



LIPAN APACHE TRIBE OF TEXAS

P.O. Box 5218
McAllen, TX 78502
www.lipanapache.org 956-648-9336
contact@lipanapache.org



Statement by Chairman Bernard Barcena of the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas Big Bend Conservation Alliance Alpine, Texas; Sept 30, 2016

Hóóyí (Hello).

Last month, the Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas Tribal Council passed a resolution (#08-22-16) stating its support of the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe's attempt to prevent the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline through their sacred sites. The Lipan Apache Tribal leadership promptly and proudly sent a copy of this resolution to Tribal Chairman David Archambault II in Standing Rock and posted it on our website and Facebook page. Like all Native American tribes and all native people, for that matter, we know it is vital to defend your land and heritage. We also know that, to stand a chance of winning the struggle against the powerful economic and political forces they face, the Standing Rock Sioux absolutely need the support and active engagement of everybody who loves this land. So as we staked our opposition to that pipeline, we also worried about our own struggle with the Trans-Pecos Pipeline. Today we and call on all those who stand with the Standing Rock Sioux to stand with us against the destruction of the Lipan Apache's heritage sites in the Big Bend.

The Lipan's struggle is the same as that of the Standing Rock Sioux. Yet in a certain way, it is a harder fight. For while we are one of the largest of the surviving ten Apache tribes with a long history in the Southern Great Plains, the Big Bend, and both sides of the Rio Grande River Valley, from El Paso to McAllen where our tribal headquarters is located, we are not officially recognized by the US government. Among other things, this means that, unlike the Standing Rock Sioux, neither the pipeline company nor any of the interested governmental agencies are required to consult with us on the impact of this pipeline on our culture, religion, and heritage. Indeed, we would have much preferred to have been consulted than to stand here today imagining the worse for everything in its path. Who knows, maybe such a consultation would have resolved the conflict that has brought on today's protest.

Under that land you see from the public roads, in the canyons and outcroppings fenced away as private land, and in the spirit that touches everything, lies our legacy—our mark in history—of struggle for survival and adaptation to and love for this land. We are a Plains people from the north, as our elders explain. We ensconced in the Big Bend region and parts further south starting hundreds of years ago. Those of you who are Culcahendes (Tall Grass People) from Barranco Azul, El Mulato, and Barrio de los Lipanes will attest that our people have been in this land since at least the 1700s, and that we are still very much here and are part of the land, and love this land, for it took us in and mothered us. So we defend it as a child defends its mother. We cannot help but see that woven into it and by it is our past and our future. As such, this land and our history, with it is also the patrimony of all humanity that calls all humans to defend as their own by all thinking and feeling people. For if our cultural sites are destroyed and the spirit is dug out with bulldozers and excavators, it will be inert to all alike. It will not be able to mother anybody anymore. And a big part of human history and knowledge will be lost to all humanity forever.

The Lipan Apache Tribe of Texas stands with all who love the Big Bend against the destruction of the humanity's heritage that the construction of this pipeline will cause if it continues as it has without any consultation of the people whose legacy and history are tied to it. Please stand with us.

Ha'u (Farewell).