



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, August 2, 2018

Contacts

Douglas Meiklejohn
Executive Director, NMELC
505.989.9022

Jaimie Park
Staff Attorney, NMELC
505.989.9022

**State Engineer Denies Augustin Plains Ranch Groundwater Application
Application Deemed Speculative**

SANTA FE – The State Engineer has denied as speculative Augustin Plains Ranch’s most recent application for withdrawal of 54,000 acre feet per year of groundwater. The State Engineer was responding to motions for summary judgment filed by the New Mexico Environmental Law Center (the Law Center) on behalf of a large group of community protestants, and a second motion filed by the Catron County Board of County Commissioners.

San Augustin Plains community members were very pleased by this dismissal of the most recent iteration of Augustin Plains Ranch’s application to mine 17 billion gallons of water annually.

Douglas Meiklejohn, the Law Center’s Executive Director, said, “The Ranch tried to argue that it would develop its plans for putting this enormous quantity of water to beneficial use in stages, once a permit was issued. The State Engineer correctly pointed out that an applicant’s intentions ‘should be well-developed ... and clearly and specifically articulated in the application’ and not provide vague promises for a plan after a permit is issued. Applicants must have a specific plan.”

Jaimie Park, Staff Attorney at the Law Center, said, “The State Engineer was correct in holding that APR is not an entity entitled to a 40-year water use planning period that municipalities, counties, state universities and public utilities are entitled to when supplying water to municipalities or counties. The State Engineer was also correct in determining that mere negotiations with potential end-users of water for municipal purposes was not sufficient to satisfy statutory requirements for approval of new appropriations of water.”

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