

News release

GREENPEACE

Emma Thompson, Nobel laureates urge US to make environmental protection Arctic Council's top priority

24 April 2015 (Iqaluit, Nunavut) — As the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting begins in Iqaluit today, British actor Emma Thompson has published [an open letter to Admiral Papp](#) urging him to place the protection of the Arctic environment at the top of the agenda for the United States chairship.

“Protecting the Arctic from oil drilling goes hand in hand with protecting the world from the worst impacts of climate change. It would be utter hypocrisy to veto the carbon-intensive KXL pipeline whilst on the other hand opening the Arctic to drilling,” said Emma Thompson in her open letter to Admiral Papp today.

Thompson's letter is part of a global delivery to Arctic Council foreign ministers, who have now all received framed copies of the [International Declaration on the Future of the Arctic](#), signed by almost 2,000 prominent figures around the world.

The International Declaration on the Future of the Arctic has been supported by prominent scientists, politicians, religious leaders, intellectuals and celebrities all around the world, including Canadian author Margaret Atwood, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and English businessman Richard Branson, among others.

“The support for Arctic protection from people around the world is a call to leaders to take action because we know that a healthy Arctic is vital to the people living in the region and to the rest of the world. As the US assumes the Arctic Council chairship this week, we're urging the Obama Administration to work with Arctic nations toward strong environmental protections. This leadership needs to start at home by not allowing companies like Shell to drill for oil in the Arctic Ocean,” said Greenpeace USA Arctic campaigner Mary Sweeters.

Thousands of people from across the globe joined Greenpeace's efforts in 2014 to rally support for the International Declaration on the Future of the Arctic and ensure that this high-profile document helped amplify the voices of the more than 6.8 million people who have joined the [Save the Arctic](#) movement to create an oil-free Arctic and establish a sanctuary in the uninhabited areas around the North Pole.

“The Arctic and its species are suffering because of our actions, and that made it all too real for me. I chose not to stand by and watch it happen, but instead be part of a solution designed to bring about awareness and real action,” said Inderjit Deogun, a community campaigner that signed up many personalities, including American author and linguist Noam Chomsky.

This weekend, Canada is handing over the chairship of the Arctic Council to the United States after a two year period with poor outcomes that saw corporate interest acquire a stronger voice in the pan-Arctic forum, and environmental protection fall low in the priority list.

“During Canada’s chairship, the oil industry was given unfettered access to Arctic leaders through the creation of the Arctic Economic Council. We’re pleased to see the US is making climate change mitigation and ocean protection a priority for their two year term,” concluded Greenpeace Canada Arctic campaigner Farrah Khan.

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Briefing documents:

Canada’s Record as Arctic Council Chair <http://bit.ly/1Fenpn5>

Expectations for the US Arctic Council Chairship <http://bit.ly/1JbWyKK>