



Aubrey Dunn, State Land Commissioner
State of New Mexico

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Looking east from the site on State Trust Lands in Lea County.

Images by SLO District Resources Manager Robert Kasuboski

State Land Commissioner targets Texas Trespasser

SANTA FE, NM – State Land Commissioner Aubrey Dunn is pursuing a Texas company for an egregious trespass in southern New Mexico.

Commissioner Dunn contacted law enforcement after discovering that Salt Creek Midstream, LLC engaged in significant construction activity on Trust Lands in Lea County without State Land Office (SLO) permission. Applicants for a right-of-way easement must first file an application with the SLO and the easement must be signed by the Commissioner before any construction activity can begin on Trust lands.

Commissioner Dunn said he plans to pursue the matter to the fullest extent of the law.

“I cannot and will not stand for companies coming into our state, disregarding the rules and using State Trust Lands for their own profit,” Commissioner Dunn said. “I have sworn an oath to protect and preserve Trust lands for our beneficiaries and I have never wavered on that.”

Salt Creek Midstream, LLC waived its initial arraignment in Lovington Magistrate Court and entered a not-guilty plea.

Under 19-6-3 NMSA, a company that enters or occupies State Trust Lands without a lease is guilty of a misdemeanor and a fine of \$500. Those charges accumulate with each passing day that the offender remains in trespass.



A deep trench was among the surface disturbance at the site in Lea County.

Oil, gas, and mineral production, ranching and farming, and commercial development on State Trust Lands support public schools, seven universities, New Mexico Military Institute, New Mexico School for the Deaf, New Mexico School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, three hospitals, correctional facilities, water conservation projects, and public building construction and repair. In fiscal year 2017, the State Land Office collected \$664 million from lease payments, oil and gas lease sale earnings, rights-of-way, permits, interest, fees, and oil, gas, and mineral royalties.