

For Immediate Release

**Large assembly of Tribal Leaders and Chiefs from United States and Canada meet to officially form new cross-border alliance to stop Keystone XL pipeline**

**July 4, Rapid City, SD (Black Hills)** — An assembly of Tribal leaders of the Great Sioux Nation along with leaders of the Ponca Nation in Nebraska and Oklahoma today met, in the sacred Black Hills in South Dakota, with a large delegation of Chiefs of First Nations from Canada who have signed the [Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion](#). The tribal leaders and chiefs sent a clear message on this July 4<sup>th</sup> US “Independence Day” about their independence as Sovereign Indigenous Nations and to announce a new cross-border alliance to stop the Keystone XL pipeline. The historic gathering challenging the power of Canada and the US to harm their lands and pollute their water comes on the heels of widespread Indigenous resistance in Canada challenging the July 1<sup>st</sup> celebrations of Canada’s “150<sup>th</sup> anniversary”.

The Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion, after the signing today of the 10 Tribes and First Nations from the Great Sioux Nation, Ponca Nation and Blackfoot Confederacy, now counts over 130 First Nations and Tribes who have signed the Indigenous Treaty barring the passage of each of the four pipelines that the Tar Sands industry of Alberta is hoping to build in order to expand production: TransCanada’s Keystone XL, Enbridge’s Line 3 pipeline through Minnesota, Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain Expansion through British Columbia and TransCanada’s Energy East.

“If you don’t think we’re nations, if you think we’re isolated remnants of a bygone era, just watch us exercise our sovereign right to protect our land and our people by stopping these pipeline abominations from threatening our water and our very future,” said Casey Camp-Horinek on behalf of the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma, who will in fact be organizing a similar type ceremony in Nebraska in the coming weeks where the broad cross-section of opponents of the Keystone XL will be invited to sign a declaration against KXL first signed on May, 17 in Calgary, AB. “Today is not just about our independence as Nations, but also everyone’s much needed independence from the shackles of oil, and especially Keystone’s dirty tar sands oil.”

Present for the formation of this cross-border Indigenous alliance against Keystone XL were most of the Tribes whose lands the pipeline would cross, from Piikani Nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy at the start of the pipeline in Canada to the Great Sioux Nation and then finally the Ponca Nation in Nebraska and Oklahoma where the pipeline would end.

Also signed on this day was [The Grizzly: A Treaty of Cooperation, Cultural Revitalization and Restoration](#), an Indigenous Treaty spearheaded by the Piikani Nation in Alberta which now also counts over 130 signatory First Nations and Tribes from across the continent. The leaders present at the ceremony today pledged to work together to

safeguard the sacred Grizzly Bear and combat the recent move by the Trump administration to delist the grizzly of Greater Yellowstone from the Endangered Species Act.

“Indigenous People in Canada, led by our women and youth grassroots water protectors, just finished crashing the July 1<sup>st</sup> ‘Canada 150’ celebrations, letting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and all of Canada know that not only can they not whitewash history, but they cannot continue to run roughshod over our Nations by looking to ram pipelines like Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain Expansion through our lands,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs on behalf of the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion. “We were honored to be invited to come support Tribes in the US as they likewise reclaim this July 4<sup>th</sup> national anniversary to mark their own independence as sovereign nations.”

“The Tribes of the Great Sioux Nation are gathered here today on this most historic occasion on this most sacred of sites, surrounded by our trusted allies, to make it clear, in honor of Crazy Horse, that we, as a sovereign nations, have not consented to and will all together fight to the end some of President Trump’s most grotesque actions, including illegally ramming through the Dakota Access Pipeline, trying to raise Keystone XL pipeline from the dead and just recently, trying to get away with delisting our sacred Grizzly bear from the Endangered Species List,” said Chairman Brandon Sazue of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe who invited leaders to the event in the spirit of “Remaking of the Sacred Hoop”, a rekindling of the alliance between the Great Sioux Nations and the Blackfoot Confederacy.

“These tar sand pipeline fights like Keystone XL, or Enbridge’s Line 3 which passes through our lands in Manitoba, are about protecting our Mother but will also end up being the turning point for relations between our Nations and state powers – the point where we say no more,” noted Kevin Hart, Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief for Manitoba, on behalf of the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion. “These are more than pipelines: they are lines in the sand for our Nations.”

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