms, drove down real wages in Mexico, and pushed another 20 million into poverty. “NAFTA’s legacy has been 23 years of forced migration from Mexico’s ancestral lands, growing economic insecurity, and environmental devastation,” said Gerardo Marín, Youth Rising Director of the Pollination Project. “It’s time to transform relations between our countries to uplift our peoples and create dignified work across borders.”

Rank-and-file nurses are also worried that Trump’s NAFTA plans could endanger public health. “California’s nurses are deeply troubled by Trump’s plans to expand corporate drug patent monopolies in the coming NAFTA talks,” said Malinda Markowitz, Co-President of the California

Nurses Association. “Our trade policies should prioritize improving people's access to affordable, life-saving medications by reducing their inflated costs, not boosting the enormous profits of pharmaceutical companies.”

In March, the administration’s much-anticipated NAFTA proposal circulated through the halls of Congress, but appeared only to seek modest tweaks to what Trump once called the “worst trade deal” ever. Instead of sweeping changes to stop the offshoring of manufacturing jobs or to eliminate NAFTA’s corporate court system that’s weakening U.S. labor and environmental laws, the plan would expand protections for digital commerce, strengthen intellectual property rights for corporations, and preserve NAFTA’s ban on Buy American programs.

“The Trump Administration is blatantly siding with corporations over working people in a process that’s secretive and undemocratic,” said Aaron Lehmer-Chang, Director of the California Trade Justice Coalition. “Thankfully, people are standing up to Trump’s trade hypocrisy and demanding that he prioritize working families and our environment over more corporate profits.”

In the months ahead, the [California Trade Justice Coalition](#) and its allies are hosting a series of town halls highlighting NAFTA’s negative impacts, while promoting positive solutions that can improve local economies, communities, and environmental health across North America.

EVENT DETAILS:

What: Oakland Voices for Trade Justice: A NAFTA Town Hall

When: Thursday, April 20, 6-8pm

Where: Citizen Engagement Lab, 1330 Broadway, 3rd Floor, Oakland, CA

Description:

Join the California Trade Justice Coalition for a discussion of the devastating impacts NAFTA has had on workers, migrants, and the environment across North America. Together, we will hear from grassroots leaders fighting for fair trade and economic justice and how we can take action to make sure NAFTA renegotiations truly benefit working people and the environment.

Please RSVP here to confirm your spot! <http://bit.do/OaklandNAFTATownHall>

The event is co-sponsored by the California Trade Justice Coalition, California Nurses Association, Citizens Trade Campaign, Friends of the Earth, Global Exchange, Rooted in Resilience, Sierra Club, and the California Labor Federation