



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“Defend Our Water – Day of Action” Calls Out Public Health, Environment and Climate Change Risks of the Expanding Petrochemical Hub in Ohio River Valley

Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto Welcomes the Native American Delegation

Pittsburgh, Pa. – This Wednesday, local and regional environmental advocates will be joined by Native leaders from communities across the country for a day of action in opposition to the expanding petrochemical hub in the Ohio River Valley.

The Ohio River Valley is at the center of rapidly expanding fossil fuel development that comes at a time when our planet can least afford it. While the world stands at the brink of exceeding safe levels of global warming pollution, a massive network of petrochemical plants, pipelines, gas wells, cryogenic plants and compressor stations threatens Southwestern Pennsylvania and the Ohio River Valley. This massive “plastics hub” will jeopardize our health and environment as well as future economic opportunities as we push carbon levels beyond what the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently reaffirmed as crisis levels.

Leaders from the Seneca Nation, who consider Southwestern Pennsylvania part of their ancestral homeland, will join native leaders from the Standing Rock Sioux, Ojibwe and other nations, along with local environmental and faith leaders. The event will coincide with the gas and petrochemical industry’s Shale Insight Conference at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center in Pittsburgh. These simultaneous events remind us all of our shared responsibility to the planet in reducing carbon emissions and greenhouse gases that will pollute our environment and choke our oceans with plastic.

Oct. 24 – 10 a.m.

Native Water Ceremony

The Fountain at the Point

Led by Degawenodas, (He Who Thunders) Haudenosaunee Seneca, Wolf Clan; Sharon Day, Ojibwe “water walker;” Guy Jones, Standing Rock Sioux; along with other native and faith leaders to protect our rivers and water.

NOTE: Photography and filming of the ceremony are strictly prohibited by Tribal leadership.

Rally – 12 p.m.

David L. Lawrence Convention Center (Allegheny River side)

The Native Water Ceremony will be followed by a procession down Liberty Avenue and peaceful rally outside the Shale Insight Conference to defend our waters from fracking, pipelines and petrochemicals.

“Our culture has become addicted to convenience, anything that makes our lives easier. We have lost our personal connection to the natural world at the hands of an industry that is motivated by profit, the almighty dollar,” says Degawenodas.

"The natural world holds so much magic and beauty and we need others to acknowledge this and remind them of the importance of our human bond," he adds. "I have come in peace, but mind you I am armed – the only weapon I carry is that of truth."

Joining Degawenodas is Sharon Day of the Ojibwe Nation in Minnesota. Sharon Day walked the full length of the Ohio River in 2014 and is returning to the spot where she started her walk for the ceremony. Guy Jones of the Standing Rock Sioux will also co-lead the event. Guy is from Ohio and has been fighting pipelines on Native land since the 1980s.

"There's a valid need for spiritual ecology in the world today," says Guy Jones, a tribal leader and Standing Rock Sioux. "Creation gifts us with air and water. When we begin to be totally conscious of these gifts, it creates a different mindset of the oneness of all things. Bringing awareness to the connectedness of all living beings is the glue that holds us all together, creating bridges for us."

Following the ceremony, the group will walk down Liberty Avenue and briefly stop in front of the EQT Building. The rally will be held at noon on the Riverfront Plaza outside the David L. Lawrence Convention Center on the Allegheny River. Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto will be on hand to welcome the native delegation.

Speakers at the rally include: MCs Ashleigh Deemer (PennEnvironment) and Sarah Martik (Center for Coalfield Justice); Degawenodas, Wolf Clan of the Seneca; Sharon Day, Ojibwe; Guy Jones, Standing Rock Sioux; Mayor William Peduto; Theresa Welsh, Seneca; Jil St. Ledger-Roty, Seneca; Larry Schweiger of Climate Reality: Pittsburgh & SWPA; Lois Bjornson, Washington County; Bob Schmetzer of Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community; Dustin White of the Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition.

Co-sponsors of the Day of Action include: 350.org Pittsburgh, Allegheny County Clean Air Now, Beaver County Marcellus Awareness Community, Breathe Project, Center for Coalfield Justice, Clean Air Council, Clean Water Action, Climate Reality: Pittsburgh & SWPA, Earthworks, FracTracker Alliance, Free the Planet, Interfaith Power and Light, Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition, PennEnvironment, PennFuture, Marcellus Protest, Mountain Watershed Association, Marcellus Outreach Butler, Sierra Club, Thomas Merton Center and Women for a Healthy Environment.

*Media is invited to attend. Photographs may be taken during the procession and rally. Please do not photograph or film the ceremony.
Images Attached of Degawenodas and Sharon Day*