



FOUNDERS:

Betty Williams, Ireland - 1976
Máiread Maguire, Ireland - 1976
Rigoberta Menchú Tum, Guatemala - 1992
Prof. Jody Williams, USA - 1997
Dr. Shirin Ebadi, Iran - 2003
Prof. Wangari Maathai, Kenya - 2004

united for peace with justice and equality

September 28, 2011

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada,
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Mr. Prime Minister:

Three weeks ago we wrote to U.S. President Barack Obama urging him to reject the proposed Keystone XL pipeline. Since the pipeline's purpose would be to transport oil from the Canadian tar sands to the U.S. Gulf Coast and beyond, we feel that it is also appropriate to communicate directly with you regarding this matter. Just as we called on President Obama to reject the pipeline, we are calling on you to use your power to halt the expansion of the tar sands—and ensure that Canada moves towards a clean energy future.

You have argued that climate change is "perhaps the biggest threat to confront the future of humanity today," and we strongly support this view. The burning of coal, oil and natural gas releases greenhouse gases that both raise global temperatures and cause ocean acidification. The resulting change in the earth's climate has already increased the frequency of extreme climate events, including floods, droughts, fires and the melting of polar and alpine ice. The devastating impacts on humans include increased violent conflict and instability, as well as famine. If greenhouse gas emissions are not drastically reduced over the coming years, billions of lives and livelihoods will be irreparably damaged.

We must all work together to confront this urgent global problem. It would be wrong for humanity to choose a path that drives hundreds of thousands of species to extinction. It would be wrong for a rich minority of the world's inhabitants to create a problem like

climate change and then refuse to do its fair share to fix it. And it would be wrong for this generation to make this planet uninhabitable when we know that our children and grandchildren will be forced to deal with the consequences.

But it is not too late. If countries work together to phase-out our dependence on oil, coal and gas, and instead focus on the efficient use of renewable energy and energy conservation, we can turn the tide. Together, we can save hundreds of millions of lives, spare billions of people great hardship, and build more sustainable energy economies. We must choose to prioritize this path and we must recognize that it is a profoundly moral decision—one that deserves to be placed alongside any other major struggle in human history.

You have a privileged opportunity to help lead Canadians towards a better future. Canada is a great country and it can rise to the challenge. In fact, there are already powerful signs of progress in the fight against climate change in Canada. The Province of Ontario, for instance, is on course to phase out the use of coal by 2014 and has adopted what is probably the single most effective piece of legislation promoting renewable energy in North America. This kind of action takes vision and know-how—and shows the strong potential for Canada to be a world leader in tackling climate change.

As you know, further exploitation of the tar sands will dramatically increase the amount of greenhouse gas emissions being produced in North America. It will also ultimately make turning the clock back on climate change impossible. But you have a choice. You can use the powers that you have to halt the expansion of the tar sands and put Canada on course to do its fair share to address climate change. This decision requires some tough choices, but in the long run—and for the sake of all future citizens who do not have a say in the decisions we make today—it is the right thing to do.

Yours sincerely,

Nobel Peace Laureates

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
President José Ramos-Horta, Nobel Peace Laureate (1996) – East Timor
Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate (1997) – USA
Shirin Ebadi, Nobel Peace Laureate (2003) – Iran