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**Scott Davis**, North Dakota Director Dept. of Indian Affairs  
**Rob Keller**, Morton County Sheriff's Department  
**Maj. French Pope**, Army Corp of Engineers  
**Weldon Loudermilk**, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs  
**Kevin Haugrud**, Acting Secretary, Department of the Interior  
**Sen. John Hoeven**, R-North Dakota; Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

Feb. 21, 2017

Dear local law enforcement, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and government officials,

As the planned enforcement of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' evacuation order to those at the Dakota Access Pipeline camp in Cannon Ball, North Dakota is underway, the organizations below urge officials to allow journalists to cover the events without fear of arrest, violence or other threats.

It is important for journalists to document the events occurring in and around the camps at Standing Rock through the eviction process. The public has a right to know what is happening there. It is journalists' jobs – and right under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution -- to cover the story through reporting, writing, photographing, videotaping and broadcasting these events as they happen.

As you may know, we reached out last week to the Morton County Sheriff's Department to offer training to law enforcement and journalists there on ways they can peacefully work together. As of Tuesday afternoon, we had not heard back from them, but the offer of providing assistance still stands.

We recognize that in the age of social media and blogging that the lines can often seem blurred between who is covering an event versus who is protesting. Those covering the story at Standing Rock as journalists should not face arrest, injury or confiscation of their equipment.

Additionally, we urge you to drop charges against journalists who have been arrested while covering events at Standing Rock, and welcome any opportunity to meet and further discuss these issues with you.

Sincerely,

Committee to Protect Journalists  
Native American Journalists Association  
National Press Photographers Association  
Online News Association  
Society of Professional Journalists