



For Immediate Release

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Orange County Judge Finds Searles Valley Minerals' Claims for Violations of Water Rights Against the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority Have Merit

Searles will continue to fight against Authority actions which threaten to put the company's longtime employees out of a job and force the closure of the business

Trona, CA — An Orange County Superior Court judge ruled last Thursday that the legal challenge filed by Searles Valley Minerals Inc. (Searles) against the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Authority (Authority) for violation of Searles' water rights has merit and may continue to move forward.

"We are very pleased that the court sided with us and rejected the Authority's attempt to dismiss our lawsuit," said **Burnell Blanchard, Vice President of Operations for Searles**. "Searles has operated in this community for more than 140 years. We have the most senior water rights in the region and that is not something that can be so easily dismissed. We will continue to fight on behalf of our employees and the Trona community."

Searles had sought to prevent the Authority from ignoring Searles' historic water rights and from taking actions that would cause Searles to suffer devastating and irreparable harm, including permanent business line closures and the layoff of hundreds of employees.

A '[Save Searles](#)' campaign has been in place for several months, representing a coalition of Searles' employees and their families as well as local residents and businesses from the City of Ridgecrest and the town of Trona – many of whom live in underserved and severely economically disadvantaged communities. The more the public has learned about the Authority's past and proposed actions, the more the '[Save Searles](#)' campaign has grown to protect the local communities.

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