



Notes from the Chief

What I'm working on for You

Osiyo -

I recently had the fortunate opportunity to visit the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation and the Sacred Stone Camp, where close to 10,000 people were standing in solidarity with the tribe in its righteous campaign to protect its historic and sacred sites, along with its precious natural resources.

I was deeply touched by the resolute spirit and collective power of the water protectors, and I am so proud the Cherokee Nation is standing united with our brothers and sisters from North Dakota. It was a powerful moment to stand shoulder to shoulder with friends, associates at the Cherokee Nation and tribal citizens from around the country to lend our voice and support for the Standing Rock people in their just fight to reroute a proposed oil pipeline that could harm historic and sacred sites, and potentially contaminate the water supply for 18 million people.

It is simply amazing what tribal people can accomplish when we come together in times of need. We delivered vital supplies, including firewood and winter clothing that our Cherokee Nation Youth Council collected. It marked the third official trip from our government, not to mention the hundreds of individual Cherokees who have traveled to support the cause. We have contributed funds for the legal battle and much needed firewood and supplies for the upcoming winter months, which on the North Dakota prairie can be brutal.

It's the right thing to do and is a plight worth supporting. The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, like Cherokee Nation, has always been a good steward of the land. Like the Lakota people, we've experienced hardships, removal and termination policies. We've had treaties broken, guarantees ignored and our lands and natural resources pillaged time and time again. It's an unfortunate history that all Indian nations share in this country and Indigenous populations share all over the world. However, Native people can and should be part of the solution for a sustainable future and for the development of clean, safe energy. We must have a seat at the table before decisions are made impacting the safety, health and natural resources of our communities because economies can no longer be built on the backs of Native people.

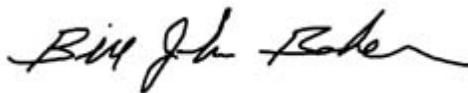
At the Sacred Stone Camp, water protectors are prepared for a long winter and ready to peacefully defend the water that sustains so many communities down the river. Like others across Indian Country, I hope for a positive and safe outcome and the federal government truly takes into account all tribal concerns. We pray that the well-being of the community will be prioritized ahead of profit and corporate interests.

This battle is really about more than just one tribe. It's about protecting our sovereign rights. It's about defending our precious water and Mother Earth. It's about all tribal nations coming together for a common cause to say, 'our rights must be respected and upheld.'

We went to Standing Rock as the largest tribe in the United States to amplify the message and voices that are rallying around this critical cause and to let all of Indian Country know that at Cherokee Nation, our heart and our spirit is with the Standing Rock Sioux people.

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