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October 7, 2021

California Energy Commission

Docket: Unit, MS-4

Re: Docket No. 20-LITHIUM-1

715 P Street

Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

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Subject: My comment following the Lithium Valley Commission Meeting on September 30, 2021, - (Nikola Lakic).

Greetings,

Chair David Hochschild, Commissioner Karen Douglas, Silvia Paz, chair and Lithium Valley Commissioners:

As you might know from my previous comments, I am strongly opposing the destruction of the Salton Sea and consequently polluting our environment for any reason, especially if it is for implementing the “Perimeter/Brine Lake” concept that provides an exposed lakebed for harnessing geothermal energy and extraction of lithium when there is a solution for harnessing geothermal energy and extraction of lithium without destroying the Lake.

I am writing this letter to comment, for the record, about a few important points that have been mentioned during previous the Lithium Valley Commission Meeting on September 30, 2021.

1. During the “Public Comment” period Mr. Tom Sephton commented - (Paraphrasing) – that the media and the public are misinformed about the extraction of Lithium at the proposed project at Hell’s Kitchen. He clarified that the process is not surface mining but the extraction of lithium from geothermal brine. He praised those who promoted projects for the extraction of lithium at the proposed project at Hell’s Kitchen.
2. A few Commissioners praised Tom Sephton on his comment.



3. I wanted to comment at that time, but the meeting moved to the next point of the agenda. At the second segment for the “Public Comments” close to the end of the meeting, I raised my hand to comment and commented. Thank you for the opportunity.

(Paraphrasing) I would like to comment in response to an earlier comment made by Mr. Tom Sephton stating that the media and public are misinformed or that there is a lack of information. There are here members representing “Environmental Justice” and health of people, water, air, etc. - I would like to have their attention.

The current course of action on the extraction of lithium is based on the implementation of the “Perimeter/Brine Lake” concept. The public needs to know that if you want to be fair and objective. I respectfully urge you to wait - for the report from the panel of independent reviewers for evaluating the importation of seawater concept - before making critical decisions.

I also mentioned mismanagement of the situation of the Salton Sea because it should not be two independent programs such as Salton Sea Management Program “SSMP” dealing with the Lake and environment (dust suppression projects); and the Extraction of Lithium program.

NOTE: There is a master plan dealing with both issues successfully. I did not say at that time because of limited time, but I will say it now. The “Perimeter/Brine Lake” concept leads to smaller, saltier, smellier, and more polluted Lake. Also, I will say at this time that the mentioned mismanagement of the situation of the Salton Sea is because my proposal was suppressed by a relatively small group of people from the public and higher officials when the current plan - the SSMP - was made and approved. I am hoping that that mistake will not be repeated with this Commission.

4. Mr. Tom Sephton commented again in disagreement with my comment mentioning that the Lake is shallow in that area and that diking can be implemented.
5. Since my name was mentioned, I asked to respond. I was allowed – thank you.

(Paraphrasing) The fact is that the current objective of companies involved in the extraction of lithium is based on the implementation of the “Perimeter/Brine Lake” concept.



Also, the fact is that the public is not properly informed about serious consequences if the “Perimeter/Brine Lake” concept is implemented.

Regarding Tom Shepton’s comment that diking can be implemented - I am taking such comment as an endorsement of my proposal because it is a fundamental element of my proposal which I am pushing (proposing) since 2013.

6. It came to my attention the recently published letter, sent to President Biden, on behalf of the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), by Mr. James Hanks, Board President and here Commissioner. The copy of the letter was/is also submitted to the “Lithium Valley Committee. Here is the link to that letter. <https://holtvilletribune.com/2021/09/08/iid-sends-letter-to-biden-on-hells-kitchen/>

In that letter, Mr. James Hanks, on behalf of the IID, headquartered in Imperial, California – is asking President Biden to assist them in fast-tracking the federal permitting process of the geothermal lithium project in Hell’s Kitchen.

NOTE: Such comments and actions by local stakeholders without seeing all proposals regarding restoration of the Salton Sea are highly inappropriate especially at this early stage before the Independent Reviewers Panel even started working on the evaluation of the proposals.

7. I wrote a letter to President Biden in response to the letter above asking him NOT to assist the IID in fast-tracking the federal permitting process of the geothermal lithium project in Hell’s Kitchen. I am including a copy of my letter in the attachment.

I understand the importance of Lithium and the business component of it, and the urgency of some commissioners and contractors to reach their goal. But, I respectfully urge those commissioners to learn about my proposal before making critical decisions because it is of mutual interest and it is in interest to the environment, the health of the population, local economy, and economy of the State at large. I would like to mention again, that my proposal does not interfere with the current project for the extraction of lithium other than the requirements of having dikes around their desired parcels (areas).

My proposal is a comprehensive design that incorporates several breakthrough technologies in the energy industry including a new system for harnessing geothermal energy and extraction of lithium from the salty water of the Salton Sea. The extraction of lithium of about 20-30 tones per year is not an impressive



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number but it is a free byproduct extracted during the generation of electricity and also byproduct is potable water. Also, my design provides multi “Mineral Extraction Facilities” (four in each power plant) that can be used by many producers of lithium and other minerals and for the production of hydrogen.

Therefore, it is important to invite me to make a presentation of my proposal for the restoration of the Salton Sea so that the remaining Commissioners - not just Commissioners Mr. Ryan Kelley and James Hanks – could learn about my proposal and could participate and ask questions if need.

If invited, I would be glad to make a presentation of any segment according to the allowed time. I would suggest that you and commissioners need to see all five segments because they are an integral part of the whole proposal and are interconnected (cooperating). I would like to emphasize for those commissioners that are involved in projects for the extraction of lithium – to have in mind that water, which you do not have, is needed for the extraction of lithium and my system provides it.

3-minutes comment is not an appropriate format for making a presentation of a comprehensive design - consisting of five segments – that could be considered as a project of the century. My proposal is under review by the panel of independent reviewers and the result will be announced in the mid of the next year (2022), but I think that commissioners need to know about my proposal and the benefits it provides before commissioners make a report to the Chair David Hochschild, and Commissioner Karen Douglas.

I am including in attachment a copy of my letter to President Biden.

I respectfully urge Chair David Hochschild, Commissioner Karen Douglas, as I did in a previous letter to Mr. Wade Crowfoot Secretary CNRA, Mr. Jared Blumenfeld, Secretary CalEPA, to forward this message to Governor Gavin Newsom to consider issuing a mandatory order requiring that owners of the land (parcels) that are below the original lake’s water level of the 1950s and 1960s (which was about -220) and which are intended for leasing for the extraction of Lithium be surrounded with appropriate dikes. That would provide a condition for refilling the Lake to the original level with seawater to prevent destruction (shrinkage) of the Lake. With appropriate design (already in existence), it would reestablish beaches, provide wildlife sanctuaries, and at the same time would provide dry land for harnessing geothermal energy and lithium on the desired area without destroying the Lake.

Sincerely,

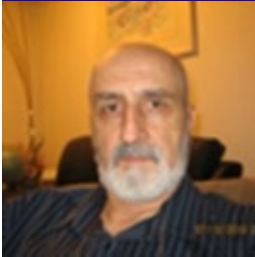


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October 1, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/>

A copy sent by Certified Mail: 7020 2450 0001 4019 1147

Re: Request for NOT to assist the IID in fast-tracking the federal permitting process for the geothermal lithium project in Hell's Kitchen, Salton Sea, Ca.

Dear President Biden:

It came to my attention the published letter sent to you, on behalf of the Imperial Irrigation District (IID), by Mr. James Hanks, Board President. Here is the link to that letter.

<https://holtvilletribune.com/2021/09/08/iid-sends-letter-to-biden-on-hells-kitchen/>

In that letter, Mr. James Hanks, on behalf of the IID, headquartered in Imperial, California – is asking you to assist them in fast-tracking the federal permitting process of the geothermal lithium project in Hell's Kitchen.

The Hell's Kitchen is an area on the southern edge of the Salton Sea in California. In that area, there is a known geothermal reservoir where many companies plan to build lithium-extraction facilities to mine (extract) the metal from the geothermal brine.

The Salton Sea in California is a terminal lake with reduced inflow from the Colorado River as a result of the water transfers related to the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA). The Lake is shrinking and exposing the receding shoreline (toxic playa) to the elements and facing incoming environmental disasters.

The IID owns most of the land in the southern part of the Lake and it is in their interest to get rid of the Lake so that they can lease their exposed lakebed to different companies for harnessing geothermal energy and extraction of lithium.



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The “current course of action” is a “smaller Sustainable Lake” or so-called “Perimeter/Brine Lake” initiated and supported by the IID, and the Salton Sea Authority (SSA) which is strongly influenced by the IID, and the Tetra-Tech, and the CNRA, and a few stakeholders with limited technical knowledge.

The “Perimeter/Brine Lake” concept is based on the false assumption that importing seawater is not a feasible solution. Also, it was based on gaining some land for geothermal and agricultural purposes. The concept of the “Perimeter/Brine Lake” inevitably leads to the smaller, saltier, smellier, and more polluted Lake. Sooner or later, it will end up as a smaller sustainable cesspool with tremendous consequences to the environment, the health of the nearby population, and the economy of the State. Everyone with common sense knows that.

At this time there are several proposals for the restoration of the Salton Sea that includes importing seawater. Those concepts are under review by a panel of independent reviewers chaired by Dr. Rominder Suri, professor, and chair of Temple University’s Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, selected by the UC Santa Cruz to evaluate water importation concepts. Importing seawater is a fundamental part of the restoration of the Salton Sea. The report from Dr. Rominder Suri, about the feasibility of the concept for importing seawater, is expected in the mid of next year (2022).

Sir, such request - to assist in fast-tracking the federal permitting process of the geothermal lithium project in Hell’s Kitchen at this time - before the report from Dr. Rominder Suri is finished and issued - is highly inappropriate conduct.

Sir, I respectfully urge you NOT to assist the IID in fast-tracking the federal permitting process for the geothermal lithium project in Hell’s Kitchen.

Instead, I respectfully urge you to consider issuing a mandatory order requiring that owners of the land (parcels) that are below the original lake’s water level of the 1950s and 1960s (which was about -220) and which are intended for leasing for the extraction of Lithium be surrounded with appropriate dikes. That would provide a condition for refilling the Lake to the original level with seawater to prevent destruction (shrinkage) of the Lake. With appropriate design, it would reestablish beaches, provide wildlife sanctuaries, and at the same time would provide dry land for harnessing geothermal energy and lithium on the desired area without destroying the Lake.

I would be glad to answer any questions that you might have.



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Sincerely,

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