

## Resolution Supporting Standing Rock Sioux

WHEREAS, the history of the Standing Rock Sioux and their opposition to the Dakota Access pipeline currently under construction exemplify struggles by Native Americans in their fight to preserve their culture and protect the environment:

- David Archambault II, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, says of the Dakota Access pipeline, which would pass under the Missouri River at the site of Lake Oahe on ancestral land upstream of the Standing Rock reservation and the source of the tribe's water: "Whether it's gold from the Black Hills or hydropower from the Missouri or oil pipelines that threaten our ancestral inheritance, the tribes have always paid the price for America's prosperity."<sup>i</sup>
- Lake Oahe is one of a chain of lakes created by multiple dams on the Missouri River constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the middle of the last century. The Standing Rock Sioux tribe was one of 23 reservations affected by the dam project. For the Standing Rock Sioux alone, about 56,000 acres of land were condemned and 190 families were relocated. "Just about every part of their economy and living situation was impacted. They lost their most important resources in the bottom lands," according to Michael L. Lawson, author of "Dammed Indians." <sup>ii</sup>
- David Archambault explains, "Although federal law requires the Corps of Engineers to consult with the tribe about its sovereign interests, permits for the project were approved and construction began without meaningful consultation. The Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of the Interior and the National Advisory Council on Historic Preservation supported more protection of the tribe's cultural heritage, but the Corps of Engineers and Energy Transfer Partners turned a blind eye to our rights. The first draft of the company's assessment of the planned route through our treaty and ancestral lands did not even mention our tribe."<sup>iii</sup>

WHEREAS, thousands of people from 280 tribes have gathered in what activists are calling the largest, most diverse tribal action in at least a century, perhaps since Little Bighorn. At least eight tribes from Washington state — some still engaged in similar battles of their own to block fossil-fuel projects on their own ancestral lands or to restore rivers in their ancestral lands which once were the source of their livelihood— have traveled to join the occupation. They are Yakama Nation, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, Lummi Nation with a 22-foot-tall totem, Puyallup Tribe, Nisqually Indian Tribe, Suquamish Tribe, Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe and Hoh Tribe.<sup>iv</sup>

WHEREAS, the Standing Rock Sioux have sued the Army Corps of Engineers seeking a preliminary injunction to halt construction of the pipeline and the Native American Caucus of the Washington State Democratic Party has documented in devastating detail the case against the Army Corp: their disregard of environmental hazards and degradation of cultural sites posed by the pipeline and its violation of mandated review processes in the permitting of the pipeline.

WHEREAS, after the federal court on September 9 denied the tribe's request for an injunction, the federal government on the same day temporarily blocked construction on federal land where it cuts close to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and under Lake Oahe. The intervention is noteworthy in a number of respects:<sup>v</sup>

- In announcing the pause, the government acknowledged complaints from the Standing Rock Sioux and other tribal nations that their concerns had not been fully heard before federal overseers approved a pipeline that the tribe said could damage their water supplies and ancestral cultural sites.
- The Army Corps of Engineers announced its intention to review its previous decisions under

federal environmental and other laws that had given approval for the pipeline. The government also urged the company building the pipeline to “voluntarily pause” all construction for 40 miles around Lake Oahe. The rest of the pipeline construction would not be affected.

- In the joint statement the Departments of Justice, the Interior and the Army called for “serious discussion on whether there should be nationwide reform with respect to considering tribes’ views on these types of infrastructure projects.”
- The government said it would invite tribes to attend formal consultations about how they might work together on federal decisions on tribal lands and on whether future legislation is needed.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

Clallam Democrats express our gratitude to the Standing Rock Sioux for their perseverance in peacefully protesting the Dakota Access pipeline and for their legal actions demanding the enforcement of their tribal rights.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

Clallam Democrats express our gratitude to the Lummi Nation who prevailed in their hard-fought fight to block the largest coal port ever proposed in North America, at Cherry Point and who for four years have embarked on a “totem journey” to create a unified front among tribes across North America that are individually fighting plans for coal terminals and crude oil pipelines in their backyards.

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

Clallam Democrats commend the willingness of the federal government to hold a “serious discussion on whether there should be nationwide reform with respect to considering tribes’ views on these types of infrastructure projects.”

**THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

Clallam Democrats urge the pipeline contractor Energy Transfer Partners, in the interest of the safety of lawful protesters, to observe the voluntarily pause of all construction of Dakota Access pipeline for 40 miles around Lake Oahe.

**THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED:**

Clallam Democrat hereby strongly oppose the Dakota Access pipeline, and call on the Army Corps to permanently revoke the Lake Oahe permit and not allow the pipeline to cross under the Missouri River at any point.

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i *New York Times*, Aug 24, 2016 guest editorial: "Taking a Stand on Standing Rock"

ii *New York Times* print edition, Sept 9, 2016: "I Want to Win Someday: Tribes Make Stand Against Pipeline"

iii *New York Times*, Aug 24, 2016 guest editorial: "Taking a Stand on Standing Rock"

iv *Seattle Times*, Sept 1, 2016: "Washington tribes stand with Standing Rock Sioux against North Dakota oil pipeline"

v *New York Times*, Sept 9, 2016: "U.S. Suspends Construction on Part of North Dakota Pipeline"