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**For Immediate Release**

**Standing Rock Tribal Chairwoman Janet Alkire Calls Upon the Army Corps of Engineers to Release Undisclosed Information on the Dakota Access Pipeline and Re-open Public Comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement**

Standing Rock Sioux Tribal Chairwoman Janet Alkire wrote to the Army Corps of Engineers demanding that the Corps release previously undisclosed information about a significant spill of drill mud during construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. She also called upon the Corps to re-open the public comment period on its environmental study of DAPL, to enable Tribes and the public to comment on the new information.

Alkire's letter, addressed to Assistant Secretary of the Army Michael Connor and the Corps' Omaha District Commander Robert Newbauer, demanded the release of information detailed in a report prepared by an engineering firm, Exponent, that found that drill mud mixed with additives was released into the environment during pipeline construction. The chemical additives in the drill mud may have contained toxic substances that could have migrated to the Standing Rock Reservation, according to Alkire. "We have learned that the Corps has also withheld information on potentially significant environmental violations during the HDD drill for DAPL. That is outrageous," Alkire stated in her letter.

The Corps of Engineers released its draft environmental impact statement on DAPL on September 13, 2023, and accepted public comment until December 8. Alkire contends the Corps

hid important information that should have been made public. This includes the information contained in the Exponent report on the unauthorized release into the environment of up to 1.4 million gallons of drill mud used to install the pipeline underneath the Missouri River.

The Exponent report was prepared on behalf of Greenpeace, an environmental organization sued by Energy Transfer for allegedly publishing false statements in support of Standing Rock during the protests against DAPL in 2016. Alkire criticized the lawsuit, stating, “Indians and our allies are always under attack by Big Oil, and that is what is happening to Greenpeace now. The lawsuit was filed in bad faith, and it should be dismissed” The case is pending in Morton County district court.

The Exponent report documents 774 “nonexistent drill mud returns” during the HDD Drill, from January 25 to March 20, 2017. The nonexistent returns could total 1.4 million gallons of drill mud with bentonite and other toxic additives.

On August 5, 2022, Energy Transfer was convicted of 23 counts for criminal violations of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Act, for the use of unauthorized chemical additives in drill mud, the release of drill mud into surface and ground water and the failure to self-report the violations. The Exponent report details similar problems by the same company during the construction of DAPL.

Alkire accused the Corps of Engineers of failing to inform the Tribe of environmental violations during the construction of DAPL, which crosses the Missouri River just one-half mile upstream of the Standing Rock Reservation. She expressed concern of a cover-up by the Corps: “I demand an answer – what did the Corps know, and when did it know it?”

According to Doug Crow Ghost, Director of the Standing Rock Water Resources Department, this is not the first time the Corps of Engineers has refused the Tribe’s requests for greater transparency about DAPL. “We have been asking for unredacted copies of emergency response plans, oil spill models and other documents relating to pipeline safety, but all we receive are blacked out, redacted copies. What are they hiding?” Crow Ghost asked. In her letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Chairwoman Akire noted the “extreme secrecy imposed by the Corps” in its environmental review of DAPL, and she urged greater transparency.

Energy Transfer, the owner and operator of DAPL, was convicted of 23 counts of criminal violations of the Pennsylvania Clean Streams Act, for the use of unauthorized chemical

additives in drill mud, and the release of drill mud into surface and ground water. “That is exactly what happened along the Missouri River,” Crow Ghost stated.

As a result of these convictions, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has added Energy Transfer to a list of “de-barred” companies, whose criminal convictions disqualify them from federal contracts or other assistance. Standing Rock Tribal leaders expressed concern that DAPL should not be operating as a result of the debarment. “The Corps is allowing DAPL to operate on federally-administered land without an easement, which violates federal law, and as a result of the debarment Energy Transfer is not even eligible for an easement,” Alkire stated.

“Nothing has been done to protect the public health and welfare of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.”

For additional information contact

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