



Association Of State And Territorial Health Officials
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President Barack H. Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We write today to express our deep concern regarding provisions being advanced by the United States Trade Representative (USTR) for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement regarding tobacco.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States, accounting for approximately one of every five deaths (438,000) each year. More deaths are caused by tobacco use than from HIV/AIDS, illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined. Each year, tobacco use results in \$157 billion in direct and indirect medical costs.

To most effectively combat tobacco-related morbidity and mortality and ensure significant program outcomes, tobacco use prevention and control programs must be fully integrated and supported within state health agencies. Infrastructure must be built and maintained for these programs, as well as adequate organizational and financial support.

The Association of State and Territorial Health Officials' (ASTHO) members have a strong history of supporting programs that improve tobacco prevention and control efforts in their states. ASTHO is the national nonprofit organization representing public health agencies in the United States, the U.S. Territories, and the District of Columbia. ASTHO members, the chief health officials of these jurisdictions, formulate and influence sound public health policy and ensure excellence in state-based public health practice. ASTHO members, along with our key public health partners and 20 affiliate organizations, represent the leaders in state, territorial, and local health departments.

We are deeply concerned that the language proposed by the USTR undermines the efforts of states and the nation to effectively address tobacco use, conduct tobacco control programs and enforce tobacco policies. We request your leadership to ensure that tobacco control measures and tobacco products are "carved out" of existing and future trade agreements, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) currently being negotiated. The "carve out" language must be

broad in scope as it relates to tobacco prevention and control and unambiguous in its intent. It is critical that trade agreements protect the nation's health by not superseding current and future public health efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul E. Jarris, MD".

Paul Jarris, MD, MBA
Executive Director
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials