

United Tribes of Michigan

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Frank Ettawageshik, Executive Director

RESOLUTION # 046 10-26-2016

United Tribes of Michigan Support for the Standing Rock Sioux to Protect its Lands, Waters, and Sacred Places

WHEREAS, the membership of United Tribes of Michigan (UTM) is open to all of the twelve federally recognized tribes located in Michigan; and

WHEREAS, the organization provides a forum for the Tribes in Michigan to address issues of common concern and is committed to join forces to advance, protect, preserve and enhance the mutual interests, treaty rights, sovereignty, and cultural way of life of the sovereign Indian Tribes of Michigan throughout the next seven generations; and

WHEREAS, UTM accepts the mission to engage, as a matter of mutual concern, issues that impact the health, security, safety, and general welfare of Native Americans; and

WHEREAS, Indian tribes are sovereigns that pre-date the United States, with prior and treaty protected rights to self-government and to our Indian lands; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States, through the Treaty, Commerce, and Apportionment Clauses and the 14th Amendment, further acknowledges the sovereign status of tribal; and

WHEREAS, the Standing Rock Indian Reservation was established as a permanent homeland for the Hunkpapa, Yanktonai, Cuthead and Blackfoot bands of the Great Sioux Nation; and

WHEREAS, the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe depends on the Missouri River as its sole water sources as well as for public health, general welfare, and sustainability of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation; and

WHEREAS, the Dakota Access Pipeline poses a serious risk to the Missouri River and the Standing Rock Sioux Tribes ability to provide a livable homeland for its people; and

WHEREAS, the horizontal direction drilling in the construction of the pipeline would destroy valuable cultural resources and sacred places of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; and

WHEREAS, the lack of true government-to-government consultation with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and other tribes with ties to the land surrounding the Missouri River is a failure

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of the federal government's trust responsibility; and

WHEREAS, all of Indian Country is standing in solidarity with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; and

WHEREAS, on December 4, 2012, the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy and Interior and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation agreed by Memorandum of Understanding to work collaboratively until December 31, 2017, to address the protection of and Indian access to sacred places, including "making recommendations to address impediments to the protection of sacred sites," but have not used the MOU to protect any sacred places to date, and have not addressed impediments to the protection of sacred places, including the sacred places that have been destroyed or are threatened by the Dakota Access Pipeline; and

WHEREAS, the UTM is deeply concerned about the protection of Native Peoples' sacred places, sacred objects and ancestors, wherever they are located or held, within or outside the United States, by whatever person(s) or entity(ies), and is unconditionally opposed to their desecration or dispossession, and to any adverse impact, damage, endangerment, injury or threat to them.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the United Tribes of Michigan supports the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's legal, administrative, and legislative efforts to halt construction of the pipeline to ensure the protection of its waters, lands, and sacred places; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, UTM calls upon the Administration to deny the easement request to drill under Lake Oahe and do a full Environmental Impact Statement; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that UTM calls upon the Department of Justice, the Department of the Army, and the Department of the Interior to follow up on the joint statement released on September 9, 2016 to: (1) do a full review and reconsideration of the decisions by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with full, meaningful consultation with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and other Missouri River tribes consistent to the true government-to-government relationship; and (2) engage Indian Country in government-to-government consultation to determine what can be done to ensure early, consistent, and meaningful tribal consultation and a significant role in the planning of projects that could impact tribal lands, resources, and sacred places, and work with Indian Country in a true partnership to determine the necessary legislative and administration changes ensure this never happens again to any tribe; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that in carrying out this resolution we call for prayers and peaceful action. Indian Country's first concern is for the safety of the peaceful protectors, law enforcement officers, government officials, and workers in Cannon Ball, ND. Any act of violence is unwelcome; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that UTM calls on the federal signatories to the MOU to abide by the commitments they made in the MOU in all the subject areas related to sacred places and to propose and implement only after extensive tribal consultation, meaningful policy changes that preserve and protect sacred places and Native Peoples' rights to access and use them in accordance with traditional practices in original territories and without intimidation or penalty,

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including the sacred places affected by the Dakota Access Pipeline; and


BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the UTM calls for the U.S. Congress to amend the American Indian Religious Freedom Act or to pass free-standing legislation to establish a statutory right of action of the kind described 26 years ago by the U.S. Supreme Court, or to set forth a process to return and otherwise protect Native Peoples' sacred places; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of UTM until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution

Adopted by a vote of 9 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstaining, at a meeting of the United Tribes of Michigan held on October 26, 2016.



Chairman Aaron Payment
UTM President



Chairwoman Regina Gasco Bentley
UTM Secretary