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First name: Susie

Last name: Hayward

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am an ordained UCC Christian minister based in Minneapolis, Dakota land. I am writing to ask that you do not allow this land that is sacred to the Lakota to be handed over and destroyed on the basis of religious freedom. The UCC descends from the pilgrims, who came to North America seeking religious freedom. This freedom is considered central, even primary, to many Americans. As a country, we claim to protect the right of all our citizens to practice their religion freely, so long as it causes no harm to others. We do not destroy sacred places of worship. Pe'sla is a sacred place of worship where land-based Lakota ceremony takes place. To seize and threaten its well-being is to violate their religious freedom. That is against the law in this country and in international law. As a minister, I beg you to honor the religious rights of the Lakota- as a matter of law and ethics. The US has not historically done enough to respect the religious freedom of its Indigenous people. We must do better.