

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-3012**

September 9, 2016

The Honorable Dave Archambault II  
Chairman  
Standing Rock Sioux Tribe  
P.O. Box D  
Fort Yates, ND 58538

Dear Chairman Archambault and Members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe,

I write to express my strong support for the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in your efforts to prevent the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) from desecrating your tribal land. This pipeline presents a major threat to the local environment, and a tremendous infringement on ancestral land rights for the Standing Rock Sioux community.

Like many other Indigenous American groups, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has suffered countless and unspeakable injustices at the hands of the federal government. Based upon the claims of the Standing Rock Sioux, the unsanctioned intrusion of the DAPL with no prior consultation of the tribe is only the latest offense. The federal government has a duty to protect all Americans, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized. Instead, it appears that in the case of DAPL, the Army Corps of Engineers has set aside the serious health, safety, and cultural objections of the Standing Rock Sioux and failed to provide adequate opportunity for your tribe and other concerned parties to weigh in.

This pattern of action approvals is all too common in our nation. In my own community, residents have been vocal in their opposition to several proposed energy infrastructure projects that also pose significant threat to both environment and land rights, including the PennEast natural gas pipeline and a Williams Transco compressor station. Similar to the case of the Standing Rock Sioux and your supporters, residents in my community regularly express frustration that federal regulators consistently fail to consider the concerns of surrounding communities in favor of rubber stamping approvals on these projects.

I firmly believe that regulating agencies must consider any and all clean, efficient and/or sustainable alternatives, in addition to legitimate community concerns. This is why I introduced H.R. 5630, the SAFER Pipelines Act, which would require the Federal Energy Regulatory

Commission to better consider alternatives and community input in their approval process for certain energy projects.

I am distressed at the images that have recently come out of North Dakota on this matter—where peaceful protestors appear to have been met with violence and excessive force while exercising their Constitutional rights to assemble and protest. These attacks are reminiscent of the violent suppression of peaceful marchers that pockmarked the Civil Rights Movement across the South in the 1960s, and carry strong similarities to more recent protests of miscarriage in our criminal justice system. I am tremendously disheartened by these updates, and intend to work with my colleagues to ensure that peaceful protests are respected.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. famously stated “injustice anywhere, is a threat to justice everywhere.” The plight of the Standing Rock Sioux stands as an injustice that requires all Americans to stand in solidarity, and whole-heartedly extend my support to you. I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress, particularly with those that fight for social and economic justice every day, to lend their voices and efforts to your fight.

Thank you for your courageous stand.

Sincerely,



BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN  
Member of Congress