

Heinrich urges president to halt closure of Oceti Sakowin Camp

Written by Gallupsun Staff
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WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., called on President Obama to work with the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Justice to de-escalate the violence at Camp Oceti Sakowin in North Dakota. In particular, he questioned the decision to close the area to demonstrators of the Dakota Access pipeline on December 5.

November 30, 2016

Dear Mr. President:

I am gravely concerned about the recent escalation of violence in North Dakota against members of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and those standing in solidarity with them. When violent confrontations first occurred earlier this fall, I urged your administration to step in and was thankful that you quickly put a halt to the project until the agencies could engage in renewed tribal consultation with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe.

However, the brutality we've seen in recent days involving rubber bullets, tear gas, and water cannons, has increasingly put the health and lives of the demonstrators at real risk. The current situation at Camp Oceti Sakowin is unsustainable and dangerous to everyone involved. I implore you to work with the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Justice to de-escalate the violence at the camp.

In particular, I question the decision to close the area to demonstrators on December 5, 2016. This arbitrary date is certain to escalate an already volatile situation and I would urge you to overturn this decision by the Corps of Engineers. I ask that you seek a peaceful resolution to

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this conflict that respects the desire of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe to protect their water and historic sacred sites.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the needs and concerns of Indian Country and for your attention to this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

MARTIN HEINRICH

United States Senator