

Interfaith Statement of Support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe
September 19, 2016

We, a coalition of diverse faith traditions, are united across theological lines by a common moral call to affirm and support the dignity of all people and to care for all of God's creation. We therefore join with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in their efforts to protect their sovereignty, water, culture, lifeways, and sacred sites. They, with so many leaders and peoples of other tribal nations and other supporters, are blocking the proposed route of the Dakota Access Pipeline. The pipeline would send as much as 570,000 barrels per day of Bakken crude oil across the tribe's ancestral lands and the Missouri River, the tribe's major source of water.

We applaud the [decision](#) on September 9th by the Department of Justice, the Department of the Army and the Department of the Interior, not to authorize construction of the pipeline on Army Corps land bordering or under Lake Oahe until the Corps determines whether its previous decisions should be reconsidered at the site under applicable federal laws. We are also grateful for the Administration's commitment to formal consultation with the tribal nations on measures to ensure meaningful tribal input into infrastructure-related reviews and decisions and the protection of tribal lands, resources, and treaty rights. We too urge peaceful relations between the peoples at the site that leads to a satisfactory resolution.

We hope that the Corps' review of all applicable laws includes environmental as well as cultural and historical impacts upon affected tribal nations. We hope the written concerns expressed to the Corps prior to its permit approval of the pipeline, by the [Department of Interior](#), [Environmental Protection Agency](#) and [American Council on Historic Preservation](#) are duly considered.

We call upon all parties to recognize and account for significant overarching factors within this controversy, including the degree of adequacy of tribal consultation in the past and present of US-tribal relations. We note for example that a central location in this defense of tribal lands and waters – Lake Oahe – did not even exist until the 1960s, when the federal government created the Oahe dam without the consent of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe. The dam flooded over 200,000 acres of the tribes' lands, [forcing peoples from their homes](#), submerging towns, critical natural resources, burial sites, and sacred places.

Further, no pipeline is immune to leaks. In May 2016, an estimated [120,000 gallons of oil & wastewater](#) leaked from a pipeline near the city of Marmarth, North Dakota. [300 oil pipeline breaks](#) occurred in the state in 2012–2013 alone. In January 2015, over 50,000 gallons of Bakken crude oil [spilled into the Yellowstone River](#) in Montana. Even with new pipeline construction technology, this could happen across the 1,172 miles of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

Finally, our faith traditions call for action to address the urgent challenge of climate change. The well-being and future of all peoples depend upon our willingness to transition justly and quickly away from fossil fuels and towards carbon free alternatives.

Therefore, we stand with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, other tribal nations and indigenous peoples in support of their children, their tribal sovereignty, natural resources, cultural heritage and sacred places. We applaud the federal government's decision to halt pipeline construction on Corps land until more thorough reviews of applicable laws and adequacy of tribal consultation are conducted. We pray for a peaceful resolution that brings forth a new and more equitable chapter for tribal nations, and a just transition towards a carbon-free future.

With hope and prayers for our shared future,

Christian Reformed Church in North America, Office of Social Justice
Columban Center for Advocacy and Outreach
Disciples Peace Fellowship
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Green Chalice, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Interfaith Power & Light
InterReligious Task Force on Central America
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas' Extended Justice Team
Sojourners
Young Evangelicals for Climate Action