

Faith Leader Letter Opposing Line 3

The Enbridge Line 3 tar sands crude oil pipeline would cut through the heart of northern Minnesota, passing within the watershed of 80 wild rice waters and crossing over 100 lakes, rivers, and streams. The threat of spills in these water-rich areas puts this project in violation of Indigenous treaty rights to hunt, fish, and gather in those lands - and five nations are legally intervening in an attempt to stop the pipeline. Line 3 would also transport 760,000 barrels per day of toxic tar sands oil, at a time when climate change requires a transition to cleaner forms of energy.



As faith leaders we are joining together to state our clear opposition to Line 3 because of the harm it would do to the Anishinaabe people. **We invite all faith leaders - rabbis, imams, priests, pastors, deacons, elders, and others - to sign this letter.**

The Minnesota Public Utilities Commission will be deciding whether or not to approve Line 3 in late May or early June 2018. This letter is an effort of faith leaders from across different traditions, speaking together with one voice to oppose this pipeline. As people of faith, we care about the health and safety of the environment, and all who live in it. We stand on the side of our Indigenous brothers and sisters as they powerfully and prayerfully lead, and we stand on the side of healing and hope.

Our goal is to gather at least five hundred signatures on this letter and to submit it to the PUC in May, ahead of their decision. We also plan to submit the letter to one or more newspapers at that time, in order to reach a wider audience.

We invite you to read the letter and add your signature below! Here is the [on-line link](#).

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Dear Members of the Public Utilities Commission:

We are leaders from many religious traditions. We are rabbis, imams, priests, pastors, deacons, elders, and others, among thousands of people of faith and conscience across MN who oppose the Line 3 Pipeline. Today we speak to you with one voice asking you to reject the Enbridge Line 3 tar sands pipeline because of the harm it would do to the Anishinaabe people.

The proposed Line 3 pipeline would carry toxic heavy crude oil 337 miles through northern Minnesota, threatening our state's clean lakes and rivers. In so doing, it threatens Native treaty rights and lifeways. Line 3 would run through the Mississippi headwaters and through many waters that grow wild rice. This is a sacred food to the Anishinaabe.

The Anishinaabe signed treaties with the U.S. government that guaranteed they retained rights to hunt, fish, and gather throughout large areas of northern Minnesota -- including lands Line 3

would cross. The state review process should have addressed these critical treaty issues head on instead of sidestepping them. Approving Line 3 would continue a long tradition of taking positions against politically marginalized Indigenous communities and putting the burden on them to fight for their rights in court.

Enbridge has a history of pipeline spills, and any spill in wild rice areas would be devastating. Even if there were no spills (an implausible outcome), this pipeline would be a massive new investment in fossil fuel infrastructure at a time when the threat of climate change requires a new direction. Climate change poses a grave threat to Minnesota's people and ecosystems. Worse, climate change disproportionately harms poor people, Indigenous people, and people of color. Faith leaders worldwide have spoken about the need to take urgent action on climate change, in statements such as the Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change, a Rabbinic Letter on the Climate Crisis, 'The Time to Act is Now: A Buddhist Declaration on Climate Change,' 'Bhumi Devi ki Jai: A Hindu Declaration on Climate Change,' and Pope Francis' 'Laudato Si' encyclical.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce concluded that this pipeline is not needed for regional energy needs. We acknowledge that some people support the project because of the construction jobs it would create, however Line 3 is a step in the wrong direction. We need new jobs as part of a "just transition" to a new renewable energy economy, with construction projects that make Minnesota a better home for everyone.

At its core, this is a moral issue. Many of us signing this letter come from Christian and other traditions that in recent years have taken formal positions acknowledging the role of our faith institutions in the mistreatment and deep trauma done to Indigenous peoples. (These include the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, the Unitarian Universalist Association, the Community of Christ, the United Church of Christ, and the United Methodist Church.) We have committed ourselves to seeking ways forward for healing and repair. Our signatures here represent an effort to live out that commitment.

Leaders from many religious traditions traveled to North Dakota in 2016 to support the Standing Rock Nation as it tried to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). Some national religious leaders took formal positions in support of Standing Rock. At Standing Rock, the world was reminded of the fundamental truth that water is life. People of faith know this deeply - our connection to creation is not simply as consumers of it. It is a sacred duty to protect life on earth for its own sake.

Many of the actions of faith leaders at Standing Rock didn't come until after DAPL was being built and there was conflict on the ground. All signers of this letter wish to join together in stating our clear opposition to Line 3 and ensuring it is never approved. We are ready to open a new chapter in how we treat our environment and how we relate with our Indigenous neighbors.

Respectfully,