

November 28, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are all American Indian and Alaskan Native who served as appointees in your administration, and we are now writing as private citizens to urge you to take immediate action to block or reroute the Dakota Access Pipeline. In addition, we are urging you to allow the water protectors to remain at the Oceti Sakowin Camp, and to protect the members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and thousands of American citizens from ongoing civil rights abuses and unnecessary violence perpetrated by local law enforcement.

Each of us served in your Presidential administration. We came from diverse tribal communities to serve under your leadership because we believed in your commitment to improving the lives of the American people, and your commitment to honoring the sacred relationship between Tribal Nations and the United States. We are proud of our service, and we are proud of the unprecedented work your Administration has done to improve the lives of Native Americans across the United States.

We believe your Presidency has been the most beneficial for Tribes in perhaps all of United States history, and we want to preserve that legacy. But, as you often say, that work is not yet finished.

The Dakota Access Pipeline was routed away from Bismarck, North Dakota because of the danger it posed to that City's residents. It was rerouted to a location near the Standing Rock Indian Reservation; and, the Tribe's citizens, cultural, and natural resources must now bear that danger. It appears that the decision to place those risks on the people of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe was made without meaningful consultation with the Tribe. That decision is inconsistent with your Administration's policy of tribal consultation under Executive Order 13175 and its endorsement of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Months of peaceful demonstrations on the part of the water protectors have been met with intimidation tactics and civil rights violations. The youth you and the First Lady visited in Standing Rock in 2014 are on the front lines of this effort.

We were outraged to see attack dogs unleashed on water protectors. And we were disgusted as we watched local law enforcement agencies spray water on unarmed people in sub-freezing weather. These tactics were used to inflict fear, pain, and humiliation on people who were merely exercising their constitutional rights.

We were also disappointed to learn that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced plans to remove peaceful water protectors from their camp near the Standing Rock Reservation. That decision – ironically announced the day after Thanksgiving – does little to advance your commitment to justice, and will only inflame tensions between American citizens and their government. It should be reversed.

America has just completed a contentious presidential election; and, soon, President-elect Donald Trump will be responsible to uphold the sacred trust relationship between the United States and Indian tribes. But, that moral and legal responsibility still rests with your Administration. Let us make wise decisions now, with eight years of experience of working with Tribal Nations in your favor.

Again, we are all grateful for the opportunity to have served in your historic Administration and are proud of your historic accomplishments. Our traditions teach us that great leaders are responsible for the consequences of their actions on the next seven generations. As friends, allies, and Indigenous people, and on behalf of those coming generations whose lives rely upon clean water, we urge you to stand up for Standing Rock.

Respectfully,

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Cherokee Nation

/s/ [Charles Galbraith](#) _____

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/s/ [Janie Simms Hipp](#)

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