

December 2015

***Keep Fossil Fuels in the Ground:  
A Declaration for the Health of Mother Earth***

We come together, recognizing the rights of nature and our interdependent and spiritual relationship with Mother Earth.

We honor Indigenous peoples' spiritual and sacred understanding of Mother Earth and their relationship with her. We respect their leadership in restoring humanity's sacred and healthy relationship with the natural world.

We recognize that the extraction, transportation, and consumption of fossil fuels has caused serious harm to the land, air, water, atmosphere and all forms of life, and is a major contributor to our climate crisis and mass extinction. These harms are disproportionately borne by those who do not profit from the economic and political systems that have caused them, bear no responsibility for the crisis, and lack adequate resources to adapt to our changing climate. This includes communities directly injured by the extraction and use of fossil fuels and those on the frontlines of the climate crisis.

We recognize that to avoid exacerbating the climate crisis and to return to a healthy relationship with Mother Earth, the vast majority of the world's fossil fuels must remain in the ground. Governments must put the needs of people and communities above corporate profits by taking bold and immediate action to end fossil fuel extraction because the natural world can no longer wait. International forums such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change's 21st Conference of the Parties in Paris provide important opportunities for world leaders to strengthen community energy by making ambitious progress towards keeping fossil fuels in the ground.

We strive for a world in which all people and our governments and institutions:

- Respect the rights of nature, Indigenous peoples, immigrated communities and communities forced to migrate, women, frontline communities and future generations, including the internationally recognized rights of Indigenous peoples to free, prior and informed consent and their right to say "no" to extractive activities on their traditional lands;
- Repair the damage caused by centuries of colonialism, racism, environmental genocide, and extractive economies;
- Promote an economy that is based on interdependence with and responsibility towards Mother Earth, remains within ecological limits, and redefines wealth away from financial accumulation and towards sufficiency and well-being; and
- Make a just transition to democratized, equitable, clean and 100% renewable energy for all.

To achieve this vision we demand:

- Full recognition and support - including adequate and direct funding - of the rights of Indigenous, impacted and frontline communities, and their informed and effective leadership and participation in developing and implementing this vision;
- Fossil fuels be kept in the ground by ending exploration and new extraction to protect Mother Earth and remain well in line with Indigenous knowledge and scientifically based climate limits;
- An immediate end to public funding and other subsidization of fossil fuel exploration, extraction and infrastructure, and investment of the resources necessary to enact a just transition to a clean and renewable energy economy for all, prioritizing frontline communities;
- An end to the fossil fuel industry's stranglehold on our political and governance systems at all levels to ensure that energy policies follow climate policies based on equity and science, so that the real interests of all are protected. To start, the undue influence of the fossil fuel industry in international and domestic policymaking must end, and industry must not be permitted to participate in international climate negotiations;
- Rejection of false solutions that perpetuate or justify the extraction and use of fossil fuels, or that continue or create new harms to our air, water, lands, communities and climate;
- Rejection of all market based mechanisms that increase inequality, violate human rights, expedite the destruction of ecosystems or allow polluters to avoid cutting pollution at the source;
- Provision of adequate financial and other support to ensure that those individuals and communities most vulnerable to Mother Earth's changing climate are able to adapt;
- Divestment from activities that support the continued extraction of fossil fuels and the oppression of Indigenous and frontline communities, and investment in activities that empower communities to take control of their energy future; and
- An immediate transition to a decentralized and democratized clean energy future powered 100 percent by renewable and sustainable energy sources.

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