

County may protest Augustin Plains Ranch application

Scott Turner — El Defensor Chieftain Editor – August 25, 2016.

http://www.dchieftain.com/news/county-may-protest-augustin-plains-ranch-application/article_d6adac7a-6a1b-11e6-80ec-c3e688c8b308.html

The Socorro County Board of Commissioners may join the protests of Augustin Plains Ranch LLC's application to pump water from Catron County to municipalities along the Rio Grande.

The commissioners discussed the issue in executive session after being informed about the application by Catron County Commissioner Anita Hand, who also took part in the executive session.

Hand called the application "pretty ambiguous" in talking about the application before the executive Tuesday, noting that the ranch's application "checked all of the boxes" of possible end users, including communities in the area such as Socorro.

Socorro County has protested previous applications since Augustin Plains Ranch first applied to pump water from the San Augustin Plains in 2007.

Hand, however, urged commissioners to protest again so that the protest "will hold up in court."

Hand was asked if any of the ranch's wells were in Socorro County. She told commissioners all of the wells were in Catron County, but some were near the county line.

She said the wells were close enough to impact wells in Socorro County.

"I know it's been a long battle," Socorro County Commissioner Daniel Monette said. He indicated that he wanted the commission to join the protest.

Residents were urged to keep up with when the application was published in a newspaper of record. Protests can be filed up to 10 days after the third publication of the application.

More from the commission meeting will be featured in the Sept. 1 edition of El Defensor Chieftain.