



Dene National Office
Assembly of First Nations (NWT)

5125- 50th Street
P.O. Box 2338
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2P7

Toll Free: 1 866-511-4081
Phone: (867) 873-4081
Fax: (867) 920-2254
Website: www.denenation.com



National Chief Shawn Atleo
Assembly of First Nations
Trebla Building
473 Albert Street, Suite 900
Ottawa, ON K1R 5B4

September 23, 2011

Dear National Chief:

RE: Endorsement of Mother Earth Accord

On September 16th, 2011, the Dene Nation and other First Nations, tribal leaders, and property owners from the United States and Canada worked together to draft the Mother Earth Accord. The Accord lays out our reasons for opposing the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, which would transport tar sands crude oil from Alberta to refineries in the southern US.

Among other things, the Accord calls for a moratorium on tar sands development, full consultation under the principles of free, prior, and informed consent, and a rejection by the Whitehouse of the Presidential Permit required to construct the pipeline.

We are asking for your support in opposing the Keystone XL pipeline by endorsing the Mother Earth Accord. A copy of the Accord is attached. Endorsement may come from Chiefs and Councils, Tribal Councils, other Aboriginal organizations, and individuals.

To endorse the Accord, please draft a letter on your letterhead that clearly states, "We agree with the Mother Earth Accord." You may also include other comments and information about your community and your concerns. A copy of Dene Nation's endorsement letter has been attached as an example.

We will accept endorsement letters until the US government has made a final decision on the Keystone XL pipeline (expected in early November), but we would appreciate to receive your endorsement before October 7, 2011, so representatives of Dene Nation can hand-deliver it to representatives of the US government on our trip to Washington, D.C. for pipeline hearings.

Please send all endorsement letters by email to dtseleie@denenation.com or by fax to 867-920-2254. You may contact Dene Nation's Land and Environment Secretariat at 867-873-4081 if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you, we look forward to receiving your letters of support for this important Accord.

Sincerely,

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief
AFN Regional Chief, NWT

Attachments (2)

"Implementing Treaty & Aboriginal Rights Since 1970"



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September 19, 2011

To whom it may concern:

RE: Mother Earth Accord

The Dene Nation agrees with and endorses the Mother Earth Accord.

Sincerely,

Bill Erasmus
Dene National Chief
AFN Regional Chief, NWT

Mother Earth Accord

September 2011

Tribal Government Chairs and Presidents, Traditional Treaty Councils, and US property owners, with First Nation Chiefs of Canada, impacted by TransCanada's proposed Keystone XL tar sands pipeline and tar sands development present at the Rosebud Sioux Tribe Emergency Summit, September 15-16, 2011, on the protection of Mother Earth and Treaty Territories:

Recognizing that TransCanada's proposed Keystone XL pipeline would stretch 1,980 miles, from Hardisty, Alberta, Canada to Nederland, Texas, carrying up to 900,000 barrels per day of tar sands crude oil, which would drive additional tar sands production;

Recognizing the existing resolutions and letters in opposition to the Keystone XL pipeline;

Guided by the principles of traditional indigenous knowledge, spiritual values, and respectful use of the land;

Affirming our responsibility to protect and preserve for our descendants, the inherent sovereign rights of our Indigenous Nations, the rights of property owners, and all inherent human rights;

Affirming our Indigenous view that the Earth is our true mother, our grandmother who gives birth to us and maintains all life;

Recognizing that the tar sands in northern Alberta, Canada is one of the largest remaining deposits of unconventional oil in the world, containing approximately 2 trillion barrels, and there are plans for a massive expansion of development that would ultimately destroy an area larger than the state of Florida;

Recognizing that tar sand development has devastating impacts to Mother Earth and her inhabitants and perpetuates the crippling addiction to oil of the United States and Canada;

Recalling in September 2010, the Assembly of First Nations of Canada called on the United States government to take into account the environmental impacts of tar sands production on First Nations in its energy policy, citing the high rates of cancer in the downstream Fort Chipewyan community, which prominent scientists say are potentially linked to petroleum products;

Recognizing the findings published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences that tar sands production releases 13 elements considered priority pollutants under the U.S. Clean Water Act, including lead, mercury, and arsenic into the Athabasca River in northern Alberta, which flows 3,000 miles downstream to the Arctic Ocean;

Recognizing that tar sands production produces three times the greenhouse gas emissions of conventional oil and NASA climate scientist James Hansen has said that if the tar sands are fully developed, it will be “essentially game over” for the climate;

Recognizing that Canada’s greenhouse gas emissions from tar sands development have more than doubled since 1990, which is the main reason Canada is failing to meet its greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol;

Concerned that Indigenous people are most vulnerable to the social, cultural, spiritual, and environmental impacts of climate change;

Recognizing that Exxon-Imperial and ConocoPhillips Heavy Haul shipments are attempting to haul more than 200 oversized loads of heavy oil machinery from the Port of Lewiston, Idaho along Highway 12 into Montana, then north to the tar sands project in Alberta, Canada;

Concerned that tar sands crude oil is more toxic, corrosive, and abrasive than conventional crude oil and poses additional pipeline safety risks that have not been fully assessed by the U.S. Department of State in its final Environmental Impact Statement for the Keystone XL pipeline, issued August 26, 2011;

Recalling that TransCanada’s year-old Keystone pipeline, from Manitoba, Canada to Patoka, Illinois and Cushing Oklahoma, has had 14 spills in the U.S. portion since it started operation in June 2010, and was temporarily shut down by regulators in late May, 2011;

Recognizing TransCanada’s extremely poor safety record for the Keystone pipeline, it is probable that the Keystone XL pipeline will have frequent spills because it will have similar design specifications;

Concerned that oil spills from the Keystone XL pipeline would destroy live-sustaining water resources, including the Ogallala Aquifer, which provides drinking water for millions of people and farmland irrigation throughout the Midwestern United States;

Concerned that construction of the Keystone XL pipeline will impact sacred sites and ancestral burial grounds, and treaty rights throughout traditional territories, without adequate consultation on these impacts;

Concerned that the Keystone XL pipeline would increase air pollution in the communities surrounding the refineries that the pipeline would service where people of color, Indigenous peoples, and poor people are already experiencing high rates of cancer and respiratory illness;

Recalling that TransCanada’s permit application to the Canadian government for the Keystone XL pipeline said it will increase oil prices in the United States by \$4 billion per year;

Acknowledging that the Keystone XL pipeline is not designed to provide the United States with energy security and that industry documents indicate Gulf Coast refineries operate in a free trade

zone and plan to refine tar sands oil into petroleum products that are intended for export overseas;

Therefore, we are united on this Mother Earth Accord, which is effective immediately, that it be resolved as follows:

We support and encourage a moratorium on tar sands development;

We insist on full consultation under the principles of “free, prior and informed consent,” from the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples both in the United States and Canada;

We urge regional authorities to halt the Exxon-Imperial and ConocoPhillips Heavy Haul shipments of tar sands equipment through the United States and Canada;

We urge the United States and Canada to reduce their reliance on oil, including tar sands, and invest in the research and development of cleaner, safer forms of sustainable energy and transportation solutions, including smart growth, fuel efficiency, next-generation biofuels and electric vehicles powered by solar and wind energy.

We strongly believe that the proposed Keystone XL tar sands pipeline is not in the national interest of the United States or Canada; and

We urge President Obama and Secretary of State Clinton to reject the Presidential Permit for the Keystone XL pipeline.

Signed by: