



CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA REPORT

DATE: March 28, 2017

AGENDA OF: April 4, 2017
DEPARTMENT: City Council
SUBJECT: Supporting Standing Rock Sioux Protests against North Dakota Pipeline (CN)

RECOMMENDATION: Resolution supporting Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's opposition to the construction and use of the Dakota Access Pipeline, and to communicate our actions to the Federal government, our state and local representatives, and also to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

BACKGROUND:

Scores of U.S. city governments have passed resolutions or written letters opposing construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL). The pipeline cuts across sacred sites and is a risk to the water supply of over 10 million people. Numerous attempts have already been made by local and federal representatives to halt construction of this pipeline.

From Sitka, Alaska to Asheville, North Carolina, cities across the United States have passed resolutions in support of Standing Rock as they've engaged in a protracted struggle against the corporate giant, Energy Transfer Partners. In California alone, many of our neighbors from Santa Barbara, San Francisco, Berkeley, and Oakland have shown their support.

The pipeline is 1,172 miles long and will cross under Lake Oahe near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. The reservation is actually located in two states, North and South Dakota. DAPL would carry over half a million barrels of crude oil a day from the Bakken Oil Fields in North Dakota to refineries in Pataoka, Illinois.

Though DAPL would run through treaty lands and potentially desecrate hundreds of archaeological sites that are significant for Native American populations, there was no meaningful consultation of tribal leadership by Energy Transfer Partners. In December, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers refused to issue a final easement, stating an alternate route would be sought due to this impasse with the Tribes and ordering an environmental impact statement complete with public comments. Shortly after President Trump took office, he prematurely terminated the EIS and construction of the pipeline was completed in February.

The threat to water and the larger environment is real. There have been over fifty oil pipeline accidents in the U.S. in the past two years alone, which led to spills, a few deaths, several injuries and destruction of water and wildlife, not to mention the release of toxic, flammable chemicals and carcinogens into the ground, air and water.

For seeking to protect their water, protestors at Sacred Stone Camp have endured intimidation and harassment by Energy Transfer's private security, Morton County police officers, and National Guardsmen; over 800 people are facing criminal charges; “water protectors” have endured violent attacks with dogs and pepper spray by these same private security firms. The arrested individuals have been stripped searched, numbered with ink on their bodies for identification, and detained in kennels. Excessive force has been used against nonviolent protectors by law enforcement. Journalists and medics have specifically been targeted by law enforcement, and there has been intentional destruction and desecration, including by urination, of burial sites, prayer sites and culturally significant artifacts. This is not a complete list of the atrocities committed in defense of this pipeline. It is not a stretch to consider that the current actions of Energy Transfer Partners, and the U.S. government, are reflective of some of the genocidal practices Native American people have endured throughout this country’s history.

Many in Santa Cruz have been present at pipeline demonstrations, slept in tents at the Oceti Sakowin camp, faced down water cannons in freezing temperatures, and endured harassment by the private security forces. Locally, supporters of Standing Rock have held rallies and marches and have gained support and admiration from large numbers in our community. These various groups now seek an official resolution which joins Santa Cruz to a larger community of cities who are “Standing with Standing Rock” during a very difficult period in their struggle. At a time when oil has already begun flowing through DAPL we wish to put Energy Transfer Partners and the new Trump Administration on notice that our community finds their behavior and actions unacceptable, morally reprehensible, and just a continuation of corporations profiting off the lands of native peoples while enriching a few shareholders.

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ATTACHMENTS:
Resolution