

## STATEMENT OF CLIMATE CIVIL RESISTANCE

We, the people of and in the United States, in solidarity with peoples around the world, future generations, and non-human nature, hereby assert our right to resist the fossil fuel system. Our resistance is justified by law, morality, and the long-term interests of the planet and its people; it is grounded in the ongoing violations of our federal and state governments in abetting corporate degradation of the climate; and it is demanded by the need to build a new society in which equity and ecological sustainability replace the corruption and violence of the current regime. Our right to resist is premised upon fundamental and undeniable rights to a healthy planet and a just future.

We acknowledge the communities and activists in the United States and around the world who have waged this struggle for years and who have articulated the urgency of resistance. We recognize the historical injustices of our present political system as well the right of self-determination for Indigenous nations within the borders of the United States. We emphasize the contradictions and limitations of the American legal system. Nevertheless, we address our grievances to existing powers in the hope and belief that, by fighting together in a world we did not choose, we can build the world we want.

The extraordinary legal violations underlying the climate crisis produce a right to resist on the part of the people. Popular consent is the predicate of democratic governance and may be revoked when the institutions of government have lost their allegiance to the public. The basic right of the people to replace a corrupt regime with a new social order based on justice and equality is immutable, and the law recognizes this principle of just resistance.

### **We assert the right to climate civil resistance based on the following sources and principles:**

- *The Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States* (guaranteeing the people's rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and forbidding the unequal distribution of harms, including those caused by climate change, onto poor people, people of color, Indigenous populations, and future generations)
- *The Public Trust Doctrine* (requiring the government to protect those aspects of non-human nature that are necessary to support the life and welfare of the people)
- *Rights to Local Government and Self-Determination* (constitutionally protecting the right of the people to govern their own communities according to the environmental and health standards they desire)
- *Rights of Indigenous Peoples* (protecting, under international agreements and federal treaties, Indigenous sovereignty and the right to live in harmony with nature)

- *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (recognizing each individual's right to life, liberty, and security of person and the right to economic, social, and cultural rights indispensable for her dignity and the free development of her personality)
- *International Treaties* (obliging the United States to prevent dangerous climate change and to secure economic, social, and cultural rights)
- *Customary International Law* (requiring the United States to prevent its territory from being used to cause environmental harm in other nations)
- *Rights of Non-Human Entities* (protecting non-humans from the harmful consequences of climate change based on principles of constitutional, international, and common law and in the interests of our unitary natural community)

In light of these legal principles (and others which may be articulated or developed), **we assert our right to non-violently resist the fossil fuel system and those actions of federal, state, and local governments that support it. Our assertion is justified by the extreme and existential threat of climate change to all human and non-human life.** Our right of resistance is further grounded in justice, morality, and the right of the people to withdraw their consent from a government that works against its interests.

This resistance has and will take many forms. It is already underway in communities across the nation, where those called to confront the fossil fuel system know the best manner of their principled struggle.

The time for polite petitioning has passed. We have a collective responsibility to address the climate crisis and the right to resist the activities of governments and fossil fuel corporations that perpetuate it. In the courts of law, in the audience of public opinion, and in the tribunal of history, we will stand justified in our resistance to the fossil fuel system.

*An expanded version of this statement is available at [www.climatedefenseproject.org](http://www.climatedefenseproject.org).*

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