

Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice



A national faith-based organization founded in support of Unitarian values

Margaret Rao president@cusj.org

Wednesday, January 9th, 2019

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

c.c. The Honourable Jody Wilson-Raybould
Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada

Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to you on behalf of Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, a national faith-based organization that advocates for peace and justice, and environmental protection in our country and in our world. We have written to you previously, urging you to honour Canada's climate commitments and to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy. In light of the most recent report by the International Panel on Climate Change, the need to act is more urgent than ever if we are to avert the worst consequences of climate change.

We also urged you in the past to honour land treaty agreements with Indigenous Peoples as a first step in implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's recommendations. You recently stated that the government is working to build better relations with Indigenous communities and that it is important to build **'local approval'** for resource projects such as the Coastal Gaslink pipeline. And yet, this is decidedly not the case in light of tremendous opposition to the latest proposed pipeline project in B.C. All five hereditary clan chiefs of the Wet'suwet'en Nation have unanimously opposed all pipeline proposals and have not provided free, prior, and informed consent to the Coastal Gaslink/TransCanada LNG project.

In the Delgamuukw land case of 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada affirmed the power of Aboriginal title within Canadian law. In a joint statement the Wet'suwet'en clan chiefs concluded, **"When the courts and the governments fail to respect justice and the Indigenous laws of this land, the people must speak up and hold them accountable ... because this is our home. Our medicines, our berries, our food, the animals, our water, our culture are all here since time immemorial. We are obligated to protect our ways of life for our babies unborn."**

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May further commented, "It is disturbing that public resources of any jurisdiction are essentially privatized in the interest of whatever corporation got an injunction." She and the majority of Canadians decry the RCMP's arrest of more than a dozen peaceful land defenders as a clear violation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted by our government.

We, once again, urge you Prime Minister to keep your promises to the Indigenous Peoples of this land and to move towards a clean, green economy for the sake of all of our children's children.

Standing on the Side of Love and Justice!!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Margaret Rao". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Margaret Rao
President, Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice