



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)

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Nobel Laureates Applaud President Obama's Rejection of the Keystone XL Tar Sands Pipeline

"A dangerous fossil fuel driven future can no longer be considered inevitable; the climate impacts have become too serious and too devastating to ignore."

WASHINGTON (November 12, 2015) – 10 Nobel Peace Prize laureates today offer their sincere congratulations to President Obama for rejecting the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline. The laureates include landmine activist Jody Williams and Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

"The decision you have made and the leadership you have shown by rejecting this pipeline marks a critical turning point," the laureates write in a letter sent to President Obama today. "A dangerous fossil fuel driven future can no longer be considered inevitable; the climate impacts have become too serious and too devastating to ignore."

Nobel peace prize winners—including the 10 signatories— have previously written to Obama urging him to reject the controversial pipeline on moral grounds given the growing destruction caused globally by climate change. The tar sands expansion that depended on the Keystone XL pipeline would have added billions of tons of new carbon pollution to the atmosphere, further devastating the lives and livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people for whom climate change is already a daily struggle.

The letter also recognizes the central role played by concerned citizens in rejecting the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.

"This is also the time to celebrate the exceptional movement of concerned citizens -- led by the brave people on the frontlines -- that never lost hope, and that insisted at every turn that you would be accountable to your climate promises," the letter states. It goes on to urge people to continue to stand up and demand climate action: "This empowering demonstration of people power should inspire each and every one of us, and remind us of the indispensable role we can all play in building a better world."

The laureates conclude by looking forward to ongoing climate leadership from President Obama during the remainder of his presidency and beyond.

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The full text of the Nobel laureates' letter follows:

Advocating for peace, justice and equality

November 12, 2015

Dear President Obama,

It is with great pleasure we write to thank you for rejecting the Presidential Permit for the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline.

The decision you have made and the leadership you have shown by rejecting this pipeline marks a critical turning point. A dangerous fossil fuel driven future can no longer be considered inevitable; the climate impacts have become too serious and too devastating to ignore.

The Canadian tar sands are part of a future we can't afford. With their detrimental impacts to the climate, to the lives and livelihoods of communities in Northern Alberta, and on the ability to shift economies towards safer, stable, and clean energy opportunities, their expansion is simply unjustifiable.

This is also the time to celebrate the exceptional movement of concerned citizens -- led by the brave people on the frontlines -- that never lost hope, and that insisted at every turn that you would be accountable to your climate promises. This empowering demonstration of people power should inspire each and every one of us, and remind us of the indispensable role we can all play in building a better world.

President Obama, in applauding your decision we also recognize that this is one of many great strides that must be taken to protect our shared climate. And not just by you, but by leaders and concerned citizens across the globe. This struggle extends beyond the tar sands and into the coal mines, the fracking fields, the Arctic Ocean, the deep seas, and beyond. It will be over only when we have truly ceased to depend so heavily on something that is destroying our only home.

While we celebrate this important climate victory, we must keep our gaze fixed on the future that our children and grandchildren deserve. The future where our decisions have built them a better world that we can feel proud to leave for them.

We look forward to ongoing climate leadership throughout the rest of your presidency and beyond.

With our sincerest thanks,

Mairead Maguire, Nobel Peace Laureate (1976) — Ireland

Betty Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate (1976) — Ireland

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

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

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

José Ramos-Horta (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

The Nobel Women's Initiative was established in 2006, and is led by Nobel Peace laureates Jody Williams, Shirin Ebadi, Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Leymah Gbowee, Tawakkol Karman and Mairead Maguire. The Nobel Women's Initiative uses the prestige of the Nobel Peace Prize and of courageous women peace laureates to magnify the power and visibility of women working in countries around the world for peace, justice and equality.

