

INISEISCEN Resource

From: pharb2@msn.com
Sent: Friday, September 03, 2010 4:18 PM
To: INIS_EIS Resource
Subject: DocketID NRC-2010-0143
Attachments: Lea county, New Mexico water supply update.pdf

Weve heard for years that lea county is running out of water.

Here is a water supply update from a paper article.
Its my belief the area doesn't have the water for nuclear projects

Phillip Barr
NM

Federal Register Notice: 74FR17253
Comment Number: 26

Mail Envelope Properties (SNT125-DS26453160C5D1BD1AA46609E8D0)

Subject: DocketID NRC-2010-0143
Sent Date: 9/3/2010 4:18:28 PM
Received Date: 9/3/2010 4:22:00 PM
From: pharb2@msn.com

Created By: pharb2@msn.com

Recipients:
"INIS_EIS Resource" <INIS_EIS.Resource@nrc.gov>
Tracking Status: None

Post Office: phx.gbl

Files	Size	Date & Time
MESSAGE	227	9/3/2010 4:22:00 PM
Lea county, New Mexico water supply update.pdf		513129

Options
Priority: Standard
Return Notification: No
Reply Requested: No
Sensitivity: Normal
Expiration Date:
Recipients Received:

New rules aim to protect water users

LEVI HILL
NEWS-SUN

Proposed new guidelines for acquisition of water rights in the Lea County area should protect water users of all levels and help ensure there is water for future generations.

That was the message from members of the New Mexico Office of the State Engineer Thursday at a public meeting at the Lea County

Event Center.

"The guidelines are a framework on how we treat applications," said John D'Antonio, state engineer. "The guidelines exist to protect the existing water rights. They are not as rigid as rules and regulations, but they define the way we look at hydrological models so we better know what is going on."

The proposed guidelines were first

drafted in 2003 and have gone through a development process with the Lea County Water Users Association for more than five years before the state office set them into motion for approval.

Thursday's meeting was one in a series to gather input on the guidelines, which pertain to the High

SEE WATER, Page 5

Water

from PAGE 1

Plains aquifer beneath Lea and parts of Gaines counties and the Ogallala Formation, which covers parts of seven states including New Mexico.

The new guidelines coincide with the state declaring the Lea County Underground Water Basin a "closed basin," meaning no new water rights can be filed in the basin.

"A lot of basins in New Mexico are considered closed to new appropriations," D'Antonio said. "This is to protect those in the basin from newcomers."

The closing does not apply to the transfer of water rights from one use to another and the new guidelines do not apply to domestic use, stock or temporary construction well applications, said Tom Morrison, a consultant for the state engineer's office.

"The guidelines do not have anything to do with issuing those permits," he said. "They also do not alter the existing permit conditions."

Under the new guidelines, water right transfers would have to meet a series of conditions before they could be approved. Those conditions have been set in place because hydrological projections show that large portions of the county will have water saturation thickness below 55 feet by 2045, Morrison said. Those areas have been declared criti-

cal management areas.

Saturation is the depth of water from either the red bedrock bottom of the aquifer or, in the case of wells, the depth of water above the well pump.

Much of the water loss is along Lea's eastern border with Texas.

"This is a 40-year planning model we have set up extending to 2045," he said. "That model extends into Texas six-seven miles because they are pumping more water than us and they are affecting our water supply."

Under the new guidelines, water rights could not be transferred to other uses if studies show those uses would cause more than a 0.2 foot per year decline in the aquifer level in non-critical management areas and more than 0.025 feet per year in CMAs.

The rights also could not be transferred if the new use would deplete the saturation thickness to 55 feet or less or if it reduced saturation at neighboring domestic wells to less than 20 feet.

D'Antonio said meetings with the Lea Water Users groups have also put into motion the potential for future requirements on well metering for all wells.

The guidelines will be up for approval at a future date. For more information on the guidelines, contact the Office of the State Engineer at 505-764-3864.