

Madam Chair, members of the Committee:

My name is Brett Bruton. I grew up on the San Augustine Plains. I graduated from Magdalena High School. After High School I went to New Mexico State and graduated with an Ag Business Degree. I am a fourth generation rancher and continue to work on our family's ranch.

I am here today to represent the youth of Catron and Socorro counties. There is a fear that is plaguing our communities. The fear that continues to grow is what will happen if the Augustine Plains Ranch is allowed to remove and sell water from the San Augustine Basin. This ranch wants everyone to believe that the water will replenish itself. That's not true. The water is in a closed basin.

When the APR starts pumping they will lower the water level so quickly that it will force the rest of us to drill new wells we can't afford. Isn't that "impairment"? Before he died, Frank Titus estimated this project will empty the aquifer within 10 years.

I'm the father of a newborn son. I would like to see him as the fifth generation to continue our way of life on the Bruton Ranch.

Thinking of the future has faced me with questions:

1. Should we sell the ranch now while there is still water and is worth something? A ranch with no water won't sell for much?
2. Should we continue the fight and hope the state does not let this happen?
3. I was raised to believe that if you take care of the land, it will take care of you. Why should I continue to conserve our resources when this project is allowed to ignore them?

If the APR is allowed to pump water, then our state has set a precedent. We will open the door for more cases like this. No telling who will be next.

The Augustine Plains Ranch is not coming to help our community. They are here for profit. Let me say that again:

**They are not here to help the community, state, or anyone. They are here for profit.**

Once they have made their money and the water is gone, they will be far, far away. We will be left with a resource that is destroyed, wildlife numbers decreasing, businesses gone, families broken, and a way of life gone forever.

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- Frank Titus was a long-time professor of hydrology at NM Tech. He passed away about 2 years ago. He oversaw the last in-depth study of the Plains in 1973.