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*****UPDATE*****

Energy Transfer Partners CEO Kelcy Warren Agrees to Meet With Society of Native Nations

200 Texas Water Protectors call for Warren's removal from Parks & Wildlife Commission, DAPL pipeline billionaire recuses himself from vote on East Texas pipeline

Austin, TX - At a meeting of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission yesterday, Energy Transfer Partners CEO Kelcy Warren agreed to meet with representatives of the Society of Native Nations over the desecration of sacred burial grounds caused by the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (aka, DAPL) near the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in North Dakota and the Trans-Pecos Pipeline in West Texas.

Approximately 200 Texans gathered at Texas Parks and Wildlife Headquarters in Austin for a peaceful demonstration to speak out against Warren's presence on the Commission. Energy Transfer Partners is also constructing the Comanche Trail Pipeline in El Paso County.

After the rally outside Parks and Wildlife headquarters, several citizens and organizational leaders from across Texas joined the public meeting of the Commission to oppose an easement for a pipeline corridor across the J.D. Murphree Wildlife Management Area for the installation of up to six refined petrochemical product pipelines, which was scheduled for a vote of approval.

Near the end of the public testimony, Mescalero Apache and board member of Society of Native Nations Pete Hefflin spoke directly to Warren, appealing him to address the destruction of ancestral graves in North Dakota. From the dais, Warren said he did not believe graves were disturbed but promised to meet Hefflin and the organization to discuss the issue further.

After the meeting, **Pete Hefflin, Mescalero Apache, Society of Native Nations Board Member**, made the following remarks:

"I came to him in a prayerful way and he agreed to meet with us. I couldn't believe it. I told him, 'I'm not mad at you nor angry. I have prayed for you and your family. How would you like it if I was to go and dig up your ancestors, like you've been doing to my people?' to which Warren responded 'I don't think I've done that.'"

Hefflin continued, "It means we're moving in the right direction and that prayer is powerful. It's got more power than any weapons or any money out there. The elders of North Dakota have been telling us to remain in prayer and to remain peaceful."

“We want to make sure this meeting happens. Not only for Texas, but for North Dakota and anywhere else in the world where these pipelines are hurting people, the land, and our future generations.”

“We will be in contact with representatives from Standing Rock and West Texas groups like Defend Big Bend and Big Bend Conservation Alliance to gather and review the evidence of the desecration of these sacred sites.”

“Our relatives in North Dakota and our historian contacts in West Texas have the information about desecrated sacred sites in both areas, and we appreciate Kelcy Warren’s willingness to sit with us and review that information together.”

At the conclusion of public testimony, Warren and Parks & Wildlife Commissioner Anna Galo recused themselves from the vote and the Commission tabled the item.

“We are energized by the tremendous turnout in support of Native peoples and communities affected by the oil and gas industry,” said Reggie James, Director of the Sierra Club’s Lone Star Chapter. “We sincerely hope that Mr. Warren is a man of his word and meets with the Society of Native Nations and other Native leaders, and that he also does the right thing and steps down from the Commission so that Parks and Wildlife can focus on what they do best - protecting and preserving our state’s parks and natural areas.”

The Sierra Club supports removal of Kelcy Warren from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission, and seeks to play a positive role in supporting and strengthening agency’s efforts to learn more about oil and gas development’s impacts on state parks and wildlife areas.

The Sierra Club is glad to play a supporting role to the organizations who made today possible: Society of Native Nations, Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe of Texas, Defend Big Bend, Earth Guardians of El Paso, TX, Save Our Springs Too, and Equilibrio.

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