

Pipeline seeks court permission to proceed with plan

By JAMES MACPHERSON and BLAKE NICHOLSON Associated Press

CANNON BALL, N.D. — The company building a \$3.8 billion oil pipeline sought a federal judge's permission Tuesday to circumvent President Barack Obama's administration and move ahead with a disputed section of the project in North Dakota, as opponents held protests across the country urging it to be rejected.

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners and a subsidiary asked the court to let them lay pipe under a Missouri River reservoir, a plan the Standing Rock Sioux says threatens its drinking water and cultural sites. The Army Corps of Engineers said Monday it needs more time to study the impact of the plan.

While President-elect Donald Trump, a pipeline supporter, likely would greenlight the project when he takes office in January, the company is trying to win federal approval — or a court order — to allow it to go forward now. The delay has already cost nearly \$100 million, the company said in court documents, "and further delay in the consideration of this case would add millions of dollars more each month in costs which cannot be recovered."

In a statement Tuesday, the company blamed the Obama administration for "political interference"



Chris Pietsch/The Register-Guard via AP

With chants and signs, protesters occupy the lobby area of Wells Fargo Bank during a rally against the Dakota Access oil pipeline construction in Eugene, Tuesday. The peaceful march began in front of the Army Corp offices in Eugene and moved through the downtown area stopping at several banks that the group said are involved in helping fund the pipeline.

in the pipeline review process.

The Army Corps referred a request for comment to the Justice Department, which declined comment.

Protests were being held Tuesday across the country, from California to Vermont. Activists called for demonstrations at Army Corps of Engineers offices and at banks financing the pipeline construction.

More than two dozen people were arrested near Mandan, North Dakota, after a group of about 400 protesters put a truck and tree

branches on BNSF Railway tracks near a pipeline work staging area and tried to set it on fire, Morton County sheriff's spokesman Rob Keller said.

"They had a rope soaked with kerosene," he said. "A (Highway Patrol) trooper with an extinguisher doused it so it wouldn't light."

Trains were delayed three hours, railroad spokeswoman Amy McBeth said. Officers in riot gear used pepper spray and in one instance a stun gun against protesters who refused to leave.

Mandan is about 50 miles north of a camp where hundreds of protesters have gathered in recent months to oppose the pipeline. Robert F. Kennedy Jr., an environmental attorney and president of the New York-based Waterkeeper Alliance, which seeks to protect watersheds worldwide, visited the camp Tuesday, speaking out against the arrests of protesters and a project he says will benefit billionaires and not the American people.

"What they are doing here is a crime, an environmental crime, and there are real victims," he said.

In Columbus, Ohio, police reported an activist blocked traffic by handcuffing himself under a vehicle at a downtown intersection. In Montpelier, Vermont, more than 100 people gathered outside a bank, chanting, singing songs and holding signs saying "Water is Life" and "Standing With Standing Rock."

"It may seem hopeless, like David against Goliath, but we believe that if we're persistent and we recruit, that this movement will grow and hopefully these kinds of projects will stop," said protester Lee Shen of Thetford Center, Vermont.

The Corps on Monday called for more study and input from the Standing Rock Sioux before it decides whether to allow the pipeline to cross under Lake Oahe. The 1,200-mile pipeline that's to carry

North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois is largely complete except for that stretch, which will skirt the tribe's reservation.

Gov. Jack Dalrymple said Tuesday that an additional delay "does nothing but prolong and intensify the public safety issues imposed on Morton County and the state of North Dakota since the beginning of August," when protests against the pipeline broke out. In his statement, Dalrymple said a decision on the project easement "is long overdue" and that the pipeline would be safe.

The Corps in July granted Energy Transfer Partners the permits needed for the project, but it said in September that further analysis was warranted, given the tribe's concerns. Its announcement Monday came amid speculation that federal officials were on the brink of approving the crossing. ETP last week began preparing equipment to bore under the river.

ETP disputes that the pipeline would endanger the tribe, and CEO Kelcy Warren noted earlier that Army Assistant Secretary Jo-Ellen Darcy had informed company officials and Tribal Chairman Dave Archambault that the Corps' previous permit decisions "comported with legal requirements." ETP contends that the Corps has no legal justification for the delay.

BRIEFLY

Oregon behind on food inspections, increasing disease risk

SALEM (AP) — Oregon's secretary of state says the agriculture department is behind on food safety inspections of food processors, dairies, grocery stores and others and the shortcomings need to be addressed to protect people from sickness.

The Food Safety Program is responsible for regulating more than 12,000 food safety licenses in the state of Oregon. Auditors found that, as of October, 2,841 licenses were past due for an inspection by more than three months.

The audit was released Tuesday by Secretary of State Jeanne P. Atkins. It stresses that adhering to food safety regulations is crucial to minimize the risk of contamination, and that it's up to food safety inspectors to make sure those regulations are followed.

Bundy brothers back in custody in Nevada for Feb. 6 trial

PAHRUMP, Nev. (AP) — Ammon Bundy and his brother, Ryan, are back in federal custody in Nevada ahead of a February trial on charges stemming from a 2014 standoff with federal agents outside their father's ranch near Bunkerville.

Ammon Bundy's attorney, Daniel Hill, confirmed Tuesday that the sons of Cliven Bundy were transferred Monday from a federal detention center in Seattle to the Nevada Southern Detention Center in Pahrump, about 60 miles west of Las Vegas.

Cliven Bundy also is being held there.

The brothers were acquitted of federal conspiracy charges in federal court in Portland on Nov. 2 after a five-week trial related to an armed takeover at a national wildlife refuge.

Their trial in federal court in Las Vegas is scheduled to begin Feb. 6. They face 16 felony counts, including assault on a federal officer, extortion and obstruction of justice.

Authorities arrest ten in drug trafficking investigation

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — Authorities say 10 people have been arrested around Seattle and in Oregon after a two-year investigation of drug trafficking.

Justice Department U.S. Attorney Annette L. Hayes said in a news release Tuesday that a Drug Enforcement Administration-led task force conducted raids at 14 places in King and Pierce counties in Washington and at locations in Springfield, Oregon.

Members of the group arrested Tuesday allegedly transported drugs and money in hidden compartments of vehicles. Authorities searched

a landscaping business, an auto wrecking yard, a motorsports/boat business and a pawn shop.

Hayes says over the course of the investigation law enforcement has seized over \$350,000 in cash, more than 30 pounds of methamphetamine, cocaine and firearms.

The defendants, ranging in age from 21 to 51, were scheduled to appear in U.S. District Court in Tacoma this week.

UO enrollment drops for fourth year

EUGENE (AP) — Enrollment at the University of Oregon fell 2 percent this year, marking four years of declining enrollment for the school.

The Register-Guard reports that a total of 23,634 students enrolled at the university this year, down 2 percent from fall 2105 and 4 percent from the record high in fall 2012.

Overall, the student population at the university has been falling or flat for a half-dozen years after UO officials quickly increased the student population in a major growth spurt.

Though overall enrollment is falling, the number of out-of-state graduate students has been growing, with 11 percent more undergraduates coming from outside Oregon this year compared to 2002. The number of in-state graduate students has dropped 25 percent since peak enrollment in 2002.

Corrections

The East Oregonian works hard to be accurate and sincerely regrets any errors. If you notice a mistake in the paper, please call 541-966-0818.

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