



AMERICAN  
PSYCHOLOGICAL  
ASSOCIATION

November 14, 2016

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are writing on behalf of the more than 117,500 members of the American Psychological Association (APA) and our Society for the Psychological Study of Culture, Ethnicity and Race to express our support for your Administration's hold on the construction of the oil pipeline near the Standing Rock Reservation, and your consideration of alternate routes for the project.

APA is the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology in the United States. Our mission is to advance the creation, communication, and application of psychological knowledge to benefit society and improve people's lives.

Due to the proposed placement of the pipeline, we have concerns about the possibility for future leakage posing harm to the people of the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. As psychologists, we are particularly troubled by the potential for adverse neurological effects of oil-contaminated water. Moreover, we are disturbed that the pipeline was considered too risky to route close to Bismarck, North Dakota, but not to the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation.

Native American populations have been historically marginalized and mistreated by the United States. For instance, not all States recognized Native Americans' right to vote until 1957, and many tribes experienced great loss of life, land, and culture as the result of State and Federal legislation. This mistreatment is associated with historical trauma in which the loss experienced by one generation is transferred to subsequent generations through biological, psychological, environmental, and social means. Studies have shown that historical trauma is linked to health disparities, including increased likelihood of early death due to chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, unintentional injuries, assault/homicide, and suicide. We strongly advocate for the empowerment of these communities through continuous, meaningful consultation with tribal leaders as the project develops.

We are also very concerned about the violence that has occurred in response to protests. Media reports describe protesters being held in dog kennels and shot with rubber bullets, a frightening continuation of the historical mistreatment of Native Americans. We ask that you do whatever you can to urge law enforcement to show restraint as they try to diffuse the conflict.

750 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002-4242  
(202) 336-5500  
(202) 336-6123 TDD



Please Recycle

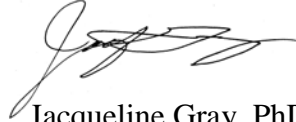
[www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)

Thank you again for your commitment to consider re-routing the pipeline in an effort to preserve Native American sacred ground and a safe water supply. If we can be of any assistance, please contact Serena Dávila, J.D., in APA's Public Interest Government Relations Office, at 202-336-6061 or sdavila@apa.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Susan H. McDaniel (PhD)". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the letters "S", "H", and "M" being particularly prominent.

Susan H. McDaniel, PhD, ABPP  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jacqueline Gray". The signature is cursive and stylized, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

Jacqueline Gray, PhD  
President  
Society for the Psychological Study  
of Culture, Ethnicity and Race