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District Court Again Denies Augustin Plains Ranch Groundwater Application

SANTA FE – In a brief Memorandum, 7th Judicial District Court Judge Matthew Reynolds granted the Motions for Summary Judgment filed by the New Mexico Environmental Law Center for approximately 80 residents of the San Agustin Plains and by the Catron County Board of County Commissioners. The Motions were filed in response to the appeal by Augustin Plains Ranch of the State Engineer’s denial of their most recent application to divert 17 billion gallons of groundwater annually.

Judge Reynolds' ruling was based on his finding that he had already decided the issues presented by this Augustin Plains Ranch application when he denied the application filed by the Ranch in 2007 and 2008. In making his decision, the Judge said “[t]he people of New Mexico should not have their water tied up any longer.”

Community members Carol and Ray Pittman, who began mobilizing residents in the area around Datil over a decade ago, were surprised and elated. “At last! We hope this zombie project is finally dead,” they said. “It’s been a long haul, but the community has been united and will be in the future. We are thrilled.”

Douglas Meiklejohn, the Law Center’s Director and co-counsel on this case with Staff Attorney Jaimie Park, said, “Judge Reynolds aptly summarized earlier decisions in this long process when he said that the New Mexico Constitution was ‘offended by APR’s attempted subversion’ of constitutional requirements.”

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[7th Judicial District Court Memorandum Denying APR Application](#)