

To the Water Resources Review Committee:

On Tuesday, August 14, at 1:30pm in Steamboat Springs, there will be a presentation by Misters Vandiver, Robbins, and Smith about the San Luis Valley Subdistrict effort. These persons are in no position of risk, unlike all the farmers and ranchers who have long awaited well administration based on the doctrine of prior appropriation and historical consumptive use.

A total lack of groundwater administration for the past 30 years has contributed to the water shortage facing the Rio Grande Watershed. The subdistrict effort has stalled the promulgation of Rules and Regulations. SB04-222, the subdistrict legislation, has served as a steady income for district engineers and attorneys while strangling farmers and ranchers they purport to serve. It also ignores the doctrine of prior appropriation, and enables the state engineer to continue to delay well administration.

"Maximum utilization" has justified putting water on the market for whomever has the economic and political muscle to acquire it, a far cry from Colorado statutes.

So far, subdistrict efforts have made no real progress to reduce pumping, reduce consumption, reduce depletions to the aquifer or to replenish it, and senior water rights are not being protected.

From some of us who are not enamored of SB04-222 and its preservation of the status quo.

Sutherland Ranches
Virginia Sutherland
Mr. Bill L. Kothorge
Larry Martens
Laurie E. Kothorge McCheng

John L. Werner
Maef Engleot
Sue Ellen Engleot
Lynn Sutherland