

## For Immediate Release

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## Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Takes Action to Protect Culture and Environment from Massive Crude Oil Pipeline

*Tribe files legal action against U.S. Army Corps' misguided approval of Dakota Access Pipeline that threatens livelihoods, sacred sites, and water*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.**—Yesterday, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, represented by Earthjustice, filed a lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) for violating the National Historic Preservation Act and other laws, after the agency issued final permits this week for a massive crude oil pipeline stretching from North Dakota to Illinois.

The [complaint](#), filed in federal court in Washington D.C., says the Corps effectively wrote off the Tribe's concerns and ignored the pipeline's impacts to sacred sites and culturally important landscapes. The pipeline travels through the Tribe's ancestral lands and passes within half a mile of its current reservation.

The Corps' approval of the permit allows the oil company to dig the pipeline under the Missouri River just upstream of the reservation and the Tribe's drinking water supply. An oil spill at this site would constitute an existential threat to the Tribe's culture and way of life.

"The Corps puts our water and the lives and livelihoods of many in jeopardy," said **Dave Archambault II, the elected Chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe**, based in Fort Yates, North Dakota. "We have laws that require federal agencies to consider environmental risks and protection of Indian historic and sacred sites. But the Army Corps has ignored all those laws and fast-tracked this massive project just to meet the pipeline's aggressive construction schedule."

The Dakota Access Pipeline project, also known as Bakken Oil Pipeline, would extend 1,168 miles across North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, and Illinois, crossing through communities, farms, tribal land, sensitive natural areas and wildlife habitat. The pipeline would carry crude oil from the Bakken oil fields in North Dakota to Illinois where it will link with another pipeline that will transport the oil to terminals and refineries along the Gulf of Mexico.

"There have been shopping malls that have received more environmental review and Tribal consultation than this massive crude oil pipeline," said **Jan Hasselman, an Earthjustice attorney representing the Tribe in the litigation**. "Pipelines spill and leak—its not a matter of if but when. Construction will destroy sacred and historically significant sites. We need to take a time out and ensure that the Corps follows the law before rushing ahead with permits."

Despite objections by the Standing Rock Sioux and other organizations, construction of the pipeline has already begun.

The Standing Rock Sioux have led a national campaign to draw attention to the pipeline, which crosses the Missouri River less than a mile upstream of the Tribe's reservation, imperiling its drinking water supplied and destroying sacred sites. The tribe has launched an international campaign, called "Respect our Water", asking the Army Corps to deny the key permits for the pipeline.

Currently, Tribal youth are [running from North Dakota to Washington D.C.](#) to deliver the 140,000 petition signatures to the Corps. A video of participating Tribal youth can be viewed by “clicking” the link below:

In 2010 a single pipeline spill poured 1,000,000 gallons of toxic bitumen crude oil into the Kalamazoo River in Michigan. The cleanup cost over one billion dollars and significant contamination remains. In January of 2015 over 50,000 gallons of Bakken crude oil spilled into the Yellowstone River in Montana. This was the second such spill in that area since 2011.

[Read the online version of the release](#)

[Read the complaint](#)

[Read Earthjustice's Q&A with Waniya Locke of People Over Pipelines](#)

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