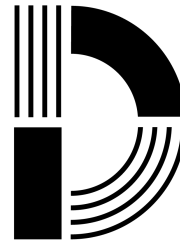


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Document Title:	The Alianza Environmental Justice Campaign - Letter to the Lithium Valley Commission
Description:	Letter to Chair Paz and the Lithium Valley Commission submitted by the Alianza Environmental Justice Campaign. Signed December 7, 2021 by Alianza Coachella Valley, Youth Leadership Institute, Pacific Institute, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, Sierra Club, Loma Linda University School of Public Health, and Kounkuey Design Initiative (KDI).
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**SIERRA
CLUB**



December 7, 2021

Lithium Valley Commission
California Energy Commission
715 P Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Lithium Valley Commission Community Forum on November 17, 2021

Dear Chair Paz and Lithium Valley Commissioners,

As partners working on environmental justice topics around the Salton Sea, we would like to express our gratitude for holding such a valuable event as a community forum. The inclusiveness of languages other than English and your collaborative efforts to provide in-person access to the forum showcased your efforts to make this event accessible to many who otherwise may not have been able to attend. However, there are several observations and points of feedback we

would like to offer to the Lithium Valley Commission (LVC) in support of ensuring these meetings are as effective and inclusive as possible for local communities:

- It is valuable for community members to better know members of the LVC and their roles within the commission. However, commissioners often took more space and subtracted from time that could otherwise be dedicated toward allowing community members to speak. There need to be accessible community-centered conversations moving forward.
- Second, based on community feedback during the community forum, there is miscommunication around the role and authority of the LVC to the community. As it stands, public perception is that LVC will develop a report that will suggest whether or not lithium extraction happens. The LVC needs to create better communication with the community to address uncertainty as to what the LVC's purpose is, what authority they have over the decision to bring lithium extraction to the Salton Sea and if not the LVC, then who would be the final decision maker. It is essential for community members to know who they need to address about the decision to bring lithium extraction to the Sea.
- We understand the LVC shared that they have research underway that will bring more understanding as to the safety of lithium brine extraction at the Sea. When will the results from this research be available to the public? Is this research underway already and if so, where is the research site? Would it be possible to do a tour of the demonstration project? Will community members be updated with the timeline needed to follow lithium extraction development and assess if this is what they would like to have happen in their communities? We are somewhat confused by the organizational landscape of the future technology. Please prioritize mapping out the specific agencies and corporations that are directly involved in the demonstration project. There needs to be transparency with community members about research, leadership and the economic opportunities that lithium extraction could bring.
- While we understand that lithium extraction and the revenue it can bring can create great benefit and economic prosperity to the Coachella and Imperial Valley, please be mindful of the language and tone used when speaking about lithium extraction at the Salton Sea. Commissioners spoke about lithium extraction in positive light and suggested lithium extraction will happen despite the fact that adjacent Salton Sea communities have not given the same approval nor do we know if it will actually be sustainable without environmental impacts to water and air quality from the increased infrastructure and goods movement. As a whole, the LVC should ensure that communities have a voice in the decision making process in terms of lithium extraction around the Salton Sea.

We thank you for your continued outreach and efforts in community engagement. We will continue to track lithium extraction and the work of the LVC, and we are more than willing to provide feedback on this vital topic.

Sincerely,

The Alianza Environmental Justice Campaign

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