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Action Taken in the Dakota Access Pipeline Statement from USET President Kirk Francis on behalf of USET Sovereignty Protection Fund and United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET)

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Sunday's announcement by the Obama Administration to deny the easement for the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), to conduct a more stringent environmental review, to consider alternate routes, and to consult further with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe was long awaited and a sign that Indian Country's concerns are being heard. We strongly urge the Army Corps to move forward expeditiously in identifying and securing an alternate route for the pipeline. While it is important that we recognize the value and benefit that our collective advocacy efforts had in securing this win, we must remain equally vigilant and steadfast in our determination to ensure that the next Administration does not reverse this decision and that we not let our guard down as the possibility for conflict continues.

Additionally, as expressed in a letter sent to President Obama on December 2nd that was [signed by 35 Tribal Organizations](#), we remain concerned and outraged by the recent tactics and excessive force employed by the police against the water protectors and believe those tactics to be an outright violation of their human and civil rights. While Sunday's easement denial announcement was a positive step forward, I continue to call upon the President to take immediate and decisive action to deescalate the conflict and to provide for the overall safety and well-being of all those involved in the protest to ensure that no further abuses are committed and no lives are lost.

Finally, the realities of DAPL serve to reinforce why it is time to replace the antiquated and paternalistic framework of the current trust model with a 21st Century model that recognizes Tribal Nations as sovereigns and equals within this special and unique Nation-to-Nation relationship. We must work together to address and correct the [failures and inadequacies of our relationship](#) to prevent DAPL-like situations in the future.

Thoughts and prayers from our USET family of Tribal Nations go out to all the water protectors and advocates who work so tirelessly in the name of upholding and protecting our inherent sovereign authorities and rights.

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