

York Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, York, Pennsylvania, being inspired by the Indian Affairs Committee and the Earthcare Working Group of New York Yearly Meeting, approves the following minute:

We strongly support the Standing Rock Sioux in their opposing construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. This 1,100 mile pipeline would create the same dangers as other projects, such as the XL Keystone Pipeline, and should be rejected for the same reasons. The proposal should properly have been subjected to the same thorough review prior to approval as the XL Pipeline, so that the Standing Rock Sioux could have their voices heard and their historic rights respected, including the right of access to clean water, the foundation of all life, and the protections of their burial sites and other sacred sites as the 1978 Native American Religious Freedom Act guarantees. This includes honoring and respecting the promise of the United States to the Great Sioux Nations in the 1851, 1859, and 1868 Treaties of Fort Laramie which this project would violate.

All the others affected by the project are also entitled to be heard. Anything less for a project of this scope, is a failure of the democratic process and is a lack of transparency. It also violates the spirit and intent of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. It is a deliberate avoidance of the environment review process and undermines the laws intended to ensure that all environmental effects are considered and properly weighed before approving an undertaking of this magnitude.

As Friends, we bear witness to the equality and to the sacred nature of every person, since every person carries the same Spark of Divine Light. The principle of equality is also a fundamental principle of a democratic society. When we shut out voices and ignore the rights of the people of Native Nations within the United States, we deny that principle.

Friends have had a particular concern for relations between European colonizers and First Nations since our founder George Fox's encounters with Indigenous inhabitants during his travels in the 1680's. Today, as we embrace continuing revelation regarding the nature of our relationships with Indigenous peoples, we believe that we must stand beside our First Nation brothers and sisters in insisting that the legal and treaty rights of the Standing Rock Sioux be honored and not be violated by the construction of this pipeline.

As Friends, we also hold sacred our responsibility, the responsibility of all humankind, to care for the Earth, our home, and preserve it for the future generation of human and of all life. Our Native sisters and brothers have led the way in caring for our mother earth. As humans continue to pursue the use of fossil fuels rather than finding renewable and sustainable sources of energy, we imperil the atmosphere, the air we breathe, and the climate necessary for all forms of life. We must move quickly to implement environmentally sound practices to preserve our Earth and all life on it.

Thus we minute our support of the Standing Rock Sioux, 9-11-2016, in the spirit of peace and healing.

Mitakuye Owasin
(All our relations)