



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PRESS RELEASE

Law Center and Citizens Defeat Water Grab

SANTA FE, NM: On September 17, 2008, Broe Land and Acquisitions, Inc. LLC (Broe) filed a notice that it was withdrawing all of its applications for water rights that are currently pending before the State Engineer. Broe, a Denver corporation specializing in real estate speculation, had filed a total of 16 water rights applications to appropriate thousands of acre-feet of groundwater per year from the Gallup underground water basin in Catron County.

Broe's decision to withdraw resulted from a motion filed by New Mexico Environmental Law Center (the Law Center) staff attorney Bruce Frederick on behalf of its clients. Frederick argued that the appropriation would have violated state law that requires water rights be owned by the same entity that owns the land. Broe's water rights applications violated this law because the company would have ended up owning water rights to land owned by the State of New Mexico.

Thomas Davis, who owns water rights in the area, said "Broe's plans to pump thousands of acre-feet from the aquifer would have impaired our wells and threatened our community, which depends on that groundwater."

"This is a major victory for New Mexico communities working to protect their scarce water resources," said Frederick. "This appeared to be an effort to speculate in water rights by obtaining and developing water reserves in the same way that oil companies develop oil and gas reserves, a practice that could devastate communities that depend upon the water involved." Frederick also said outside water speculators see profit-making opportunities in New Mexico and are intent on converting what's left of New Mexico's free unappropriated groundwater into their private reserves.

Frederick and the Law Center are also representing individuals opposing the applications filed by the San Augustin Plains Ranch to appropriate 54,000 acre feet of water annually from the San Augustin plains area near Datil, NM.

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