

Good evening Board members and thank you for allowing me speak at this hearing. I would also like to thank the Avara's; that is, A Handsome Dog Ranch, for attending this hearing and listening to those of us who wish to address this application for operating a high volume water well. I ask you to keep an open-mind, and heart to all of our comments. I have met Skip and found him to be most gracious and friendly, and I hope that my speaking tonight will in no way harm any future congenial relationship. Certainly, I am not in any way trying to cause your ranch problems or to be obstinate.

As I read this application, it causes me to question several items. The permit to draw this volume of water per year for an **INDIVIDUAL** is quite overboard. At such a high volume by comparison to other individual wells, it sounds more like this ranch is a business-type ranch, as though it is their **LIVELIHOOD** or main income. However, the reality is A Handsome Dog Ranch is simply one of several pieces of property owned by the Avaras.

For some 150 plus years surrounding families to this ranch have conducted their property as their primary home; and for most, it is their **ONLY** home. They have lived off the land with the same utilization of agricultural and stock raising; and have dealt with all the climate changes that have occurred over these years. Never, did they feel the need for this quantity of water to conduct their business (for some, their **LIVELIHOOD**). Rather, they adjusted to the elements as they came and dealt with draught or an overabundance of rain - and yet they survived.

As for wildlife management; wildlife has lived and thrived on these lands for hundreds of years and has sustained without the outside interference of this exponential grab of water resources, so using that as validation is disingenuous at best and perhaps even deceptive. The same can be said for the raising of livestock seeing as the amount of livestock on the property is minimal by comparison, and in no way would warrant this absurd volume of water for an **INDIVIDUAL**.

As to water for **RECREATIONAL PURPOSES** - excluding the obvious fishing, I would think it means some sort of surface recreational activities **ON** the lake. So

it would appear, this volume of water is to be pulled out of the aquifer; an aquifer shared by all of us, for the simple use of personal pleasure with a total disregard for those who depend on this water supply for survival. Further adding to a self indulgent request for water.

Even at first glance, one can see the hypocrisy revealed on this application and it becomes very clear all of this water is going to be used for personal pleasure and convenience.

Now, I want to be clear on this. I am a staunch supporter of property rights and believe that what one does on their own land is their choice; their business. However, when those choices have the broad reaching consequences that affect every one of your neighbors, just to make sure your desires are satisfied, then I must speak out.

The wording in the application in no way justifies the need for this volume of water, and so, it leads to the question - what is the real end game requiring this need and validating the reason for potentially causing a catastrophic impact on a water supply shared by everyone in proximity to this ranch?

Well, let me interject some information about this land. On Footprints Lake which is about 80 surface acres, there is Robert Pfinney Dam, built around 1960. According to the requirements of a 2013 law, the size of this dam requires that at some point it will have to be certified safe. To do so, it will have to be proven the dam will not be compromised and the easiest way of doing this is to keep the lake at a constant level. Which brings us to possibly the REAL need for this much water, further exemplifying and adding to an already self-indulgent request.

In dry years, keeping the lake at a constant level would take a huge quantity of water. These are the same years when water will be of the utmost priority for the rest of us who call this area our home. Surely, there is another way to accomplish the safety of the dam; i.e., excavating, shoring up the inside of the dam with rock, just to name a couple of options. To just "fill" the lake up for the sake of filling, is

such a waste of a precious resource and once gone will not replenish in our lifetime.

The water issue has been very contentious in our area. Already 14 commercial permits have been approved and 4 of those permits are on County Road 411 - and I emphasize these are COMMERCIAL water wells.

Residents have been on pins and needles wondering what Lost Pines is going to approve/disapprove; if and when water corporations are going to start pumping the impounded water from the aquifer; what it will mean some 10-20 years down the road. And in the midst of this, Handsome Dog Ranch applies for a permit to operate an exceptionally high volume water well - conveniently, AFTER the well has already been drilled? It gives the appearance that their view of our community is that it is easier to ask for forgiveness than permission.

Has there been given a second thought that during times of draught, when surrounding families are trying to conserve and deal with a draught, and Handsome Dog Ranch is pumping precious water into the lake - will it not give anyone pause, or at least a twinge of guilt?

When the locals find their water table has dropped enough to require hiring a water well driller to get their well deeper just to have water, while Handsome Dog Ranch is running their well to keep the water level in the lake constant, will anyone feel the families should be compensated for their expenses or potential loss in property value?

Lastly, and this hits to the heart of it for me. This bespeaks of such treachery to the locals in this community; of just taking from the land and not giving back, for one's own self indulgence. A Handsome Dog Ranch is just one of many properties they own - it is just another notch in their investment portfolio. Quite differently, for the locals - this is OUR HOME. We don't have other places to lay our head at night; to raise our children; to make a life for our families; and we need water each and every day for survival (water, by the way, that we have previously paid for when we had our water wells dug.)

If this application is approved and later on causes a loss in our water supply, it will be on our backs and we will be the ones to suffer the consequences, and there isn't one thing we can do about it. We will simply be collateral damage.

I implore the Board members to consider the long term and big picture of all potential consequences of approving this permit.

Thank you.