Update: Obama, government agencies put a stop to pipeline for now.

Udall, Heinrich, Lujan, and Grisham pen letter to Obama, asking for intervention

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich and U.S. Representatives Ben Ray Luján and Michelle Lujan Grisham sent a letter to President Obama Sept. 8, calling on the administration to intervene in the recent escalation of violence by private security personnel against Native protestors over the construction o



f the Dakota Access Pipeline. The New Mexico lawmakers took action in response to the growing concerns in tribal communities across New Mexico about the First Amendment rights and abusive treatment of Native protestors.

"We oppose and condemn unjustified violence against protestors in the strongest possible terms. The aggressive actions undertaken by private contractor security personnel in North Dakota including the use of pepper spray and dogs are alarming, and it is important that the concerns regarding this project are given due consideration and steps are taken to ensure the safety of everyone on site," the lawmakers wrote.

The New Mexico delegation was sent letters and resolutions from Pueblo of Isleta Governor E. Paul Torres on behalf of the All Pueblo Council of Governors representing 20 pueblos, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez, and the President of the Shiprock Chapter Duane Chili Yazzie.

"In particular we call to your attention the resolution from the Shiprock Chapter calling on your administration to intervene in the deplorable recent escalation of violence between private security personnel and Native American protestors over the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline," the lawmakers continued.

The full text of the letter is below.

September 8, 2016

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President: We would like to bring to your attention the attached letters and resolutions shared with us by Pueblo of Isleta Governor E. Paul Torres on behalf of the All Pueblo Council of Governors representing 20 pueblos, Navajo Nation President Russell Begaye and Vice President Jonathan Nez, and the President of the Shiprock Chapter Duane Chili Yazzie. In particular we call to your attention the resolution from the Shiprock Chapter calling on your administration to intervene in the deplorable recent escalation of violence between private security personnel and Native American protestors over the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline.

We oppose and condemn unjustified violence against protestors in the strongest possible terms. The aggressive actions undertaken by private contractor security personnel in North Dakota including the use of pepper spray and dogs are alarming, and it is important that the concerns regarding this project are given due consideration and steps are taken to ensure the safety of everyone on site.

We are aware of ongoing litigation concerning the Army Corps of Engineers' approval of permits, but we request an immediate intervention into this escalating violence and that your administration respond to the growing concerns in tribal communities across New Mexico about the First Amendment rights and abusive treatment of Native American protestors.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Tom Udall
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján
United States Representative

Michelle Lujan Grisham
United States Representative