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CELEBRITIES RALLY BEHIND FILMMAKER ARRESTED IN PIPELINE PROTESTS

Emmy-winning filmmaker Deia Schlosberg was charged with three counts of conspiracy Singer Neil Young, actor Mark Ruffalo and other celebrities on Thursday joined in calling for

charges to be dropped against a documentary maker arrested while filming protesters who shut down oil pipelines from Canada to the United States, saying that she was acting as a journalist. Deia Schlosberg, producer of the 2016 documentary How to Let Go of the World and Love All the Things Climate Can't Change, was taken into custody at a TransCanada Corp's Keystone



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Pipeline site in Pembina County, North Dakota. She was charged along with activists Samuel Jessup and Michael Foster on Thursday with three counts of conspiracy, charges which carry a maximum penalty of 45 years in prison. Foster was also charged with trespassing and criminal mischief. Oscar-nominated director Josh Fox, who produced How to Let Go of the World with Schlosberg, said in an open letter to President Barack Obama and North Dakota Governor Jack Dalrymple that the charges against her were "unfair, unjust and illegal." The letter was signed by more than 30 artists, filmmakers, writers and journalists, including Young, Ruffalo, actors Daryl Hannah and Frances Fisher and singer Alex Ebert of Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros. "Journalism, especially documentary filmmaking, is not a crime, it's a responsibility. The freedom of the press is a fundamental right in our free society. The charges filed against her are an injustice that must be dropped immediately," said the letter, posted on the website EcoWatch. The Pembina County Sheriff's Office has repeatedly declined to comment and Pembina County State's Attorney

Ryan Bialas was not available to comment. The criminal complaint accuses Schlosberg, 36, of agreeing with Jessup and Foster two weeks in advance to "engage in conduct that would constitute theft of property" and of traveling to the pipeline site in the same vehicle as Jessup and Foster. All three appeared in court on Thursday morning for a bond hearing but remained in the Pembina County Jail several hours later. An attorney for Schlosberg could not immediately be reached for comment on Thursday. Documentary filmmaker Lindsey Grayzel told Reuters that she was arrested in Washington state while filming the protests on Tuesday and her footage confiscated. She had not been charged as of Thursday afternoon. During the protests, activists broke into valve stations at five remote locations to stop the flow of crude through arteries that pump around 15 percent of the oil consumed in the United States every day. Companies operating the pipelines shut down their lines for between five and seven hours as a safety measure before restarting them, according to Reuters estimates and company representatives. The action on Tuesday underscored the

vulnerability of the thousands of miles of pipeline in the United States that deliver energy to consumers. Together, the pipelines have the ability to carry nearly 2.8 million barrels a day of crude across the Canada-U.S. border. On Monday, actress Shailene Woodley and 26 other people were arrested on charges of trespassing and engaging in a riot at a demonstration against the Dakota Access Pipeline near St. Anthony, North Dakota.

PIPELINE COMPANIES REVIEW SECURITY AFTER 'RECKLESS' PROTEST

Activists entered several pipeline facilities in the United States on Tuesday

Kinder Morgan Canada will review its security measures after a co-ordinated protest in the U.S. attempted to shut down several oil-export pipelines. And the company's president says he expects further attacks if the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion from Edmonton to the West Coast is approved. Environmental activists in four U.S. states broke into remote pumping stations Tuesday and tried to disrupt the flow of oil from Alberta's oil sands. The protesters say they support the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, which opposes construction of a separate pipeline carrying oil from North Dakota to Illinois.

"There was a security breach, reckless access to our facilities. No damage was done, no harm was caused, no supply was interrupted," said Ian Anderson, president of Kinder Morgan Canada. "Was there anything we could have done differently? I'm not aware at this point, but we'll obviously take a look at that." Spectra, Enbridge and TransCanada were also impacted by the protesters. The companies warn sudden shutoffs can have unintended environmental

consequences. The U.S.-based group, Climate Direct Action, said it's responsible for the protests. "For most of the day, all five tarsands lines coming into the United States were shut down and that, I think, is a remarkable accomplishment," said Jay O'Hara, with Climate Direct Action. "It's exemplary of the type of action we need to see coming from government leaders and business leaders to tackle the climate crisis." They cut chains and tried to close the pipes, but Anderson said the valve connected to Kinder Morgan's pipeline was not turned off and supply was not impacted. "That's very, very difficult to do manually, if not impossible, at the site location," he said. "But had there been any tampering, we would have found out about it. We have cameras at many locations. I'm pretty satisfied that our intelligence and security would have maintained that site in a protected way." The Canadian pipeline industry has voiced its concern about vandalism after several tampering incidents in Ontario over the last year. Oil companies work together on security measures, Anderson said. "We share trends that we're seeing, we share social media intel that we may be picking up and [it] informs us quite well about what actions there may be," he said. The company is already planning security measures for its planned Trans Mountain pipeline expansion in the event it receives approval and the company can go ahead with the project in Alberta and B.C. Activists said they studied for months on how to execute Tuesday's shutdowns safely. Together, the lines affected can carry up to 2.8 million barrels of oil a day.

"It's extremely dangerous and thank goodness no one got killed or hurt," said Alberta Energy Minister Marg McCuaig-Boyd. "It sure sounds quite extreme. It's just plain dangerous."



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