

Polygamy Towns Center of Bizarre State Law Suit

Utah's attorney general has filed a lawsuit against a water utility that serves two polygamous church-run towns on the Utah-Arizona border, arguing it has not paid a Utah state trust that owns most of the land in the towns.

Attorney General Sean Reyes' office is asking a court to dissolve Twin City Water Works Inc, which supplies Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Arizona, home to the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

The sect is not affiliated with the Salt Lake City-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which renounced polygamy in 1890.

Warren Jeffs, leader of the sect, is serving life plus 20 years in Texas on a 2011 conviction of sexual assault charges related to his marriages with underage girls.

The twin towns of Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City are home to the majority of Jeffs' followers, and church members control most aspects of city government.

The lawsuit, filed on March 16 in the Fifth District Court in St. George, Utah, says the water utility never compensated Utah's state-run United Effort Plan trust for well-water extracted from land it owned.

"It is rather shocking that they would continue to operate in a process that is not compliant with laws and contracts," Assistant Utah Attorney General Joni Jones said on Friday.

The federal government also has filed a civil rights lawsuit against the water company, contending it diverted \$1.7 million in funds collected from the towns.

The lawsuit by Reyes' office, citing records obtained by the trust as well as statements filed in the federal lawsuit between 2002 to 2009, claims the utility disbursed more than \$4.3 million.

The company is not listed in online telephone directories and could not be reached for comment on Friday.

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