

Plains of San Agustin aquifer safe ... for now

By John Larson, El Defensor Chieftain staff writer

http://www.dchieftain.com/news/plains-of-san-agustin-aquifer-safe-for-now/article_2b25f428-c9b0-11e9-a232-cf37b916f3ef.html

The years-long struggle between Augustin Plains Ranch LLC (APR) and countless protestants was put to rest last week when Seventh Judicial District Judge Matthew Reynolds ruled on a final order filed by the Community Protestants and Catron County granting summary judgment and dismissing APR's latest application.

In the six page order, "Notice of Submission of Final Order Granted Summary Judgment in Favor of the Community Protestant and the Catron County Board of County Commissioners and Dismissal with Prejudice" the Court found:

1. That the motions for summary judgment filed by the Community Protestants are granted.
2. All other motions for summary judgment are denied as moot
3. Augustin Plains Ranch's appeal from the State Engineer's August 1, 2018 order denying the Augustin Plains Ranch's 2014/2016 Application to appropriate groundwater is dismissed with prejudice.

If it had been approved by the Office of the State Engineer, APR's application would give it permission to drill 37 wells to a depth of 2,000 feet to pump water from the aquifer beneath the Plains of San Agustin in Catron and Socorro counties and send it in bulk via a north-south pipeline to as yet unknown customers in Albuquerque and surrounding communities.

"Dismissal with prejudice" is a final judgment by the court, and the plaintiff (APR) is barred from bringing an action on the same claim.

It is unknown if APR will pursue the water mining project with a new and different permit application.