

You Decide

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Interbasin water transfers are they needed? If a land owner who has a large ranch decides that he can make more money by selling the water under his land than he can by raising cattle on that land should he have the right to do so?

Pros:

It is his land. He pays taxes on it. If he can meet the requirements to apply for a permit from New Mexico State Engineer to develop 54,000 acre feet of water annually from the Plains of San Augustin and transfer it out of its basin origin shouldn't he be able to do so? If he can find investors to back his proposal and buyers for that water where it can be put to beneficial use isn't that following the State statutes? This would mean that the area receiving the water would have economic growth potential and that sounds like a positive for the developer, the backers and the receiving area. Isn't pro-growth a good thing in the State of New Mexico. Just think this proposal makes money for a lot of people.

Cons:

The export of the amount of water being requested will have some very negative impacts on the adjoining land owners. **1.** The basin of origin is not being recharged at a sufficient rate to keep up with amount being extracted. The basin is in decline at this time due to groundwater leakage to adjacent basins, existing developments within the basin and the amount of annual recharge from rain and snow because of the decades of drought. There is also a high evapotranspiration rate in this geographic area. **2.** The basin has many perched aquifers, which indicates that the water levels vary from a few tens of the feet to several hundred feet. The new proposed wells will be pumping water from 2,000 feet below ground level. This will cause adjacent existing wells to go dry. It has been suggested by Frank Titus a deceased hydrogeologist that a vast majority of the wells will go dry within a ten year period from the start of pumping by the Augustin Plains Ranch, LLC. **3.** The basin sediments are referred to as bolson fill. These are mainly very fine grained in the central areas of the two basins and get coarser near the margins. Near the margins and where the sediments thin because of underlying structure these sediments will be subject to earth fissures or tension cracks; which can cause severe damage to anything laying above. **4.** This proposal by the APR, LLC, will cause economic loss to the Datil area and land values will drop on the adjacent ranches because of the lack of groundwater. This loss of resources and economic value is not to the benefit of Catron and

Socorro Counties; whereas the areas receiving the APR's water will see economic benefit.
There is no positive outcome from this proposed development for Catron and Socorro Counties

So how do you think this will play out in the court hearings? Will rural areas across the State be discounted as unimportant in favor of the urban areas? Will money be the driving force?

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