

For Immediate Release

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## **Water Protector sentenced to 8 years in Federal Prison for actions to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline**

Des Moines, IA –On Wednesday Federal Judge Rebecca Goodgame Ebinger sentenced Jessica Reznicek to 8 years in prison, followed by 3 years supervised probation, and a restitution of \$3,198,512.70 paid to Energy Transfer LLC for the actions she took in 2016 to stop the Dakota Access Pipeline.

“I am saddened to be preparing for prison following today’s sentencing hearing. My spirit remains strong, however, as I feel held in love, support and prayer by so many near and far. Regardless of my sentence I am hopeful that movements to protect the water live on in the struggles against Line 3 and the Mountain Valley Pipelines.” Jessica Reznicek

The judge sided with the Federal prosecutors and applied a domestic terrorism enhancement to Jessica’s case. The enhancement originated in the Bush era Patriot Act, which expanded the definition of terrorism to cover "domestic," as opposed to international, terrorism. The prosecutor requested the enhancement claiming that Jessica’s acts of resistance were “violent”, “dangerous”, and sought to “intimidate the government”. The judge decided that this argument provided enough evidence to substantiate the enhancement, saying it was necessary to discourage others from taking similar actions.

The enhancement increases Jessica’s sentence, but also has far reaching implications for broader social justice movements. This use of this enhancement interprets non-violent actions that challenge corporate profit as acts of terror against the government.

On today’s decision one of Jessica’s attorneys Bill Quigley stated, “Unfortunately, actions to protect our human right to water were found to be less important than the profit and property of corporations which are destroying our lands and waters. For a country which was founded by the rebellion of the Boston Tea Party this is extremely disappointing. But the community of resistance will no doubt carry on. And history will judge if Jessica Reznicek is a criminal or a prophet. Many of us are betting she’s a prophet.”

In her statement to the court Jessica highlighted how the water system for her hometown of Des Moines is on the verge of collapse. The city water department has admitted that both the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers are so polluted and low that in the upcoming weeks they might not be able to continue to use them to supply the capital with drinking water. Meanwhile “victim” in this case Energy Transfer Partners and its subsidiaries are responsible for 313 reported spills since 2012 on liquid lines, 35 caused water contamination. In the last 5 years the company had more accidents harming people or the environment than any other operator.

Jessica will remain on house arrest until she has to self-report for her sentence and plans to file an appeal within the 14 day window allowed by the court.