

# New York Yearly Meeting

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**Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 7, 2016

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## **QUAKERS SUPPORT STANDING ROCK SIOUX AGAINST PIPELINE**

### ***The Dakota Access Pipeline violates First Nation rights and threatens the environment***

[September 7, 2016; New York, NY] New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) stands in solidarity with our Native brothers and sisters and their allies engaged in non-violent protest at the Standing Rock encampment against the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

For over two hundred years, New York Yearly Meeting has advocated for fair and just treatment of First Nations peoples and for honoring the treaties between them and the US government. We know that each person is imbued with a spark of the Divine and therefore all persons deserve love, respect, and equal treatment. Acting out of this commitment, grounded in love and a desire for justice, we have in the past urged the US government to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples and to revoke the so-called Doctrine of Discovery.

We stand against fracking and all infrastructure that supports it, and we envision a fossil-free energy future that does not exacerbate global warming and the destruction of our beloved Earth.

We support non-violent civil disobedience when laws or practices are against our conscience and our sense of the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

We unite with The United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in calling for a “fair, independent, impartial, open and transparent process to resolve this serious issue and to avoid escalation into violence and further human rights abuses.”

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### **Our statement of conscience**

New York Yearly Meeting commends the following statement by our Committees on Indian Affairs and Earthcare Witness:

*Our two Committees strongly support the Standing Rock Sioux in their actions opposing construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.*

*This 1100-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 protection of their burial sites and other sacred sites as the 1978 Native American Religious Freedom Act guarantees. This includes honoring and respecting the promises of the United States to the Great Sioux Nation 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, particularly for a project of this scope, is a failure of the democratic process and is a lack of transparency. It is a deliberate avoidance of the environmental 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 U.S., we deny that principle.*

*Friends also have had a particular concern for the relations between the European settlers on this continent and its First Nations, beginning with our founder George Fox's encounters with Native inhabitants during his North American travels in the 1680s and the founding of Pennsylvania. New York Yearly Meeting has had a standing Indian Affairs Committee since the 1790s and maintains warm relations with Native Nations and Peoples of this region up to this day. Thus we stand beside our First Nation brothers and sisters in insisting that the legal and treaty rights of the Standing Rock Sioux must be honored and must not be violated by the construction of this pipeline. Too often, Native Nations have paid the price for projects intended to benefit American society by actions that violate treaties and Native rights, such as taking land or constructing dams.*

*As Friends, we also hold sacred our responsibility, the responsibility of all humanity, to care for the Earth, our home, and preserve it for the future generations of humans and of all life. Our Native sisters and brothers have long led the way in showing the importance of taking into consideration not only our own desires, but also the needs of the future generations, before we act. Projects such as the Dakota Access Pipeline imperil the waters of the earth, vital to the Standing Rock Sioux and to all life. Pursuing the use of fossil fuel rather than finding renewable and sustainable alternatives imperils the atmosphere, the air we breathe and the climate necessary for the continued existence of humanity and of the many forms of life that we know and claim to cherish. We must move quickly to implement environmentally sound practices to preserve our Earth-home and all life on it.*

Lucinda Antrim, Presiding Clerk  
Christopher Sammond, General Secretary  
New York Yearly Meeting of the  
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

**About New York Yearly Meeting**

New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is the denominational organization comprising the Quaker meetings (congregations) in New York State, northern New Jersey, and southwestern Connecticut. First established in 1695, New York Yearly Meeting has approximately 3,400 members. It is called a “yearly meeting” because it meets annually as a gathered body to consider the work laid upon it by God’s Holy Spirit. For more information about the Yearly Meeting, visit [www.nyym.org](http://www.nyym.org) or call 212-673-5750.

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