



State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
Santa Fe

GAIL ARMSTRONG

R - Catron, Socorro, Valencia
District 49

P.O. Box 326
Magdalena, NM 87825
Cell Phone: (505) 269-2364
E-mail: gail@gailfornewmexico.com

COMMITTEES:
Enrolling & Engrossing
Health & Human Services
Labor & Economic Development

4/3/18

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Office of the Cabinet Secretary
United States Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

It has come to my attention that the Department of the Interior has decided to withdraw official protests filed against plans to access water beneath the plains of San Augustin in Southwestern New Mexico by Augustin Plains Ranch, LLC.

These protests have been on file with the State Engineer since 2007 and are vitally important to the concerns of residents in this community who have consistently raised objections over the Augustin Plains Ranch LLC application. While I personally have been strongly opposed to this plan, regardless of the arguments made on the merits of the proposal, it is important that we leave formal objections from prior administrations in place as one of the many pieces needed to help aid in making an informed decision. Withdrawing these protests eliminates pertinent information on a proposal that could have a significant impact on water in New Mexico.

As you know, The Augustin Plains Ranch LLC proposes to remove 54,000 acre feet of water per year for 300 years which is a substantial amount; the ramifications of such a large transfer of water must be thoroughly vetted. Formal protests filed with the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer by prior administrations represent a legitimate concern that has not changed in the 10 years since the protests were filed. I am disappointed that your agency decided to withdraw protests made by the prior two administrations and strongly encourage you to reconsider the actions taken.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gail Armstrong".

Gail Armstrong