

September 29, 2017 State Engineer Office public meeting at Macy Center, Socorro.

To those of you who showed up for the State Engineer's meeting September 28, many thanks.

Those who couldn't be there – you didn't miss a lot. The meeting turned out to be something other than was advertised. It basically was a Public Relations effort on the part of the State Engineer to convince protestants that he is going to do an honest and fair job evaluating this third effort by the Augustin Plains Ranch LLC to mine our water in the Plains of San Augustin.

The Macey Center was full – and it's a big place. We had been told in the Scheduling Order, that there would be a presentation by the applicant, with an opportunity for members of the audience to make comments not previously submitted in a letter, in addition to an explanation of the process the application would be subject to. It turned out not to be that at all, but rather a carefully scripted presentation by the Hearing Officers strictly on OSE procedure and designed to show the utter fairness of everything the OSE is doing.

The State Engineer changed the purpose and content of the meeting at the last minute, taking us all by surprise. The resulting meeting allowed only consideration of the OSE process. The Hearing Officers made a careful and formal presentation from the dais, complete with visual aids. They then answered questions from the audience submitted prior to the meeting before hearing the OSE presentation. The audience had no access to microphones, and only questions in written form could be asked. No follow up to the OSE response was possible.

The OSE did not attempt to answer any substantive questions, but responded only to process questions. For example, they made no meaningful answer to a question about what would constitute "impairment". If this was not a process question, I don't know what is.

Interestingly, the questions from the audience indicated our negative stance toward this project. There wasn't a single comment in its support. We are continuing to be solidly against this project, and if we keep on that way, we will win.

It was not a satisfactory meeting. But our attendance had one important reward. We once again demonstrated that no matter what the State Engineer and the Augustin Plains Ranch LLC drag us through, our community is united. We will keep showing up and fighting the good fight.

It's going to take all of us to see this effort through to a conclusion. There are many ways to help. If you will respond to this message with a note saying what you might be able to do, that would be a big help in itself. We may have to do mailings, for example, or make phone calls. Our network reaches far and wide and it can grow with your help. As you know, we have raised money as part of our effort – the biggest need being for the hydrologist who will testify on our behalf. So far we have done what's needed and I know we will continue to do that.

If anyone wants a copy of the Scheduling Order, let me know. Or download [here](#) with the meeting instructions