

January 14, 2021

Dear President-elect Biden,

We, the undersigned group of Indigenous women leaders, call on you to take immediate action to stop the Keystone XL, Line 3, and Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) pipeline projects on day one of your Presidency. These three pipelines pose grave threats to Indigenous rights, cultural survival, Sacred water and land, the global climate, and the public health crises within our communities, which have been greatly exacerbated by Covid-19.

In 2020, we experienced severe climate impacts, with record-breaking heat, wildfires, and hurricanes. Now, as we enter a new Administration, the U.S. must take seriously the climate emergency at hand, and act urgently to meet and exceed the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement. Indigenous knowledge and scientists have made clear that a critical part of stopping carbon emissions in the atmosphere is keeping fossil fuels in the ground. Massive pipeline projects such as Keystone XL, Line 3, and DAPL, are not in alignment with the natural laws or with meeting these commitments.

Combined, these three pipelines would emit catastrophic amounts of carbon dioxide annually¹, increasing major health risks to our Indigenous communities along the pipeline routes. Line 3 alone crosses more than 200 water bodies and 800 wetlands², and would irreparably harm sensitive ecosystems through construction and create immense risk of tar sands spills into these Sacred and protected areas. The previous Administration created devastation to environmental protections that must be rectified immediately.

As construction on the KXL and Line 3 pipelines move forward, Indigenous women are put in danger of further violence³. Already, our communities are dealing with the epidemic of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW) and our families are impacted without the support of federal or state agencies. We still have daughters, aunties, mothers, cousins, and two-spirit relatives who have never been found and whose perpetrators have never been brought to justice. There is clear evidence that the epidemic of MMIW is directly linked to fossil fuel production. Workers from outside our local communities come to construction sites to build pipelines, creating temporary housing communities known as "man camps" near the pipeline route, which are oftentimes on or next to Indigenous Peoples territories. Studies⁴, reports⁵ and Congressional hearings⁶ have found that man camps lead to increased rates of sexual violence and sexual trafficking of Indigenous women and girls, as well as an influx of drug trafficking. Indigenous women leaders along KXL and Line 3 have already reported adverse impacts from the current construction that has happened, all made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ See, for further research, [Drilling Towards Disaster: Why U.S. Oil and Gas Expansion Is Incompatible with Climate Limits](#), Oil Change International, January 16, 2019.

² [Line 3 opponents file federal suit to try to block the pipeline](#), MPR News, December 28, 2020.

³ See, for example, [The Darkest Side of Fossil-Fuel Extraction](#), Scientific American, October 24, 2019.

⁴ [Drilling Down: An Examination of the Boom-Crime Relationship in Resource-Based Boom Counties](#), Western Criminology Review 15(1):3-17, 2014.

⁵ [Native American and Women's Organizations Request UN Help on Sexual Violence](#), Indian Country Today.

⁶ [Human Trafficking in the U.S.](#), C-SPAN, September 23, 2013

Since the onset of the pandemic, Indigenous Peoples across the U.S. are experiencing the devastating impact of the virus's spread⁷ due to colonial policies and practices that have led to historically underfunded healthcare programs and significant health disparities⁸. Moving forward with pipeline construction of Line 3 or KXL will only exacerbate the issues Indigenous communities already endure.

The KXL⁹, Line 3 and DAPL pipelines are also in clear violation of our Treaty Rights and all are moving forward without the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) of Indigenous Tribes and Nations. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes FPIC as a specific right that pertains to Indigenous Peoples, and allows our Nations to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect our communities and territories¹⁰.

The KXL project has been opposed by Tribes, land owners, and environmental groups since the very beginning. The proposed Line 3 pipeline route violates the Treaty Rights of the Anishinaabe by endangering treaty-protected wild rice beds and other critical natural and cultural resources in the 1842, 1854, and 1855 treaty areas. DAPL, and its parent company Energy Transfer Partner, continue to be met with legal challenges from Tribal Nations along the pipeline corridor, many of which did not consent to the project in the first place. Despite our opposition, these pipelines continue to be built. As you take steps to acknowledge and uphold Tribal sovereignty, FPIC is a clear way forward for aligning U.S. policies with established international and Indigenous Peoples' protocols.

Below are five actions you can take to uphold Indigenous sovereignty, align your Administration with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement and exceed its agenda, and keep fossil fuels in the ground.

We request on day one of your administration that you:

1. Fulfill your promise and rescind all permits for Keystone XL pipeline.
2. Order a review of the Section 404 and 408 permits for the Line 3 pipeline.
3. Shut down all DAPL operations and order the Army Corps of Engineers to complete a thorough Environment Impact Statement for DAPL.
4. Issue a Presidential Memoranda to halt construction and operations of the Keystone XL, Line 3, and DAPL fossil fuel pipeline projects, including the construction of temporary housing for workers, also known as "man camps".
5. Take executive action requiring federal agencies to engage in a process of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent of American Indian and Alaska Native Indigenous Nations, as laid out by the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

⁷ [COVID-19 Mortality Among American Indian and Alaska Native Persons — 14 States, January–June 2020](#), CDC MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep 2020;69:1853–1856.

⁸ [The impact of historical trauma on American Indian health equity](#), Medical News Today, November 27, 2020.

⁹ [TC Energy to Build Keystone XL Pipeline](#), TC Energy, March 2020.

¹⁰ [Free Prior and Informed Consent: An indigenous peoples' right and a good practice for local communities](#), Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, 2016.

No more broken promises, no more broken Treaties. We represent Indigenous Nations and Tribes from across the United States all impacted by fossil fuel extraction and pipelines, and we urge you to fulfill the United States promise of sovereign relations with Tribes, and your commitment to robust climate action. Please heed our words, we are the women leaders of our communities and we are calling on you to show us on day one your commitment to fulfilling the U.S. treaty obligations and ending the reign of fossil fuel extraction in our tribal territories.

Respectfully,

Casey Camp-Horinek, Ponca Nation, Environmental Ambassador, Women's Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) Senior Project Leader/Board Member

Joye Braun, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Community Organizer with the Indigenous Environmental Network

Faith Spotted Eagle, Ihanktonwan Dakota, Oceti Sakowin, Brave Heart Society Elder

LaDonna Brave Bull Allard, Lakota historian, member of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and founder/landowner of Sacred Stone Camp

Winona LaDuke, White Earth Nation, Executive Director, Honor the Earth

Tara Houska, JD, Couchiching First Nation Anishinaabe, Founder, Giniw Collective

Simone Senogles- Chi-noodin Ikwe, Red Lake Anishinaabe, Leadership Team, Indigenous Environmental Network

Mysti Babineau (makadewaa-binesi), Anishinaabe, Red Lake Band of Ojibwe

Kandi White, Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara, Native Energy & Climate Campaign Coordinator with Indigenous Environmental Network

Michelle Cook (Dineh), Divest Invest Protect

Vivian Billy, Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma, President/Founder MMIP of Northern Oklahoma.

Cherri Foytlin, Dine'/ Navajo Nation, L'eau Est La Vie Camp

Monique Verdin, United Houma Nation, Another Gulf is Possible

Nina Berglund (Wanagi Thawacipi Win), Northern Cheyenne & Oglala Lakota, Youth Leader and Activist

Judy Wilson, Secwépemc, Chief of Neskonlith Indian Band & Union of BC Indian Chiefs Executive Member

Mechelle Sky Walker, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Indigenous Environmentalist & Political Activist

Harmony Lambert, Chumash Nation, Vice President of the Board & Direct Action Trainer at the Indigenous Peoples Power Project (IP3)

Eriel Tchekwie Deranger, member of the Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation and Executive Director of Indigenous Climate Action

Ellen Gabriel, Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk Nation), Turtle Clan, Indigenous Activist

Jennifer K. Falcon, Fort Peck Assiniboine Sioux, Indigenous Environmental Network

Alison Iakonnhiio Ehara-Brown, (Mohawk), Grandmother Advisor, Idle No More SF Bay

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