

## Winona LaDuke Steps Down as Leader of Honor the Earth After Sexual-Harassment Lawsuit

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Amid fallout from a sexual-harassment lawsuit, environmental nonprofit Honor the Earth announced today that its co-founder — internationally known activist and author Winona LaDuke — will step down from her position as co-executive director sooner than expected.

LaDuke (Anishinaabe) submitted her letter of resignation to the board of the Ponsford, Minn.-based group on Monday. The board unanimously accepted LaDuke's resignation after "lengthy, emotional discussions," according to a statement.

The resignation of LaDuke, who co-founded Honor the Earth 30 years ago with musicians Amy Ray and Emily Saliers of the Indigo Girls, will accelerate the organization's leadership transition plan that began last fall. Krystal Two Bulls (Oglala Lakota and Northern Cheyenne), who joined Honor the Earth in December 2022 as co-executive co-director, will assume the sole executive director position at the nonprofit.

LaDuke's decision to step aside follows a jury's decision in a Becker County (Minn.) court last week that found Honor the Earth liable for sexual-harassment and retaliation against a former contract employee, Margaret "Molly" Campbell.

*In the [lawsuit](#), Campbell alleged that her co-worker Michael Dahl sexually harassed her on several occasions and also engaged in sexual misconduct with minor boys during a group outing between 2014 and 2015. Campbell claimed she reported the incidents and her concerns to her supervisors, including LaDuke, but they took no action against Dahl.*

Following the two-day trial, the jury found Honor the Earth acted with deliberate disregard for the rights and safety of others on one count of sexual harassment and two counts of reprisal. In a six-page verdict, Honor the Earth was ordered to pay \$750,000 in damages to Campbell, who left the organization in 2015.

Responding to the judgment, LaDuke issued a [statement](#) on April 1 that said, "As we move forward from the court's decision, we remain committed to resisting all forms of sexual harassment, violence and assault. Honor The Earth is an organization predominantly led by Indigenous women and we will continue our organizational mission to raise awareness and offer support to develop needed financial and political resources for the survival of sustainable Indigenous communities."

Today, in a [Facebook post](#), LaDuke apologized for "not responding to Ms. Campbell's claims with the appropriate level of care and urgency" at the time of the original allegations. She took personal responsibility for the mistakes made in this case, but pointed out the disproportionate levels of incarceration among Native Americans in Becker County and railed at the court system.

"The court system is a punitive, white, carceral system that targets Native Peoples," she said. "In such a forum, it was unsurprising that the result would be a staggering and disproportionate fine against Honor the Earth."

The Honor the Earth board of directors and Two Bulls acknowledged the need for the organization to move forward.

"In order to move ahead with the important work that Honor the Earth does in Native communities and for the protection of the environment in greater Minnesota with our friends and many allies across North America and around the world, the organization's Board of Directors regrettably, but unanimously accepted Winona LaDuke's Letter of Resignation yesterday," Honor the Earth Chair Paul DeMain said in a statement.

In a [statement](#) posted on the organization's website, Two Bulls pledged Honor the Earth would be an example to other organizations about the "deep work our communities, organizations, collectives, and movement spaces still have to do around sexual harassment."

"The movement is in a moment of moving away from allowing these types of behaviors to further traumatize our people. For far too long, it has not been taken seriously in our communities, especially those rife with the generational traumas that came out of the experiences in Boarding Schools. Honor The Earth is committed to the listening, healing and the intentional work ahead."