



# AAIA

## Association on American Indian Affairs

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November 30, 2016

The Honorable Loretta Lynch  
Attorney General  
United States Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20530

Dear Attorney General Lynch,

The Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) condemns the actions of Morton County law enforcement on November 20, 2016, against the Water Protectors opposing the Dakota Access Pipeline. Excessive force was used against protesters, including rubber bullets, mace/pepper spray, water cannons in subfreezing temperatures, and tear gas. Law enforcement officers were dressed in riot gear, met peaceful Water Protectors with military style vehicles, and violated the First Amendment and other constitutional rights afforded to each person assembled there to oppose the Dakota Access Pipeline. The horror of these actions played out in living rooms across our country as fellow Americans witnessed the violent chaos on their televisions. These unarmed Water Protectors have sustained injuries including hypothermia from water cannons, blinded and blackened eyes and swollen extremities from rubber bullets, and a woman who suffered severe injuries to her arm from a concussion grenade and is undergoing multiple surgeries to prevent amputation.

These actions by law enforcement were inhumane and warrant an immediate investigation by the Department of Justice. The AAIA stands with the Water Protectors, traditional and spiritual leaders, and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe in opposition to this excessive brutality against native people and their supporters. We urge you to exercise your powers as the Attorney General of the United States to investigate these outrageous violent acts and tactics taken by local law enforcement and their blatant attempts to suppress the Water Protectors' First Amendment and other constitutional rights.

Winter is quickly closing in and AAIA urges that construction be halted, all federal permits be suspended, and that federal and tribal officials engage in meaningful consultations pursuant to Executive Order 13175 and federal law to ensure that a full environmental and cultural review takes place.

On behalf of the oldest Indian advocacy member organization in the United States established in 1922, we reiterate that you personally intervene to prevent further excessive and unnecessary force being carried out by local law

The Honorable Loretta Lynch  
November 30, 2016  
Page 2

enforcement against the Water Protectors, tribal members, religious leaders and their supporters. It is your legal and moral duty to uphold the sacred trust relationship between the United States and Indian tribes.

Sincerely,



Faith Roessel, Esq. (*Navajo*)  
President, AAIA  
Board of Directors

cc: Dave Archambault II, Chairman, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe  
Harold Frazier, Chairman, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe  
Dave Flute, Chairman, Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate

Sally Jewell, Secretary, U.S. Department of the Interior

Senator John Barrasso, (R-WY) Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs  
Senator Jon Tester, (D-MT), Vice Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

Rep. Tom Cole, (R-OK), Co-Chair, Congressional Native American Caucus  
Rep. Betty McCollum, (D-MN), Co-Chair, Congressional Native American Caucus

Stacey Ecoffey, Commissioner, Administration for Native Americans

Karen Diver, Special Assistant to the President, Native American Affairs

John M. Fowler, Executive Director, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation