

Indigenous Peoples' Resolution in Solidarity Against Genetically Engineered Trees

We, the undersigned reject the efforts by the biotech, agriculture, biofuel, and biomass industries, governments and their agencies to genetically engineer and commodify trees for industrial and commercial applications at the expense of Mother Earth's delicate biodiversity and climate stability; and

WHEREAS: Indigenous Peoples from time immemorial have respected, protected, and used the gifts of medicine, food, shelter, tools, clothing, and ceremonial resources from our homelands and to this day our forests and plains are a means of subsistence and quality of life, which genetically engineered (GE) trees will threaten; and

WHEREAS: GE trees do not belong in the complex ecosystem as they have been contaminated with genetic material from totally unrelated lifeforms. Altering them in this way violates natural law and therefore they can no longer function as a viable part of the natural ecosystems and native forests; and

WHEREAS: GE trees are unnecessary, unwanted, untested, and the proliferation into our natural ecosystems will cause irreversible harm; and

WHEREAS, GE tree plantations requires millions of gallons of water, increasing demand on local and regional water supplies, during a time, in some regions, of projected surface and sub-surface water depletion and scarcity due to a changing climate and unpredictable weather activities, and

WHEREAS, GE tree operations produce toxic runoff from pesticides/herbicides that threaten streams, rivers and groundwater sources in situ and surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS, Monoculture plantations of non-GE oil palm, poplar, eucalyptus, and pine trees have proven to exacerbate deforestation, destroying natural habitat for countless lifeforms – GE trees will lead to expansion due to expected gains in productivity and profits; and

WHEREAS, GE trees will further industrialize rural and urban areas with vast expanses of single non-native and invasive species that will threaten regional biodiversity, native forests and ecosystems, and contaminate the air, water, and lands with highly toxic agrochemicals; and

WHEREAS, GE trees will contribute to climate change because they store less carbon and their use for biofuel/biomass/bioenergy emits that carbon back into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, GE trees are part of the commodification of nature and a component of carbon trading / carbon offsets systems that doesn't cut emissions are source, creates toxic hotspots to local communities living next to dirty energy polluting facilities and further displaces Indigenous and front-line traditional communities worldwide; and

WHEREAS, the monopolization of land and water to grow GE trees to replace a fraction of the fossil fuels needed as energy demands increase, will worsen human rights abuses and intensify global water, food, and climate crises; and

WHEREAS, trees can live for decades and are by their nature, through evolution over the millennia, spread their pollen over great distances and therefore will threaten genetic contamination of natural forests, resulting in highly unpredictable, and destructive consequences; and

WHEREAS, the insertion of gene sequences and genetic engineering processes result in mutations and unpredictable changes within the genome of the GE tree and how it interacts within ecosystems, potentially threatening delicate natural regenerative biodiversity; and

WHEREAS, International agreements – including trade and climate negotiations, as they are riddled with loopholes, will lead to corruption that is socially and ecologically destructive; and

WHEREAS, we support Native Nations and Indigenous Peoples to reject the unjust extreme economic and political schemes and to contribute to a transition away from false solutions and toward a just and equitable future for our next seven generations; and

WHEREAS, we adhere to the indigenous principles of the 7th Generation Principle or its dominant society counterpart called the Precautionary Principle for no action or the prohibition of the introduction of genetically modified organisms and foods if cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically, and whose effects are disputed, uncertain or unknown.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY UNDERSIGNED:

Read, approved, and adopted this _____ day of _____, 20xx

ⁱ For the purposes of this Resolution, the term “*Indigenous Peoples*” or “*indigenous communities*” includes federally and state-recognized tribes, individual members of federally and state recognized tribes, including those living outside Indian country, individual members of non-recognized tribes, indigenous community-based organizations, tribal colleges and other indigenous stakeholders.