

# [***Calls For Justice Raised By Indigenous Women's Divestment Delegation During Meetings With Fossil Fuel Funders***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5S7V-5G21-DXCW-D4SK-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Portland: Common Dreams has issued the following press release: Over the past week, the third Indigenous Women’s Divestment Delegation to Europe was present in Switzerland and Germany - working to expose harms and injustices, and engage in high-level meetings with Credit Suisse, UBS, Deutsche Bank, and Swiss government officials, during which Delegates demanded adherence to the standards of Indigenous rights and human rights law, and meaningful action to divest funds from the fossil fuel companies pushing unwanted extractive development in Indigenous territories, while further endangering the global climate. The Spring 2018 Indigenous Women’s Divestment Delegation to Europe was comprised of both frontline community leaders, and tribal officials who serve or have served in official capacities for their Tribal Nations, including - Charlene Aleck (Elected councillor for Tsleil Waututh Nation, Sacred Trust Initiative, Canada); Dr. Sara Jumping Eagle (Oglala Lakota and Mdewakantonwan Dakota pediatrician, living and working on the Standing Rock Reservation, North Dakota); Michelle Cook (Din233;/Navajo, human rights lawyer); Wast233; Win Yellowlodge Young (Ihunktowanna/Hunkpapa of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Former Tribal Historic Preservation Officer); and Monique Verdin (Member of South Louisiana’s United Houma Nation Tribal Council and the Another Gulf Is Possible Collaborative) - along with Osprey Orielle Lake (WECAN International Executive Director and Delegation organizer). [Full speaker biographies available here]. Building off of the successes and steps taken by the first two Divestment Delegations, Indigenous women leaders spoke their truth as women living and working on the frontlines in impacted communities during meetings with banks, officials, media, and Swiss and German community members.

Delegates shared stories, data, and calls for accountability focused on the dire social and environmental impacts of projects including Energy Transfer Partners’ Dakota Access and Bayou Bridge Pipelines, Kinder Morgan’s TransMountain Pipeline, and Enbridge’s Line 3 Pipeline. Face to face meetings with both Deutsche Bank and UBS bank officials were held, as women leaders followed up on previous demands and discussions, and continued to make impassioned calls for divestment of funding from fossil fuel development, and respect for Indigenous rights to free, prior and informed consent as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As part of the Delegation’s work in Zurich, an action was held outside of the Credit Suisse and UBS headquarters in the city’s financial district, during which Indigenous women Delegates and local women from Swiss Klimaseniorinnen (Senior Women for Climate Protection) raised a Tipi structure, and spoke out for Indigenous rights and urgent climate action. The direct-action was a response to a promise made by Delegates to Credit Suisse during 2017 meetings, that if meaningful action was not taken by the bank, Indigenous women would return to their doorstep with their messages and symbols of their homelands. Following the action, the representatives of the Indigenous Women’s Divestment Delegation to Europe delivered a memorandum of demands and their analysis to Credit Suisse, before entering into a meeting with Swiss government representatives, including officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Labor and Economics. As one of the central actions of the Spring 2018 Delegation, women leaders also attended the Credit Suisse Annual Shareholders Meeting. Each woman took the floor and shared powerful testimony in front of some 1,200 Credit Suisse executives, employees, and shareholders, exposing exactly how the bank’s money has contributed both historically and currently to egregious violations of Indigenous rights, human rights, and the health of the global climate. The Delegation’s powerful remarks were featured on Swiss national television, and a full recording of the Credit Suisse annual shareholder meeting is available here, with testimony by the Indigenous Women’s Divestment Delegation beginning at minute 1:51:28. A special evening forum was also held in Zurich [full video here], providing a platform for Indigenous women delegates to address the public, and build important collaborations with European climate, Indigenous, and women’s rights organizations and activists. Despite purportedly high ethical and human rights standards, Germany and Switzerland are home to several of the world's largest financial institutions supporting extraction projects across Indigenous territories in the United States and around the world, making these two countries the focus of this and the previous two Divestment Delegations. The third Indigenous Women’s Divestment Delegation to Europe was facilitated by the Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) International in partnership with Indigenous women leaders and their directives, as part of an international movement which is pursuing institutional divestment as a strategy to advocate for change from banks and investors, and protect the climate, and rights and lives of Indigenous communities and others experiencing the impacts of fossil fuel development. Members of the media are encouraged to reach out with all questions and interview requests. Photos from the third Indigenous Women’s Divestment Delegation to Europe are available for download here. “We are incredibly honored, humbled, and thankful for the reception, recognition, welcoming, and the compassion shown by the good people of Switzerland who have heard our cries for justice and accountability for Swiss investments in Indigenous territories in the U.S. and Canada. I observed, however, that the banks and financial institutions often do not reflect the contemporary heart or values of the Swiss people in my opinion. The world and our nations must work together to capture and make accountable to the people, the financial systems which were created to serve and secure humanity’s resources for our collective future and wellbeing.” explains Michelle Cook (Din233;/Navajo, human rights lawyer) “By meeting with these financial institutions who have invested in companies and projects that impacted my community, they are able to hear and see first hand how their investments were complicit in human, Indigenous and environmental abuses. There is nothing more powerful than the truth.” explains Wast233; Win Yellowlodge Young (Ihunktowanna/Hunkpapa of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Former Tribal Historic Preservation Officer) “Our drinking water and Lakota way of life is threatened by the Dakota Access Pipeline and the unethical corporation Energy Transfer Partners. Until our families are safe, we will continue to hold corporations and the financial institutions who fund them accountable. Where is your money going? We are downstream of your decisions. Make a difference and divest.” explains Dr. Sara Jumping Eagle (Oglala Lakota and Mdewakantonwan Dakota pediatrician, living and working on the Standing Rock Reservation, North Dakota) “I found it incredible how detached the people are at these big financial institutions, how unaware they are of the realities of the projects they are investing in. This divestment trip really highlighted this. As I spoke of the Orca Whales being threatened by tanker traffic and our water being contaminated by more tar sands pipelines, the guy at the bank said, ‘get to your point’, and ‘ask a question...if you have one!’. Aghast, I exclaimed, ‘Stop funding these corporations that are violating Indigenous rights and are a huge threat to our ***environment***!’. Being accompanied by beautiful, strong leaders from Standing Rock and South Louisiana and Navajo Nation was powerful. I’m sure these Bankers will remember for some time.” explains Charlene Aleck (Elected councillor for Tsleil Waututh Nation, Sacred Trust Initiative, Canada) “I travelled all the way to Switzerland to better understand how shortsighted investments threatening our Houma Bayou territories in south Louisiana are linked to the protection of the sacred inlet waters of the Tseil Waututh Nation and to the Lakota, Dakota, Nakota in the watershed upriver from my homelands. Our delegation of women spoke our truths from the frontlines, connected to each other by pipeline projects, as we met with bankers in blue suits in big buildings where international investments fuel collaborations with corporations invested in violating human and Indigenous rights and the rights of our Mother Earth. Paths of resistance, against pipeline companies Energy Transfer Partners and Kinder Morgan, led us to the doorsteps of Deutsche Bank, UBS and Credit Suisse to petition these institutions to divest from bad business practices gambling with false promises of profit over the generational respect of water quality, people lives and their ways of life.” explains Monique Verdin (Member of south Louisiana’s United Houma Nation Tribal Council and the Another Gulf Is Possible Collaborative) “The Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) International is honored to have the opportunity to organize the Indigenous Women’s Divestment Delegation with the directives of strong women leaders standing bravely for fossil fuel divestment, for the water and climate, and for the health and survival of their Indigenous Nations and all people. As a group of diverse Indigenous women living and working in impacted lands including British Columbia, the Gulf Bayou, and the Standing Rock Sioux Nation, the Delegates faced intensive meetings where we addressed institutionalized environmental racism, and fiercely advocated to bring about direly needed changes to financial and political systems. It is far past time for financial institutions to be accountable, and for justice to be served in all cases of violation of the land and lives of Indigenous peoples due to the continued expansion of the fossil fuel industry. The work of the Delegates is a pivotal contribution to the ongoing global struggle to transition off of fossil fuels, and there is no doubt that the women have had an impact on the bank and government officials whom they looked in the eye and demanded morality and action from.” explains Osprey Orielle Lake, Executive Director of the Women’s Earth and Climate Action Network (WECAN) International

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