



Laureates:

Mairead Maguire, Ireland (1976)
Rigoberta Menchu Tum, Guatemala (1992)
Jody Williams, USA (1997)
Shirin Ebadi, Iran (2003)
Leymah Gbowee, Liberia (2011)
Tawakkol Karman, Yemen (2011)

President Barack Obama
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500
USA

June 17, 2013

Dear President Obama and Secretary Kerry,

We are writing to urge you to once and for all reject the TransCanada Keystone XL pipeline.

Like millions of others, we were buoyed by words in the President's second inaugural address: "We will respond to the threat of climate change, knowing that failure to do so would betray our children and future generations." Mr. President and Secretary Kerry, this is an opportunity to begin to fulfill that promise. While there is no one policy or action that will avoid dangerous climate change, saying 'no' to the Keystone XL pipeline is a critical step in the right direction. Now is the time for unwavering leadership.

Climate change threatens all of us, but it is the world's most vulnerable who are already paying for developed countries' failure to act with their lives and livelihoods. This will only become more tragic as impacts become worse and conflicts are exacerbated as precious natural resources, like water and food, become more and more scarce. Inaction will cost hundreds of millions of lives – and the death toll will only continue to rise.

Since we first wrote you, in September of 2011, the risks of tar sands oil and the threats of dangerous climate change have only become clearer. Tragic extreme weather events, including hurricanes, drought and forest fires in your own country, have devastated hundreds of millions of people around the globe. Recent tar sands oil spills in Kalamazoo, MI and Mayflower, AR, have served as a harsh reminder that shipping the world's dirtiest oil will never likely be safe enough for human health and the environment.

Advocating for peace, justice and equality

Alberta's oil sands are Canada's fastest growing source of greenhouse gas pollution and emissions are projected to double over the next seven years. The International Energy Agency, among many other respected bodies, has found that in order to prevent catastrophic global warming of over two degrees centigrade we must leave two thirds of fossil fuels in the ground. In contrast, the expansion of the Alberta oil sands, as projected, is consistent with the pathway to global warming of six degrees centigrade. The Keystone XL pipeline is critical to this rate of tar sands growth, as without it the industry is unlikely to be able to fulfill its plans of tripling oil sands production.

We recognize the extreme pressure being put on you by industry and the governments of Canada and Alberta, and note this pressure represents the interest of the largest, wealthiest corporation—and not the average Canadian. We applaud the Government of British Columbia for standing up to this pressure and calling for the rejection of another tar sands pipeline, the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline. On the other hand, acting against broad public opinion, the Canadian Government has abandoned its commitments both under the United Nations Kyoto Protocol and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. The Canadian Government has also taken extreme measures domestically to gut environmental legislation and muzzle scientists in order to fast track tar sands pipeline development.

We also recognize the pressure from forces in your own country. The Keystone XL pipeline will not benefit or improve the lives of Americans, but nevertheless we understand that the politics of action on climate are not easy. We believe you are the kind of leaders who can stand up to those interests when necessary, to do what is right for the world and for future generations.

You have both been clear that it is time for the United States to step up and do its fair share to fight the climate crises. We acknowledge the work and investment that is happening in North America to increase energy efficiency and clean energy, but unless we dramatically accelerate such efforts and move more quickly away from the use of fossil fuels – our other efforts will be rendered practically irrelevant.

Our shared climate cannot afford the Keystone XL oil sands pipeline.

As leaders who have spoken out strongly on these issues, we urge you, once again, to be on the right side of history and send a clear message that you are serious about moving beyond dirty oil.

Yours sincerely,

Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate (1976) — Ireland

Betty Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate (1976) — Ireland

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Laureate (1984) — South Africa

Adolfo Pérez Esquivel, Nobel Peace Laureate (1980) — Argentina

Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Nobel Peace Laureate (1992) — Guatemala

José Ramos Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate (1996) — East Timor

Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate (1997) — USA

Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate (2003) — Iran

Tawakkol Karman, Nobel Peace Laureate (2011) — Yemen

Leymah Gbowee, Nobel Peace Laureate (2011) — Liberia

