Letter to President Obama from Greenpeace

Save the Arctic from Shell's drills

You have declared that "No challenge poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change" and showed leadership in vetoing the Keystone XL pipeline bill. Why then, would you allow Shell to drill in Arctic waters after a Nature study declared that Arctic Oil MUST be kept in the ground to prevent catastrophic climate change?

We call on your administration to protect the Arctic from offshore oil drilling and rescind Shell's Arctic drilling lease. The technology does not exist to clean up an oil spill in the Arctic Ocean, and Arctic oil must be left in the ground in order to avoid the catastrophic effects of climate change. The risks are simply too great to allow drilling in this fragile and important ecosystem.

Example Spiritual Progressive Edit to Letter:

Dear President Obama,

Given your belief that "No challenge poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change," I am confident that you are as concerned about the environment as I am. I am sure you understand why many people, myself included, call upon you to recognize that the technology does not exist to clean up an oil spill in the Arctic Ocean, and that such a spill would have a catastrophic effect by accelerating climate change. Given the past history of the frequency of such spills, it is human arrogance to believe that we can take such risks without future destruction.

And yet, simply promoting sane environmental policies based on the fact that they pose a threat to future environments is an inadequate approach to solving the environmental crisis because (as is evidenced by your current position to allow Shell to drill in the Arctic) our approach to the environment is frequently grounded in a belief that there is always more we can extract from the earth and because when money is a factor in making decisions that impact the environment, the environment almost always loses.

You could make a lasting contribution to environmental sanity if you were to change the way people thought about these decisions. You could help people recognize that we need to approach the planet not just as a resource but also as fundamentally valuable. Imagine how much broader the constituency for environmental sanity would be if you were to talk of the earth as our sacred inheritance and our responsibility to act as stewards of this amazing planet. If you would frequently talk about the importance of responding to the world with awe, wonder and radical amazement and to cultivate in our children that ability to see the earth as a sacred gift, you’d make a real contribution to environmental consciousness, and then it would be easier to be successful to build a broader constituency for steps like a powerful carbon tax, massive funding of alternative sources of energy like solar and wind, and other innovative steps that would make it possible for the U.S. to offer leadership at the U.N. Climate Summit in Paris this Fall. Make the struggle to prevent environmental disaster a central ethical and spiritual concern for every citizen, and a way to show real patriotism because there can be no thriving U.S. of A. without a thriving planet, and you will overcome the divisive debates that are generated by those who put corporate profit above environmental sustainability. But to do that, you need to be consistent in protecting the environment and unequivocal in articulating this as a higher spiritual and ethical goal for all of humanity.

Sincerely,

*Your name*