

6 January 2013
Montreal

Dear Prime Minister Harper,

We, the undersigned, are members and friends of the Unitarian Church of Montreal. We stand in solidarity with the members of Idle No More, and with Chief Theresa Spence, who are calling upon us all to undo centuries of wrong perpetrated against the First Nations of Canada. While we are encouraged to learn that you have agreed to meet with First Nations leaders, including Chief Spence, on Friday, January 11, we urge you to reconsider your past positions and to move toward truly transformative dialogue.

As members of a faith community that values the beauty of creation and the interdependent web of existence, as well as the inherent worth and dignity of all persons, we call upon you to withdraw Bill C-45 which has the potential to devastate water and waterways within the Native communities, and will have a damaging impact on all Canadians and future generations.

The peoples of the First Nations of Canada have, for centuries, suffered from oppressive attitudes of colonizing governments. Their sense of spirituality, traditions, languages, and *sense of being* have been intentionally suppressed. It is time for us, as Canadians, to fully respect their economic, cultural and territorial rights.

Aboriginals want what non-native Canadians and immigrants have achieved without conflict: self-determination and the right to live with dignity. They want to define the conditions of their territories and their lives. First Nations people want to stop the pillage of the environment. They want their people to flourish so that peace will reign in their souls and pride will overtake a sense of apathy and abandonment. These are long-held desires, and will only come about through just change.

We welcome our elected leaders to find strength in unity, and to value coming together in the best interests of all Canadians. Even as Chief Spence's hunger strike may come to an end, we urge you to listen and to work with First Nations leaders to overcome the injustices done against communities that can bring us much wisdom and deserve to have their rights restored.

Sincerely,

Name

Signature

Address

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

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