

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 13, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to respectfully request that you direct the Army Corps of Engineers to require a full environmental impact statement for the Lake Oahe crossing of the Dakota Access Pipeline that includes meaningful tribal consultation. In light of the decision of the Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit to reject the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's request for a temporary halt to construction, the project's current permits should be suspended and all construction stopped until a complete environmental and cultural review has been completed for the entire project.

We applaud your administration taking action to deny the authorization of construction on Army Corps-owned land and under Lake Oahe pending a review of prior decisions under the National Environmental Policy Act and government-to-government consultation with the tribes. In addition, we appreciate the administration's decision to reassess the way the federal government incorporates tribal concerns regarding permitting decisions more broadly. This is a longstanding problem, and these efforts must bring about long overdue, meaningful change.

Unfortunately, the pipeline company, Energy Transfer Partners, is committed to completing construction, despite a request from the U.S. Department of Justice for a temporary halt to construction around Lake Oahe.

Over the past several weeks, hundreds of Native American tribes have mobilized in unprecedented solidarity to draw attention to the pipeline's encroachment on sacred lands. Nationally, there has been a groundswell of opposition to the project. The pipeline's construction is not only a violation of tribal treaty rights, but has the potential to cause more damage to sacred land. Until there has been full and meaningful tribal consultation, all pipeline permits and easements should be revoked or denied.

In addition, not unlike the Keystone XL pipeline, the Dakota Access will have a significant impact on our climate. All fossil fuels infrastructure projects of this significance must be subjected to a test to consider the long term climate impacts. As such, there must be a serious consideration of the full potential climate impacts of this pipeline prior to the Army Corps of Engineers approving any permits or easements for the Dakota Access pipeline. According to Oil Change International, the Dakota Access pipeline would have the same impact on the planet as adding 21.4 million more cars to our roads, or 30 new coal plants.

We support the tribes along the pipeline route in their fight against the Dakota Access pipeline project. It is imperative that the Corps' permitting process be transparent and include public notice and participation, formal and meaningful tribal consultation, and adequate environmental review. Until that occurs, construction of this project must be halted.

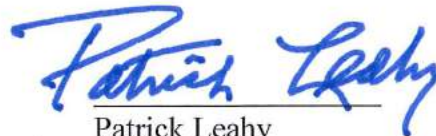
If there is one profound lesson that indigenous people have taught us, it is that all of us as human beings are part of nature. We will not survive if we continue to destroy nature.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

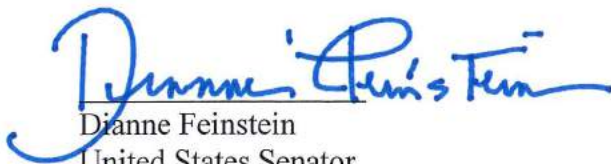
Sincerely,



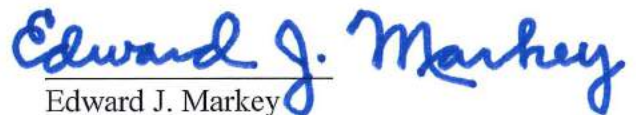
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator