

4.A.6.

Black Hills Alliance

Black Hills Alliance position paper (1980)

In organizing the International Survival Gathering in 1980, the Black Hills Alliance identified its vision of an environmentally sustainable, anticolonial approach to land use that joined Indigenous claims with those of settlers opposed to the pollution of extractive industries. The position paper is a call for democratic and relational self-government.

1. Creating a “National Sacrifice Area” from the northern Great Plains is unnecessary to meet our country’s energy needs and is incompatible with the principles of democracy, environmental preservation, and self-determination.
2. Uranium mining and milling, called the most dangerous part of the nuclear chain by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, threaten:
 - our home with contaminated water, air, and land;
 - our people with cancer, birth defects, and shortened lives;
 - and those who eat our area’s products with unfit meat, grains, and vegetables.

These things have happened in other uranium districts, and we can’t assume “it won’t happen here.”

1. The Bureau of Reclamation states that energy development will result in the “disappearance or loss of tribal cultural heritage” among Indian people. Events in Wyoming show the loss of rural cultural heritage in energy-impacted areas. We value our quality of life and our ways of life and will not sell them for corporate profits or short-term gains.
2. Under international law, the Black Hills belong to the Lakota (Sioux) people. The illegality of treaty-breaking land grabs in the 1800s has been admitted by the United States Court of Claims. Recent corporate and government actions should be recognized as a continuation of these practices, not only in the Black Hills but for all native peoples threatened by energy resource exploitation.
3. Agricultural families are the keepers of the American way of life. Government actions that encourage loss of land to large corporations and banking interests remove the guardians of the land, encourage exploitation of the land, and lead to further concentration of employment opportunities and power in the hands of the few.
4. Current energy policies are destructive because they concentrate decision making in the hands of a few people who are concerned only with profits. These people, including the oil companies and the members of the

Trilateral Commission, have shown their lack of concern with the will of the people, future generations, wildlife, people's health, a life-supporting earth, local values, and laws and regulations.

5. Alternatives to centralized energy have been proved safe, viable, less expensive, and a boost to employment. We advocate a community-based appropriate technology, the end of government blocks to that technology, and a national program to provide permanent ways that will provide our energy needs without destroying the land and people.

4.A.7.

Southwest Organizing Project and others

Open letter to the National Wildlife Federation (1990)

As an ever-growing number of communities confronted the social and health problems that accompany environmental destruction, gaps grew between community organizations and large conservation NGOs such as the Sierra Club and the Audubon Society. This letter, addressed to the National Wildlife Federation and taking on a set of environmental NGOs known as the "big ten," highlighted the environmental concerns of working-class communities of color and Indigenous people that such large nonprofits were ignoring or disrespecting. The letter was initiated by the Albuquerque-based Southwest Organizing Project and signed by one hundred organizers from across the southwest. Reflecting the growing environmental justice movement, it brought attention to the race, class, and geographic disparities of environmental collapse.

Dear Mr. Hare:

We are writing this letter in the belief that through dialogue and mutual strategizing we can create a global environmental movement that protects us all. We are artists, writers, academics, students, activists, representatives of churches, unions, and community organizations writing you to express our concerns about the role of your organization and other national environmental groups in communities of people of color in the Southwest.

For centuries, people of color in our region have been subjected to racist and genocidal practices including the theft of lands and water, the murder of innocent people, and the degradation of our environment. Mining companies extract minerals leaving economically depressed communities and poisoned soil and water. The US military takes lands for weapons production, testing, and storage, contaminating surrounding communities and placing minority workers in the most highly radioactive and toxic worksites. Industrial and municipal dumps are intentionally placed in communities of color, disrupting our cul-