

National AFL-CIO supports Dakota Access pipeline project

But AFL-CIO constituency groups side with the Sioux Tribe of North Dakota in an attempt to stop it.

The national AFL-CIO has gone on record supporting the controversial Dakota Access pipeline project. Conversely, AFL-CIO constituency groups and a num-

ber of union locals are joining with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe of North Dakota in an attempt to stop the project.

The \$3.8 billion, 1,172-mile oil pipeline covers four states. It will be constructed with union labor, providing over 4,500 family-wage jobs.

The pipeline is slated to cross

the Missouri River less than a mile from the Sioux Tribe's reservation. The Tribe says the pipeline will destroy sacred burial sites, and threaten the water, land, and health of the reservation.

The Missouri River is one of the largest water resources in the U.S., and provides drinking wa-

ter for millions of people.

In July, the tribe sought a temporary injunction to halt construction, suing the Army Corps of Engineers, the federal agency that approved the project. On Sept. 9, the D.C. District Court declined the injunction. However, that same day the Obama Administration called for a temporary halt on all work. That action prompted a response from the AFL-CIO a week later.

"We believe that community involvement in decisions about constructing and locating pipelines is important and necessary, particularly in sensitive situations like those involving places of significance to Native Americans," President Richard Trumka said in a press statement issued Sept. 17. "However, once these processes have been completed, it is fundamentally unfair to hold union members' livelihoods and their families' financial security hostage to endless delay."

Trumka called on the Obama Administration to allow construction to continue.

Meanwhile, union members have joined with hundreds of Native Americans outside the Sioux Tribe in peaceful occupa-

tions of the land. They have been met by security guards with pepper spray and dogs. Several journalists trying to cover the protests have been arrested and charged with trespassing.

A labor coalition that includes A. Phillip Randolph Institute, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the Coalition of Labor Union Women, the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement, and Pride at Work, encouraged stakeholders — labor unions including the building trades, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and others who would be impacted — to come together to discuss a collective resolution.

"As organizations dedicated to elevating the struggles of our respective constituencies, we stand together to support our Native American kinfolk — one of the most marginalized and disenfranchised groups in our nation's history — in their fight to protect their communities from further displacement and exploitation," the Labor Coalition for Community Action said in a press release.

"We remain committed to fighting the corporate interests that back this project and name this pipeline 'a pipeline of corporate greed.' We challenge the labor movement to strategize on how to better engage and include Native people and other marginalized populations into the labor movement as a whole."

(Editor's Note: Service Employees Local 503 of Oregon passed a resolution in support of the Tribe, and donated \$1,503 to their cause.)



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