

# Green River Water Rights Trial to begin Monday

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Blue Castle nuclear plant site near Green River, Utah (Blue Castle)

SALT LAKE CITY (ABC 4 Utah) – The case over the state's decision to approve water rights for the proposed Green River Nuclear Power Plant starts this week. HEAL Utah is the group appealing the state's decision claiming there is not enough water in the state as is and if a nuclear plant is built there will be even less.

Blue Castle Holdings' plan is to build two, 15,000 megawatt units along the Green River. It's a nuclear power plant big enough to provide half of Utah's energy needs.

"Nuclear power is consistently the lowest cost producer of electricity in the U.S.," said Blue Castle Holding's CEO Aaron Tilton. ABC 4 Utah spoke with Tilton back in 2010, nearly two years before the state's engineer approved the company's request for water rights.

"On a scale of 1-10 we think it's a 9 or 10 that it's going to be built," said Tilton.

But HEAL Utah says not so fast.

HEAL Utah's Policy Director Matt Pacenza told ABC 4 Utah, "Using 53,000 acre feet of water to cool nuclear reactors is a really poor choice for Utah."

HEAL Utah filed for the appeal claiming taking that much water could damage the natural stream environment and interfere with other water rights users; dropping the green river by up to an inch and a half. Blue Castle Holdings disagrees.

Tilton said, "With the studies we did on the river we have already determined that it would not reasonable affect the environment of the stream."

Pacenza said, "There are definitely differing opinions as to exactly how much it will impact the river. 53,000 acre feet of water is certainly nothing to sneeze at; it's enough for 200,000 people to use."

HEAL Utah also points to demand. The group claims the state doesn't have a need for a power plant. Pacenza says even Rocky Mountain Power is on their side.

"Rocky Mountain Power has explicitly on the record repeatedly said they have no interest in nuclear power, so if the utility that supplies about 3/4 of Utah doesn't want power from the Green River nuclear reactors then why build it?" asked Pacenza.

One reason could be jobs. Building the plant would reportedly bring 4,000 construction jobs and give Emery county 1,200 full time jobs with an average salary of \$80,000 a year.

Stay with ABC 4 Utah for complete coverage of the trial from Price, Utah.

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