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PROTESTERS ATTACKED BY POLICE WITH PEPPER SPRAY, SEVEN ARRESTED DURING SHUTDOWN ALEC ACTION IN PHOENIX, AZ

NEWS RELEASE:

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www.ShutDownALEC.org

SCOTTSDALE, AZ — Dozens of protesters were attacked by police with pepper spray and seven people have been arrested so far in a day of action against the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC).

On November 30, starting at 8 am hundreds marched and converged on the Kierland Westin Resort and Spa in Scottsdale, where ALEC is attempting to hold its annual “States and Nation Summit”.

This is breaking news, the protest is planned to continue and grow through the day. More updates to follow.



“We will continue to use diversity of tactics to send the message to ALEC members that the we are watching and we will not stand for the further destruction of our communities and environment that ALEC members push into law in order to fill their own pockets.” Stated Alex Soto of O’odham Solidarity Across Borders. “The amount of force that police are using to protect ALEC’s corporate interests reveals how corrupt this system is.” Stated Soto.

An O’odham elder was transported to the hospital for breathing difficulties due to the police’s pepper spray attack.

Behind closed doors of ALEC meetings, thousands of state politicians and hundreds of powerful transnational corporations come together to create laws that advocate for, among other things, the desecration of Indigenous land through eco-cide and the growing dragnet of incarceration that sweeps up immigrants and people of color, all for the profit of global corporations (like SB1070).

Additional actions are planned through December 3.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1

4pm: March at Freeport McMoran

Converge at Freeport McMoran, Downtown Phoenix, AZ.

Decentralized Actions at Various Sites Locations throughout the valley All day
Rally against ALEC influence on Arizona Politics organized by Arizona at Work
Speaking Event w/ Lisa Graves, Publisher of ALECexposed.org

6pm: At OccupyPhoenix

Full schedule located at: www.azresistsalec.wordpress.com/schedule/



A Message to the American Legislative Exchange Council

Today, protected by an army of police officers and private security guards, you are meeting in Scottsdale, Arizona. However, outside the walls of your security apparatus there are many voices under attack that have united to confront, expose, and resist all that you represent. On the twelfth anniversary of the historic mass mobilizations that shut down the World Trade Organization in Seattle, we are here to reveal the ways in which the policies and laws promoted by your members are causing great harm in our communities in the form of criminalization, militarization, privatization, and environmental destruction.

Your organization is a tool for corporations to obtain access to thousands of legislators, helping them work hand in hand to develop profitable legislation. ALEC generates socially and environmentally destructive policies which prioritize profits over people. Due to your secret nature you have thrived, but your days of anonymity are numbered. We now know where to point the finger at the corporations writing laws in America.

In order to understand the depth of your insidious influence, we look to the destructive legacy of colonialism. Scottsdale, Arizona is occupied Akimel O'odham land. Some of the clearest examples of corporate/legislative collusion can be found here, in the exploitation of Indigenous people and their land. We know you applaud infrastructure projects such as the widening of the I-10 in Tucson, and the proposed extension of Loop 202 through sacred lands in Phoenix, allowing for profit to accumulate quickly as goods and commodities travel faster, no matter the cost to the communities and wildlife which stand in the way.

Indigenous communities are at the front lines of your attack, and today they continue a 500 years long resistance. Peabody Energy's coal mining at Black Mesa has led to the forced relocation of more than 10,000 Dine' and Hopi people in Arizona. Tohono O'odham in the border region are severely impacted by border militarization, drone plane surveillance, and daily harassment by border patrol agents. We also know that your harm extends globally through your promotion of international trade agreements such as NAFTA and CANAMEX.

Your corporate board is filled with members from extractive industries such as Newmont Mining Corp., Barrick Gold, Peabody Energy and Freeport McMoran, whose harm extends locally and internationally. In Arizona, Freeport McMoran is threatening to develop the largest copper mine in North America on Apache lands, and internationally, they have been equated by the United Nations to forcing their workers to operate under conditions comparable to slave labor.

We see your members promoting and profiting from the criminalization of immigrant communities through racial profiling and terrorizing legislation like SB-1070, the same way you have previously promoted three strikes laws and mandatory minimum sentencing. These laws have led to the massive incarceration rates that our communities continue to face today.

Your profit-driven greed ceaselessly threatens our communities and all that we hold sacred.

We do not seek reform. We are not protesting to ask for you to change. We are not here to promote an alternative political agenda. We want you to become so transparent that you cease to exist.

For far too long politicians and corporations have waged war on the earth and its people. It doesn't start or stop with you, but you exemplify the worst of it, and this is why you are currently in the spotlight. Every action of resistance is an act to reclaim our lives.



**ALEC IS WHERE ALL
OUR STRUGGLES
MERGE.**

**IT REPRESENTS THE ROOT OF
SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESTRUCTION IN
WHICH PROFITS ARE PUT OVER PEOPLE.**



INDIGENOUS ELDERS & SUPPORTERS OCCUPY ALEC MEMBER SALT RIVER PROJECT HEADQUARTERS



TEMPE, AZ — Indigenous Dine’ (Navajo) and O’odham elders and supporters are taking direct action by occupying Salt River Project (SRP) headquarters today at 10am. This action is occurring while the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) holds their “States & Nation Policy Summit” in Scottsdale, AZ. SRP is on ALEC’s corporate board.

Louise Benally, a resident of Black Mesa impacted by SRP’s operations, is delivering a letter to SRP that outlines critical concerns of her community. She expressed that “My community is heavily impacted by Salt River Project’s coal and water extraction activities. SRP has extensive ties to Peabody Energy’s massive mining operations and the Navajo Generating Station which they co-own. Coal mining has destroyed thousands of archeological sites and our only water source has been seriously compromised. Their operations are causing widespread respiratory problems, lung diseases, and other health impacts on humans, the environment, and all living things.”

“...We demand that SRP & Peabody meaningfully involve the indigenous communities they are impacting, and that they convert to non-fossil fuel based energy sources and address the health impacts on our communities.”

“...ALEC, acting in the corporate interests of SRP & Peabody Energy, continues policies & operations that are not only devastating whole communities and ecosystems, but greatly de-stabilizing our planet’s climate for the profit of a few, the so-called 1%.” stated Benally.

Ofelia Rivas, an elder and activist of the O’odham, Indigenous Peoples on the border of Arizona and Mexico, states “As indigenous people we understand that the balance of the land is actually the balance of our people and any disturbance of that is very devastating not only to our spiritual health but our overall physical health, as well as all living things. As indigenous people we are not separated from our environment. We’re deeply connected to everything in the universe: the land, the mountains, water, air, and all plant and animal life.”

“...The proposed loop 202 freeway extension that threatens South Mountain and the continuing construction of the US and Mexico border and it’s militarization. Trade policies such as NAFTA and CANAMEX alter our way of life and threatens our Him’dag. We will no longer accept the violence the state attempts to enforce on us along their border. Especially the aggressive legislation of ALEC. We demand you recognize the declaration of universal indigenous rights as well as the rights of our mother earth. Enough is enough, it ends now!”

The massive canals constructed before colonial invasion of O’odham lands are now being utilized by Salt River Project. O’odham culture is deeply rooted throughout this area, which is as far north as the Phoenix Valley, as far west as the coast of Mexico in what is now Rocky Point, east as the San Pedro river and as far south as Hermosillo and the Sierra Madres Mountains.

Ray Aguilar stated that “the air conditioning and power we enjoy and water we drink comes at the suffering caused by SRP and Peabody’s exploitation of the land and people. When will we realize that our privileges are based on this? We must take further action. I just spent one week doing direct, on-land support with Black Mesa residents assisting with basic essential human needs. That’s why I’m here today. This critical situation would not exist if not for these greedy corporations.”

Peabody Energy, also an ALEC member, is the world’s largest private-sector coal company. With 2010 sales of 246 million tons and nearly \$7 billion in revenues, Peabody creates 10 percent of U.S. power and 2 percent of worldwide electricity.

Since 1974 more than 14,000 Dine’ families have been forcibly removed from their ancestral homelands due in large part due to U.S.-backed tribal councils and coal mining.

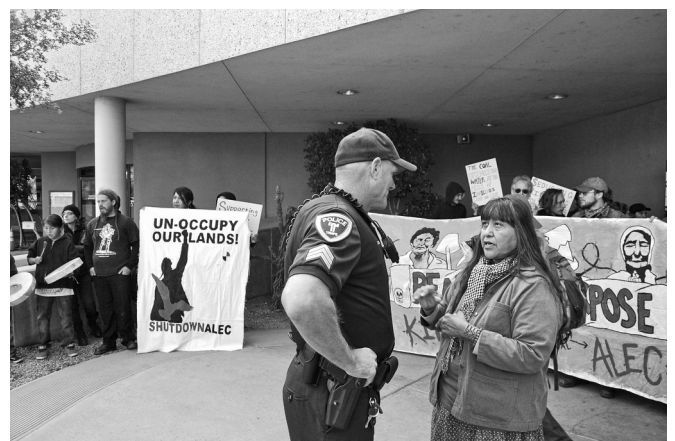
To protest the deadly legacy of environmental and cultural destruction caused by the company’s collusion with Peabody Energy the protest has stated the following:

Big Mountain Sovereign Dine’ Nation
P.O. Box 23501
Flagstaff, AZ 86001

Salt River Project
1521 N. Project Drive
Tempe, AZ 85281

David Rousseau, President
John R. Hoopes, Vice President

CC:
American Legislative Exchange Council
Ben Shelly, Navajo Nation President
LeRoy N. Shingoitewa, Hopi Tribe Chairman



Barack Obama, United States President
Jan Brewer, Governor of Arizona
Gregory H. Boyce, CEO, Peabody Energy
Peabody Energy Corporate Headquarters
Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission
Ben Nuvamsa, Former Chairman, Hopi Tribe
Black Mesa Water Coalition
Black Mesa Trust
Forgotten People
Gila River Indian Community
Zuni Salt Lake Coalition
Indigenous Environmental Network
Center for Biological Diversity
International Indian Treaty Council

To the Owners, Operators, & Beneficiaries of Salt River Project,

We are a community that is heavily impacted by the Salt River Project's coal and water extraction activities. We are particularly impacted by Peabody Energy's mining operations to which you have extensive ties, the Navajo Generating Station which you co-own, and the exploitation of the water that underlies our ancestral lands. We wish to formally bring before you some critical concerns of our community.

The Navajo Generating Station and Peabody's mining operations cause widespread respiratory problems, lung diseases, asthma issues, other health impacts on humans, the environment, and all living things. We don't have access to health insurance. The plants and animals are also impacted and there are no studies on that. There is no remedy for that for now.

Peabody is an extremely disrespectful company, they're tearing up everything for the coal. Mother earth and our cultural resources such as sacred sites are not at all respected. Back in the mid-nineties, grandmothers were defending the land when the mine was being expanded more and more, and we witnessed peoples' graves being totally bulldozed. They have been exploiting and destroying sacred places, and that is not being talked about.

And the coal ash that they're trying to dump on our lands now—it's really no different than the uranium that we have suffered from for so many years. It's toxic and poisonous, and there's no safe place to store the coal ash.

The mining needs to stop. Until then, we demand that you honor the clean air act and the EPA's highest standards by installing the best retrofit technology available on the Navajo Generating Station to reduce pollution from mercury, arsenic, and other toxic pollutants being released in to the air.

Our water is being exploited and our aquifers have been depleted for decades, causing springs to go dry and vegetation to change. Salt River Project needs to stop manipulating the Navajo and Hopi tribal governments, coercing them to sign agreements without consent from tribal members. Our water resources are not replenishable, and without the water, we cannot continue our way of life.

The beneficiaries of the energy and water you sell must realize that our suffering is a direct result of their consumption. They must also understand that the continued taking of finite “natural resources” is creating imbalances that threaten the survival of everyone’s future generations.

These issues are not being heard: Stop exploiting and destroying our ancestral homelands. Stop poisoning us. Stop meeting behind closed doors. Stop greenwashing your unfair and harmful practices. Recognize that you have a unique ability and thus a responsibility to put an end to these things, and that by not doing so you are also harming yourselves.

For background information: www.blackmesais.org

For information on ALEC protests: www.azresistsalec.wordpress.com and www.alecexposed.org

... The proposed loop 202 freeway extension that threatens South Mountain and the continuing construction of the US and Mexico border and it's militarization. Trade policies such as NAFTA and CANAMEX alter our way of life and threatens our Him'dag.



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ENOUGH IS ENOUGH, IT ENDS NOW!

IT'S A BLACK BLOC BLUR!



FINAL DAY WRAP-UP

On Friday, December 2nd, the final day of mobilization against the summit of the American Legislative Exchange Council, 16 were arrested at an action against Salt River Project. The action was led by Diné and O'odham elders and had multiple stages of escalation.

Salt River Project is on the Corporate Board of ALEC, Louise Benally, a resident of Black Mesa impacted by SRP's operations, delivered a letter to SRP that outlines critical concerns of her community. She expressed that "My community is heavily impacted by Salt River Project's coal and water extraction activities. SRP has extensive ties to Peabody Energy's massive mining operations and the Navajo Generating Station which they co-own. Coal mining has destroyed thousands of archeological sites and our only water source has been seriously compromised. Their operations are causing widespread respiratory problems, lung diseases, and other health impacts on humans, the environment, and all living things."

Five people locked down in the lobby and numerous others blockaded the front entrance. Banners inside and outside read "Expose ALEC, Peabody Kills", "UnOccupy Our Lands" and "Shut ALEC Down, Relocation = Genocide" in specific reference to the past forty years of forced relocation of Diné people from Black Mesa. The police presence started out small and increased to a massive collaborated effort between the Police Departments of Tempe, Scottsdale, and Phoenix, including riot police and a bomb squad. Streets on both ends were shut down and business was disrupted for multiple buildings. Riot police snatched multiple individuals in the crowd, who continued to chat, dance, etc. The numbers started out at around 70 and continued to swell as others found out about it. The whole action lasted 6 hours.

As the day continued the undercover police presence was particularly pervasive and obvious. Many people were monitored and followed throughout the day culminating in the presence of more than a dozen known undercovers after a police attack on the first Friday demo.

FIRST FRIDAY DEMO

A call was put out for people to converge at a particular intersection in downtown Phoenix during the monthly art walk and to take the street. Many arrived in bloc with a 'Class War!' banner for a roving dance party following a radical marching band. The police responded heavily about twenty minutes in and pepper spray started to fly. Scuffles erupted as the police tried to snatch people, and ultimately the pigs were only able to take one person away.

From the AZ Resists ALEC call for legal support:

"Branson was snatched from the crowd of protesters during the initial pepper spray of the crowd, and placed under arrest. Branson was then brutalized by police who left him with cuts on his body

and abrasions on his face. The police also pepper sprayed Branson once he was cuffed and in the back of the police car, completely unable to defend himself. The unwarranted pepper spraying left him with chemical burns on the areas of his body that had open sores from the brutal arrest. Branson is being charged with 2 counts of aggravated assault on an officer. His bond is \$2800.”

Some portions of the crowd continued on as others scattered, some of whom were followed by police. At this point, the presence of undercover in various spaces in downtown increased dramatically, though fortunately, no further arrests were made.

JAIL SUPPORT

During the three days of the ALEC summit, a total of 25 people were arrested, two of whom face serious felony charges. All are now out of jail. This comes two weeks after the state re-arrested one person on felony charges from last year’s anti-nazi actions in Phoenix. During that re-arrest, Phoenix Police photographed others present and interrogated them as to whether they were anarchists. Long term support is needed for all those under attack by the state in Arizona – indigenous people, undocumented people, all people of color, trans and queer people, poor and working class people and anarchists.

To support those arrested during the ALEC mobilization, see the Legal Aid page from AZ Resists ALEC here: www.azresistsalec.wordpress.com/legal-aid/



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