

# CONTESTED BOUNDARIES: PEOPLE, LAW, AND OIL PIPELINES

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*Sam is Co-Director and Jasmine is Assistant Producer of feature-length documentary 'NECESSITY: Oil, Water and Climate Resistance'. NECESSITY traces the fight in Minnesota against the expansion of pipelines carrying tar sands oil through Native lands and waterways.*

*The documentary follows Indigenous leaders and non-Indigenous allies who use direct action methods to protect their sacred land and demand justice. One key question is posed: is civil disobedience necessary in a climate emergency?*

This is a story of everyday people and their fight to save the planet. It's a David and Goliath struggle against one of the world's most powerful industries: companies involved in the transport of fossil fuels through a vast interlocking network of pipelines, ships, trains and terminals.

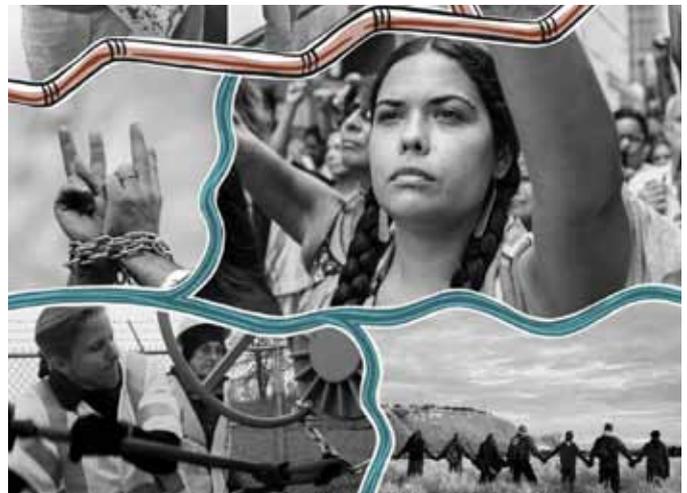
As climate change protests and activism continue to gain momentum, the focus on legal strategies within the climate movement has gained new urgency as well. Through NECESSITY, we consider what legal tactics are required and what activists need to know about their legal risks and rights? What are the lessons to learn from Indigenous knowledge on the front lines of the climate movement? What vision of change are these activists calling for?

As scientists call for dramatic reductions in fossil fuel usage to avert a global catastrophe, oil companies continue to ramp up production and transport. The oil infrastructure that supports this need is extensive. Pipelines challenge colonial borders between states, countries, treaty-imposed boundaries and cross through reservations and traditional Anishinaabe hunting and fishing areas.

Producers face a formidable foe, however, as citizens in different regions of the country literally put their bodies on the line to stop the flow of oil. This direct action is for a reason - it is Indigenous groups and communities of colour who suffer the most immediate, disproportionate and severe consequences of the climate crisis. These consequences include impacts on physical and mental health, as well as displacement and environmental degradation.

The climate emergency requires new ways of thinking about so many aspects of life, from health care, housing, food production and consumption, to jobs and communities. But it also requires new ways of thinking about films and storytelling. Often climate change documentaries focus on the scope of the threat, rather than the experiences of activists or those on the front line of resistance. As educators and academics as well as filmmakers, the team sought to go beyond documenting climate impacts.

Instead, the documentary aims to deepen viewers' knowledge of the climate crisis' roots in environmental



racism, as well as the legal rights and risks of activists. In learning about these issues, the film equips viewers to consider direct action and other legal strategies, and shows how the 19th century treaty rights and Indigenous struggles to protect tribal lands are relevant to climate resistance today. The plights of tribal communities resisting fossil fuel infrastructure are, in ways, part of a larger struggle for the survival of all humanity. And in recognition that bold action is needed to tackle the climate crisis and that people engage in group forms of resistance upon realising goals cannot be reached alone, the term 'necessity' was selected as the title.

This decade is a time of peril and possibilities, a time of tremendous urgency that requires thoughtfulness as well as passionate commitment. Youth and elders alike need to be prepared, to know their rights, and to learn from history and from the lessons of those on the front lines.

We hope those who watch and discuss the film come away with a greater readiness to support and engage in direct action - both as a result of the inspiring stories and vistas of the film and because they understand better the history and legal grounding of this movement.

Stay connected and follow how the stories unfold on Facebook & Instagram: @necessitythemovie