



Letters to the Observer: Lack of concern for water; 'We should be worried'

Stephen Farkash

December 21, 2018

Editor:

Folks, the coup d'etat of Rio Rancho and Sandoval County is nearly complete.

Each week in the Observer, we read another submission by a mouthpiece for this takeover. Let's have a look.

Paul, Gessing, of the Rio Grande Foundation, is a frequent contributor to the dialogue. His group has 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status but receives funds through the dark money ATM of the right.

Donors include Charles Koch, the Cato Institute and the Donors Trust and Donors Capital Fund (\$584,000 in 2010-13 alone). Same fund paid Matthew Whitaker \$1.2 million and is known for its assault on labor unions, climate scientists and public schools.

RGF doesn't disclose its donors. Tax filings have revealed these connections.

Kyler Nerison is the only staff member of New Mexicans for Prosperity. He has stated that one of his concerns is the "costs associated with blocking oil and gas lease sales."

I attended the Mid-Region Council of Governments meeting this month, where a resolution is being discussed concerning water issues. Greg Hull is the chair and David Heil is the director.

My comments to the council included the fact that Mayor Hull's campaign in 2018 received \$2,500 from Reform for Sandoval County PAC run by outgoing Sandoval County Commissioner and former chairman Don Chapman and an \$800 contribution from the current county commission chairman, David Heil.

If you're suffering from high interest rate charges, transfer your debt to one of these...

Seems \$3,300 buys silence and a loss of spine on the most-important issue facing our city, its water resource.

Heil also counseled the group to consult the Sandoval commission on this issue due to its expertise!

The county commission meeting where the “Right to Work” (for less money and benefits) ordinance was enacted was packed with Americans for Prosperity actors, a Koch Industries funded organization welcomed by commissioner Jay Block and chairman Heil.

Oil and gas extraction has been occurring in Sandoval County for 50 years. But it’s been vertical drilling, not hydraulic fracking and not in the highly fractured geology of Rio Rancho.

The New Mexico Tech study identified a high risk for contamination.

Even if all went well, the 55,000 AMREP parcels leased could contain many platforms with up to eight wells on each and each well requiring millions of gallons of water.

I guess the low-flow toilets, fixtures, appliances, xeric landscaping and the city’s \$25 million water re-injection project will compensate. Sarcasm implied.

But, if it does not, we could be looking at a ghost town. Residential properties would be worthless. The mortgage due, nobody home.

Will residents allow the power brokers controlling the dialogue to equate concerned citizens as an environmental mob of left-wing extremists?

AMREP, a Princeton, N.J., entity convicted of defrauding land buyers in 1975 and 1993, and out-of-county Thrust Energy will be winners. AMREP’s top four officers were convicted to six months in prison and the company fined a combined \$395,000.

They’ve teamed up with the New Mexico Oil and Gas Association and we should be very worried.

Stephen Farkash

Rio Rancho