

# United Confederation of Taino People



## Office of International Relations and Regional Coordination

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12.21.2010

Hon. Daniel José Galán Kercado,  
Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources  
PO Box 366147 - Puerta de Tierra Station  
San Juan P.R.00906-6600

ANALIST/COORDINATOR SECTION  
2010 DEC 31 A 7 38  
US ARMY CORPS  
OF ENGINEERS

RE: Proposed Gas Pipeline Project called "Via Verde"

Takahi (Greetings) Hon. Daniel José Galán Kercado,

The United Confederation of Taino People (UCTP) is submitting this communication to voice its opposition to the proposed Gas Pipeline Project called "Via Verde", and the licensing of large-scale gas development on Borikén (Puerto Rico).

The UCTP is aware that the preamble to the constitution of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico ensures the free participation of its citizens in collective decisions;" we note however that this multinational project ignores and tramples on the right of Borikén Taino People as well as environmental and grassroots organizations to participation in collective decision-making.

Taino indigenous people as well as grassroots community people who live in the areas that will be affected by this project, have told the Federal and national government of Puerto Rico, that they oppose the construction of the Gas Pipeline "Via Verde" because it threatens the lives, health, welfare, security, culture, Sacred Sites, food sovereignty and property of the People, and presents a threat to *Atabei*, Mother Earth, her environment, over 21 rivers, water, air, fish, agricultural lands, endangered species, and their habitats.

Borikén Taino People, environmental and grassroots organizations have taken to the streets and marched to demonstrate that they are unconditionally saying no to the destructive gas pipeline project and are petitioning the Federal and Puerto Rican government to cancel all plans and permits related to this project.

With this in mind, the UCTP denounces the persistent failure of the Federal and Puerto Rican officials to respect the rights of Taino People as one of the most egregious examples of their double standard with respect to human, constitutional and international rights and crass violation of the Taino Peoples rights to consultation, free, prior and informed consent.

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The proposed Gas Pipeline not only threatens Taino People but all the Peoples of Borikén (Puerto Rico). According to the AEE plans, the pipeline route is 146 km long with a potential impact to over 100 meters wide and, would severely impact around 400 agricultural acres.

The UCTP therefore urges the Federal and Puerto Rican government to take action by immediately committing to stop the gas pipeline now, and to explore new sources of renewable and sustainable energy, with the intention of fully respecting, ensuring and upholding the rights of the Taino Peoples of Borikén (Puerto Rico).

Consistent with UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People, the UCTP calls upon the Federal and Puerto Rican Government to ensure that no further development takes place within ancestral Taino Territory without consultation of, and obtaining the free, prior and informed consent of Taino Peoples.

Oma bahari (With respect),

*Roberto Múkaro Agueibaná Borrero*

Roberto Múkaro Agueibaná Borrero,  
President, UCTP-OIRRC

*Roger Guayacan Hernandez*

Roger Guayacan Hernandez,  
Director, UCTP Borikén Liaison Office

CC:

HON. JENNIFER A. GONZÁLEZ COLÓN, Presidenta de la Camara de Representantes de Puerto Rico;  
Hon. Eric Correa Rivera, President of the Comisión de Recursos Naturales, Ambiente y Energía de la Camara de Representantes de Puerto;

HON. THOMAS RIVERA SCHATZ, Presidente del Senado de Puerto Rico;

Hon. Luz M. Santiago Gonzalez, President of the Senate Commission on Natural Resources;

Hon. Luis G. Fortuño, Govenor of Puerto Rico;

Edgar W. Garcia, US Army Corp of Engineers;

Mr. Ken Salazar, Secretary, U.S. Dept. of the Interior;

Ms. Chandra Roy-Henriksen, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues Secretariat;

Mr. James Anaya, Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

Ms. Andrea Carmen, Executive Director, International Indian Treaty Council