## SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE	: UNITED STATES
	_
MISSISSIPPI,	)
Plaintiff,	)
v.	) No. 143, Orig.
TENNESSEE, CITY OF MEMPHIS,	)
TENNESSEE, AND MEMPHIS LIGHT,	)
GAS & WATER DIVISION,	)
Defendants.	)

Pages: 1 through 78

Place: Washington, D.C.

Date: October 4, 2021

## HERITAGE REPORTING CORPORATION

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4	Plaintiff,	)
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6	TENNESSEE, CITY OF MEMPHIS,	)
7	TENNESSEE, AND MEMPHIS LIGHT,	)
8	GAS & WATER DIVISION,	)
9	Defendants.	)
10		
11		
12	Washington,	D.C.
13	Monday, October	4, 2021
14		
15	The above-entitled n	matter came on for
16	oral argument before the Supreme	e Court of the
17	United States at 10:00 a.m.	
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1	APPEARANCES:
2	
3	JOHN V. COGHLAN, Deputy Solicitor General, Jackson,
4	Mississippi; on behalf of the Plaintiff.
5	DAVID C. FREDERICK, ESQUIRE, Washington, D.C.; on
6	behalf of the Defendants.
7	FREDERICK LIU, Assistant to the Solicitor General,
8	Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.;
9	for the United States, as amicus curiae, in
10	support of overruling the Plaintiff's exceptions
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1	PROCEEDINGS
2	(10:00 a.m.)
3	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: I have the
4	honor to announce on behalf of the Court that
5	the October 2020 term of the Supreme Court of
6	the United States is now closed and the October
7	2021 term is now convened.
8	I'd like to begin by noting that
9	Justice Kavanaugh will be participating in the
10	argument today remotely.
11	Today's orders of the Court have been
12	duly entered and certified and filed with the
13	Clerk.
14	I am also pleased to welcome Gail
15	Curley as the new Marshal of the Court. Marshal
16	Curley retired from the United States Army this
17	summer, where she held the rank of Colonel, and
18	was most recently Chief of the National Security
19	Law Division of the Judge Advocate General. We
20	wish her well in her service as the Court's 11th
21	Marshal, which she commenced on June 21.
22	We will hear argument first this
23	morning in Original Case 143, Mississippi
24	against Tennessee.
25	Mr. Coghlan.

1	ORAL ARGUMENT OF JOHN V. COGHLAN
2	ON BEHALF OF THE PLAINTIFF
3	MR. COGHLAN: Mr. Chief Justice, and
4	may it please the Court:
5	The Court should reject the Special
6	Master's conclusion that equitable apportionment
7	is Mississippi's sole remedy because it's a
8	remedy that redresses the wrong injury.
9	Mississippi does not claim that Defendants are
LO	taking more than their fair share of
L1	groundwater. Rather, Mississippi's case turns
L2	on a different question: Do Defendants have the
L3	right to control groundwater while it is located
L4	within Mississippi's sovereign territory?
L5	And the Court has answered this
L6	question in Tarrant Regional Water District
L7	versus Herrmann. There, in considering an
L8	interstate surface river that had already been
L9	apportioned, the Court recognized an injury
20	other than that of an upstream state harming a
21	downstream state by taking too much water.
22	Specifically, the Court recognized that one
23	state may not divert water from another state's
24	sovereign territory absent a waiver of that
25	covereignty

1	And, here, it's undisputed that
2	Tennessee is diverting groundwater from
3	Mississippi without Mississippi's permission and
4	they do so knowingly. In the 1960s, the U.S.
5	Geological Survey warned them it was happening.
6	But rather than stop, Defendants opened new well
7	fields within three miles of the border and
8	substantially increased their pumping.
9	As of 2014, when Mississippi filed its
LO	complaint, they had suctioned more than 400
L1	billion gallons of groundwater across the
L2	border. They've increased the cost of
L3	Mississippi's own groundwater pumping. And by
L4	their own admission, Defendants' pumping is
L5	draining an overlying surficial aquifer that
L6	record evidence indicates is pulling
L7	contaminants down into the aquifer at issue in
L8	this case.
L9	Now the Special Master, in reaching
20	its conclusions, asked whether the Middle
21	Claiborne Aquifer was an interstate resource.
22	This was the wrong question to ask because the
23	answer doesn't matter. Even if the aquifer is
24	an interstate resource, Mississippi still
25	nossesses sole and evaluaine control over

- 1 groundwater within its sovereign territory, as
- 2 recognized in Tarrant and ensured by the
- 3 Constitution, and Defendants cannot force
- 4 groundwater across the border without violating
- 5 this sovereignty.
- 6 I welcome the Court's questions.
- 7 JUSTICE THOMAS: Well, counsel, you
- 8 seem to complain about Tennessee pumping water
- 9 from Mississippi, but you admit that Tennessee
- 10 does not enter across the border into
- 11 Mississippi, isn't that correct?
- MR. COGHLAN: Well, Justice Thomas, we
- acknowledge that their wells are physically --
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Okay. So -- but the
- 15 case that you cite as an intrusion from -- I
- 16 think it's Tarrant or Tarrant -- wasn't that a
- 17 cross-border situation?
- MR. COGHLAN: Well, yes, Your Honor,
- 19 and we would say that this is a cross-border
- 20 situation too. So we certainly acknowledge that
- 21 their wells are physically located in Tennessee,
- 22 but the pumping is physically crossing the
- border, unnaturally changing the pressure levels
- in this aguifer.
- 25 JUSTICE THOMAS: But isn't that true

- of any well? I mean, let's say it was a lake
- 2 and Tennessee was pumping water on its side of
- 3 the lake. Couldn't you argue that technically
- 4 it was drawing water from Mississippi?
- 5 MR. COGHLAN: I -- I think so, Your
- 6 Honor, and I think the -- the key is where --
- 7 what is the range of the unnatural effect that
- 8 is controlling the water? And so, here, it's --
- 9 it's undisputed that the -- these wells create
- 10 cones of depression that are measurable,
- 11 limited, and controllable and predictable. And
- 12 so Tennessee is exercising control over the
- 13 groundwater within that area.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: But couldn't
- 15 Tennessee make the exact same argument about
- 16 you? Couldn't Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri all
- make the same argument that whenever you pump
- 18 you're causing similar problems for them?
- 19 MR. COGHLAN: They certainly could,
- and we should be held to the same standard, Your
- 21 Honor. We don't believe that Mississippi is
- 22 pulling any groundwater or exercising control
- over groundwater extraterritorially. Certainly,
- 24 if that was the case, Mississippi should be held
- 25 to the same standard.

1	JUSTICE THOMAS: Lastly, and I'll be
2	done, do you have any cases that suggest that
3	or to support your argument on that point, that
4	the mere fact that you draw from the same well
5	without entering another state is actionable?
6	MR. COGHLAN: Well, Your Honor, I I
7	would point back to to Tarrant in this sense
8	that Tarrant doesn't specifically say that there
9	has to be a physical crossing of the border.
LO	Tarrant focuses on the water and who's
L1	exercising control over the water.
L2	And so we would I would contend
L3	that, here, it's Tennessee exercising control
L4	over this water unnaturally while it was within
L5	Mississippi, essentially creating a vacuum and
L6	intentionally putting these vacuums right next
L7	to the border to exercise a limited area of
L8	control over water and pull it out of
L9	Mississippi into Tennessee.
20	JUSTICE THOMAS: All right.
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, I
22	think your position comes down to arguing that
23	equitable apportionment is a remedy that should
24	be used only in the case of interstate waters,
) E	in addition was know to the galman who kind

- 1 of go with the flow.
- 2 MR. COGHLAN: Mr. Chief Justice,
- 3 that's not our argument, and I think that
- 4 Tarrant makes this point because Tarrant dealt
- 5 with an interstate surface river that had
- 6 already been apportioned. But I think the
- 7 problem is equitable apportionment redresses a
- 8 different type of injury. It addresses a case
- 9 where states are acting entirely within their
- 10 own sovereign borders, the unnatural taking of
- 11 water is occurring entirely within a state's
- 12 sovereign borders.
- This is different because this is a
- 14 state crossing the border, exercising control
- over that resource beyond the border, so that's
- 16 why I say it doesn't matter --
- 17 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, what
- other cases would you -- putting aside water,
- 19 what other cases would you admit are subject to
- 20 equitable apportionment?
- 21 MR. COGHLAN: Your Honor, I'm not
- 22 sure, and I'm not sure the equitable
- 23 apportionment should or should not apply as a
- 24 concept to groundwater. I think there are
- 25 reasons why, based on the nature of groundwater,

- 1 it might not make sense.
- 2 But I think the Court doesn't need to
- 3 address that question about whether or not
- 4 equitable apportionment should apply to
- 5 groundwater because, as I say, this is a
- 6 different type of injury. This is an injury
- 7 where one state is reaching across the border
- 8 and exercising control --
- 9 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well --
- 10 MR. COGHLAN: -- beyond its sovereign
- 11 territory.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- putting
- aside your reaching across the border, I mean,
- in -- in the absence -- you -- you concede,
- don't you, that the aquifer flows from
- 16 Mississippi into Tennessee?
- 17 MR. COGHLAN: We -- we concede that
- 18 there is some water that crosses the border,
- 19 yes.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I
- 21 suppose then you're -- you're not saying that
- there's no equitable apportionment of that
- 23 water?
- MR. COGHLAN: I think, Your Honor, our
- 25 point is that whether or not aquifers and

- 1 groundwater should be subject to equitable
- apportionment is not the legal issue that we're
- 3 presenting before the Court.
- What we're presenting is does
- 5 Tennessee have the right to control the resource
- 6 beyond Tennessee's sovereign boundaries in
- 7 Mississippi when Mississippi has not waived its
- 8 sovereign right over control of that
- 9 groundwater.
- 10 JUSTICE KAGAN: I'm not sure I
- 11 understand that, Mr. Coghlan. I mean, you're
- 12 not now saying that this is not an interstate
- 13 water. You're conceding that it is an
- interstate water, is that correct?
- MR. COGHLAN: I don't know that we're
- 16 conceding it, Justice Kagan. I --
- 17 JUSTICE KAGAN: You're saying that you
- 18 win even if it is an interstate water --
- 19 MR. COGHLAN: That's --
- 20 JUSTICE KAGAN: -- is that correct?
- 21 MR. COGHLAN: -- that's correct.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Okay. So you're
- 23 saying it's irrelevant whether it's an
- interstate water or not?
- MR. COGHLAN: That's correct.

1 JUSTICE KAGAN: So let's assume that 2 it is an interstate water. 3 MR. COGHLAN: Okav. JUSTICE KAGAN: And you're saying that 4 the reason you should win is because -- is 5 because what? Because Mississippi is 6 7 essentially doing something unnatural to have access to that interstate water? What --8 9 MR. COGHLAN: I'd say, Your Honor, it's that Tennessee --10 11 JUSTICE KAGAN: Tennessee, excuse me. 12 MR. COGHLAN: That Tennessee is 13 exercising control over groundwater while it is 14 located within Mississippi's sovereign 15 territory. 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, but Tennessee is 17 doing things, I think you admitted, in -- in --18 in one of the questions that Justice Thomas put 19 to you -- Tennessee is acting entirely within its own borders. It is having effects on 20 21 Mississippi, but that's the case with respect to 22 people using a flowing river, that if there's a 23 -- a flowing river, Tennessee might be taking 24 water from it, which has effects in Mississippi. 25 So why is it any different?

1	MR. COGHLAN: Justice Kagan, where I
2	would disagree with you is that Tennessee is
3	acting entirely within its own borders. Their
4	their wells are physically located in
5	Tennessee, but this pumping is creating a
6	unnatural area of effect that's predictable,
7	measurable, and controllable, and that area of
8	effect is having physical effect, unnatural
9	JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, it's have
10	MR. COGHLAN: physical effects
11	JUSTICE KAGAN: it's it's
12	predictable, measurable, and controllable when
13	an upstream state takes a lot of water from a
14	river that that will leave the downstream state
15	with less water. All of that is predictable in
16	the exact same way that one state is harming
17	another, and yet we turn to equitable
18	apportionment to deal with that.
19	MR. COGHLAN: And I think, Your Honor,
20	the difference as as I in this case is
21	that in all of the Court's equitable
22	apportionment cases, the state who's, you know,
23	unnaturally having an effect on the water by
24	taking and removing water is acting, and the
25	effect of that is occurring the direct effect

- of that is occurring entirely within the state's
- 2 sovereign territory and that whether or not the
- 3 water ultimately doesn't reach the downstream
- 4 state because it doesn't flow there is -- is
- 5 incidental, whereas, here, there is a direct
- 6 intentional effect.
- 7 The -- the purpose of pumping
- 8 is to move water. And Tennessee is putting
- 9 these wells next to the border, creating a
- 10 vacuum, and of -- of a measurable area of
- 11 effect, and intentionally pulling the water out
- of Mississippi and exercising control, direct
- 13 control I would say, over that groundwater while
- it is within Mississippi's sovereign territory.
- 15 And I think --
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Counsel, can you
- 17 please explain to me how that's different from a
- dam, if Tennessee built a dam and put it on the
- 19 Tennessee side, it's completely on its side, and
- it's interfering with the natural flow of water
- 21 to Mississippi? So how is that different than
- 22 putting a well that interferes with the natural
- 23 flow of the groundwater?
- 24 MR. COGHLAN: Well, Justice Sotomayor,
- 25 I don't know that it would be appropriate to --

- 1 to dam a water, but the difference I would say
- 2 is -- is this: that creating a dam within your
- 3 own sovereign territory is an action occurring
- 4 within your own sovereign territory. The --
- 5 the -- the physical direct effect of it is
- 6 within Tennessee if that's what's happening.
- 7 Pumping here is exercising control
- 8 over the water while it is physically located in
- 9 Mississippi. In -- in the example of the dam,
- 10 the physical control over the water is occurring
- 11 entirely within Tennessee.
- 12 Here, it's occurring within
- 13 Mississippi's sovereign territory, where
- 14 Mississippi has the exclusive right to exercise
- 15 control over the groundwater.
- 16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: May I turn your
- 17 attention to an issue you didn't mention, which
- is whether you should be given leave to amend or
- 19 not? That is what your -- the other side is
- 20 pointing to as their exception.
- 21 Could you tell me -- you've been
- 22 litigating this case for over 16 years. You
- 23 started in the Fifth Circuit. You went to the
- 24 district court, you went to the circuit court;
- 25 both courts told you you've got to seek

- 1 equitable apportionment. You come here in 2010.
- 2 We tell you the same thing.
- Now this is the third time you've done
- 4 this. This -- this time you explicitly disclaim
- 5 any claim for equitable apportionment.
- 6 When is enough enough? When should
- 7 you be stopped from amending and seeking
- 8 equitable apportionment, assuming you lose? But
- 9 it is a question that's open in this case.
- 10 MR. COGHLAN: Well --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: It's only an
- 12 assumption I'm working from, but when is enough
- 13 enough?
- MR. COGHLAN: Well, Your Honor, I
- think there's a recognition in equitable
- apportionment cases that it's prospective, and
- 17 it's for future injury. It's not to rectify
- 18 past injury. That's part of the reason why we
- 19 think it's the wrong remedy here.
- 20 We also think it doesn't redress the
- 21 injury over sovereign control of water. But,
- 22 based on the nature of the remedy and that it is
- 23 prospective only, I think there's a recognition
- that states should always have the right to be
- 25 able to pursue that -- that remedy, particularly

- 1 here, where, in the interim, Tennessee continues
- 2 to pull groundwater out of Mississippi.
- I think it would be inequitable to
- 4 prevent us from --
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Well, why
- 6 shouldn't we just leave that question alone?
- 7 Why should we just not decide this case,
- 8 whatever the decision is, and not decide whether
- 9 to grant -- to grant permission or not and,
- 10 assuming you finally say you're going to amend
- or do amend, let you figure out what's equitable
- 12 at that time or not?
- MR. COGHLAN: Well, I -- I think, Your
- 14 Honor, again, setting aside the fact that we
- think equitable apportionment is the wrong
- 16 remedy for -- for this case --
- 17 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So that goes to my
- 18 -- begs my question --
- MR. COGHLAN: Yeah.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- which is, if
- 21 you think it's the wrong remedy, can you plead
- it, number one? Will you plead it, number two?
- 23 MR. COGHLAN: If -- if the Court
- 24 disagrees with us and finds that equitable
- apportionment is the only remedy available to

- 1 Mississippi, we would still want the option
- 2 to -- to pursue that. Even if it's -- we think
- 3 it would be incomplete as a form of relief, we
- 4 would want to obtain whatever relief is possible
- 5 for -- for Mississippi.
- 6 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, you
- 7 emphasized in your -- your answers so far the
- 8 concept of physical control of the aquifers. In
- 9 Mississippi, it's theirs to control.
- 10 You know, in the western states, they
- 11 have these, I don't know, wild horses or wild
- burros, whatever they are, and they don't obey
- the state lines and they're wandering around and
- 14 they -- let's just say they go from, you know,
- 15 New Mexico to wherever.
- 16 Let's suppose that they're -- I know
- they're pests, I guess, in some places, but
- let's suppose they're a valuable resource. If
- 19 they were in Mississippi and crossed into
- 20 Tennessee and Tennessee seized them at that
- 21 point, would that be damaging Mississippi, or
- 22 could Tennessee say, look, they're on our
- territory, they're under our physical control,
- 24 we can exercise dominion over them, period?
- MR. COGHLAN: Mr. Chief Justice, I

- think, if they're exercising control within
- 2 Tennessee, that is distinct from what's
- 3 happening here, where there's control --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, I don't
- 5 care if it's distinct from what's happening here
- 6 or not. I'm just wondering if -- I -- I would
- 7 suggest that that's at least in some sense an
- 8 interstate resource.
- 9 Normally, under our precedents, those
- 10 are subject to equitable apportionment. But --
- 11 but you would say under your theory that, no,
- 12 Tennessee could take all the value of that
- interstate resource just because it happened to
- 14 be under Tennessee -- in Tennessee under that
- 15 particular point?
- MR. COGHLAN: Mr. Chief Justice, I --
- 17 I -- I don't know the answer to that question,
- 18 but I think the point is this: whatever the
- 19 limits of that sovereign control are -- and
- we're not saying here that Mississippi's
- 21 sovereign control over groundwater is unlimited.
- 22 Certainly, Congress can place limits on it.
- 23 This Court, acting appropriately, can place
- limits on it. Our point is that Tennessee may
- 25 not limit it in Mississippi by exercising

```
1
      control over it while it is within Mississippi.
 2
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So I -- so it
 3
      sounds to me like you're not going to give me an
      answer on the wild horses?
 4
               MR. COGHLAN: Well, Mr. --
 5
 6
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's an
 7
      interstate resource that goes back and forth
8
     between two different states. You seem to say
      that if it's in one state, that's theirs.
 9
10
     it's in the other, you know, it's -- it's that
11
      state's. And I'm positing a resource that
12
     migrates between the two states because some
13
     people might think that's what's at issue here.
14
               MR. COGHLAN: And, Mr. Chief Justice,
      I -- I apologize. Your question is whether or
15
     not Tennessee could take -- capture all the
16
17
     horses --
18
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yeah.
19
               MR. COGHLAN: -- while --
20
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Whoever -- you
21
     know, in the spring or whenever, they -- they go
22
      to Mississippi, and then, in the fall, they go
23
     to Tennessee, and can Tennessee, say, just grab
24
      -- round them up and say they're ours?
```

MR. COGHLAN: While they're in

2.2

- 1 Tennessee?
- 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: While they're
- 3 in Tennessee.
- 4 MR. COGHLAN: I would suggest yes,
- 5 they could. Whether or not they could do so to
- 6 the extent that they would preclude all of those
- 7 horses from going back to --
- 8 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yeah, every
- 9 last one they -- they grab.
- 10 MR. COGHLAN: Your Honor, probably
- 11 not. But I -- I would suggest that the
- difference in the example you're suggesting is
- 13 -- is that which distinguishes equitable -- all
- the Court's equitable apportionment cases from
- 15 -- from that here, which is that in the example
- Your Honor is, you know, suggesting, Tennessee
- is acting entirely within Tennessee's borders.
- 18 It's not acting extra -- extraterritorially.
- 19 And I'd say that is what distinguishes
- 20 the case here from Your Honor's example and --
- and from all the Court's equitable apportionment
- 22 cases.
- JUSTICE BREYER: So what -- I have the
- 24 same kind of question. My understanding -- and
- 25 you have to -- it's very elementary. I mean, I

- 1 think water falls from the sky. Some of it's
- 2 evaporated back. Others of it goes into oceans
- 3 or lakes or streams. A huge amount goes under
- 4 water -- underground. It's groundwater, and it
- 5 runs all over the place. That's why I like the
- 6 wild horses. My idea of that groundwater is
- 7 it's going all over the place.
- 8 MR. COGHLAN: Yes.
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: So what's the
- 10 standard? Are there any cases? What's the
- 11 standard when one state takes some of that
- 12 running-around groundwater that another state
- 13 says, oh, no, it should stay here?
- 14 It sounds to me -- you know, San
- 15 Francisco has beautiful fog. Suppose somebody
- 16 came by in an airplane and took some of that
- 17 beautiful fog and flew it to Colorado, which has
- its own beautiful water -- air. And somebody
- 19 took it and flew it to Massachusetts or some
- 20 other place.
- I mean, do you understand how I'm
- 22 suddenly seeing this and I'm totally at sea?
- 23 It's that the water runs around. And whose
- 24 water is it? I don't know. So you have a lot
- 25 to explain to me, unfortunately, and I will

- 1 forgive you if you don't.
- MR. COGHLAN: Well, Justice Breyer, I
- 3 would say this: We're not claiming here that
- 4 Mississippi owns the water in a sense of
- 5 absolute title to the water. What we're talking
- 6 about is the -- the right to exercise control
- 7 over the resource while it is within the -- the
- 8 sovereign territory and the borders of
- 9 Mississippi.
- 10 And Mississippi is not trying to
- 11 prevent the water from flowing naturally or to
- go across the border or -- or prevent the wild
- horses in the Chief Justice's hypothetical from
- 14 going across the border.
- What we're saying is Tennessee does
- 16 not have a right to exercise any control over
- 17 them while -- or over -- control over the
- 18 groundwater while it is within Mississippi.
- 19 And what -- so what we're proposing is
- that states can, you know, withdraw groundwater
- 21 from within as long as the physical effects --
- and this is something that's measurable and
- 23 predictable, as I said -- as long as the
- 24 physical effects of those pump -- that pumping
- 25 does not encroach and affect the water and

- 1 control the water outside the -- or in -- in a
- 2 sister state.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Yeah, but you're
- 4 saying that the question is whether there's an
- 5 extraterritorial action. But there has not been
- 6 a trespass. There has not been pumping on
- 7 Mississippi's land. What there has been is
- 8 actions on Tennessee's land that have a
- 9 measurable and predictable effect. That is
- often true when it comes to water, that one can
- 11 take action in one state and have effects in
- 12 another state. I mean, all of our cases in this
- 13 area are premised on that.
- So why is it any more true in this
- 15 case than in any other that there's
- 16 extraterritorial action as opposed to
- 17 extraterritorial effects?
- 18 MR. COGHLAN: Your Honor, because I
- 19 would say that there's -- the intent of pumping
- is to move water and to exercise control over
- 21 the groundwater in this case. And so I come
- 22 back to the fact that it's -- it's measurable
- and predictable because that's the area over
- 24 which states know they're going to be impacting
- and having a direct effect on the groundwater.

1 And, you know, what Mississippi --2 what Tennessee and Defendants seem to want to 3 say is, well, if there was a pipe that crossed the border and that made a physical intrusion of 4 space, that Mississippi would win and this case 5 6 would be different when a pipe doesn't actually 7 do anything to water. It's the pumping that controls the water and causes the water to move 8 9 from one place to another. 10 And so to say that, well, you need to 11 have a pipe or some sort of physical intrusion 12 of space for this case -- in this exercise of control over the water to be actionable, we 13 14 think, would elevate form over substance because 15 they don't need a pipe to exercise control over 16 this groundwater. 17 JUSTICE BARRETT: Okay. I have a 18 follow-up on Justice Kagan. 19 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Mr. Coghlan --20 JUSTICE BARRETT: I think what you're 21 asking -- or what she's asking you and pointing 2.2 out is that it wouldn't work this way if we were 23 talking about water that was above ground. what is your argument -- and this is kind of 24 25 what Justice Kagan asked you at the beginning.

- 1 What is your argument for treating the
- 2 groundwater differently?
- I mean, how much of it depends on your
- 4 assertion that, well, it travels interstate but
- 5 very slowly, it can take centuries to move from
- 6 Mississippi into Tennessee? I mean, is it the
- 7 speed at which the water moves that matters
- 8 here? And if so, when is it so fast that
- 9 actually it falls into the -- the aboveground --
- 10 MR. COGHLAN: Well --
- 11 JUSTICE BARRETT: -- kind of category?
- MR. COGHLAN: Well, Your Honor, our
- view is that this principle would apply equally
- 14 to groundwater, to surface water, to -- to other
- 15 types of resources. And we think that's what
- 16 the Court recognized in Tarrant when it
- 17 recognized this concept when dealing with an
- interstate surface river that had already had
- 19 the remedy of apportionment applied and
- 20 recognizing that there was a different type of
- 21 injury because, in that case, Texas was seeking
- 22 to divert water and exercise control over it
- while it was within Oklahoma's sovereign
- 24 territory.
- So I -- I would posit that it does --

- 1 it does not matter that the water here is
- 2 groundwater in the subsurface. The principle
- 3 should apply equally and we think the Court has
- 4 found it to apply equally with surface water in
- 5 Tarrant.
- 6 JUSTICE GORSUCH: I'd like to --
- 7 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Mr. Coghlan --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Oh, go -- go ahead,
- 9 Justice Kavanaugh.
- 10 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice --
- 11 Justice Kavanaugh.
- 12 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: The amicus brief
- of eight states says that your position would
- 14 "inject dangerous uncertainty into established
- 15 systems of natural resource management and
- 16 undermine an established process to resolve
- disputes over a natural resource."
- So I just wanted to get your response
- 19 to those states which seem to suggest that your
- 20 position would cause a lot of problems in how to
- 21 manage these resources.
- MR. COGHLAN: Well, Justice Kavanaugh,
- 23 the states' amicus is premised on the notion
- that there is no known duty. And we would posit
- 25 there is a known duty here. The Court has

1 recognized it in -- in Tarrant, is that states 2 can only exercise control, sovereign control, 3 over a resource within their own borders. So I think what we're asking to do is 4 for the Court to just simply extend the 5 6 principles recognized in Tarrant to the -- to 7 the case -- which are known duties, to the case 8 here. 9 And I think I would respond to the 10 western states by saying, what would happen if 11 Tennessee wins? And I think the danger there is 12 -- is what we're already seeing here, where you 13 have both Mississippi and Tennessee pumping on 14 each side of the border, trying to have a tug of 15 war over this groundwater at issue, unnaturally 16 draining the aguifer and damaging it when -- if, 17 based on the nature of groundwater, if both states pumped away from the border, neither 18 19 state would have any impact whatsoever on the 20 groundwater within the -- the neighboring state. 21 And I think that's unique about --2.2 about groundwater. But -- but Tennessee could 23 have gotten all the groundwater and pumped as 24 much groundwater as it wanted and had zero

effect on the groundwater in Mississippi if it

- 1 had -- if the cones of depression were not
- 2 crossing the border. And so this is an area
- 3 where it's distinct from surface water because
- 4 there isn't this natural leveling out of water
- 5 when -- when you take it out. There's only a
- 6 limited area of effect when you're pumping
- 7 groundwater outside of which there's no impact
- 8 whatsoever on the rest of the aquifer.
- 9 And I think that's another -- that's a
- 10 reason why, conceptually, equitable
- 11 apportionment may not make sense to apply to
- 12 groundwater, because it's not about the amount
- of groundwater coming out; it's purely about
- 14 where that groundwater is -- is -- is coming
- 15 from.
- But, to -- to answer your
- 17 question directly, Justice Kavanaugh, we do not
- 18 believe that there would be the detrimental
- 19 effects that the western states complain of.
- 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Counsel, I
- 21 just have one additional question. If you
- 22 prevail, then, presumably, Tennessee could bring
- 23 -- or could bring a counterclaim against you in
- those situations where your wells take water
- from Tennessee, right?

MR. COGHLAN: That is true, Your 1 2 Honor, but I --3 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. Then --4 then, if they do, presumably, the normal thing would be I'd take whatever you owe -- Tennessee 5 6 owes you and whatever you owe Tennessee and set 7 it off against the other and that's what would 8 happen, right? MR. COGHLAN: I -- it -- it could, 9 10 Your Honor. I think that it would be a 11 motivating factor for states to come and 12 negotiate interstate contact. 13 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. So, if 14 it could, that starts to sound a lot like 15 equitable apportionment. How is it different at 16 the end of the day? 17 MR. COGHLAN: Well, in the sense that 18 it would motivate states to -- to come and 19 negotiate, we think it would have -- it would have -- be similar to equitable apportionment 20 21 in -- in that respect. 2.2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you. 23 Justice Thomas?

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questions.

JUSTICE THOMAS: I have no further

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
2	Breyer?
3	Justice Alito? Nothing?
4	Justice Kagan?
5	Justice Gorsuch?
6	JUSTICE GORSUCH: I I do have one
7	quick question just to follow up on Justice
8	Sotomayor's line of questioning to you, counsel.
9	Suppose you fail to prevail here
10	today. I'm I'm wondering what we do next.
11	The Special Master recommended that we grant
12	leave to amend to add an equitable apportionment
13	claim. But we don't actually have a motion for
14	leave to amend before us. And we have a
15	standard that has to be met among other things,
16	whether it's a logical outgrowth of the existing
17	litigation, timeliness, as Justice Sotomayor
18	alluded to, and I'm just wondering what you
19	would have the Court do should you fail to
20	prevail?
21	MR. COGHLAN: We'd ask the Court to
22	to grant us leave to amend, and, of course, the
23	Court could
24	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Have you have you
25	moved? Have you sought to meet the standards?

- 1 I -- I -- I haven't seen that in the papers
- 2 before us.
- MR. COGHLAN: We -- we have not yet,
- 4 Justice Gorsuch.
- 5 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So, again, what
- 6 would you have this Court's judgment line look
- 7 like should you fail to prevail? We wouldn't
- 8 grant leave to amend because there's no motion
- 9 pending before us. Do we just say, as Justice
- 10 Sotomayor said, nothing?
- 11 MR. COGHLAN: Justice Gorsuch, we
- 12 think the Court could grant leave to amend but
- certainly reflect the principles you -- you just
- mentioned, that if Mississippi does not behave
- 15 timely or -- or does not file a -- a proper
- 16 motion, that the Court could obviously deny
- 17 that.
- 18 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So give you a
- 19 certain number of days in which to present the
- 20 Court with a proper motion? Is that the
- 21 suggestion?
- MR. COGHLAN: I wouldn't put a
- 23 specific number and obviously would defer --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Of course not. No
- 25 -- no -- no one wants a deadline. But should --

- 1 give you an opportunity within a reasonable
- 2 period of time, and we might set a deadline for
- 3 a motion. Is -- is that -- is that your
- 4 suggestion?
- 5 MR. COGHLAN: We would -- I think the
- 6 Court certainly could do that. Whatever number
- 7 the Court would feel would be reasonable, we
- 8 would act within that period.
- 9 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Thank you very much,
- 10 counsel.
- 11 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
- 12 Kavanaugh.
- 13 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Just picking up on
- that, isn't your position that you want to
- 15 preserve the right to seek equitable
- 16 apportionment into the future even if you don't
- 17 seek it now, or am I misunderstanding that?
- 18 MR. COGHLAN: I -- I -- I think it's
- 19 both, Justice Kavanaugh. We would like the
- 20 opportunity to -- to replead in this matter, but
- 21 also, because equitable apportionment is a
- 22 prospective remedy only, we would want the
- 23 opportunity to pursue that in the future in a
- 24 new action if needed.
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Thank you.

1	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
2	Barrett?
3	JUSTICE BARRETT: None.
4	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Okay. Thank
5	you, counsel.
6	Mr. Frederick.
7	ORAL ARGUMENT OF DAVID C. FREDERICK
8	ON BEHALF OF THE DEFENDANTS
9	MR. FREDERICK: Thank you, Mr. Chief
10	Justice, and may it please the Court:
11	Tennessee has lawfully pumped
12	groundwater out of the Middle Claiborne Aquifer
13	on its side of the border for more than 130
14	years. The Special Master correctly recommended
15	dismissal of Mississippi's complaint but erred
16	in suggesting that Mississippi be freely granted
17	leave to amend.
18	First, the Equitable Apportionment
19	Doctrine provides the exclusive remedy for
20	complaints about the usage of water that flows
21	from one state into another and the actions in
22	one state affect interstate water flow.
23	Mississippi's claim for more than \$600 million
24	in damages, therefore, must be dismissed.
25	Mississippi's principal argument in

- 1 response is that the aquifer water flows slowly.
- 2 But this Court has never conditioned the
- 3 application of the Equitable Apportionment
- 4 Doctrine on water velocity.
- 5 Here, even Mississippi's expert
- 6 acknowledged that in predevelopment conditions,
- 7 more than 37 million gallons of water per day
- 8 flowed out of Mississippi and into adjoining
- 9 states.
- 10 Second, the Master did not consider
- 11 how this case would fundamentally change if
- 12 Mississippi were freely allowed to amend to
- 13 plead an equitable apportionment action at this
- stage after disavowing an apportionment claim
- 15 for the last decade.
- Nor did the Master consider that
- 17 Mississippi can show no injury at all from
- 18 Tennessee's water withdrawals. The undisputed
- 19 facts are the aquifer's water volume in the
- 20 greater Memphis and northern Mississippi area
- 21 has changed very little in the past 100 years.
- 22 The aquifer is fully saturated and in a state of
- 23 equilibrium. And Mississippi has increased its
- 24 own pumping dramatically and can extract all the
- 25 water it needs.

- 1 Mr. Chief Justice, I welcome the
- 2 Court's questions.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: Mr. Frederick,
- 4 counsel for Mississippi says that if you simply
- 5 moved your pumps away from the border, all would
- 6 be well. What do you make of that?
- 7 MR. FREDERICK: Well, two things.
- 8 There was testimony on this at the trial.
- 9 Dr. Spruill was asked that question and said that
- 10 Memphis could engage in a massive relocation,
- and then Mississippi's other expert, Mr. Wiley,
- said that it would have no appreciable effect on
- 13 the cone of depression.
- Dr. Spruill, on cross-examination,
- conceded that Mississippi's own pumps are closer
- 16 to the border than those in Tennessee. And when
- 17 Dr. Waldron, our expert, testified, he said that
- 18 that pumping was causing a reversal in the
- 19 change in the water flow and that Mississippi
- 20 was, in fact, intercepting -- that was his words
- 21 -- water that would have flowed from Mississippi
- 22 to Tennessee in its natural state.
- JUSTICE THOMAS: And you oppose
- amending the complaint here to include
- 25 apportionment, equitable apportionment. What is

1 to stop Mississippi from simply filing a new 2 motion in this case and starting all over? 3 MR. FREDERICK: Nothing would stop it, but Mississippi would have to meet the standards 4 for a material change in circumstances that 5 would warrant this Court's consideration of an 6 7 equitable apportionment claim. In the case of Colorado versus Kansas, 8 decided in the early 1940s, this Court said that 9 10 the standard was a material change in circumstances. That, of course, was the 11 12 long-running dispute over the Arkansas River. And what the Court said was that if 13 14 that material change in circumstances has not 15 occurred, then denial of a motion for leave to 16 file a complaint is the appropriate disposition. 17 JUSTICE THOMAS: Thank you.

23 If all they wanted was to stop you 24 from drawing water because the way you're

also be appropriate.

claim that the equitable apportionment is the

it shouldn't be, that a nuisance action could

exclusive remedy. The amici law professors say

JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Mr. Frederick, you

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drawing it harmed the aquifers, which is, I

- 1 think, what I heard them say earlier, why
- 2 wouldn't a nuisance action be appropriate?
- 3 MR. FREDERICK: A nuisance action
- 4 would be appropriate if there was damage to the
- 5 water or if there was some issue of subsidence
- 6 or other water quality. I think this Court's
- 7 case in City of Milwaukee is representative of a
- 8 cross-boundary tort.
- 9 But what they are complaining about is
- 10 our usage of the water that flows in interstate
- 11 --
- 12 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So it's a --
- MR. FREDERICK: -- waters.
- JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: -- question of how
- 15 they pleaded?
- 16 MR. FREDERICK: I think that's
- 17 correct. And in the nuisance context, the law
- 18 professors don't say exactly how you would
- 19 administer a nuisance claim under what they are
- 20 talking about. And I would point out that there
- 21 was evidence at the trial about the absence of
- 22 subsidence or any degradation of water quality.
- We presented that in our Defendants' Proposed
- 24 Findings of Fact Numbers 246 and 47 on page
- 25 126A.

1 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: One last question. 2 What does a material change mean to you? What 3 would qualify? MR. FREDERICK: I think what would 4 qualify is if Mississippi was able to plead 5 6 plausibly and with the suggestion that clear and 7 convincing evidence would follow that it was unable to extract water, that it had to engage 8 9 in significantly increased costs in order to pump, that it suffered a degradation in water 10 11 quality or that there was evidence of subsidence 12 in the aquifer as a result of pumping. 13 Those would be of the type that you 14 would measure their significance based on the 15 classic standard that you would look --16 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: Given the way this has been litigated, those issues have not 17 18 actually been decided by anyone. 19 MR. FREDERICK: They haven't been 20 decided, but they're --21 JUSTICE SOTOMAYOR: So why should we 2.2 even say don't amend until there's a material 23 change? Because we don't even know what the 24 baseline is right now. 25 MR. FREDERICK: Well, what you would

- 1 say is that -- and I think to your earlier
- 2 question to my friend, I think you would say
- 3 nothing. Where the Special Master erred was in
- 4 suggesting that there be a free motion to amend
- 5 without actually following through the necessary
- 6 steps, a motion satisfying of the standard for a
- 7 material change in circumstances.
- 8 And you do have cases on this, Your
- 9 Honor. Nebraska versus Wyoming, which looked at
- 10 the question of what constitutes a fundamentally
- 11 different change of character of the claim, is
- 12 directly on point, as is the Colorado versus
- 13 Kansas case.
- 14 So you do have standards. It would be
- 15 Mississippi's burden, of course, to prove that
- 16 since 2010, when this Court denied Mississippi's
- 17 complaint in the alternative for an equitable
- 18 apportionment, that circumstances had changed
- 19 sufficiently to warrant allowing it to go
- 20 forward.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Frederick, suppose
- 22 that Mississippi had an entirely intrastate lake
- that was near the Mississippi/Tennessee border
- 24 but was -- all the borders of this lake were in
- 25 Mississippi. And suppose -- and suppose that

- 1 there was some newfangled technological way of
- 2 Tennessee helping itself to the waters of that
- 3 lake.
- 4 Would that be an equitable
- 5 apportionment claim, or, in that case, would
- 6 Mississippi have a different kind of action?
- 7 MR. FREDERICK: I think it would have
- 8 a different kind of action. The Equitable
- 9 Apportionment Doctrine has applied to interstate
- 10 bodies of water in which there is flow, there's
- 11 natural flow. And under your hypothetical,
- 12 Justice Kagan, there would be no interstate
- 13 character to the water.
- 14 JUSTICE KAGAN: Is -- is there such a
- thing as, when you're dealing with groundwater,
- looking at groundwater and saying that it moves
- so slowly, with the consequence of transferring
- 18 so little water between these states, that we
- 19 should treat it as my hypothetical rather than
- treat it in the same way as, say, an interstate
- 21 river?
- MR. FREDERICK: There was no evidence
- 23 at the trial, the five-day trial, about that,
- 24 although there was a lot of questioning about
- 25 that concept, and all of the hydrologists

- 1 acknowledged a couple of key facts for the
- 2 court.
- 3 One is there is no physical barrier
- 4 between the water in the ground under Tennessee
- 5 and under Mississippi. There is no distinction
- 6 in the subsoil surface, the sands and the
- 7 composition. It is one continuous hydrological
- 8 unit. That was acknowledged by all five
- 9 hydrologists who testified.
- 10 And so what you would be looking at
- 11 there, I think, is a situation that would be
- 12 quite different than the aquifer that we have
- 13 before us here.
- Now, on the volume question, Justice
- 15 Kagan --
- 16 JUSTICE KAGAN: I mean, maybe that
- 17 would be true -- you -- you started by saying,
- oh, look, this is, like, 37 million -- what was
- 19 it, 37 --
- 20 MR. FREDERICK: Thirty-seven million
- 21 gallons per day.
- JUSTICE KAGAN: Right. And -- and --
- and you suggested that that's a relevant fact
- 24 such that if there weren't 37 million, if there
- 25 were 37,000 or if there were 37, we should maybe

- 1 have a different way of analyzing this question,
- 2 is that right?
- 3 MR. FREDERICK: I don't think so
- 4 because, in the interstate lake hypothetical
- 5 that Justice Thomas, I believe, posed, you'd
- 6 still have the same kind of phenomena. Water in
- 7 its natural state is always going to be moving.
- 8 Water molecules will be moving.
- 9 Now how quickly they move ought to be
- irrelevant to the application of the Equitable
- 11 Apportionment Doctrine for a couple of reasons.
- 12 Legally, the Court has never said that, and in
- 13 the Oregon versus Washington case, where it
- 14 looked at whether or not the anadromous fish --
- sorry, Idaho case, the anadromous fish, those
- 16 fish were out at the ocean for years before they
- 17 came back to spawn.
- 18 And the Court has also considered
- 19 situations where rivers have run dry for long
- stretches of time before there's any water flow.
- 21 It nonetheless has held that the Equitable
- 22 Apportionment Doctrine applies.
- But, on the volume point, Justice
- 24 Kagan, I think it's important to take into
- 25 account the size, the sheer size, of this

- 1 aguifer. Not only does it encompass parts of
- 2 eight -- it lies underneath parts of eight
- different states, but the thickness of the
- 4 aquifer is huge. In parts of it, it's as much
- 5 as 500 feet. In parts under Tennessee, it goes
- 6 to 1100 feet.
- 7 And so one inch of movement per day,
- 8 which is what the testimony was at trial, can
- 9 translate into tens of millions of gallons of
- 10 water per day. And, of course, if you were to
- annualize that, you'd be able to cover the
- 12 entire District of Columbia in more than a foot
- of water by the amount that is moving one inch
- 14 at a time out of this aquifer.
- 15 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. Frederick, our
- 16 Doctrine of Equitable Apportionment arises in
- the area of moving water, of rivers, and you're
- asking to extend it to groundwater, and you've
- made a very strong argument for why that might
- 20 be sound.
- 21 I -- I'm wondering what the limiting
- 22 principle is, however, and what we're buying
- 23 here. Is every aquifer in -- in the country
- that might have some interstate effect now going
- 25 to be part of this Court's original

- 1 jurisdiction? Is -- is Justice Breyer's fog now
- 2 part of the Court's original jurisdiction? Is
- 3 the Chief Justice's herd of wild burros, who may
- 4 or may not be a nuisance, part of this Court's
- 5 original jurisdiction now?
- 6 MR. FREDERICK: Well, what the Court
- 7 has held is that the Equitable Apportionment
- 8 Doctrine applies to natural resources,
- 9 principally water and, in the one case of the
- 10 fish, to the public trust doctrine.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But so far --
- 12 MR. FREDERICK: And --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- it has been about
- 14 moving water and the fish. You're right. I
- forgot about the fish. Okay. But that's part
- of the moving water, the salmon in the river.
- 17 And this is an extension. And I'm -- I'm --
- just analytically, what are the outer bounds of
- 19 it? You can sell me on how it's not a big deal.
- 20 Fine, I got it. But what are the outer bounds
- 21 of this principle?
- 22 MR. FREDERICK: I think --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Where does it end?
- 24 MR. FREDERICK: I think the outer
- 25 bounds are where this Court recognizes the

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1 public trust doctrine to apply. In those
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- 2 resources that are outside the public trust
- doctrine, the Court has not applied the
- 4 equitable apportionment principle. And so, in
- 5 those -- in those resources -- air is one of
- 6 them. Justice Holmes recognized that in the old
- 7 Illinois Central case over --
- 8 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Right.
- 9 MR. FREDERICK: -- a century ago.
- 10 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Right.
- MR. FREDERICK: So, to Justice Breyer,
- 12 you know, if there were --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: So the wild --
- MR. FREDERICK: -- such a plane --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- the wildfires --
- MR. FREDERICK: -- the fog actually --
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: -- in California
- 18 affecting Colorado, the burros -- I'm not aware
- of any in Mississippi, but there might be some,
- 20 wild -- all of that's now part of the Court's
- 21 original jurisdiction?
- MR. FREDERICK: Well, I -- I would say
- that, of course, the burden on the complaining
- 24 state has to be a significant injury of
- 25 substantial magnitude. That has been the

- 1 Court's standard for over a century from Kansas
- 2 versus Colorado. And if the burros or the fog
- 3 created a significant injury of substantial
- 4 magnitude, I think it would be appropriate for
- 5 the Court to exercise its jurisdiction.
- 6 Sitting here today, I have a hard time
- 7 seeing that in the real world. But I think that
- 8 what the Court could say is that you have
- 9 extended groundwater in certain respects to
- 10 equitable apportionment cases when there has
- 11 been substantial pumping of groundwater that has
- 12 affected surface flows.
- 13 You did that in the Oregon versus
- Washington case back in the 1930s, where there
- were 300 pumps of water on the Oregon side of
- 16 the boundary, and the Court said that Washington
- 17 nonetheless could show no injury to its own
- 18 irrigators because there was subsur- --
- 19 subsurface flow that was occurring.
- 20 You've held that in other cases
- involving compacts, where you've enforced
- 22 compact decrees for surface flows
- 23 notwithstanding the fact that there have been
- 24 substantial water pumping going on on either
- 25 side of the state.

1	And so I think that it's not that far
2	of an extension to say that where Mississippi
3	has uniquely pleaded a claim about an aquifer
4	that all the evidence showed at trial was
5	connected to surface streams, and, here, the
6	Wolf River, itself an interstate river, flows
7	directly into the Middle Claiborne Aquifer at a
8	recharge zone in the eastern part of the area
9	that we're talking about.
LO	JUSTICE BREYER: I'm still nervous
L1	about the question that Justice Gorsuch is
L2	asking. I mean, there's groundwater under every
L3	state. I mean, every state will start suing
L4	each other, except maybe Hawaii or Alaska. And
L5	we haven't seen a lot of cases like that.
L6	And my my thought then is what you
L7	think about is maybe it could be done, but maybe
L8	it's better left to compacts or to Congress.
L9	And should we say anything about amendment?
20	That's where the that's where we have to
21	decide something here, because anything we say,
22	of course, they have a right to ask to amend.
23	MR. FREDERICK: Yes.
24	JUSTICE BREYER: But, if we say a word
) E	about it that a gaing to be taken as this is a

- 1 totally appropriate kind of suit, and wild
- 2 horses we worry about later, and -- and I don't
- 3 know where it's going.
- 4 MR. FREDERICK: Well, Justice Breyer,
- 5 two points in response to your question.
- 6 One, I think their approach spawns
- 7 much more litigation than our approach.
- 8 Equitable apportionment is about sharing. It's
- 9 about sharing scarce resources when those
- 10 resources become scarce. It's not about money
- grabs because of the way that flow has been
- 12 affected by pumping.
- 13 And, Chief Justice, you asked about
- 14 Tennessee counterclaims. Dr. Waldron testified
- 15 that there was significant -- tens of millions
- of -- of gallons of water every day that was
- 17 flowing into Tennessee and out of Tennessee and
- into Memphis and -- and into Mississippi.
- 19 And so what the evidence at trial
- 20 would show would be that there would be
- 21 substantial counterclaims if that were the
- 22 standard. And that's why we respectfully
- 23 suggest it should not be the standard.
- Now, with respect to the fact that
- 25 aquifers are under many, many states, in fact,

- 1 most of the states in the country, respectfully,
- 2 the question ought to be is there scarcity and,
- 3 if there is scarcity, is there a doctrine that
- 4 calls for conservation, calls for historic uses,
- 5 calls for weighing the harms and benefits, calls
- 6 for prospective action that would enable the
- 7 scarce resource to be shared? And the answer is
- 8 yes.
- 9 JUSTICE BREYER: Well, maybe we should
- 10 just wait to decide that matter, which could
- lead to all kinds of lawsuits, until we have to
- 12 decide it.
- MR. FREDERICK: You could, but what I
- 14 think you should say is that this is
- indisputably an interstate water resource in
- 16 which there is flow. If there is a remedy, it
- 17 falls under the Equitable Apportionment
- 18 Doctrine. Mississippi has disclaimed an
- 19 equitable apportionment claim. Therefore, its
- 20 complaint should be dismissed. Period.
- JUSTICE BARRETT: And not specify with
- or without prejudice for leave to amend?
- MR. FREDERICK: I don't --
- 24 JUSTICE BARRETT: Just say nothing?
- 25 MR. FREDERICK: I -- I thought I just

- 1 captured what I think is the appropriate
- disposition. They haven't moved to amend their
- 3 complaint. They've been very careful not to say
- 4 whether they plan to do it. Their entire gambit
- 5 here has been to get Tennessee to pay them
- 6 hundreds of millions of dollars for water that
- 7 in part they have intercepted at the boundary.
- 8 So it's not -- and they say this on
- 9 page 36 of the blue brief. They do not claim
- 10 that Tennessee is taking out more than its fair
- 11 share of the water. That's not their claim.
- Their claim is that they think they
- have an ownership right that entitles them to
- 14 charge Tennessee for water. And that, we think,
- the Court should say, no, that's not the correct
- 16 statement of the law.
- 17 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Shouldn't a
- dismissal be without prejudice to them filing an
- 19 equitable apportionment action? It would seem
- 20 extreme to me to bar them from doing so in the
- 21 future.
- MR. FREDERICK: Justice Kavanaugh, I
- think that the correct disposition would be to
- 24 dismiss this complaint, their territorial
- ownership claim, with prejudice. And I would

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1
      urge the Court to do that to disincentivize any
 2
      other state from seeking --
 3
                JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: What -- what --
               MR. FREDERICK: -- to limit a --
 4
                JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Sorry to
 5
 6
      interrupt. What would the effects of that be on
7
      their ability to file an equitable apportionment
      claim even if they can't show a material change
 8
      in circumstances?
 9
10
               MR. FREDERICK: You would address that
11
      at the motion for leave to file a new complaint,
12
      where they would be put to their burden to show
13
      that there's been a material change and there
14
     has been a significant injury of serious
15
     magnitude, and Tennessee would respond depending
16
      on what they pleaded in their new complaint.
17
               CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Frederick,
18
      thank you. I've had a little trouble following
19
      the science here. Is this really water we're
20
      talking about? I mean --
21
               MR. FREDERICK: Yes.
2.2
                CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: -- it's
23
      complete -- well, it's mixed up with silt and
```

small particles and all. If you -- you can put

it in your hand, right, and it would be silt?

24

- 1 It would be wet, but, until you pump it, it's
- 2 really not the water, right?
- 3 MR. FREDERICK: No, the definition of
- 4 an aquifer is a fully saturated formation,
- 5 hydrogeological formation, in which there are
- 6 usable quantities of water.
- 7 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Yeah, yeah, I
- 8 read that, but "fully saturated" means it's
- 9 saturating something, right?
- 10 MR. FREDERICK: Yes. It's sand
- 11 mostly.
- 12 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: It's not like
- 13 a -- sand, okay. Someone explained to me it's
- 14 like you're in the -- the side of the shore and
- you put your foot down and when you lift it up,
- it kind of fills with water in that gap, right?
- 17 MR. FREDERICK: That is descriptive of
- 18 parts of the aquifer, yes.
- 19 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, it's the
- 20 part that I could understand.
- 21 (Laughter.)
- 22 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: So -- so why
- 23 should we view it as like -- just like our
- interstate water cases? I mean, it is an
- 25 unnatural operation of the pumping, separates

- 1 out the water, and at that point, it's -- it's
- 2 usable.
- 3 MR. FREDERICK: For the --
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: But, before
- 5 that, you would just call it silt, and if
- 6 somebody showed you, you know, a handful of
- 7 silt, they wouldn't say, oh, that's water.
- 8 MR. FREDERICK: Well, Mr. Chief
- 9 Justice, I think you would say that it is water
- 10 because it's some of the finest water that
- 11 anyone can drink in the United States. This
- 12 artesian water is absolutely spectacular water
- that they have pumped, and they have run it over
- 14 filters that filter out some of the iron and
- some of the other minerals, but it is very pure
- 16 water and it is delicious.
- 17 And I would urge the Court to consider
- 18 the aquifer -- just because it is -- it is mixed
- in with sediment does not distinguish what it
- 20 actually is, which is water when it is pulled
- 21 out, and it is not a sophisticated scientific
- 22 operation to do that.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 24 counsel.
- 25 Justice Thomas?

1 JUSTICE THOMAS: No questions, Chief. 2 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 3 Breyer? 4 JUSTICE BREYER: No. 5 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice Alito? 6 No? 7 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Mr. Frederick, on the -- on the question of leave to amend, just 8 to nail that down, would -- would you have any 9 10 objection to this Court simply resolving the 11 case as before us and saying that there is no 12 leave to amend currently pending before us? We don't need to address it. The Special Master 13 14 was erroneous to the extent that he suggested 15 there was? 16 MR. FREDERICK: We -- that if -- with 17 that last part, Justice Gorsuch, we would have no objection to that. 18 19 JUSTICE GORSUCH: Okay. 20 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice 21 Kavanaugh? 22 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: No further 23 questions. 24 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice

25

Barrett?

1	JUSTICE BARRETT: I do have one
2	question following up on the Chief's question to
3	you about separating the water from the silt.
4	What if you could separate out some
5	other thing from the silt, like some sort of
6	mineral, and find some sort of way to pump it
7	and pull it into Tennessee? How would that
8	fare? Would that be subject to equitable
9	apportionment?
10	MR. FREDERICK: No, Your Honor.
11	Minerals have not been subjected to the
12	Equitable Apportionment Doctrine because they're
13	not covered by public trust. They are privately
14	owned, usually through surface ownership rights
15	by personal property. Sometimes they get
16	severed in some states where you can own the
17	surface land and sever off the mineral rights.
18	Those would be treated separately
19	under well-established law.
20	JUSTICE BARRETT: Thank you.
21	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
22	counsel.
23	MR. FREDERICK: Thank you.
24	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Mr. Liu.
25	

1	ORAL ARGUMENT OF FREDERICK LIU
2	FOR THE UNITED STATES, AS AMICUS CURIAE,
3	IN SUPPORT OF OVERRULING THE PLAINTIFF'S EXCEPTIONS
4	MR. LIU: Thank you, Mr. Chief
5	Justice, and may it please the Court:
6	Under Mississippi's theory of this
7	case, certain groundwater belongs to Mississippi
8	simply by virtue of having passed through
9	Mississippi's territory.
10	There's no support for such a theory.
11	Indeed, Mississippi can't point to a single
12	jurisdiction that has ever allocated groundwater
13	based on such a theory.
14	This Court, when confronted with
15	disputes over the allocation of interstate
16	resources, has applied the Doctrine of Equitable
17	Apportionment. That doctrine represents the
18	most sensible way of allocating an interstate
19	resource because it respects the equal
20	sovereignty of the states.
21	And Mississippi identifies no reason
22	why that doctrine should govern interstate
23	surface water and fish but not the groundwater
24	at issue here. Mississippi's exceptions to the
25	Special Master's report should, therefore, be

- 1 overruled.
- I welcome the Court -- the Court's
- 3 questions.
- 4 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Well, counsel,
- 5 you say on page 18 of your brief that
- 6 Mississippi's case is indistinguishable from --
- 7 from or at least sufficiently similar to all the
- 8 Court's prior precedents because it's
- 9 groundwater that crosses across state lines and
- 10 affects the other state.
- But there are a lot of other ways in
- 12 which it's distinguishable. The fact that we
- 13 were just talking about that it's -- however
- 14 delicious it might be when you get the silt out
- of it, it's not too good when the silt's in it
- and the fact that it's groundwater.
- 17 And I'm just wondering, this is a case
- of first impression, isn't it? You really are
- 19 trying to move this beyond the flowing water and
- 20 the fish?
- 21 MR. LIU: Well, it -- it's true that
- 22 this Court has not addressed directly the
- 23 question of how to deal with the allocation of
- 24 water in an aguifer. Our point is that this
- 25 Court's prior precedents have identified two

- 1 characteristics of the resources at issue in
- 2 those cases that justified the application of
- 3 the Doctrine of Equitable Apportionment.
- 4 And in this case, those two
- 5 characteristics, that is, the resource moving
- 6 naturally across state lines and the fact that
- 7 one state's use of the resource within its
- 8 borders affects the presence of the resource in
- 9 the other, those two characteristics are present
- 10 here. At least they're sufficiently similar.
- 11 And so, while there are certainly
- 12 differences between groundwater and surface
- 13 water, those are the -- those are the two
- 14 differences that matter, and they matter
- because, when those characteristics are
- 16 satisfied, that's when the Doctrine of Equitable
- 17 Apportionment makes sense.
- 18 When those characteristics exist,
- 19 you're inevitably going to have a conflict of
- sovereign interests of, on the one hand, the
- 21 sovereign interest of the state's right to use
- the water here in Tennessee and, of course, the
- 23 sovereign -- the interests of the other
- 24 sovereign to protect its citizens from whatever
- 25 effects that use may have.

1	And because one state can't simply
2	impose its policy on the other, the Doctrine of
3	Equitable Apportionment does what the best we
4	can do, which is to treat each state as an equal
5	sovereign, take account of all their interests,
6	put both states' bound both states' interests
7	on the balance, and then reconcile them as best
8	as we can.
9	JUSTICE KAGAN: Mr. Liu, suppose that
LO	instead of drilling their wells straight down,
L1	Tennessee drilled its wells, like, on a slant
L2	MR. LIU: Right.
L3	JUSTICE KAGAN: so that, in fact,
L4	the wells did cross the boundary between
L5	Tennessee and Mississippi. Is it then an
L6	equitable apportionment claim, or, at that
L7	point, does Mississippi have a different kind of
L8	action?
L9	MR. LIU: Well, I want to be clear
20	about what we think the domain of equitable
21	apportionment is. We think this doctrine
22	applies when one state is complaining about the
23	other state's use of the water.
24	So there might still be equitable
25	apportionment as

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1
                JUSTICE KAGAN: Well, that's really
 2
     what Tennessee -- Mississippi would be
 3
      complaining about, right? Because it's drilled
 4
      these wells and it's getting all this water.
     Let's say that the gravamen of the claim is
 5
 6
      really exactly the same, they're taking our
7
      water.
                This -- the only thing that's
 8
     different --
 9
10
               MR. LIU: Right.
11
                JUSTICE KAGAN: -- is the mechanism,
12
      that the mechanism they've used is one that does
13
     a physical trespass.
14
               MR. LIU: Yeah, that -- that's
15
     definitely a different case. And I think it's
16
     because there's a -- an additional harm there
17
      that I think has been understood --
18
                JUSTICE KAGAN: But not the harm that
19
      anybody cares about. You know, it doesn't
20
     matter that it's stepped an inch onto
21
     Mississippi's land. What -- you know, what
2.2
     Mississippi is complaining about is we have less
23
     water than we used to have.
               MR. LIU: Well, I -- I think it does
24
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matter whether the -- the state is crossing the

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1
     boundary or not. That -- that isn't -- that
 2
      isn't a --
 3
                JUSTICE KAGAN: Well --
                MR. LIU: -- circumstance where --
 4
                JUSTICE KAGAN: -- presumably, that
 5
 6
      would be a very minimal kind of damages, this --
 7
      the crossing of the border. The damages are
 8
      going to come from the taking of the water, and
 9
      the taking of the water, let's presume in my
10
     hypothetical, is exactly the same.
11
                MR. LIU:
                          If the taking of the water
12
      is exactly the same, I think there -- the water
13
     would still be subject to equitable
14
      apportionment, but one very important factor in
15
     how you import -- apportion that water might be
16
     how the water was extracted.
17
                Again, I just want to be clear there
18
     probably is room for a different kind of tort
19
      that's actionable because of the trespass, and
20
     so I'm not saying that that's -- that's somehow,
21
      you know, not -- not as -- not an important
2.2
     boundary that's literally been crossed in that
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Now my friend tries to distinguish

this Court's equitable apportionment cases from

23

24

25

case.

- 1 this case on a number of grounds, but I don't
- 2 think any of those grounds suffices. One of the
- 3 things my friend said was: Well, in this case,
- 4 we have an exercise of Mississippi's sovereign
- 5 authority. But, of course, that's going to be
- 6 true in all of this Court's equitable
- 7 apportionment cases. There's always going to
- 8 be, for example, an upstream state that's
- 9 exercising sovereign authority over the water
- 10 before it passes on to another state.
- 11 My friend mentioned this unnatural
- 12 effect of -- of -- of how the water is moving
- 13 from Mississippi to Tennessee. But, in all of
- these cases, what you're going to have is some
- 15 human intervention that extracts the resource
- 16 from its natural state, whether it's the
- 17 fishermen in Idaho v. Oregon or the irrigators
- in Kansas versus Colorado. Here, it's the wells
- in Tennessee. So that -- that doesn't really
- 20 distinguish this case.
- 21 The mechanism by which the water is
- 22 moving across, that's not different in this case
- 23 either. In all of these cases, the effect that
- one state has on the other, the mechanism is
- 25 through the agency of natural laws.

1 So, in the case of a stream, it's --2 it's just simple laws of physics that if you 3 take water out of a stream, there's going to be less water downstream. 4 Here, it's really no different. 5 6 mean, the -- the experts have put a fancy name 7 on what a cone of depression is, but anyone who has ever removed water from a vessel knows that 8 when you remove the water, more water is going 9 10 to flow to where you removed it. And -- and 11 that's -- that's simply what's happening here. 12 The one thing my friend also mentioned 13 was the -- the pace of the movement. But the 14 fact that it's moving slowly doesn't change the 15 fact that what we have here is a single continuous resource that moves across state 16 17 lines. 18 And, as Mr. Frederick emphasized, that 19 movement is hardly trivial. We're talking 20 millions and millions of gallons per day. Compare that to the river at issue in Kansas 21 versus Colorado. There, the Court noted that 2.2 23 the flow of the river varied during certain 24 parts of the year and in even some parts of the 25 year ran totally dry.

And the Court said, well, that doesn't 1 2 really matter. What matters is that we're 3 talking about a single continuous river that flows from Kansas to Colorado -- I'm sorry, from 4 Colorado to Kansas. And, here, we're talking 5 6 about a single continuous aguifer that -- that 7 exists underneath eight different states, including Mississippi and Tennessee. 8 9 Justice Kavanaugh asked about the uncertainty that might exist if this Court 10 11 adopted Tennessee and our view of the case. 12 think it's -- it's quite the opposite, that the 13 approach that Mississippi is advocating is 14 unprecedented. 15 This -- this might be a new issue, 16 Mr. Chief Justice, that this Court is 17 addressing, but the allocation of groundwater is 18 an issue that's resolved intrastate every day of 19 the week. We -- we have state courts that look 20 at, well, how do we allocate groundwater between 21 one owner or the other? And the way they do it 2.2 isn't the way Mississippi wants you to do it. 23 No one -- no one pulls up water from a well and then says, well, some of this -- some 24 25 of these molecules came under the landowner's

- 1 property; I have to -- I have to put those back
- 2 in the water. No, all -- all these
- 3 jurisdictions apply some sort of equitable
- 4 principle where they share the water that's
- 5 underneath them.
- 6 So I think the upheaval would come not
- 7 from adopting our approach, which is continuous
- 8 with not only this Court's equitable
- 9 apportionment precedents but also how states
- deal with this issue, but rather in adopting my
- 11 friend from Mississippi's position.
- 12 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Mr. Liu?
- 13 MR. LIU: Yes.
- 14 JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: The final sentence
- of your brief says that the complaint should be
- 16 dismissed. Should that dismissal be with
- 17 prejudice or without prejudice?
- MR. LIU: Well, Justice Kavanaugh, we
- 19 did not file an amicus brief on Tennessee's
- 20 exceptions to that part of the Special Master's
- 21 report, and so we don't take any position on
- 22 that issue. We view that as principally a
- 23 dispute between these specific parties.
- I will say, though, that Mississippi
- 25 has gotten a number of chances already to seek

- 1 an equitable apportionment claim. They -- they
- 2 filed a complaint in 2009. They filed the
- 3 instant complaint in 2014. In neither complaint
- 4 have they made any real effort to plead an
- 5 equitable apportionment claim.
- And so we would simply ask this Court
- 7 that if it does allow leave to amend in this
- 8 instance that it at least allow those new
- 9 allegations to be subject and tested to a prompt
- 10 motion to dismiss or motion for judgment of the
- 11 plead -- on the pleadings just in case we don't
- 12 need any lengthy discovery or an evidentiary
- 13 hearing to -- to resolve what --
- JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: Well, they -- they
- presumably didn't raise that because they didn't
- think that was the right box, analytical box,
- for this kind of dispute. But, if we say that,
- in fact, equitable apportionment is the right
- 19 categorization, why should they be precluded
- 20 from then seeking an equitable apportionment
- 21 remedy as a matter of basic fairness?
- 22 MR. LIU: I -- I think whether this
- 23 Court gives them a chance to seek that
- 24 opportunity, basically, it comes down to whether
- 25 this Court thinks enough is enough or whether

- 1 they've already had a chance to do so. We don't
- 2 have a position on whether Mississippi is given
- 3 that opportunity.
- 4 Our only point is that if they are
- 5 given that opportunity, that we -- we -- that
- 6 this Court allow those allegations to be tested
- 7 promptly because, at least so far, the
- 8 allegations we've seen with respect to injury,
- 9 which is a threshold requirement of equitable
- 10 apportionment, haven't -- haven't been
- 11 sufficient.
- 12 Justice Gorsuch mentioned a concern
- about opening the doors of this Court's original
- 14 jurisdiction. I think one of the -- one of the
- underpinnings of this Court's original
- 16 jurisdiction docket has been this threshold
- 17 requirement of injury. This Court has -- has
- 18 consistently required that the complaining state
- 19 show an injury of serious magnitude that would
- 20 justify invoking this Court's extraordinary
- 21 authority to compel one sovereign to -- to stop
- 22 what it's doing.
- 23 And I -- I -- I think here, again, our
- 24 proposal would leave that injury requirement in
- 25 place. And so that injury requirement would

- 1 filter out many of the cases that simply don't
- 2 have merit.
- I think another problem with
- 4 Mississippi's approach is that they have no
- 5 injury requirement. Mississippi has not really
- 6 tried to show injury here. They've simply tried
- 7 to show that certain molecules took a certain
- 8 path through the water from Mississippi to
- 9 Tennessee. And every state that sits on top of
- 10 an interstate aquifer and that drills wells is
- going to inevitably create a cone of depression
- and you're going to have these claims available
- 13 to this --
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: But -- but why
- 15 doesn't that suffice to state a harm in -- in at
- least an Article III type sense, that the less
- water available to Mississippi necessarily
- impairs its natural resources and, therefore,
- 19 its ability to attract businesses and
- 20 residential units in the future, and maybe it
- 21 doesn't need it today, but it's -- it's in the
- 22 bank for -- for the state's future and future
- 23 generations?
- MR. LIU: Well, we -- we're certainly
- 25 not challenging Mississippi's Article III

- 1 standing in this case.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: Yeah, but you're
- 3 saying an -- an injury. So why isn't that an
- 4 injury? Or just an injury in the sense of -- of
- 5 the aesthetic pleasure of knowing and certainty
- 6 that your natural resources are preserved for
- 7 future generations?
- 8 MR. LIU: And -- and I think,
- 9 Justice Gorsuch, when this Court is properly
- 10 presented with an equitable apportionment claim,
- 11 the Court would have the opportunity to discuss
- 12 what sorts of injuries in this context suffice.
- JUSTICE GORSUCH: You're selling us on
- 14 injury as being a filtering device, no pun
- intended, right?
- MR. LIU: No pun intended.
- 17 JUSTICE GORSUCH: No pun intended.
- 18 But -- but -- but now you're saying that that
- 19 will have to be sorted out in the future. Is
- that what I'm hearing?
- MR. LIU: Well, I think, at -- at a
- 22 minimum, the injury can't be a injury to their
- 23 right of ownership or sovereign control over the
- 24 --
- 25 JUSTICE GORSUCH: But if --

Τ	MR. LIU: resources.
2	JUSTICE GORSUCH: Again, I can just
3	I can transplant that. Instead of ownership, if
4	you don't like ownership, how about parens
5	patriae and the protection of natural resources
6	for future generations? Do you like that?
7	MR. LIU: Well, I think they could get
8	in the door, but then the question is whether
9	JUSTICE GORSUCH: That gets them in
10	the door, but ownership doesn't?
11	MR. LIU: Ownership doesn't because
12	that that's that's that's simply a
13	legal right that doesn't exist. And I think
14	even today Mississippi conceded that they're not
15	claiming absolute ownership over this resource.
16	Their their point in invoking
17	sovereign authority in ownership is to sort of
18	justify a legal theory that that that
19	would in turn justify the 615 million dollars in
20	damages they're seeking.
21	And my only point is it didn't take
22	much for them to be able to allege that claim,
23	and it's not going to take much for other states
24	either because these cones of depression are the
25	inevitable consequence of any well use over an

- 1 interstate aquifer.
- 2 And there's nothing stopping
- 3 Tennessee, if Mississippi's theory is upheld,
- 4 from bringing the very next suit. So --
- 5 JUSTICE GORSUCH: So it sounds to me
- 6 like the government thinks that it should be
- 7 equitable apportionment because that's a better
- 8 doctrinal fit but that Mississippi very likely
- 9 has a claim it can state?
- 10 MR. LIU: I -- I -- I doubt that
- 11 Mississippi has a claim it -- it can state. If
- 12 you look at our limitation brief that we filed
- when -- when -- when Mississippi
- originally filed the complaint, we looked at the
- 15 allegations and said in that brief that the
- 16 allegations were not sufficient enough to -- to
- 17 plead a sufficiently serious injury.
- Now it may well be that Mississippi
- 19 has injuries now they would like to plead.
- 20 Granted, they weren't trying to plead an
- 21 equitable apportionment claim in 2014. But the
- 22 allegations we've seen have not sufficed.
- 23 CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
- 24 counsel.
- 25 Justice Thomas?

Τ	JUSTICE THOMAS: No questions, Chief.
2	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Justice
3	Breyer?
4	Justice Alito?
5	Justice Kavanaugh, any further
6	questions?
7	JUSTICE KAVANAUGH: No further
8	questions.
9	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: And Justice
10	Barrett? No?
11	Thank you, counsel.
12	Mr. Frederick, you have rebuttal? I'm
13	sorry, Mr. Coghlan, do you have rebuttal? Thank
14	you.
15	REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF JOHN V. COGHLAN
16	ON BEHALF OF THE PLAINTIFF
17	MR. COGHLAN: Thank you, Mr. Chief
18	Justice. Just just briefly a few points.
19	On the suggestion that Mississippi
20	does not have the ability to to show a real
21	and substantial injury, we we certainly
22	dispute that.
23	And the core injury which we pled from
24	the beginning, I think, is an injury to
25	Mississippi's sovereighty That's the the

- 1 core injury, the fact that Tennessee is acting
- 2 extraterritorially and usurping Mississippi's
- 3 exclusive sovereign control over the groundwater
- 4 within its borders. We think that in of itself
- 5 is a sufficient injury, as recognized in -- in
- 6 Tarrant.
- 7 But we have others. It's certainly
- 8 the case that Mississippi's -- the cost of
- 9 Mississippi to access the groundwater has
- 10 increased. Dr. Spruill, Mississippi's expert,
- 11 talks about this in the hearing transcript at
- 12 pages 212 to 214, that there's greater cost
- 13 because the water levels have dropped as a
- 14 result of this pumping. So, while they may in
- theory be able to get the same amount of water,
- 16 as Mr. Frederick said, that comes at a greater
- 17 cost.
- More importantly, there's a suggestion
- 19 that there's no indication that there's any harm
- 20 to the water. The record evidence suggests
- 21 otherwise too. Defendants acknowledge at
- 22 page -- or, excuse me, Defense Finding of Fact
- 23 156 that their pumping is draining an overlying
- 24 surficial aquifer, and both the U.S. Geological
- 25 Survey and Mississippi's expert, Dr. Spruill,

- 1 have testified that that's pulling contaminants
- down into the aquifer at issue here, which is
- 3 where both states get their drinking water from.
- 4 So we think that's a real and
- 5 substantial injury. And these issues have not
- 6 fully been explored. Because of the way the
- 7 Special Master set up the proceedings,
- 8 Mississippi did not have a chance to fully build
- 9 a record on the -- on these points, but we do
- 10 think that there's sufficient evidence there.
- Justice Kagan, you asked whether the
- 12 case would be different if some of these wells
- 13 physically intruded by an inch in -- across the
- 14 border. And I think your question demonstrates
- why that shouldn't matter, because even if it is
- an inch, but all the damage and the injuries
- 17 that -- is the same, it really kind of elevates
- 18 form over -- over -- over substance.
- 19 And I turn back to Tarrant. Tarrant
- 20 did not talk about there being a physical
- 21 violation or invasion of space. Tarrant talked
- 22 about a proposed diversion of water and
- 23 exercising control over the water in that case.
- 24 And I think that's where the injury
- was considered there, and that's where the

- 1 injury is here, that Tennessee is exercising
- 2 control over groundwater while it was within
- 3 Mississippi.
- 4 And just -- just finally, if the
- 5 Court, you know, wants to consider applying
- 6 equitable apportionment to groundwater, which we
- 7 don't think it needs to answer that question to
- 8 rule in Mississippi's favor, I would contend it
- 9 doesn't solve the problem because of the nature
- 10 of groundwater.
- 11 Extracting groundwater has a very
- 12 limited area of effect, so you can't just
- apportion it and say each state gets a certain
- 14 amount of water. Tennessee gets 5 billion
- 15 gallons and Mississippi gets 5 billion gallons.
- 16 Where that water is coming from and
- 17 specifically with relation to the border matters
- 18 because Tennessee, as we've said, could get all
- 19 the groundwater it wants, could pump as much as
- 20 it wants, and have no impact whatsoever on the
- 21 Mississippi because of the nature of
- 22 groundwater.
- 23 So I think simply apportioning it
- 24 without taking into consideration the border
- will not solve the problem. And that's why we

_	Concend that 5 what the this is a different
2	injury and and and requires a different
3	remedy.
4	And so, ultimately, we think Tarrant
5	addresses the case that we have here. We don't
6	think the Court needs to pave a new new law
7	to to rule in Mississippi's favor. We
8	believe they just need to extend the principles
9	recognized in Tarrant to the case here.
10	Thank you.
11	CHIEF JUSTICE ROBERTS: Thank you,
12	counsel. The case is submitted.
13	(Whereupon, at 11:13 a.m., the case
14	was submitted.)
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