



March 17, 2016

The Honorable John F. Kerry
Secretary of State
US Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry:

We write to urge the U.S. State Department to take tangible actions to discourage further tragic events like the murder of Ms. Berta Cáceres, ceaseless defender of Honduran rivers, land rights, and indigenous communities. Ms. Cáceres championed efforts to protect Honduras' Gualcarque River from large-scale development projects –including the proposed Agua Zarca hydroelectric dam– that would have had an immensely negative impact on her community.

Waterkeeper Alliance is a global movement uniting more than 270 Waterkeeper organizations around the world and focusing citizen advocacy on issues that affect our waterways, from pollution to climate change. Waterkeepers --149 of them in the U.S. alone-- patrol and protect nearly 2.5 million square miles of rivers, streams and coastlines in the Americas, Europe, Australia, Asia and Africa.

Like Ms. Cáceres, Waterkeepers throughout the U.S. and the world speak truth to power and challenge the rationale and benefits of large-scale projects that pollute and damage our waterways. Ms. Cáceres' murder puts the spotlight on the reality that many Waterkeepers and other advocates throughout the world also face as they stand up for their communities' right to clean water.

In light of the above, the Waterkeeper Alliance and the Waterkeeper organizations listed below collectively urge the U.S. Department of State:

- To support an independent and international investigation of the murder of Ms. Cáceres, led by the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR);
- To press the Government of Honduras to provide immediate, effective, and carefully consulted protection to members of Ms. Cáceres' family and colleagues, especially Mexican national Mr. Gustavo Castro, sole witness to the murder;
- To urge the Government of Honduras to meet its obligation to provide prior, free, informed, and transparent consultation of communities for proposed and existing hydropower concessions;
- To ensure that U.S. assistance and support for multilateral bank projects do not promote or permit development projects, such as hydropower dams, without meeting the obligation for prior, free and informed consultation with indigenous communities.

CLEAN WATER  **STRONG COMMUNITIES**

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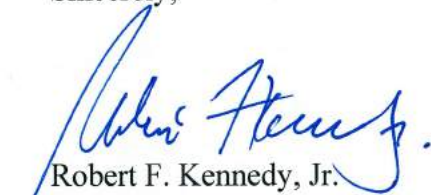
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We support U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy's call for an end to the Agua Zarca dam project, and the protection of the Gualcarque River that Ms. Cáceres devoted her life to defending.

Aggressions against environmental advocates are an attack on fundamental freedoms. We need your sustained leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
President
Waterkeeper Alliance

U.S. Waterkeeper organizations:

Myra Crawford
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Inland Empire Waterkeeper
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Maule Itata Coastkeeper
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