



LIUNA!

October 26, 2016

TERRY O'SULLIVAN

General President

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE LIUNA GENERAL EXECUTIVE BOARD, DISTRICT COUNCILS, AND LOCAL UNIONS IN THE UNITED STATES

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

I write to update you on the current status of the Dakota Access Pipeline which is one of the largest pipeline projects in the United States, and has been the subject of a concerted campaign of misinformation which has received considerable media attention in the last month. As you may know, there are over 1,100 LIUNA members and more than 4,500 Building Trades members working on this active project which is already more than sixty percent completed.

LIUNA has been a vocal advocate for the Dakota Access Pipeline from its inception. Not only because it puts our members to work under a Project Labor Agreement (PLA), but also because it is one of the safest and most technologically advanced pipelines in the nation. After an exhaustive and thorough two-year review by four state regulatory agencies and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the project was permitted and approved.

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe did not raise objections to the Dakota Access Pipeline during the state permitting process, and in fact participated in several meetings on the project. It was only after the Pipeline was approved, crews and equipment were mobilized, and construction was underway that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe decided to challenge the project in court. Not surprisingly, federal courts refused to block construction of a lawfully permitted project, and unfortunately, misguided protests escalated.

Frustrated by their failure to get their way, a small, but significant number of Pipeline opponents – most of which are environmental activists from outside of North Dakota – have moved from peaceful protest to aggressive tactics that threaten the safety of construction workers, public safety officers, and protesters themselves. LIUNA members continue to go to work each and every day, despite escalating protests which have gone beyond peaceful, civil disobedience to include trespassing on active construction sites, destroying equipment, intimidating construction workers and law enforcement officials – risking injury to themselves and union workers on the project. In essence, these protesters are acting like thugs.

LIUNA has no quarrel with peaceful, civil disobedience; our movement has a long and proud history of using such tactics, and we will always defend the rights of others to do so. But we will not tolerate actions that put our members in harm's way.

Feel the Power

ARMAND E. SABITONI

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ROBERT F. ABBOTT

SAMUEL STATEN, JR.

PAUL V. HOGROGIAN

THEODORE T. GREEN

General Counsel

HEADQUARTERS:

905 16th Street, NW

Washington, DC

20006-1765

202-737-8320

Fax: 202-737-2754

www.liuna.org

Much of the opposition to the Pipeline is based on misinformation. The facts are on our side, yet in the past month, we have witnessed vocal opposition from groups, including some self-righteous unions, who know little about the project and have no job equity in it. These unions have sided with THUGS against trade unionists. They are a group of bottom-feeding organizations that are once again trying to destroy our members' jobs. These job-killing unions are the: Communications Workers of America (CWA), National Nurses United (NNU), Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), American Postal Workers Union (APWU), and Service Employees International Union (SEIU). It is also important to acknowledge that the AFL-CIO recently came out in support of the Dakota Access Pipeline. While we may not always agree with the AFL-CIO on some of their strategies and decisions, we appreciate that they stood by our members on this important issue.

LIUNA will not forget the reprehensible actions and statements against our members and their families from the five unions listed above. Brothers and sisters, for every ACTION there is a REACTION, and we should find every opportunity to reciprocate their total disrespect and disregard for the health, safety, and livelihoods of our members. Not only have these unions joined in a common cause with the self-interested opportunists vilifying hard-working tradesmen and tradeswomen, they are knowingly repeating the lies and misinformation driving opposition to this project. In joining forces with opponents of Dakota Access, these unions have displayed a truly amazing level of hypocrisy and ignorance while threatening the safety and livelihoods of workers who are AFL-CIO and Building Trades members.

Some of our so-called brothers and sisters in the trade union movement have abandoned solidarity with the working class and are instead throwing in with environmentalists who have co-opted the tribes in their effort to fight pipelines. Tribal members are concerned with protecting water quality and avoiding destruction of culturally significant sites – goals that the Pipeline owner and our members fully intend to achieve by building the Pipeline carefully, respectfully, and responsibly.

Unfortunately, these protests are being fueled and promoted by another group: so-called “keep it in the ground” environmentalists who oppose all pipeline projects no matter how safe or how carefully developed. A recent headline summed it up best: “Are Environmentalists Using Native Americans, and Does It Matter?” The answer to both questions is yes. The groups behind the anti-pipeline movement are exploiting tribal concerns in an effort to mobilize public opinion against pipeline projects that have nothing to do with tribal concerns.

Some Members of Congress have recently signed onto letters against the Dakota Access Pipeline. I have reached out to each of these Members of Congress and expressed our anger and disappointment of their complete disregard of our members.

Americans deserve to know the truth. The Dakota Access Pipeline does not run through sacred burial sites or across any part of the Standing Rock Reservation, and it does not pose a threat to the Missouri River. Opponents want the public to believe that these issues were not considered over the two-year review process. But this is not some half-baked project. It is an all-union built Pipeline that was meticulously reviewed and vetted.

With the Dakota Access Pipeline now more than halfway finished, these facts bear repeating:

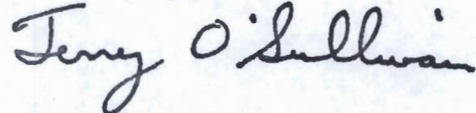
- The Pipeline underwent an exhaustive two-year review during which supporters and critics had ample opportunity to express their positions.
- Throughout the review process solicitations for input from various groups were made, including to the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held 389 meetings with fifty-five tribes during the review process. They met with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe individually nearly a dozen times before the Pipeline route was finalized and the project permitted.
- The Dakota Access Pipeline was rerouted 140 times in North Dakota alone to avoid culturally sensitive areas. The entire route was surveyed by professional archaeologists and ethnographic specialists. Multiple archaeological studies conducted with state historic preservation offices found no sacred items. This was all well-established before construction began, and it has been reaffirmed by additional surveys conducted since then. Opponents continue to claim otherwise.
- Opponents contend that the Dakota Access Pipeline poses a threat to the Missouri River. This Pipeline was designed with state-of-the-art safety measures and redundancies, including compliance with all safety and environmental regulations. Also, this Pipeline is not the first pipeline to cross the Missouri River. Eight other pipelines have already been built and are already in service under the same body of water, transporting thousands of barrels of crude product every day. No organization has done more to prevent pipeline spills and protect waterways in North Dakota than LIUNA.
- Last month, a U.S. District Court refused to halt construction, citing that regulators had followed the law. The U.S. Court of Appeals recently upheld that decision. Yet rather than respect the court's ruling, the Obama Administration chose to overstep its authority by halting construction of the river crossing. The Administration even had the nerve to ask for construction to be "voluntarily" halted on another 20 miles of right-of-way – effectively asking our members to "voluntarily" give up their paychecks for work on a lawfully permitted project.

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LIUNA as always, will continue to fight for our members and their families. We will remain vigilant and resolute on this issue and will continue to work relentlessly to protect the jobs and the safety of those we proudly represent. We stand in solidarity with our Building Trades brothers and sisters who skillfully and courageously continue to build the Dakota Access Pipeline.

With kind regards, I am

Fraternally yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Terry O'Sullivan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

TERRY O'SULLIVAN
General President

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