

Legislation Text

File #: 160824, **Version:** 0

Calling upon the United States federal government to suspend construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline and expressing solidarity with the Indigenous resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline.

WHEREAS, The proposed Dakota Access Pipeline would carry as many as 570,000 barrels of fracked crude oil per day for more than 1,100 miles from the Bakken Oil Fields of North Dakota to Illinois, passing over sensitive landscapes, including treaty-protected land containing recognized Native American cultural resources and across or under 209 rivers, creeks, and tributaries including the pristine Missouri River, which provides drinking water and irrigates agricultural land in communities across the Midwest; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a permit allowing construction of the fracked oil pipeline without meaningful Tribal consultation or environmental review as required by federal law in July, 2016, despite deep opposition from the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and other Tribal nations along the proposed route as well as from farmers, scientists, and more than 30 environmental advocacy groups; and

WHEREAS, In a show of unprecedented historical cooperation, over 100 Native American tribes have issued resolutions and/or traveled to stand in solidarity with the Lakota Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and have established two peaceful encampments in Cannon Ball, North Dakota known as the Sacred Stone Camp and Camp Warrior to resist the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline and to protect this sacred land via their cultural and spiritual presence; and

WHEREAS, The United States federal government has a long and tragic history of oppressing Native Americans through formal policies such as the Civilization Fund Act of 1819, signed by President James Monroe, which led to the formation of often abusive Native American boarding schools in which children were kidnapped or separated from their homes, and sought to decimate Native American history, language and customs; and

WHEREAS, The long and tragic history of displacing Native Americans continued with the racist Indian Removal Act of 1830, which sanctioned the rape, slaughter, and forcible displacement of thousands of Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, The programs resulting from these harmful Acts continues into the 21st century, where foster care agencies in 32 states are still engaging in practices which disproportionately remove Native American children from their families; and

WHEREAS, The need to protect sacred spaces and respect Native American land is even more imperative today because of the long-term impacts that these harmful policies have had on Native American communities, where children are often subjected to sub-standard living and schooling conditions, and in spite of these vicious attacks Native Americans have maintained their history and continue to promote Native American history and pride inside and outside of their communities; and

WHEREAS, It is impossible to understand the protests surrounding the Dakota Access Pipeline without first

acknowledging the role that United States policy has had in genocide, biological warfare, forced assimilation, and displacement of Native Americans, and the destruction of Native American sacred land throughout American history; and

WHEREAS, The Native American Religious Freedom Act of 1978 affirms the need to “protect and preserve for Native Americans their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions,” particularly in Native American sacred places; and

WHEREAS, Article 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, as endorsed by the United States in 2010, provides that governments shall consult with Indigenous Peoples “in order to obtain their free and informed consent prior to the approval of any project affecting their lands or territories and other resources, particularly in connection with the development, utilization or exploitation of mineral, water or other resources”; and

WHEREAS, racist policies, actions, and methods continue to be utilized today, as shown through brutal attacks by police directed at protesters of the pipeline and the recent US District judge’s ruling that construction of the pipeline will not cause damage to sacred sites and construction can continue, despite hundreds of Tribes’ continued assertion that sacred areas have already been damaged; and

WHEREAS, The City of Philadelphia, as the Birthplace of American Democracy and as a City which continually stresses and advocates for the rights of disadvantaged and oppressed peoples across our city and nation, believes that every group of people across the nation has a right to freedom of speech and expression; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby calls upon the United States federal government to suspend construction on the Dakota Access Pipeline and expressing solidarity with the Indigenous resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline.