

# [***Pipeline security company says it's victim of smear campaign***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5NYC-JG21-DY6F-J2VB-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

BISMARCK, N.D. — The heavily criticized company that handled private security for the disputed Dakota Access oil pipeline said Thursday that its efforts were aimed at creating a safe working ***environment*** and that it's the victim of a smear campaign.

North Carolina-based TigerSwan is in trouble with North Dakota regulators for operating without a state license and has been lambasted on social media by pipeline opponents for its aggressive tactics during months of protests against the $3.8 billion pipeline that began moving North Dakota oil to a distribution point in Illinois this month.

The company said in a statement to The Associated Press that it "has been the subject of a deliberate misinformation campaign," and that social media "‘click bait' makes wild claims about work done in the interests of public safety." The company didn't immediately answer further questions, citing ongoing litigation.

North Dakota's Private Investigative and Security Board this week sued TigerSwan in state court, saying it had no license during the height of the protests and has continued operating after being denied one. The board wants a judge to stop TigerSwan's armed workers from continuing to monitor the pipeline system.

It also is seeking attorney fees and administrative fines that could total thousands of dollars from the company and President James Reese for operating without a license, a misdemeanor carrying a potential sentence of 30 days in jail and a $1,500 fine.

Pipeline opponents have denounced TigerSwan, which was founded by retired military special forces members, after internal documents recently surfaced indicating the company's workers in North Dakota used military-style counter-terrorism measures, had a close working relationship with public law enforcement and used propaganda.

"We worked hard at trying to make sure everybody remained peaceful and prayerful, but the goal of TigerSwan was to frame the dispute as extremely violent," said Dave Archambault, chairman of the Standing Rock Sioux tribe, which has led opposition to the pipeline. The tribe fears environmental harm. Texas-based developer Energy Transfer Partners says the pipeline is safe.

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