Filename: SampleLetterRevisedShort4-ProtestAprproject-2016.docx

City state zip

date

(Your address)

State Engineer

5550 San Antonio Drive NE

Albuquerque, NM   87109-4127

Dear Sir: [OR use name if there is one]:

I am writing with regard to RG-89943, an application that proposes to mine water in the Plains of San Augustin.

My protest to this application is based largely on concern for the public welfare and on the need for New Mexico to conserve and use water wisely. Underlying this is my outrage at a corporation seeking to steal our water out from under us for their own profit.

This applicant, the Augustin Plains Ranch LLC (APR LLC), proposes to pump 54,000 acre feet of water per year and pipe it to the Albuquerque area. This is ancestral water. Undoubtedly the water levels in the Plains are would sink progressively, with dire consequences for the plains and its population. Evidence indicates that the outflow from the basin already goes to the Gila River system. It may also go to the Rio Grande. It is likely that this natural flow would be diminished or even eliminated by the proposed massive pumping. There is no “offset” for the water stolen from the natural flow.

Water is not now needed in in the Albuquerque area where the proposed pipeline would take it. The people of Albuquerque are not clamoring for a new supply of water. Instead, it is the applicant who has been clamoring to sell our San Augustin Plains water to anyone who will buy it. Providing a new source of water would not encourage conservation. The major consequence of the pumping would be to leave large chunks of Catron County literally high and dry. This would not be in the public interest and would be contrary to rational water conservation policy.

We question if this proposal is actually a beneficial use of the basin’s water. This project would cost the residents of Catron County more in loss of property values and economic sustainability than the APR would gain. The project could also cost all New Mexicans a lot of money. The APR LLC has advocated for a public/private partnership arrangement to accomplish this project. Such an arrangement could obligate the taxpayers of New Mexico to assume the risk that the project is economically viable. Profit for one foreign corporation is not necessarily a beneficial use for the citizens of New Mexico. In spite of the “beneficial use”, this proposal remains a speculation in water.

Two of the four core criteria incorporated in New Mexico water law have been largely ignored by the Office of the State Engineer: public welfare and conservation of water. Those criteria give a large segment of New Mexicans standing in this matter. This project clearly is not in the public interest nor in the interest of water conservation. People rather than moneyed interests should be listened to.

Yours sincerely,

Your name

Cc: New Mexico Environmental Law Center