



Native Organizers Alliance responds to cancellation of Keystone XL Pipeline

Washington, DC—President Joseph R. Biden today signed an executive order cancelling the permit for the Keystone XL oil pipeline. The following statement from Judith Le Blanc (Caddo), executive director of Native Organizers Alliance, an organization dedicated to building a support network of Native leaders and grassroots organizers, can be quoted in-full or in-part.

President Biden's cancellation of the Keystone XL Pipeline permit is critical to upholding tribal sovereignty and protecting the rights and health of Native peoples. While we know our fight doesn't end with today's critical action by the president, this is an important step.

Today's action by President Biden is the result of the relentless work and dedication from tribes and grassroots organizers. For years, Native grassroots organizers have joined with the traditional leaders and sovereign nations like Rosebud Sioux Tribe, Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, Oglala Lakota Nation, and Yankton Sioux Tribe, to stop this project. Farmers, tribal councils, ranchers, and Native non-profit organizations have been instrumental in raising awareness around the significant threats to the health and resources of Native peoples living in the path of the pipeline. And sovereign tribes have taken the issue to court to protect their territories and the Missouri River bioregion for all.

The fight to stop the Keystone XL Pipeline brings into sharp focus that for too long tribal nations and Native peoples have been forced to spend millions of dollars of their scarce resources to fight developers who fail to consult with our sovereign nations. Consultation is required by our treaties and agreements but time and time again, we see developers move ahead with the aid of the federal government without our approval and agreement. We demand more. Our treaties require more. It is a violation of the constitution to fail to properly consult with sovereign nations before approving projects like the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Tribes are too often forced to take legal action just to get the federal government to uphold the promises made to our ancestors. We are hopeful that the Biden administration will begin a turning point where federal agencies aren't just plowing ahead with major infrastructure projects that violate our rights, and endanger our tribal citizens and resources. We urge President Biden and federal agencies to uphold their constitutional duty to secure prior and informed consent from U.S. tribes.

Today's cancellation of the pipeline permit is a critical first step, but there is more to be done. Not just on Keystone, but in the protection and stewardship of the sites we as Native peoples hold sacred like Bears Ears, the Black Hills, and Chaco Canyon.

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About Native Organizers Alliance

The Native Organizers Alliance (NOA) is dedicated to building the organizing capacity of tribes, organizers and community groups for transformational policy change. It also provides a forum for Native leaders, organizers and organizations to work in collaboration with each other and promote their work with non-Native national allies. <http://nativeorganizing.org/about-us/>