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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

In the matter of:)
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Forum Presentation)
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Docket No.: 20-LITHIUM-01

LITHIUM VALLEY COMMISSION

REMOTE VIA ZOOM

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022
1:30 P.M.

Reported by:

Elise Hicks

APPEARANCES

COMMISSIONERS

Silva Paz, Chair

Ryan E. Kelly, Vice Chair

Steve Castaneda

Rod Colwell

Roderic Dolega

Miranda Flores

James C. Hanks (Absent)

Arthur Lopez (Ritchie)

Luis Olmedo

Frank Ruiz

Manfred Scott (Absent)

Thomas Soto (Absent)

Jonathan Weisgall

CEC STAFF

Elisabeth de Jong

Lindsay Buckley

Natalie Lee

CEC PUBLIC ADVISOR

Rosemary Avalos

APPEARANCES

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jose Flores
Mariela Loera
Nikola Lakic
Eric Reyes
Tom Sephton

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Carol Zabin, Director Green Economy Programs
Center for Labor Research and Education,
University of California Berkeley

Jim Turner, Chief Operating Officer of Controlled Thermal
Resources (CTR)

Burt Short, BHE Renewables, CalEnergy Operating Corporation

Marc Cowan, California Workforce Development Board, High
Road Construction Careers Program

Robert Meyer, Director of Economic Development at the
Employment Training Panel

Priscilla Lopez, Director of the Imperial County Workforce
And Economic Development Office

Efrain Silva, Dean of Economic and Workforce Development
At Imperial Valley College

Danny Machain, Assistant Business Manager, International
Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 569

Shrayas Jatkar, CA Workforce Development Board

Professor Chris Benner, PhD from University of California
Santa Cruz

Hector Meza, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers #569

Sahara Huazano, Alianza Coachella Valley

Marco Lizarraga, La Cooperativa Campesina

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1:30 P.M.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022

CHAIR PAZ: Good morning, everyone.

Welcome to the Lithium Valley Commission Meeting. We do have an extremely full agenda today. We're going to be hearing the topic of Workforce Development and with a full workshop that will address topics that have been of interest not only to the Commissioners, but also the community.

We do anticipate there's going to be robust discussion on that topic and we want to do our best to ensure that there is ample opportunity for comments and discussion. For this reason, we will be implementing the use of time limits today. This will apply, the presenters I know who are given an allotted time; we're going to ask you to please stick to those. But as well, implementing time limits on Commissioner and Public Comments. Each member of the public will have up to 2 minutes to make a comment on all items except for the workforce development workshop; for the workshop, all public commenters will have up to three minutes. Also, we will request that commissioners try to keep their comments brief and I will let you know when

1 you are at the two minute mark so that you can wrap up
2 your comment. Thank you in advance for your cooperation
3 and I hope we can get all the information we need in a
4 timely manner today.

5 This is just a reminder that we are providing
6 interpretation services in Spanish for attendees
7 participating in this Zoom meeting. The via
8 computers or tablets, unfortunately Zoom
9 interpretations does not work for Attendees who
10 are only joining by phone.

11 I will now introduce the representative
12 from the CEC so that they can give instructions
13 to the Spanish speaking audience on how to use
14 the service.

15 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Thank you, Chair Paz.

16 (Speaks Spanish)

17 Chair Paz, back to you.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. To make sure that
19 all members of the public have access to the
20 meeting under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act,
21 we do ask that all Lithium Valley Commissioners
22 remain on the English Channel for the entirety of
23 the meeting and preferably with the cameras on.

24 I'll also note that the slides include
25 Spanish interpretation and that language is

1 highlighted in light gray.

2 Elisabeth, back to you for some
3 instruction.

4 MS. DE JONG: Thank you, Chair Paz. This
5 meeting is being conducted entirely remotely via
6 Zoom consistent with Governor Newsom's Executive
7 Order N-21-22 to improve and enhance public
8 access to state agency meetings during the Covid-
9 19 pandemic.

10 This meeting is being recorded, as well
11 as transcribed by a Court Reporter. The
12 transcript will be posted to the docket. The
13 recording of the meeting will be available on the
14 Lithium Valley Commission webpage. The Spanish
15 interpretation will not be recorded or
16 transcribed.

17 Members of the public will be muted
18 during the presentations, but there will be
19 opportunities for public comment at times
20 throughout the agenda. There is a Q&A window in
21 the Zoom application, which you may use to type
22 questions and comments, and staff will relay
23 these comments.

24 The chat function should be used only for
25 IT support or other technical issues. Please do

1 not use the chat functions to provide comment or
2 questions on the contents of the meeting. Please
3 remember to stay muted until you've been called
4 on to speak. Meeting materials, including the
5 notice and presentation slide decks are posted
6 online and in the Lithium Valley Commission
7 Docket. We will be posting an updated slide dock
8 online and to the docket with the guest
9 presentations translated into Spanish.

10 With that, back to you, Chair Paz.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We are going to
12 do Roll Call.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Castaneda.

14 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Here.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Colwell.

16 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yeah.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Dolega.

18 COMMISSIONER DOLEGA: Here.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Flores.

20 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Present.

21 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Hanks.

22 COMMISSIONER HANKS: (No audible reply)

23 CHAIR PAZ: Vice Chair Ryan Kelley.

24 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Here.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Lopez.

1 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: (No audible reply)

2 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo.

3 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Here.

4 CHAIR PAZ: I'm here.

5 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Ruiz.

6 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: (No audible reply)

7 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Scott.

8 COMMISSIONER SCOTT: (No audible reply)

9 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Soto.

10 COMMISSIONER SOTO: (No audible reply)

11 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Weisgall.

12 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Here.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We do have a
14 quorum. Thank you.

15 The agenda is on your screen. I do want
16 to remind us all that we chose to continue two
17 items for consideration in today's meeting, so we
18 will be starting with those. And because one of
19 the items, the item to continue the discussion on
20 possible selection on the Lithium Valley
21 Commission, proposed recommendations related to
22 Governor Newsom's budget with duplicative on an
23 item in the agenda. We are going to consider all
24 of this at the top of the meeting so that we're
25 not having the same conversation later on in the

1 agenda. And we can take action today as
2 appropriate and continue to keep this topic as an
3 agenda item throughout this year's budget and
4 legislative process. Thank you. Next, please.

5 As I noted before, we have two items that
6 were continued from the January 16th meeting.
7 Today we will complete our discussion, offer an
8 opportunity for public comment and finalize our
9 actions and vote on the items as shown on this
10 slide. As a reminder, public comment will be
11 limited to two minutes on these items. And I
12 will also be guiding Commissioner comments to
13 keep us on time. Next slide, please.

14 First, we need to complete our discussion
15 and take action on the Proposed Recommendations
16 Related to Governor Newsom's Proposed Budget. We
17 finalized the last meeting with a motion and a
18 second for that motion, Commissioner Castaneda
19 initially offered the motion, however, I
20 subsequently summarized that motion prior to the
21 vote and we were not able to complete the vote on
22 that motion.

23 So we're going to start with this item.
24 We have a pending motion that would do two
25 things, 1) it would request the Energy Commission

1 to support the Lithium Valley Commission in
2 meeting with legislators and further exploring
3 the options where we, the Lithium Valley
4 Commission, agree on doing our discussion, and we
5 had that discussion February 16th.

6 And the second part was for two members
7 to have delegated authority to work with the CEC,
8 meet with the legislators and represent the LVC,
9 again, only on those items where we found
10 agreement, with the two members being Vice Chair
11 Ryan Kelley and myself.

12 So I'm going to again re-read and maybe
13 clarify that motion and then I will ask
14 Commissioner Castaneda if you still wants to
15 support that motion.

16 In summary, the motion is for the Lithium
17 Valley Commission to authorize two members, Chair
18 Paz and Vice Chair Kelley, to meet with
19 legislators and represent the Lithium Valley
20 Commission to discuss recommendations for those
21 items upon which the Lithium Valley Commission
22 has agreed. And additionally, to request that
23 the CEC provide technical assistance to Chair
24 Paz, myself, and Vice Chair Kelley, and support
25 in scheduling conversations and meetings with

1 legislators and their representatives to explore
2 the recommendations agreed to by the Lithium
3 Valley Commission.

4 Are there any questions on this motion?

5 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Chair Paz?

6 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: I will go ahead
8 and remake and reiterate that motion.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner
10 Castaneda. I believe it was Rod who had seconded
11 that motion. So, Rod?

12 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: I'll confirm that
13 motion, Chair Paz. Thank you.

14 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Maybe there's a
15 discussion, so is there any discussion from the
16 Commissioners? We'll do that before I open it to
17 public comment. Commissioner Weisgall. You're
18 on mute.

19 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Here we go.
20 Yeah, this is fine. I think we also agreed that
21 individual Commissioners were perfectly free to
22 enter into discussions with Legislators on their
23 own. I just want to clarify that that's the
24 understanding of the motion.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Correct. You all have the

1 ability to meet independently, representing
2 yourself, your organization, that is correct.

3 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Thank you.

4 CHAIR PAZ: Uh huh. Okay, so we will
5 open to public comment. Elisabeth?

6 MS. DE JONG: Yes, thank you. So if
7 you're joining us by Zoom on your computer,
8 please use the "raise hand" feature. And if
9 you've called in, please dial *9 to raise your
10 hand, and then *6 to unmute your phone line.
11 We'll go first to any hands raised in the Zoom
12 application and on the phone, and if there are
13 any comments written in the Q&A.

14 Chair Paz, I don't see any hands raised
15 or written comments at this time, so back to you.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So can we do a
17 roll call on this vote? Elisabeth, can you
18 support me with the roll call and the vote?

19 MS. DE JONG: Yes, I can. To the Lithium
20 Valley Commissioners, when I say your name,
21 please let us know your vote, yes or no.

22 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Castaneda.

23 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yes.

24 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Colwell.

25 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes.

1 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Dulega.
2 COMMISSIONER DULEGA: Yes.
3 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Flores.
4 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Yes.
5 MS. DE JONG: I believe that Commissioner
6 Hanks is not present. Vice Chair Kelley.
7 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Yes.
8 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Lopez. Not
9 present. Commissioner Olmedo.
10 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes.
11 MS. DE JONG: Chair Paz.
12 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.
13 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Ruiz. He's
14 not present. Commissioner Scott. Not present.
15 Commissioner Soto. He's not present. And
16 Commissioner Weisgall.
17 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes.
18 MS. DE JONG: I count eight yeses. Chair
19 Paz, back to you.
20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Next item. This
21 is the second item that was continued from the
22 February 16th meeting. During the meeting I
23 provided a brief summary of this item and
24 Commissioner Olmedo provided some comments in
25 support of this Commission taking action as

1 proposed.

2 However, again, there was no action taken
3 and no motion was made. So today I want to
4 introduce this item and continue the discussion
5 before possibly taking an action.

6 This item is for the Commission to
7 consider submitting a Comment Letter addressing
8 the need for further consideration of the regions
9 identified in the Community Economic Resilience
10 Fund (CERF). To summarize where the process is.
11 There have been two rounds of public comment from
12 EDD, GO-Biz and OPR, I believe are the agencies
13 responsible for CERF.

14 The first public comment was around the
15 creation of the regions. During that time, there
16 were local organizations, including Alianza, the
17 organization that I represent, Comitte Civico,
18 with Commissioner Olmedo and other local
19 organizations who provided comment such as being
20 that we needed a region that would bring the
21 Salton Sea together. So we needed a Salton Sea
22 region.

23 Unfortunately, that did not happen, but
24 the current map for CERF has a portion of the
25 Salton Sea with San Diego, and that's the

1 Imperial and San Diego Counties, that's the
2 southern border. And then the other portion of
3 the Salton Sea, the one that lies in the
4 Coachella Valley, is with Riverside and San
5 Bernardino Counties.

6 I believe that having them separated just
7 diminishes a lot of the opportunity that we can
8 have to leverage this funding, not just for the
9 conversations around Lithium and all the planning
10 that is going to need to happen outside of this
11 commission. But also, it fails to recognize that
12 Imperial and the Coachella Valley, particularly,
13 the Eastern Coachella Valley have more in common
14 with each other than they do with either San
15 Diego or Riverside. So that is the spirit of
16 this letter, and I will open it for comments or
17 questions right now.

18 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Chair Paz, this is
19 Rod here.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

21 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Is there a funding
22 proposed here, or royalties? Is that what this
23 is about? I'm trying to --

24 CHAIR PAZ: Oh, sorry. I should have
25 started there, maybe a little bit of background.

1 CERF is the Community Economic Recovery Fund that
2 was allocated in last year's budget, I believe
3 it's around \$600 million that is going to be
4 distributed to regions across the state, so those
5 regions have been defined already as 13 regions
6 with the Salton Sea split between two regions in
7 competition with one Metropolitan area.

8 But the purpose of the fund is for these
9 regions to be able to do economic recovery
10 planning that, you know, will bring together
11 environmental considerations, recovery from the
12 Pandemic, and sort of integrate a more holistic
13 approach when we're talking about economic
14 planning. Did that answer your question,
15 Commissioner Colwell?

16 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes it did, thank
17 you so much.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Commissioner Olmedo.

19 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, Madam
20 Chair. In support of the idea of putting a
21 letter forward, because the Eastern Coachella
22 Valley and I'm not sure if the letter just
23 defines to that area, it certainly has a lot in
24 common with Imperial and programs have
25 historically been built around the border. And

1 not understanding the vast amount of space
2 between Imperial and the economy that has been
3 built here, and the economy that has been built
4 in Coachella, Eastern Coachella has much more in
5 common. We also face considerable challenge with
6 what should be the common sense isn't always the
7 common sense for programs that are designed in
8 the map, and not necessarily designed to be
9 customized within our communities. We share the
10 air basin here, Imperial-Coachella; we share
11 perhaps one of the largest, if not the largest
12 climate crisis that is facing us as a result of
13 drought, as a result of the need or climate
14 change altogether, which is the Salton Sea. We
15 share an agricultural industry and many other
16 industries that exist in this region. It's the
17 common sense I can't stress enough, that year
18 after year or program after program, you know, we
19 get brought in together with San Diego and don't
20 get me wrong, that's what we aspire to over the
21 weekend right? If people are fortunate to have a
22 good vehicle to get over the grade there and get
23 into the beach, pitch a tent or fortunate enough
24 to have a house along the coast, then certainly
25 that's what you know-great dining experience. We

1 also have great dining experience across the
2 border here. We have a housing crisis in -

3 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo, if you
4 can wrap up and I hate to -

5 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Certainly.

6 CHAIR PAZ: -- do this, but I'm going to
7 have to be doing this throughout.

8 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: No, no, I respect
9 that. I apologize. So, yeah, in conclusion is I
10 think that we have an incredible opportunity here
11 where the state, I believe, is listening to us.
12 I believe that the Governor and it's leadership
13 team are listening. If ever possible, I think
14 it's right now. And I'm very optimistic that a
15 region that's made up of Imperial and Coachella
16 is possible. Thank you.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And I did hear
18 you ask in your comments about whether the Salton
19 Sea Region has been designated. In the letter, I
20 want to point out that there is some language,
21 sort of put in some boundaries if possible, that
22 it would cover Imperial County, much of Riverside
23 County, so starting from Palm Springs Area, all
24 of the Coachella Valley, and going perhaps all
25 the way to Blythe, given that we do share the

1 agricultural economy and Blythe is off the very
2 distant -- so just bringing some equity into this
3 piece, as well. Commissioner/Vice Chair Ryan
4 Kelley.

5 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Thank you, Chair Paz.
6 I have had the opportunity to discuss this with
7 Chair Paz and Mr. Olmedo, I support the action
8 and I call for the question.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Was that a
10 motion? Do we have additional questions?
11 Commissioner Flores?

12 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Yeah, I just wanted
13 to, you know, kind of splay off I'll be
14 abstaining from this particular vote because of
15 being part of the administration, you know, I
16 don't have a full understanding of why this
17 particular region is -- I'm not saying that I
18 disagree with the letter, so I'm making that
19 really clear, but just wanting more information
20 before I move forward with a decision.

21 CHAIR PAZ: We will open it to public
22 comment and then I will come back and request a
23 second to the motion. Elisabeth, public comment
24 please.

25 MS. DE JONG: Thank you, Chair Paz. If

1 you're joining us by Zoom on your computer,
2 please use the "raise hand" feature; if you've
3 called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand, and
4 then *6 to unmute your phone line.

5 First, we'll go through the hands raised
6 in the Zoom application, then phones, and then
7 any written in comments. The first hand raised
8 was Jose Flores. You should be able to unmute
9 yourself.

10 MR. FLORES: Good afternoon. Have you
11 worked in the fields in the '70s and '80s and
12 commute? From Imperial Valley in the summer is
13 to Coachella. I totally concur with the notion
14 that we are the same, similar communities. So
15 constantly going uphill, our two regions, being
16 represented by proxy, by the more affluent
17 influential communities is to our detriment, so I
18 totally agree with this letter and what it
19 states. Thank you.

20 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next hand
21 raise looks like the Leadership Council, you
22 should be able to unmute yourself.

23 MS. LOERA: Hi. This is Mariela Loera
24 with Leadership Council. I just wanted to
25 reiterate the comments I made. Last week on this

1 -- which is very similar to what you all are
2 discussing already, but the importance for this
3 group not only to continue to encourage at the
4 Salton Sea Region, you define not as two, but as
5 one. And also to mention that CERF is also a
6 good opportunity for this group to support the
7 Lithium extraction effort to develop economic
8 growth, while at the same time focus on repairing
9 and sustaining environmental harms and injustices
10 in the region. So it's just another tool for the
11 group to use. Thanks.

12 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. There is one
13 written comment. Jesus Arguelles says: Are the
14 proposed modified boundaries only for CERF?" And
15 that looks like all of the comments for this
16 period. Back to you, Chair Paz.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So that last
18 question, yes, this letter is only addressed to
19 CERF. To the extent that other agencies will
20 start looking at our region in a more integrated
21 way, that's always welcome. But this letter is
22 at this point directed for the CERF process.
23 Commissioner/Vice Chair Ryan Kelley.

24 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Chair Paz, if you --
25 I'm sorry I didn't keep track of it, but if you

1 need a motion, I made the motion.

2 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And I need a
3 second.

4 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: I'll second, Chair
5 Paz.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So we have a
7 motion by Vice Chair Kelley and a second by Rod
8 Colwell. Elisabeth, can you support me with the
9 roll call, please?

10 MS. DE JONG: Yes, I can. As I call your
11 name, Commissioners, if you could just please say
12 yes or no for your vote.

13 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Castaneda.

14 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yes.

15 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Colwell.

16 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes.

17 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Dulega.

18 COMMISSIONER DULEGA: I'll have to
19 abstain.

20 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Commissioner
21 Flores.

22 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Abstaining.

23 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Commissioner
24 Hanks; I believe that Commissioner Hanks is not
25 present. Vice Chair Kelley.

1 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Yes.

2 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Lopez, I
3 believe is not present. Commissioner Olmedo.

4 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes.

5 MS. DE JONG: Chair Paz.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

7 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Ruiz. Oh, I'm
8 sorry, he's not present. Commissioner Scott, I
9 believe is not present. Commissioner Soto is not
10 present. And Commissioner Weisgall.

11 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes.

12 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Let me do a
13 quick count. I heard six yeses and two
14 abstentions. Back to you, Chair Paz.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Next slide,
16 please.

17 So as we work to transition into the
18 Workforce Development Workshop, Elisabeth will
19 quickly be guiding us to some housekeeping, and
20 then I will frame the workshop, put it in context
21 before calling our presenters. So, Elisabeth.

22 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. So we will be
23 posting the presentation from today in English
24 and Spanish online and to the Docket. If any
25 guest participants have any presentation

1 materials they want to share on screen, please
2 also be sure to email the CEC a copy so we can
3 include those materials. Additionally, we
4 appreciate the depth and context of the
5 presentations and discussion today.

6 We ask that you please be mindful of the
7 time limits, ensuring that everyone has a chance
8 to present and have meaningful discussion after
9 the workshop. Back to you, Chair Paz and for
10 introduction of the guest speakers.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Let me set the
12 context a little bit. You have heard both from
13 the local community members as well as, from the
14 very beginning, conversations that this
15 Commission has, there is a high interest in
16 workforce development and the opportunities for
17 our communities to have access to high quality
18 jobs and other economic opportunities that could
19 be created in Lithium Valley.

20 So today's workshop is a deep dive into
21 the realm of workforce development so we can
22 better understand the employment opportunities in
23 the first place, as well as the needs and the
24 resources involved in developing the workforce.

25 We'll hear from people that have been

1 involved in workforce development in various
2 ways, including researching key industries and
3 occupations to understand the scope of employment
4 opportunities, developing new education programs
5 in the region with a focus on the permanent
6 operations jobs, providing funding for industry
7 to train incumbent, as well as mid-entry level
8 workers, and much more.

9 Several people who will be presenting
10 today will be framing the work and
11 recommendations using the concept of High Road,
12 which we received a presentation on a while back.
13 And it's a term that's showing up more and more
14 across economic and environmental policy.

15 I'll let our presenters go into detail
16 about what the High Road means exactly. But
17 suffice it to say that, at the highest level, the
18 High Road is the metaphor for the kind of economy
19 and society that we want to have for economic
20 growth, income equality, and shared prosperity,
21 and a healthy environment as seen and treated as
22 necessary compliments, rather than a tragic
23 tradeoff.

24 The High Road is also the Newsom
25 Administration's primary approach to workforce

1 development in which attention is paid equally to
2 workers and training, as well as jobs and
3 employers. The High Road approach focuses on
4 addressing not just jobs and training, but more
5 specifically to the quality and accessibility of
6 both. That's why the Governor's Budget Proposal
7 for Climate Change in Lithium Valley mentions
8 things like labor standards and community
9 benefits.

10 To put it simply, the High Road aligns
11 with our notions of an inclusive economic
12 development and our vision for a sustainable,
13 inclusive, and equitable Lithium Valley.

14 So with that, I will start introducing
15 the first presenters who were asked to address a
16 few questions, specifically what are the jobs
17 associated with Lithium development. So Carol
18 Zabin, who is the Director of Green Economy
19 Programs, Center for Labor Research and Education
20 at the University of California Berkeley, if you
21 can get us started.

22 MS. ZABIN: Thank you very much, Chair
23 Paz. And it's an honor to speak with you today.
24 Can you hear me, everybody? Okay.

25 We were asked by Chair Paz to share some

1 of the recommendations on building the High Road
2 that we developed in the State jobs and Climate
3 Action Plans and how they pertain to the specific
4 types of job opportunities that were presented
5 here in Lithium Valley. Next slide.

6 So our goal today is really to outline a
7 menu of strategies that ensure access to High
8 Road jobs in Lithium Valley for local workers.
9 So, the Commission has been clear about this goal
10 and what we hope to contribute is how to make
11 this promise of good careers for local folks a
12 reality. Next slide.

13 So just to be a little more detailed on
14 what a High Road job is, it's about job quality,
15 family supporting wages, safe workplaces, career
16 pathways, and worker protections including the
17 right to join a union. And job access, of
18 course, is about hiring local workers and
19 training them to support their placement and
20 advancement.

21 So a High Road Employer is one that has a
22 business model that's based on quality and on the
23 skills of their workers so that they can in fact
24 support High Road jobs. And High Road policy
25 really supports these High Road Employers,

1 favoring them with government assistance and
2 setting minimum standards for job quality and
3 access. So, we are creating a competitive
4 environment that favors the High Road Employers
5 and closes off low road practices. Next slide.

6 So we know we're at the beginning of a
7 huge opportunity in Lithium Valley to expand raw
8 material production in geothermal energy. We're
9 kind of at Stage 1 of what might be landing even
10 more of the supply chain. And it's important to
11 set the stage at Stage 1, kind of set the table,
12 really set the standards for business development
13 and community benefits now, so that we can
14 influence what's on the table now, but also
15 development in the future. Next.

16 And how we do that is we have to start
17 with the policies aimed at growing Lithium
18 Valley, including government funding, support for
19 public infrastructure, procurement policies,
20 streamlined permitting, all the things that
21 government is doing to encourage development in
22 the region.

23 And it's on these policies where you want
24 to insert your standards and strategies to ensure
25 good jobs and access for local folks. It's not

1 about just training. You can't train your way
2 into good jobs; what you have to do is create the
3 demand for new, good, skilled jobs and then fill
4 in any gaps around training needs. Next slide.

5 So, we're lucky here today with specifics
6 from the business representatives and a couple of
7 Developers that will talk much more specifically
8 about the jobs their investments are generating.
9 But I'm bucketing them into three categories:
10 construction, operations and maintenance, both of
11 which are blue collar work, and white-collar
12 jobs. It's important to do that because there
13 are different strategies to ensure jobs at
14 quality and access, and different training
15 pathways for each bucket.

16 You know, construction jobs obviously at
17 facilities and infrastructure are built: here
18 the gold standard for training is certified
19 apprenticeship. The blue-collar jobs are in
20 operations and maintenance. Those are the bulk
21 of permanent jobs, usually only requiring a high
22 school degree and workplace-based training.

23 And the white-collar jobs where folks
24 need college to get hired are a small percentage,
25 obviously important, but a small percentage.

1 So let me go one-by-one. Construction:
2 it's really a unique industry because there is
3 clear segment of the industry that is already
4 High Road and is based on the use of State
5 certified apprenticeship training, and really a
6 set of laws that set wages and benefits in public
7 sector construction.

8 And we can plug into this High Road by
9 using project labor agreements to build out
10 Lithium Valley's facilities and infrastructure.
11 Next slide.

12 So, what's a PLA? Other folks are going
13 to talk about this in more detail, but it is a
14 collective bargaining agreement that sets wages
15 and benefits standards. It kicks in the use of
16 state certified apprenticeship programs, and it
17 organizes the work and ensures the labor piece.
18 It generally helps projects finish on time and
19 within budget.

20 Now the big federal infrastructure
21 investments will require PLAs by President
22 Biden's Executive Order, and I know of at least
23 one new facility that already has a PLA, and what
24 we're saying is any future projects should have
25 PLAs too.

1 And you can negotiate them one-by-one,
2 but a PLA policy for the region can help
3 streamline negotiations and levels of playing
4 fields for big construction projects. Next
5 slide.

6 CHAIR PAZ: I just want to do a quick
7 time check. We're halfway there. Thank you.

8 MS. ZABIN: Okay, I think I'm good. And
9 I will let Mark and others talk about how these
10 agreements work, but they also facilitate hiring
11 of local workers when there are local hire
12 agreements as part of the PLA, and the key here
13 is kind of transparent tracking of who gets hired
14 and often community groups have a role in
15 monitoring this, and also problem solving when
16 contractors feel like local hire goals aren't
17 working for them.

18 Operations and Maintenance Jobs, this is
19 the biggest bucket. Again, usually requiring no
20 more than a high school degree, trained usually
21 on the job, and there aren't the same ready laws
22 and apprenticeship infrastructure already in
23 place, as in the construction industry, but the
24 same ideas hold.

25 And so here our recommendation is new

1 Lithium Valley Development should include job
2 quality standards and inclusionary hiring
3 agreements. Now, in some cases around the state,
4 PLAs are paired with larger community benefits
5 agreements that include these jobs, not just the
6 construction jobs.

7 Again, the goals are the same of job
8 quality and job access, and employer commitments
9 to invest in worker training, which happens
10 automatically in apprenticeship, but here
11 requires a specific commitment. And there is
12 really adequate funding at the state level to
13 support this. I know you heard about the H RTP
14 Initiative, and you will hear about the
15 Employment Training Panel funding that's
16 available. Next slide.

17 Finally, the White-Collar jobs usually
18 typically require some college credential. It's
19 a small percentage. Next slide. And here,
20 generally these are family supporting jobs with
21 some career mobility. So the issue here is
22 really to expand access to education, to college
23 for local folks and then connect those folks to
24 industry so that when they finish college they
25 can stay home or come back home, rather than seek

1 employment elsewhere for their college degree.

2 We'll hear more about this, I think, from
3 other speakers, but creating opportunities for
4 internships in industry is really key, and there
5 is really great examples, for example the San
6 Francisco Public Utilities Commission. A variety
7 of entry points to connect students with industry
8 here.

9 So the core principles for training and
10 education want to pull out, they were sprinkled
11 really in earlier slides. So start with the
12 jobs, partner with employers, support
13 apprenticeships where they exist, and look for
14 ways to create labor management partnerships
15 where they don't. And really fund comprehensive
16 training that prepares workers for careers and
17 really should avoid the mistakes we've made in
18 creating new niche green job programs that really
19 are only about one technology and are not
20 connected to jobs.

21 So, the summary principles and
22 recommendations: incorporate job quality and job
23 access into policies to support Lithium
24 development. It's not just about training. And
25 when we do need to build the training

1 infrastructure, to really do it with industry.

2 And I want to just say, and again I think
3 Dr. Chris Benner will go into this in more
4 detail, but a way to pull all these principles
5 together, and also add in the other promised
6 community benefits of environmental remediation
7 and community amenities, etc., and to promote
8 authentic community voice is through a community
9 benefits agreement. Again, these can be
10 negotiated project-by-project, or there can be a
11 framework of a policy to encourage and even
12 require community benefits agreements as we
13 institute policies to support development in
14 Lithium Valley. And that's it. Thank you.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And you did
16 awesome with your time, thank you. Our next
17 speaker is Jim Turner, the Chief Operating
18 Officer of Controlled Thermal Resources.

19 MR. TURNER: Good morning, Chair Paz and
20 Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity.
21 I'm the Chief Operating Officer for Controlled
22 Thermal Resources and we are developing the first
23 fully integrated geothermal Lithium facility here
24 in the United States, combining Lithium
25 extraction with renewable energy in an integrated

1 design. Next slide, please.

2 So how many new jobs? Well, we're going
3 to create probably about 480 ongoing construction
4 jobs under Labor Agreements for at least eight
5 years, probably quite a bit longer than that as
6 we fully develop the portion of the resource of
7 the Salton Sea Geothermal resource that we have
8 our arms around.

9 Looking at it in stages, the first stage
10 is small, but it will create about over 200
11 direct project jobs. Stage 2, which is much
12 larger than stage 1, will add about 940. And by
13 the time we complete the full development of this
14 part of our resource, we think we'll have about
15 1,400 total direct jobs. Some of them will be
16 professional -- accountants, engineers, etc. The
17 vast majority will be operators and maintenance
18 personnel, actually operating and maintaining the
19 plants that we build.

20 The average wages from our development,
21 based on my experience in here for almost the
22 last 30 years, will be more than double that of
23 the current median wage in Imperial County.
24 That's an important aspect for us because we're
25 looking for people who want to make a career out

1 of this industry and stay with this throughout
2 that career. Over 90 percent, easily, will be
3 from Imperial County. I think the number will
4 even be greater than that. The best employees
5 that I've experienced, again in the years that
6 I've been here in the geothermal industry, are
7 the ones that are directly from Imperial County.
8 There's a big tendency to stay, we pay well, and
9 they've become part of the geothermal community,
10 as well as residents here.

11 In addition to that, because of the
12 indirect or ancillary jobs, according to the
13 Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation,
14 there's probably an equal number or more that's
15 created as a result of the development such as
16 ours. Next slide, please.

17 What kinds of jobs. Well, I mentioned
18 Operators and Maintenance personnel. These are
19 the people right on the front line in these plans
20 that operate, supervise, maintain, and otherwise
21 make sure that the products are going out the
22 door.

23 We need Engineers. It's tough to find
24 Engineers in Imperial County, we all know that,
25 and when we do find a young man or a young lady

1 that goes off the college, gets an engineering
2 degree and comes back, we look real hard at
3 trying to hire that person into our geothermal
4 industry because chances are they will stay here
5 and work with us.

6 And to give you an idea, if you try to
7 attract somebody from New York City or Detroit,
8 or whatever, to move down to the Valley and stay
9 here for their career, it's usually pretty tough.

10 There are other types of jobs. In an
11 industry like Lithium or power, we end up with
12 Laboratory Technicians that are needed,
13 definitely Finance, Accountants, Warehouse
14 people, and usually a pretty good cadre of
15 Office Administration and Service personnel. To
16 get to that point, though, we've got to build
17 these plants. So the construction jobs, again,
18 are best if the employees come from Imperial
19 County. As we all know, it gets pretty toasty
20 here in the summertime and we don't like to stop
21 work constructing these plants. And the folks
22 that have spent a good portion of their lives
23 right here in Imperial Valley tend to be the best
24 construction job workers that we've seen in
25 building these plants.

1 Again, I mentioned ancillary jobs before,
2 there is a tremendous number that's created,
3 whether it's on hotels, or restaurants, some of
4 the clothing stores in the mall, etc., to be able
5 to provide their services to our workforce. Next
6 slide, please.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Just to let you know we're at
8 the half mark.

9 MR. TURNER: Great. So how do we get
10 there? Jonathan Weisgall at Berkshire and I, we
11 worked together back in the '90s on this, it's a
12 very good model, but the best way is education.
13 We like to go to high schools, talk about the
14 type of work we do. Hopefully that entices
15 people to either go to college and get a degree
16 and come back or, if they don't go to college,
17 join our workforce. A smaller percentage
18 definitely will get a degree, like an engineering
19 degree, or a finance or accounting degree. The
20 trick there is to get them to come back to the
21 Valley and, again, join the workforce.

22 There's all kind of levels of jobs, skill
23 sets that we need in the geothermal industry, and
24 the Lithium industry is basically a chemical
25 plant.

1 We work with the Workforce Development
2 Team here in Imperial County, have done that for
3 years. Imperial Valley College, SDSU, trying to
4 encourage as much education as we can. We
5 participate as teachers on occasion, and when we
6 bring in new people that are brand new to the
7 industry, we'll put them through lots of
8 classroom training, and then eventually on-the-
9 job, in the field training. Next slide, please.

10 But I'd just mention this on-the-job
11 training, but that's an important aspect of
12 having a safe workforce, a healthy workforce, and
13 one that knows how to conduct and operate these
14 plants. That's extremely important. And our
15 goal, in our company, and I think it's the same
16 in all the geothermal companies out here that are
17 going after Lithium, as well as just renewable
18 power, these are good paying career-type jobs,
19 they're lifelong opportunities to grow and
20 prosper right here. Next slide, please.

21 In addition to that, we need places for
22 our employees to live. You've all probably seen
23 back in the 2000's we had a housing boom out here
24 that was great. Then it tends to slow down, but
25 we want our employees to be able to live in good

1 communities, have nice houses, etc. CTR is
2 collaborating with Imperial County, local
3 builders, state government, etc., with an
4 initiative to build affordable and sustainable
5 homes in our community for the people that live
6 here as our employees. That's an important
7 aspect and I think we all have to remember that's
8 something that we must do if we're going to have
9 a good healthy workforce. Next slide, please.

10 I think this might be our last one.
11 IVEDC, the Imperial Valley Economic Development
12 Corporation, did some assessments for us in terms
13 of what our development would bring to the
14 community. There's a lot of local taxes and
15 ancillary job earnings, as you can see in these
16 numbers, that directly impact our community.
17 This is money that by and large stays here, and
18 is utilized here because of the number of jobs,
19 not only that are direct employees, but all the
20 ancillary or indirect jobs that are created as a
21 result of this kind of a development.

22 And I believe that might be the last
23 slide that I have. So thank you.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Jim. And you also
25 did great on time. Our next speaker is Burt

1 Short with BHE Renewables, CalEnergy Operating
2 Corporation.

3 MR. SHORT: Well, good afternoon and
4 thank you for this opportunity. I'm the HR
5 Manager for BHE Renewables and CalEnergy, and I
6 live in the Coachella Valley, have for six years,
7 and I work in Imperial Valley at our facility
8 just south of the Sony Bono Salton Sea Wildlife
9 Refuge. Next slide, please.

10 So here is an overview of our facilities.
11 As you can see, in the background is the Salton
12 Sea, and for anyone who has driven down Highway
13 111 or 86, you see the steam coming up. That's
14 not pollution, that's just condensation from the
15 cooling towers. Next slide.

16 I'm mainly going to talk about the jobs
17 that we have and the jobs that we plan to create.
18 I work on the Operations and Maintenance side;
19 I've been hiring for these jobs for six years.
20 The first jobs I'll talk about are Operators.
21 These are folks right out of high school, or a
22 GED, we have some folks who didn't graduate high
23 school who have that GED. But a Power Plant
24 certification program that we're trying to
25 develop with Imperial Vallely College will be

1 excellent because they do need a basic knowledge
2 of Algebra and some basic science to understand
3 the systems they're working on.

4 So these are folks that go out, they
5 start and stop equipment, they turn valves, they
6 take readings, they respond to spills and
7 environmental concerns, and they have to have an
8 understanding of rotating equipment such as
9 turbines, compressors, pumps. Some of them get
10 those from working on large farms, or
11 manufacturing industries, but typically we train
12 them once they start here, and they also have to
13 be able to read what we call a P&ID, the Piping
14 and System blueprints. Next slide.

15 So after an Operator has been here for a
16 few years, they work their way up to an Associate
17 Control Operator where they start working inside
18 and outside, with the ultimate goal of becoming a
19 Control Operator. I like to think of the Control
20 Operator as the pilot. They're making the
21 megawatts, putting them on the grid. They have
22 to have a previous qualification as an Operator,
23 and they start and stop equipment remotely --
24 they're looking at a bunch of screens, and
25 they're monitoring those screens for trends,

1 excursions, alarms, so they can notify the people
2 out in the field to take action so that the units
3 don't trip off line, and folks don't have
4 electricity.

5 And they do a lot of coordination with
6 other departments, so when a pump goes down to be
7 repaired or overhauled, they use lockout, tag out
8 systems so that work can be done. Next slide.

9 One of the hardest jobs we have to
10 recruit for, and anyone in industry knows, is the
11 Instrument and Controls Technicians are the
12 hardest to find. They're also the highest paid.
13 These are folks with a two or four-year degree in
14 instrumentation computer programming, plant
15 controls, and electrical plant devices. They do
16 everything from distributing control systems,
17 which are the heart of our operating plants that
18 are controlling all these temperatures,
19 pressures, environmental monitoring devices,
20 microminiature computer cards, and also the
21 computer logic that goes into controlling all
22 those different things. So, very high paying
23 jobs and also very hard to recruit to this area.
24 Next slide, please.

25 Electricians, we're not talking about

1 your typical household electrician who is running
2 wires; these are people who work on what we call
3 a programmable logic controller, which is the
4 actual device, it has electricity hooked up to it
5 and maybe also have some schematics or hydraulics
6 attached to it, to remotely open and close
7 valves. They also work on very large breakers,
8 these could be 1,200 volts, 440 volts, things
9 like that, very high voltage electricity. And
10 they also do some repairs on the electrical parts
11 of the pumps and rotors. And they have to have a
12 knowledge of an electrical distribution system.
13 Next slide.

14 Maintenance Technicians. These are your
15 typical mechanics who take valves apart, maybe
16 replaces those and make adjustments to the valves
17 for pumps, compressors, and other equipment on
18 site. Typically, these people also come in with
19 a high school education or GED, it's an entry-
20 level maintenance technician. And over time they
21 can work their way up to Senior Maintenance
22 Technician. Some of them also have welding
23 certifications, but it's not a requirement
24 because not all of our mechanics do welding. And
25 they also hire some mechanics who have machinery

1 experience. We have our own machine stop on
2 site. Next slide.

3 Resource Technicians. Because we do
4 drilling down into the earth to get to this brine
5 that we use to make our electricity and hopefully
6 will also use to extract Lithium, they are
7 working on extra large piping and the systems out
8 in the field. They are mechanically minded, and
9 we also do on site training for those folks, as
10 well. Next slide.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Just to note that we're a
12 little bit at the half line.

13 MR. TURNER: Okay, great. We also have
14 Lab Technicians and Chemists. As you heard
15 earlier, these are basically chemical plants out
16 here. Some of our folks come in with a
17 certification of two years from one of the
18 Community Colleges, and other people come in with
19 Chemistry degrees. We've even hired Chemistry
20 Teachers who come in and have been very
21 successful. They sample all the various plant
22 processes, how they operate that sampling)
23 equipment which is very sensitive and they
24 perform the analytical computations on the
25 samples to make sure we're operating within our

1 environmental permits. Next slide, please.

2 We also have Environmental Specialists.
3 These are people with typically environmental
4 degrees in air, solid waste, or hazardous waste.
5 They go around and monitor the various sampling
6 equipment and they train our own site folks to
7 respond to spills and compliance reporting. Next
8 slide, please.

9 We also have various Engineers. And
10 these folks come from all over the world, four
11 years degree or master's degree in Hard Sciences
12 and Electrical, Mechanical. We also have
13 Geologists on site. We have Controls Engineers
14 and Chemical Engineers. Next slide.

15 We also have several Safety Specialists,
16 and these folks come in with a high school
17 degree, or GED, and then are trained on site.
18 Sometimes they have previous experience, which
19 are OSHA and CAL OSHA requirements. They also do
20 on site training and they train our various
21 vendors and contractors to make sure they're
22 following our own site policies. Next slide.

23 The next level, as folks work their way
24 up from Control Operators, we have Operation
25 Supervisors who are Resource Coordinators, they

1 are previous Control Operators or have Power
2 Plant Operations experience. Maintenance
3 Supervisors are typically Senior Maintenance
4 Technicians who then decide they want to move
5 into a Supervisor/Manager role. And then we have
6 various Managers Operations, I'm the HR Manager
7 in various departments. You can see those
8 listed. Next slide.

9 Other Support jobs we have, we have
10 almost 200 people down here right now and I think
11 the next slide talks about the expansion of
12 support jobs, procurement; we have to order those
13 parts, we have our own storeroom, we have
14 nondestructive engineers who test our piping
15 thickness and things like that; Heavy Equipment
16 Operators to move things around; and we have
17 Project Analysts who handle our invoicing,
18 timesheets, and other projects. Then we also
19 have some folks with Commercial Drivers Licenses.
20 Next slide, please.

21 And we're also working on a Lithium
22 Extraction process with a potential for up to 200
23 new jobs associated for the full-scale Lithium
24 extraction operations. And that may be the last
25 slide. Next slide. Oh, there we go.

1 So our lowest level jobs start around
2 \$21.00 an hour and some folks, I&E Technicians I
3 talked to you about make over \$40.00 an hour.
4 They're all full time jobs, we don't have part
5 time employees, and these are the various
6 benefits we have that go to the package, a
7 company 401K match, full medical/dental/vision,
8 short-term/long-term disability, life insurance,
9 and then they have an incentive program that pays
10 a bonus based on our company's operations for the
11 year and safety record. We start employees off
12 with 144 hours of paid time off, that doesn't
13 include the sick leave mandated by the state, and
14 we have paid holidays, and the majority of these
15 jobs that I talked about do have the ability to
16 earn overtime pay, and we also have profit
17 sharing. And I think that was the last slide if
18 you can check.

19 Thank you for your time.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you so much. Thank
21 you, that concludes the first part of the
22 question around jobs. Our next set of speakers
23 were asked to address the topic of state
24 investments and workforce development.

25 Our first speaker on this topic is Marc

1 Cowan with the California Workforce Development
2 Board, High Road Construction Careers Program.
3 Marc.

4 MR. COWAN: Thank you, Chair Paz. And
5 hello everyone. I'm Marc Cowan and I work on the
6 High Road Construction Careers Initiative at the
7 CWDV. I'm going to explain what that is and how
8 it pertains to Imperial County.

9 So first of all, when you hear me say
10 High Roads Construction Careers Initiative, you
11 should think of Partnerships that exist all over
12 the state, that are designed to connect
13 marginalized communities with well paid
14 apprenticeship opportunities in the Building and
15 Construction trades.

16 And achieving that requires three things
17 -- I was going to say two, but it requires three
18 things. And though I'm over-simplifying a
19 little, that's supportive services, pre-
20 apprenticeship training and demand. I'm going to
21 speak about the first two now before addressing
22 demand at the end.

23 An HRCC Partnership, whether it's in
24 Fresno, Sacramento, or wherever, it will
25 consist of a number of partners that include

1 community-based organizations, workforce boards,
2 local employers, local unions, and building trade
3 councils and more, you could have JHGC (phonetic)
4 Coordinators, it can be a very broad partnership.

5 And the reason why they're set up as a
6 partnership, rather than a service provider
7 solely by a single entity, is because that allows
8 for the provision of a much wider range of
9 supportive services and pre-apprenticeship
10 training than would be provided otherwise.

11 And I think a good way to wrap our heads
12 around what that looks like when it's functioning
13 correctly is to go through an example from the
14 perspective of the participant. So, say we have
15 a woman let's call her Nicole, a single mother
16 working a job that pays minimum wage. She wants
17 a better job, but it isn't clear where to find
18 one, and she isn't aware of apprenticeships in
19 the trades or what they involve. She may not
20 have pictured herself in an occupation like that.
21 And even if she did, unless she knows someone who
22 already works in the industry, like a family
23 member, it'll be a very complicated process for
24 her to navigate getting into it.

25 Getting into an apprenticeship isn't

1 easy. And although education is rarely a
2 barrier, and it's something that doesn't require
3 a Bachelor or an associate degree, that doesn't
4 mean that there aren't any barriers. But in
5 Nicole's County, there's an HRCC Partnership that
6 exists to address those barriers, and though she
7 may not be aware of the HRCC, the HRCC is aware
8 of her insofar as she is the proper priority
9 population that they're trying to serve. They
10 want to serve women, they want to serve people of
11 color, single mothers, and among other
12 demographics.

13 So the first issue is connecting Nicole
14 with the services and training provided by the
15 partnership, and that involves outreach. She has
16 to be found and that could be a referral from an
17 AJTC, an American Jobs Center, it could be a
18 referral from a Workforce Board, someone handing
19 out a flyer if it's a CBO doing this kind of
20 work. It could be a post on Instagram or
21 targeted advertising on Instagram or Facebook.
22 There's any number of ways.

23 That that outreach is typically done by a
24 community-based organization that has a more
25 sophisticated ability to communicate with the

1 priority populations that they're trying to
2 reach, than if it was just some general entity.
3 But either way, Nicole is showing up to her pre-
4 apprenticeship classes, but in order to keep
5 showing up, she needs help with childcare. Well,
6 within the HRCC partnership there is a partner,
7 an organization that can help her out with that.

8 Another barrier that she might have is
9 that she's not able to work as many hours in the
10 restaurant that she was working in, and that can
11 be addressed by one of the organizations involved
12 in the HRCC partnership through the provision of
13 a stipend.

14 If she needs help getting to or from
15 class, there's a partner in the HRCC; in this
16 case it could be the Workforce Board that can
17 provide her with money for a bus ticket, it could
18 be a nonprofit that works with her to discharge a
19 traffic violation from her license, to get rid of
20 a suspension so she can drive.

21 If she had had past trauma that prevents
22 her from -- that she's having issues with, then
23 there could be a nonprofit that provides trauma-
24 informed care. So, in that way, each of the
25 barriers that are preventing her from getting

1 into this job are addressed one-by-one.

2 And then you get to the pre-apprentice
3 training itself, which is called a multi-craft
4 core curriculum. When Nicole learns about what
5 the additional crafts do, she gets her own
6 certification, she learns construction math, and
7 when she's finished, she has a plan for where she
8 wants to go and what she wants to do, which
9 brings us to the most important part, and it
10 touches on what Abby was talking about , which is
11 the demand. And the demand specifically for her
12 period of premises.

13 What I just described there happens all
14 over the state. But if you picture it as a
15 pipeline, it's one that's flow, it's flow depend
16 entirely on mechanisms that create demand for
17 apprentices and pull people into the labor
18 market, not just a general demand for straight
19 apprenticeships, but more specifically a demand
20 for new apprentices from local and marginalized
21 communities spelled out in the terms and
22 conditions of the labor agreements that have been
23 negotiated by the building trades and the
24 contractors and the construction managers that
25 they're working with.

1 And these agreements have different
2 names. Carol called them Project Labor
3 Agreements. Sometimes they're called Community
4 Workforce Agreements and they have those
5 workforce standards in them. They can be called
6 Community Benefits Agreements, Community
7 Workforce and Training Agreements.

8 But their relevance to HRCC is the demand
9 that they create for first period apprentices.
10 That's why they matter to us. And there is no
11 where in the state where you have an HRCC
12 Partnership that exists without these agreements
13 creating that demand.

14 And so, with that demand there's a slot
15 available for Nicole, a pre-apprentice. And in
16 that sense, the PLA serves as the last part of
17 that pipeline into a life where she can earn a
18 good living and provide for her family.

19 So, this is what we're investing in at
20 the Workforce Board. We've dispersed so far,
21 nearly \$20 million out of two different funding
22 sources and, yeah, it's a system that hinges
23 entirely on demand. So, in Alameda County, the
24 Port of Oakland, here in Sacramento where I am,
25 you have a city-wide Project Labor Agreement.

1 Fresno has a city-wide Project Labor Agreement.
2 Central Valley has high speed rail, which is
3 under a PLA with these provisions that I just
4 talked about. And for Imperial County to support
5 a pipeline like that, it needs something too. I
6 probably passed the half-way, Chair Paz.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Yes, this is the last three
8 minutes to --

9 MR. COWAN: Wrap up. I'd like to use
10 those three minutes to just touch on one last
11 thing before I conclude, and that's the fact that
12 not everyone on any given job site that comes out
13 of this, you know, wearing a hard hat will be an
14 apprentice.

15 Most will be journey level workers that
16 have themselves gone through apprenticeship
17 programs that can take up to five years to
18 complete. And out of that, maybe one in five
19 will be apprentices, depending on what happens.

20 And of those apprentices, a smaller
21 number will be first period apprentices, a lot
22 more will be apprentices who are in their second
23 or third year, you know, building up their on-
24 the-job trainings so that they can journey up and
25 become highly skilled and trained workers.

1 And so we need to express that while it
2 may not be thousands of new jobs straight away,
3 the new jobs that will be available at really
4 high quality, and then with an investment into a
5 local HRCC Partnership, the pipeline that I
6 mentioned, we can ensure that not just now, but
7 in future when more projects do come up related
8 to Lithium, or commercial construction, or
9 infrastructure development, we can ensure that we
10 have a pipeline that connects local people to
11 those high quality jobs. And the state has the
12 resources to assist in the development in that
13 pipeline. That's part of my job at the Workforce
14 Board.

15 Yeah, that's all I have to say for now
16 and if you have questions and would like a
17 follow-up on anything I've mentioned, I'd be
18 happy to chat. But until then, thanks for
19 listening. Thank you, Chair Paz.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Marc. Our next
21 speaker is Robert Meyer, Director of Economic
22 Development, Employment Training Panel. Robert.

23 MR. MEYER: Hi. Good afternoon,
24 everybody. I do believe there's a slide deck.
25 There we go. I'm the Director of Economic

1 Development with the Employment Training Panel so
2 I present to you today. Thank you for the
3 invitation to the Commission, Chair Paz. Next
4 slide, please.

5 So ETP is a state agency within the Labor
6 and Workforce Development Agency that has really
7 provided a lot of funding for job skills
8 training. Rather unique, we're entirely paid for
9 performance. We actually write a contract with
10 the Employers to deliver this training, and
11 reimbursed the costs related to it.

12 Crucially for us, we're talking about
13 \$100 million on average, on a year-to-year basis.
14 We are impacted currently by Covid and receive
15 additional funds for job creation in underserved
16 communities in two separate programs from the
17 General Fund this year, as well as administering
18 two additional small business focused grant
19 programs for the spring year.

20 We anticipate additional funds in the
21 coming year, but this is roughly our current
22 ballpark available for Employers, and local
23 Employer contractors to fund job skills training
24 in California. Next slide, please.

25 These are our major areas of focus in our

1 program. We are strongly aligned with the
2 Division of Apprenticeship Standards and the
3 important work at the State Board. Thank you to
4 Shrayas (Jatkar) and to Marc (Cowan). But we
5 also find strong alignment with a lot of research
6 entities, including Carol Zabin.

7 We serve priority industries and small
8 business, obviously looking for equity. We fund
9 approximately \$25 million a year in
10 apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and journey
11 worker training with apprenticeship training
12 committees, and Employer-led apprenticeship
13 throughout the state, primarily in building
14 trades, but we are also working in non-
15 traditional apprenticeship.

16 We have been a long partner of the
17 California Energy Commission with Zero Emission
18 Vehicle Technology, and research programs
19 including building trades with the Obama era
20 funds, or our funding. And more recently, we've
21 also worked with manufacturing support in the
22 Department of Defense and through the Office of
23 Planning and Research, two grants Cascade and
24 Cadence, which connect this energy and power work
25 into the Department of Defense, Department of

1 Energy, really seen as vital industry sectors.
2 Obviously we can look at the global politics
3 today and see that there is a national security
4 interest relative to power and energy. So we're
5 working with these resource providers and
6 programs for two grants related to the supply
7 chain, including manufacturing and the secondary
8 industry sectors, outlined effectively, I think,
9 by our Employer participants earlier.

10 We also have a program for Natural
11 Disaster and Response. This is dealing with the
12 economic impacts from natural disaster and it
13 covers drought, earthquake and fire, primarily.

14 And most importantly, we've aligned with
15 state and federal grants and other investments,
16 including incentives most importantly through Go-
17 Biz, and the Labor and Workforce Development
18 Agency. This does include CERF. This also
19 includes the DACA funds that have come through,
20 as well as Covid-specific grants related to the
21 small business, as well, more recently the
22 Digital Literacy Program and small business
23 engagement opportunities with the National Skills
24 Coalition. So, all of these areas we're working
25 to provide funding in this sector. Next slide.

1 Now, we have two main contract models
2 that are going to be relevant to this discussion.
3 Single Employer Contract, and this is any
4 Employer training their own existing workers,
5 also upskill opportunities in their current jobs,
6 or new jobs including leadership roles, as well
7 as those that they're hiring. So we can provide
8 the funding to support the job skill training
9 needs of those, and this includes aspects of
10 mining, energies, manufacturing, construction,
11 logistics, as well as the engineering and testing
12 that might be needed.

13 This is an Employer really leveraging
14 their own technology to design a training program
15 that works most effectively for them. It meets
16 our requirements, and then we can develop a
17 contract around those needs.

18 The multiple contractor model also is
19 something that we utilize, but we leverage the
20 Employer experience to provide upskill training
21 for new and existing workers, as well as to look
22 for pipeline programs for pre-apprenticeship,
23 apprenticeship, and to place unemployed workers,
24 or long-term dislocated.

25 In this case, we're targeting work with

1 the Economic Development Corporations, the
2 Chamber of Commerce, perhaps, at IV EDC we're
3 already working with, as well as doing
4 apprenticeship training committees for
5 apprenticeship training. The Unified School
6 Districts, Community Colleges, CSUs and their
7 Foundations, as well as the UC, provide us an
8 opportunity to work really around the educational
9 partnerships that are formed with the Employers.
10 So those are huge points of leverage for us.

11 And then, most importantly, the Workforce
12 Development Boards. Throughout the state we have
13 a good track record of working with these to
14 build Employer-based, Employer-focused programs
15 that will provide the job seekers the necessary
16 skills to work.

17 And in both of these cases, the funding
18 is reimbursing the training that is set up and
19 delivered and really established by the Employers
20 that are participating. Next slide, please.

21 So we train, as I said, new and existing
22 workers, full-time, job seekers, apprenticeship
23 workers, small business owners; they can be
24 trained in how to run their businesses. They can
25 be trained also as frontline workers. We

1 primarily train Employer customized job skills
2 training. We don't fund legally mandated, we
3 don't fund very generalized types of training.
4 But if the Employer identifies the training
5 necessary for its workforce, we can generally
6 cover it in the course of our flexible delivery
7 methods, and even a range of training providers.
8 It's for the Employers to decide what the most
9 effective training is for them, and then we'll
10 build off of that.

11 We do have performance metrics required,
12 I'll talk about those in a second, and all of our
13 programs report, require that the Employer
14 articulate what their investment is. This could
15 be training that they're funding on their own,
16 the wages paid for trainees while they are
17 working. Next slide.

18 Basic requirements. An eight-hour
19 minimum per participant. They should be tied to
20 Unemployment Insurance and its existing full-time
21 work status. If there's a unique case, we
22 typically can reach them, but in most cases there
23 should be a tie.

24 While there's a maximum 200 hours of
25 training, most of our Employers reach a range of

1 between 40 and 75 hours, that's typically where
2 they come in for training. It's a lot of
3 training in an ETP contract, which can last up to
4 21 months.

5 The performance metrics are basically
6 that they work after training is completed.
7 That's 90 days on the job, or in the construction
8 sector we could use an alternate recordkeeping
9 structure of usually around six months, and we
10 evaluate the first 500 hours of work during that
11 period of time.

12 And it all points that the workers must
13 earn a contract-specific minimum wage that's tied
14 to the state average hourly wage, depending on
15 the industry sector and the region of the state.
16 In most cases we're talking about between \$20 and
17 \$23 per hour being earned by the worker once
18 training is completed. Next slide, please.

19 In terms of the reimbursement, the cost
20 of the actual training is actually that. The
21 Employer, I mean, we have high cost training
22 probably being provided, it's going to be
23 independent of our actual reimbursement. We use
24 a fixed fee rate and all we do to estimate the
25 amount of training being provided is just the

1 total number hours of training times this
2 reimbursement rate.

3 Most training is \$23 an hour.

4 Apprenticeship training, factoring additional
5 investments, is reduced to \$18 per training hour.
6 And then we do fun classroom computer-based
7 training, which is independent of an instructor,
8 at a lower rate of \$9 an hour. But that's per
9 trainee, per training hour.

10 So we can work with the Employer to
11 structure what's most effective and then see what
12 is eligible for reimbursement. In new hire
13 models, costs can't be paid back to the trainee
14 and reimbursement cannot duplicate or supplant
15 existing funding available.

16 So if we have grant or investment funding
17 for training, we can't use our funds to duplicate
18 that; we can work around that in terms of the
19 different training topic areas, or work with a
20 different population of training. They should be
21 trained together, it's just that we have to be
22 very careful about overlapping the resources that
23 are made available. In all cases, we shouldn't
24 double-dip in terms of the investment for the
25 State. Next slide.

1 CHAIR PAZ: If you can use the last three
2 minutes, and I think maybe you're getting there.

3 MR. MEYER: I'm nearly done. Thank you,
4 though, for the warning. I normally am used to
5 running way over. Sorry.

6 So in terms of connecting to us, we have
7 a website with detailed information contract
8 examples. We have a list of our multiple
9 Employer contract partners, public training,
10 opportunities list; if you want to reach out to
11 our team, we could share this with you and also
12 find the work that we're doing.

13 In terms of learning about the program,
14 we have a bi-weekly interactive orientation. We
15 just talked about the high concepts of
16 contracting and what the work really is -- I
17 apologize for the typos there -- the work call,
18 916, is not part of the link.

19 And then lastly, if you want to start the
20 application itself, we're entirely online. We
21 have a self-based application that you can put
22 together as you go, and save your progress. And
23 we can assist you with doing that, not only
24 teaching you about the program, but partnering
25 you with other programs that are doing what

1 you're doing; for example, if we want to work
2 with the Unified School District in Imperial
3 County to look at a way to build a pre-
4 apprenticeship construction program, we have
5 already several that we fund that we'd be glad to
6 share not only their experience, but their
7 expertise in terms of the financial model that
8 they utilize to help you build one in Imperial
9 County to sort of help start us out in getting
10 into the pipeline.

11 We are actively working with several
12 Employers in the construction and energy sectors,
13 as well as manufacturers. We partner well with
14 the Governor's Office for Business and Economic
15 Development, and the CEC to support the
16 manufacturing not only in jobs, but also in the
17 energy sector as a whole.

18 We've built contracts in mining with MP
19 Materials last June, as well as the
20 infrastructure, infrastructure charging for
21 vehicles, as well as the power and software,
22 companies that are working in this sector. So we
23 have a lot of experience on the ground with
24 active contracts. So if there are Employers that
25 are interested in doing this -- next slide -- be

1 happy to reach out.

2 This is our team, we only have one
3 vacation photo when we were able to get together
4 for strategic planning in Southern California,
5 Elsa Wadzinski is our lead. She's already
6 working with IVEDC and some of the contractor
7 companies that we've engaged. I work with Elsa
8 and together we really take a lead on providing
9 education, outreach, exploration of funding
10 models, so how do we work or leverage a grant and
11 build success or funding opportunities.

12 I would just say, most importantly, we're not
13 interested in being a one-time resource. We want
14 to be utilized by a company now for their
15 immediately job skills needs, but also begin to
16 partner with them in a way to help them improve
17 the quality of their training and to maximize the
18 efficiency of their use of state and local
19 resources in terms of economics and workforce
20 development.

21 Thank you very much for your time. If
22 you have any questions, please don't hesitate to
23 reach out. More detail on the program will be
24 provided as part of this PowerPoint. I definitely
25 would like to provide some of the contracts that

1 we're funding relative to this effort back to the
2 Commission. Thank you for the time.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Our next group of
4 speakers were asked to address the landscape for
5 workforce development as related to Lithium
6 development. So our speakers will address what
7 education and training efforts exist now, the gap
8 that this region is facing, and potential local,
9 regional, state actions needed to advance
10 workforce development in the Salton Sea Region.
11 So I want to welcome Priscilla Lopez, the
12 Director of the Imperial County Workforce and
13 Economic Development Office.

14 MS. LOPEZ: Yes. Good afternoon,
15 everyone. Thank you, Chair Paz, for the
16 invitation. I'm happy to join you guys today to
17 talk a little bit about what the County has been
18 doing as far as workforce development is
19 concerned.

20 Again, my name is Priscilla Lopez and I'm
21 the Director for the Imperial County Workforce
22 and Economic Development Office.

23 So just to give you guys just a quick
24 background of our agency, our focus is workforce
25 development through targeted training, we assist

1 job seekers with career pathways. We guide them
2 towards economic sustainability with whatever
3 their needs may be, we address their gaps, their
4 skills gaps, their soft skills, barriers to make
5 sure they are employable and more marketable.

6 We also provide assistance to businesses
7 with job recruitment, incumbent worker,
8 customized training. Other resources and tools
9 in general, just to help them achieve their
10 business goals.

11 Imperial County, through -- we've been
12 very focused, moving forward especially with
13 Lithium Valley development and workforce
14 development through the work group for furthering
15 geothermal development for Lithium Valley that
16 was created by County leadership and convened by
17 Supervisor Ryan Kelley, our department was tasked
18 with starting a conversation revolving around
19 workforce development for minerals extraction
20 industry so that the skill set needs could be
21 addressed in trainings.

22 We brought together key stakeholders,
23 people in academia, vocational training industry,
24 local government, to listen to the concerns and
25 find the gaps that we could identify, and put all

1 our resources on the table to see what we could
2 do to create an industry recognized focused fast
3 track training program that would be tailored for
4 this industry and filled with transferable
5 skills.

6 This program ultimately will focus on the
7 skill set that is needed for an individual who
8 graduates with the certification of this skill
9 set, to have gainful employment within the
10 Minerals Extraction Industry.

11 In our discussions and within the
12 stakeholders, IVC took the ball and ran with it,
13 and I will let Efrain discuss the process in
14 detail, but within a few months a lot of the
15 major focus in our meetings and discussions were
16 - the design and the assistance of industry to
17 make sure that we're training lab technicians and
18 plant operators from the get go, so they have the
19 skills that they need to get in the door, to be
20 able to be there and ready on Day 1.

21 We've also brought forth Imperial County
22 Office of Ed, which has been very important
23 because they recognize the importance of
24 collaborating in this effort so that we can
25 introduce this industry, and ancillary career

1 opportunities that are coming down the pike, to
2 local youth at an early age. It's very important
3 that children visualize a future early on so that
4 they're able to set the goals and to think about
5 continuing their education in a more focused way.

6 In my opinion, the earlier that we can
7 introduce youth to soft skills and work ethic,
8 the better that we can handle it and look at it.

9 Additionally, as part of our
10 conversations with academia San Diego State
11 University. Also, they're engaged fully onboard
12 with efforts to expand some STEM degree program
13 opportunities for our local residents. And
14 that's key for our economic growth. With greater
15 educational employment opportunities to offer our
16 youth, we would be able to retain our local
17 talent and even import talent and retain talent.

18 Imperial County, it's a key location for
19 research opportunity. The opportunities that can
20 focus around environmental studies, ecology,
21 agriculture, sustainable energy, etc., we have a
22 living natural lab right here at the Salton Sea
23 and surrounding areas that can offer research
24 opportunities that have wide ranging
25 repercussions for clean sustainable energy

1 efforts worldwide.

2 So I think it's a great opportunity for
3 us to look at, as a state, to see how we can
4 advance that.

5 We also have discussions with the State
6 High Roads Construction Career, so that's
7 interesting that I see them on, explaining the
8 program more because I think that if we make
9 training available locally for those types of
10 careers and trades like plumbing or carpentry, or
11 whatever it is that we're looking at, these
12 opportunities are going to come in, as ancillary
13 opportunities with this industry.

14 Currently, we have something available
15 through IBEW that helps participants with
16 supportive services to get them through their
17 program successfully. And that's the only
18 apprenticeship program that you could say that we
19 have. So if we can grow that ultimately, that
20 would be great.

21 Ultimately what we really want is to
22 create a career pathway for our residents,
23 whether it's a child in junior high, or high
24 school, who doesn't quite know what they want to
25 dedicate their life to work, a dislocated worker

1 who needs to be trained in any career. We want
2 to have training programs and researchers
3 available that address the needs of the job
4 seeker. And equally key, we want to make sure
5 that industry has a developed, trained workforce
6 that's ready to start on Day 1.

7 I do want to mention that the
8 collaboration that we've had between industry and
9 academia and local government has made a huge
10 difference in making sure that we've got our
11 resources together and that we're able to see
12 what we can offer so that we can build these
13 programs.

14 And the support that we've seen all
15 around us has been really good, it's made a big
16 difference in making sure that we've got all of
17 this developed.

18 More than anything I think, if we can
19 focus on one of the key elements is support for a
20 full service, four year degree campus locally, it
21 would be a huge catalyst for the advancement of
22 workforce development in this area. That's
23 something that you've heard us talk about quite a
24 bit. And I would also say focus on maybe
25 building a campus that will train in High Road

1 construction or trades, that would be valuable
2 for our area. And our departments here to
3 continue assisting with that development of the
4 local workforce to provide business and job
5 seeker services, that include recruitment events,
6 training programs, job placement, on-the-job
7 training that is a subsidized training for larger
8 companies, or work experience also fully
9 subsidized. Just to name a few programs. And
10 these are available now, and it's not just for
11 the lithium industry, it's wide ranging, so we
12 can address these needs that are going to be
13 coming down the pike with ancillary businesses or
14 other industries that will be coming into the
15 county once this is developed. So that's what
16 our agency does and, you know, it's great to be
17 able to see what's coming from its infancy. And
18 I'd be happy to answer any questions.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Priscilla. I was
20 about to give you the three minute -- you did it.

21 Our next speaker is Efrain Silva, Dean of
22 Economic and Workforce Development at Imperial
23 Valley College.

24 MR. SILVA: Chair Paz, thank you so much
25 and thank you, Priscilla, for all the work that

1 you all have done.

2 My name is Efrain Silva, the Dean of
3 Economic and Workforce Development. I'm really
4 pleased to have joined this conversation today,
5 not just to present, but also to hear the other
6 panel speakers and be able to identify further
7 for me what we should be doing in terms of
8 preparing for this new industry that is going to
9 have the potential of hiring thousands of our own
10 residents for good paying jobs. I'm very very
11 excited to be with you guys today.

12 I'm going to share my screen. So as
13 Priscilla indicated, we actually have been
14 working with industry and coming up with
15 identification of the gaps that we have, that we
16 have the creation of new programs, and how do we
17 customize these programs to specifically meet the
18 needs of the Lithium industry.

19 We have started early because curriculum
20 development and the approval process through the
21 Chancellor's Office and through the delivery of
22 education and through the graduation of student
23 takes some time, two to three years in some
24 cases.

25 The timing for us is perfect and to be

1 able to develop the courses, start the training
2 program, and then have graduates that will be
3 ready to go and work for the industry.

4 So I think I won't spend a lot of time on
5 this because I think everybody knows that the
6 Governor Newsom did identify Lithium as one of
7 the key industries for Imperial Valley, and the
8 availability of resources that we will need as an
9 educational institution to be able to provide
10 this new training.

11 What have we been doing? We've been
12 working on this for the last several months, the
13 work group that Ms. Lopez, Priscilla, identified,
14 we have been part of that since Day 1. We've
15 been working on meeting with the industries
16 identifying the gaps.

17 And basically the bottom line as of
18 today, we have identified two primary training
19 programs that we need to develop to be ready for
20 the hiring of our residents. And currently we're
21 working on developing a new Lab Technician
22 Program, we don't have this at Imperial Valley
23 College right now, and also developing a Plant
24 Operator Program.

25 As we recognize more needs, we're also in

1 a position to be able to develop these new
2 programs. I'm very interested; I'll be
3 contacting Mr. Short shortly and talk to him
4 about our Instrumentation Efficient Technician
5 Program. We have that already. We don't call it
6 the instrumentation definition, we call it
7 something else, but the essence of this is
8 already in existence, so maybe it may need some
9 tweaking to be able to customize and be able to
10 teach our students what industry expects them to
11 know.

12 So we have met with all of the industry
13 representatives, at least four times. We
14 concluded a crosswalk of all of the chemical
15 technician programs throughout the State of
16 California, and also the Plant Operator Programs,
17 and identified what other colleges are doing and
18 kind of, not to reinvent the wheel, but kind of
19 have a starting point.

20 We actually conducted a site visit, thank
21 you, Mr. Short, for welcoming us, and Cal Energy,
22 with our faculty and when we actually met with
23 the HR Department, we met with the technicians
24 and supervisors, and had a conversation about
25 what is needed and what we should be working on.

1 We also asked all of the three companies,
2 the Lithium companies, to send out their job
3 descriptions for the jobs that they're
4 anticipating hiring, and we did an assessment of
5 those skillsets identified in these job
6 descriptions and identified what do we currently
7 teach, and where are the gaps. You know, what
8 things should we be adding to our courses and our
9 catalog to be able to come up with the training
10 programs that industry needs.

11 So again, right now, as we speak, we are
12 in the process of developing a new Laboratory
13 Technician Program and a Plant Operator Program.

14 To do this, I had to receive letters of
15 support and letters of endorsement from the three
16 companies listed on the screen, the three Lithium
17 companies. And we have to do that as a Community
18 College because these jobs are not here yet,
19 right? They're coming. And so we have to
20 substantiate to the State that the training
21 programs that we're developing have a need
22 locally. So even though the need is not here
23 today, but it will come here in the future.

24 These letters of endorsement and
25 projections of hiring needs within the areas of

1 Plant Operation and Lab Technician were crucial.
2 Without those letters and being able to
3 demonstrate that there's a need for these
4 programs, we would not be able to proceed, so
5 thank you for the three companies that provided
6 us those letters of support, those letters of
7 endorsement, and I have submitted those to our
8 Regional Consultant and they have been approved.
9 So that hurdle has been overcome and now we are
10 actually beginning to look at the actual
11 curriculum and be able to come up with a viable
12 training program.

13 So we are, in terms of our Lab Technician
14 Program, we are working with our Chemistry
15 faculty. All of our Chemistry faculty have their
16 Doctorates in Chemistry, so they're experts in
17 the field. We're also working with our Water
18 Treatment faculty, our Occupational Safety
19 faculty, and other disciplines that we're merging
20 into a single program and a single certificate
21 that, again, will satisfy the needs of the
22 industry.

23 You know, we're also wanting to hire from
24 these companies individuals that will be
25 consultants to us, what we call professional

1 experts, so these are people that actually work
2 in the industry and, as educators, we can develop
3 -- format training programs, but it's not into
4 the actual users to see what we're doing and tell
5 us, yes, you're on the right track; no, we don't
6 need this instead of that, teach this other
7 thing, or be able to expand the curriculum.

8 So having an in-house expert, an in-house
9 consultant that is from the industry is really
10 really important, so we are also preparing to do
11 bring these people on board to make sure that
12 what we're doing is what's going to work for the
13 programs.

14 Right now we're working on creating these
15 programs as a short-term certificate, so we don't
16 want students to have to be here for two years.
17 We're looking to do this at maximum one year
18 training program and ideally less than that. But
19 we also want to create pathways so that these
20 students that come in, they do a very short-term
21 certificate, but there's more than just that,
22 that if they have the desire and the time to
23 continue to work and continue coming and do their
24 Associate Degree, or their Bachelor's degree,
25 that there's a pathway designed for them to be

1 able to do this.

2 Writing the curriculum is easy; it looks
3 like this is just pieces of paper. But actually
4 the instructional equipment, the delivery of
5 services to our students is something that we
6 know already and we're going to be needing a
7 significant amount of resources. So some of the
8 instructional equipment that we're going to have
9 to buy, particularly for a Lab Technician and our
10 Plant Operator programs, can be very costly. So
11 we'll be looking for resources to be able to
12 accommodate those needs.

13 Faculty sometimes is extremely difficult
14 to recruit, so that recruitment of faculty and
15 the seed money necessary for programs to become
16 institutionalized is really important. So we'll
17 be looking for those resources that we are
18 running already, we are working that curriculum.
19 As a matter of fact, I just met with our
20 Chemistry faculty yesterday to continue the
21 development of the coursework and we are up and
22 running.

23 So I want to say that IVC, Imperial
24 Valley Colleges, they're well-positioned to being
25 able to provide the technical training of the

1 labor force that was just identified by the
2 companies, and we're very happy to be here and to
3 be able to do this, and extremely thankful to all
4 of the industry representatives and to Priscilla,
5 Supervisor Kelley, particularly Jonathan who has
6 been incredible, interested in being a resource
7 to all of us. And I'm very proud of the work
8 that we're doing and I think, based on what I've
9 heard today, we are right on point. And that
10 makes me extremely happy.

11 It was short, but I think that's all I
12 have for right now.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, though, you were
14 perfect. Right on time, so thank you, Efrain.
15 Our next speaker is Danny Machain, Assistant
16 Business Manager for the International
17 Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 569.
18 Danny.

19 MR. MACHAIN: Basically I'm with the
20 Electricians Union, but I'm also president of the
21 Imperial County Building Construction Trades
22 Counsel.

23 We represent 20 different crafts that are
24 here in Imperial County. Great to hear all the
25 different training that's coming out. Next

1 slide, please.

2 You heard about the college training and
3 all of that, which is great; let me tell you a
4 little bit about what the apprenticeships are.
5 I'll try to make it brief; my time has been a
6 little bit cut.

7 Most of the apprenticeship programs that
8 we have run between four to five years. Every
9 craft trains under specific work that they do or
10 they perform on the jobs. I will talk a bit more
11 to give you an example of what the apprenticeship
12 is and the Electrician's, which is my field.

13 For us, it's a five-year program.
14 Basically, the requirements to get in is to have
15 a GED or high school diploma, and what were
16 looking for is that you have Algebra. I've seen
17 one of the presentations on the Algebra, and
18 trust me I understand why they require Algebra.
19 Electrical requires a lot of math, math that you
20 have to do and calculate and a lot of different
21 calculations to do different stuff.

22 It's a five-year program every six
23 months. You basically go to the next level, you
24 pass a class, and you've got so many hours from
25 the job training, you get a raise. And it goes

1 consistently like that for six months, or until
2 you get to the Journeyman level on the top.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Danny, tell us when you want
4 the slides to advance.

5 MR. MACHAIN: Yes. I don't have a lot in
6 the slides, though. Most of it is going to be
7 talking. So a lot of the craft that we have, some
8 of them do require some education, other ones
9 don't require as much, but it depends on what the
10 people are looking for, what they like to do, you
11 know, I always loved electricity, so I've always
12 been kind of tied to electricity for all my
13 education outside of the apprenticeship. Next
14 slide, please.

15 In the building trades, we have 2,350
16 members. We have 226 Apprentices, and that's for
17 all the different crafts. Next slide.

18 I'm going to show you a couple of
19 pictures so you can kind of get the overview of
20 what it is. Over here you see the insulators,
21 it's hard to tell, but it looks like piping, but
22 actually that's the cover, that's the insulation
23 of a pipe, and that's one of the geothermals here
24 in Imperial County. Next slide.

25 This is from our friends, the

1 Ironworkers. You're looking at the left picture
2 of electrical port of entry and they're doing all
3 the tying of rebar before they pour the concrete.
4 On the right, you're looking at Highway 8, they
5 did a stretch from the border of Yuma all the way
6 close to the 111. It took several months, and
7 they did all the rebar reinforcement there, too.
8 Next slide.

9 This is from the Laborers. This is Drew
10 Solar, you've seen a lot of the solar, they
11 actually pal drive the columns down, so they
12 support the solar panels and a lot of stuff in
13 there. Sometimes we get in a little bit of
14 discussion who operates that machinery, but
15 within the trades we have agreements and we
16 understand where our lines are and we get to move
17 from there. Next slide.

18 This is the Operating Engineers. In the
19 top picture, you see the Salton Sea Habitat
20 Conservation. The guy on the left, the driver or
21 the operator, the one on the right, he's the one
22 that is surveying the land out there, trying to
23 get to a certain depth or something on the land.
24 They've got Surveyors that actually tell them so
25 they can be precise with that.

1 The one on the bottom, you're looking at
2 the Le Conte Energy Storage. The Operator will
3 be on the crane right there, which assists the
4 Electrician, on setting the batteries on the
5 pulls in the container. Next slide.

6 Unfortunately, this from the insulator
7 didn't fit into the picture, but that pipe is
8 down by the Pipefitters, that's their trade, they
9 basically know how to do the welding really good
10 on those pipes. And the picture on the right
11 hand side, right at the Port of Entry, they're
12 also doing some work at the Port of Entry right
13 there. Next slide, please.

14 Now, for us, our Unions represent San
15 Diego and Imperial County. We are 3,600 members.
16 We have two locations, not only for our office,
17 but also for training our apprentices. One here
18 in Imperial County in the -- we can say the
19 Master of School will be in San Diego, we have
20 550 Apprentices throughout. Seventy of those 570
21 are Imperial County Apprentices. We do rely a
22 lot on the green energy jobs, but trust me we do
23 everything, anything that has to do with
24 electrical, that's the type of work that we do.
25 A lot of our work here evolves around the green

1 energy jobs. We do a lot of community outreach
2 for our pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship
3 opportunity. We're always looking for those, you
4 know.

5 Like Priscilla mentioned, we have
6 partnership with them and I talked to you about
7 some of her staff, and sometimes they refer some
8 people to us when we can get them in either
9 through the pre-apprenticeship or get them
10 through the Apprenticeship Program. We've got
11 free training and full-time health care with
12 benefits, which is a plus for all of us. Next
13 slide, please.

14 Drew Solar Project, you're looking at 100
15 megawatts of solar energy and six parcels
16 totaling this 762.8 acres in El Centro, Imperial
17 County. You can see the torque tubes, those are
18 the crossbars that go across or sit on top of the
19 pilings that the Laborers were driving in. Next
20 slide, please.

21 Another picture of Le Conte Battery
22 Storage, that's the small crews that we have
23 right now. We actually ended up having lunch
24 with them before this meeting, so we were running
25 a little bit around. They're actually about 32

1 people right now on that side, Electricians.

2 Next slide, please.

3 This is the future. This is what we've
4 got coming up. We've got 2,000 megawatts of
5 battery storage coming, we've got vacuum solar
6 energy, 150 megawatts of solar for that, and 300
7 megawatts of battery storage. Vegas Solar, also
8 100 megawatts of solar and 100 megawatts of
9 battery storage. Next slide please.

10 PLAs, we heard a lot of talk about PLAs.
11 Basically what that is is a Prehire Agreement
12 that sets the standard between the Unions and the
13 Developer, where we agree, what is it that we're
14 going to do, what is our scope, the conditions of
15 the workplace. You have holidays, a lot of the
16 Unions have different holidays. Some of them
17 have more than others. On this PLA, we bring
18 them altogether, but the holidays are mentioned
19 there, so you don't have one or two cross working
20 while the rest of them are off because they
21 didn't get it under a collective bargaining
22 agreement. It brings labor peace, it brings
23 projects on time and on budget, and one of the
24 best things that come out of a PLA is the local
25 hire, the language that comes with them. When we

1 started doing a lot of the solar projects, we
2 started with about -- you can say as low as 50
3 percent of local hire. That was about 12 years
4 ago. The last project that we did we were
5 actually about 90 percent of local hire. Meaning
6 that we have created Journeymen level people that
7 we didn't need to get them from outside of our
8 jurisdiction. The Community Benefit Agreement.
9 Those agreements, we see them a lot, siding with
10 PLAs. Again, we're negotiating for the
11 conditions from the workplace. At the same, in
12 our Community Benefit Agreement, we can negotiate
13 also on the environment and the community needs
14 on that. So also, you can strengthen your local
15 hire right there too, and there's a lot of
16 opportunities for everybody's voices to get heard
17 on those. How am I doing on time?

18 CHAIR PAZ: Yeah, you have the last three
19 minutes to wrap up, please.

20 MR. MACHAIN: There you go. Next slide.
21 This is Imperial County Building Trades, that's
22 my information. Any questions, feel free to
23 reach out. Any questions, there's my email,
24 shoot me the email if you have any questions. I
25 wish I could have spent more time on the

1 Apprenticeship, I can do an hour on the
2 Apprenticeship, alone. Thank you.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Danny.

4 This is an opportunity for the Lithium
5 Valley Commission, now, to ask any questions of
6 the panelists that we've heard from so far. Any
7 questions?

8 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I have a question,
9 Chair Paz.

10 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

11 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: So I know -- I can't
12 remember the first one they were talking about
13 building some infrastructure regarding training.
14 Are they open throughout the Valley? Or is there
15 sites that they're already looking at?

16 CHAIR PAZ: And this question, is it
17 specific to one of the presenters?

18 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: They were talking
19 about the, yeah, it was an earlier presenter. I
20 forgot the name of it.

21 CHAIR PAZ: Was it on the construction?
22 Career?

23 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I believe it was the
24 career.

25 MR. COWAN: It was me, okay. So, yeah,

1 you're asking if there's already an HRCC
2 Partnership in the Valley?

3 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Correct. Is there?

4 MR. COWAN: No, no, not yet. At the
5 moment, there's -- so the way that we divided the
6 state and we divided it in 12 regions, and with
7 some of the rural areas that don't have quite as
8 much demand, like don't have quite as much of the
9 Community Workforce Agreements and PLAs and so on
10 that we mentioned earlier, those Counties came
11 together with other Counties that have more of
12 those agreements when they can; for example, here
13 in Sacramento, Sierra County is part of the
14 Region that encompasses Sacramento and much of
15 the Northern Sacramento Valley. With Imperial at
16 the moment, it's with San Diego. But because of
17 the lack of demand in Imperial, which we've
18 struggled to make inroads into there at the
19 moment, and a lot of these projects, they've just
20 come out of the development phase when that was
21 severely hampered by Covid and a lot of joint
22 apprenticeship training facilities not taking on
23 the apprentices. And that's why this is such a
24 great opportunity that we can finally get where
25 we want to be with some kind of an HRCC

1 partnership in Imperial.

2 MS. LOPEZ: If I can just quickly chime
3 in, Priscilla Lopez with Workforce Economic
4 Development for the County of Imperial. We have
5 been - so, Rafael and Shrayas have reached out to
6 us from the High Roads Construction Career and
7 the California Workforce Development Board to
8 discuss the partnerships. So that's one of the
9 things that's on the table and we are looking
10 into, to move forward with. It's in the works.

11 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Thank you, guys.

12 MS. LOPEZ: Welcome.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Any other questions from the
14 Commissioners? I do not see any other hands, so
15 I want to thank all of the speakers for
16 presenting to us, preparing, adjusting your time,
17 and you all did great with the timekeeping, so
18 thank you for that.

19 How about if we just do like a two-minute
20 get up, stretch, and then we'll start with the
21 panel. But I think I saw Commissioner Olmedo.

22 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Hello, Madam Chair.
23 Is this a good time to ask some questions?

24 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: First of all, I

1 want to thank all the presenters. Great
2 information from everyone. I was happy to hear
3 some of the buzz words from the trade models and
4 frameworks that gave much greater equity in terms
5 of how we see and how California models in
6 innovating a new necessary industry that could
7 help us both transition away from fossil fuel,
8 and at the same time bring equity to the front
9 line communities.

10 I wanted to ask a few questions for
11 clarification here. CTR was asking, was
12 mentioning about their housing project, and I was
13 curious to know if CTR had also looked at sort of
14 putting in or looking at it through the lens of
15 equity, you know, I more and more come across
16 local contractors that I would assume are working
17 with Unions and so on, very supportive of that.
18 But that may not necessarily be the name brand
19 contractors, you know? So many of them too often
20 become frustrated that they're not politically
21 connected, they kind of sit on these licenses
22 that they worked so hard for, but yet they're not
23 getting the same opportunities of jobs. They
24 kind of keep going to the same few, so I'm just
25 wondering if there's an opportunity for CTR, or

1 if CTR has kind of factored that into its housing
2 and developments, specifically to housing
3 projects that it has and is doing some.

4 MR. TURNER: Mr. Olmedo, this is Jim
5 Turner from CTR. Excellent question. We're
6 interested in utilizing as many of the local
7 builders, in this case, for housing as we can.
8 But again, we feel that we get a much better
9 response with the local community, whether it's
10 building or supplying a service, than if we try
11 to bring somebody in from the outside.

12 We're early in this whole endeavor and
13 we've already been contacting some of the local
14 builders, talking to them about their
15 qualifications, etc., and hopefully pretty soon
16 we'll be actually physically doing some work out
17 in the community that people will be able to see.
18 So we're early in this development, but our
19 primary focus is local builders, local service
20 organizations for that. We think we'll end up
21 with a much better result if we follow that path.

22 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: A question for CTR
23 on the economic study. I think it was economic,
24 or it was also workforce studies that have been
25 discussed, and I welcome anybody who wants to

1 talk about it, but the Federal Government and the
2 State have established mandates for all its
3 agencies, including workforce labor, to be
4 inclusive of Environmental Justice. And so I
5 have not heard the term -- I mean, I think I
6 might have, you know, the closest that I've heard
7 was I think Carol made references. I know that
8 Danny did as well in their presentations. But in
9 regards to economic analysis, workforce
10 development analysis, and any other analysis that
11 the industry in particular would be -- is it
12 including the Environmental Justice. Danny, I
13 think you're unmuted. Is it including
14 Environmental Justice, as I imagine that those
15 analyses are at some point going to be presented
16 to government and at some point government has to
17 make decisions one way or another, it being
18 sought out for incentives and investments, and so
19 on. So I'm wondering if the industry, in this
20 case just because I heard CTR, and it's for
21 anyone, if those elements are being built in
22 because as you presented it, you had gone to a
23 local entity and I wasn't sure that those metrics
24 were included. I don't recall hearing about
25 them, so I was wondering if they had sought out

1 the Environmental Justice element.

2 MR. TURNER: This is Jim Turner again. I
3 can speak for CTR. Maybe either Mr. Short or Mr.
4 Weisgall for BHE, although I was a part of BHE
5 for a number of years. Whether we actually
6 outwardly speak of it, I think we all certainly
7 believe in the principles that Environmental
8 Justice, as I understand it at least, stands for.
9 We're very concerned that we do our part in the
10 community, whether it's environmentally related
11 or socially related, or whatever because we live
12 here. We want the community to grow and prosper
13 and we certainly want our employees to grow,
14 prosper, go to higher level jobs, etc. We
15 probably don't speak outwardly enough about it,
16 but it's certainly in all of our planning
17 discussions on how we're going to grow as a
18 company. I won't speak for BHE other than, when
19 I was there, we also were very concerned about
20 the health of the community and especially as it
21 pertained to our employees.

22 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, there's
23 economic values, there, I would think that they'd
24 be factored in. You know, just a real quick
25 reference point that when economic studies were

1 being done in terms of the impacts of moving
2 solar into the path of least resistance, which
3 was agricultural land, farmworkers were never
4 factored in as part of the impacted, there was no
5 transition, there were no economic values placed
6 on -- or any value at all placed on farmworkers,
7 so because of those experiences, we have a great
8 opportunity here to make sure that we're not only
9 bringing the values, but we're bringing the
10 expertise to make sure that they inform those
11 values. So I would encourage the industry to
12 look at frameworks that would certainly be
13 inclusive of those values and be -- thank you,
14 Jim, for BHE, it wasn't very clear, there was a
15 mention of condensation, but a signaling of
16 evaporation, so I was just trying to get an
17 understanding as to whether the characterization
18 that was presented was of condensation or
19 evaporation, given that it wasn't given any value
20 of emissions, yet the Air Board has a list of
21 emissions that contribute to those -- I'm not
22 going to say it I fully read into condensation,
23 but certainly to evaporation. But I would
24 imagine that they were also found in
25 condensation. The clarity on that --

1 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo, these
2 are great questions. I do want to keep us with
3 our time. I think there is an opportunity here.
4 CTR mentioned they're early in the process and to
5 have a further conversation maybe with
6 Commissioner Olmedo outside of this meeting so he
7 can maybe help you understand -- how to value
8 some of the economic justice principles that he's
9 mentioning. I mean, I hear you, that you're
10 already in the process, so I think it's a good
11 opportunity to have those conversations in more
12 detail than right now.

13 And for your other question to BHE, we're
14 going to have a panel in March around the
15 environmental impacts, so I think this is a great
16 question for that, so if it's okay, maybe we can
17 put that in the parking lot for the March
18 meeting. But I think it's a great question that
19 can be answered in more detail during the
20 environmental workshop.

21 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair, that
22 concludes my questions and I was only referring
23 to the slides that were put in front of us.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Correct.

25 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: So certainly, I

1 agree that that can be brought back for the
2 environmental. I was only seeking clarification
3 on the condensation and evaporation on the
4 slides, put in front of us today.

5 CHAIR PAZ: Correct. And I do recognize
6 that that phrase that you echoed was used, so
7 BHE, we will be asking you at the next meeting,
8 but thank you so much.

9 Now, if there are no other questions, a
10 two-minute break. Don't go anywhere unless you
11 have to. Just stand up, stretch, and then we'll
12 go into the panel. But I know we've been sitting
13 for a while. Two minutes.

14 (Break at 3:42 p.m.)

15 (Reconvene at 3:46 p.m.)

16 CHAIR PAZ: I will now introduce the
17 panel. We have invited a group of experts. To
18 share on the topic of creating access to economic
19 and job opportunities I want to welcome Shrayas
20 Jatkar from the California Workforce Development.
21 And I will take this opportunity really to just
22 thank Shrayas for all of the support that he's
23 given me. He is one of the first people that I
24 talked to when we started planning this workshop,
25 so, Shrayas, thank you, thank you, thank you so

1 much.

2 And also, I want to thank Commissioner
3 Castaneda who started this effort with me and
4 then Commissioner Weisgall, who helped me
5 complete it. So thank you for all your support
6 and I will now let Shrayas introduce himself and
7 the panelists and take it from here.

8 MR. JATKAR: Excellent. Well, thank you
9 so much. It's really an honor to be here and
10 present this panel, to moderate this panel.

11 As mentioned, my name is Shrayas Jatkar.
12 I work at the California Workforce Development
13 Board. We're one of the seven departments within
14 the State's Labor and Workforce Development
15 Agency. I'm on the Policy branch here. I'm a
16 Policy specialist that works on equity, climate
17 and jobs. Equity, Climate, and Jobs is also our
18 shorthand for how we define the principles of the
19 High Road. And I've been following this
20 Commission very closely for the last several
21 months and I've been awaiting today's session on
22 Workforce Development.

23 With that, let me just say a couple of
24 words about this panel. I think you've heard
25 from a number of presenters who have talked about

1 and provided specific recommendations, talked
2 about tools like Community Benefits Agreements,
3 so I think this panel will hopefully really
4 continue that focus, really focusing on the how,
5 as in how do we operationalize and advance
6 economic equity? I think that's the big question
7 this Commission has long been talking about,
8 wanting to do things differently, wanting to make
9 sure that community members are gainfully
10 employed and enjoying the many economic benefits
11 associated with developing a Lithium industry in
12 the region. And so hopefully, again, this panel
13 will provide you with some useful ideas for how
14 we can turn those dreams into reality.

15 So the panel that we have today, we have
16 four panelists. Each of them will make some
17 opening remarks. I'll pose some questions, or
18 probably we have enough time for just one
19 question per panelist, and then we'll turn it
20 back to the Commissioners for you to have any
21 questions and discussion with our panel.

22 So, if actually we could go back to the
23 slides so I can introduce folks real quickly. Do
24 we have that slide of the panelists? Thank you.
25 So as you see here, we have a diverse group of

1 folks from academia, community-based
2 organizations, organized labor, as well as Social
3 Services Workforce Services.

4 So first we have Dr. Chris Benner with
5 U.C. Santa Cruz, Professor and Director of the
6 Institute for Social Transformation, also the
7 Chair and Director of the Everett Program for
8 Technology and Social Change.

9 Hector Meza is a Business Agent with
10 International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers,
11 Local 569, which as you heard earlier represents
12 members of the Electrical Workers Union in both
13 Imperial and San Diego Counties. Hector grew up
14 in Brawley and he's had a very interesting story
15 to tell, so I look forward for you all to hear
16 from him.

17 Sahara Huazano, Director of Programs with
18 Alianza Coachella Valley, and I thought I would
19 just give a quick word about Alianza that I saw
20 on their website, but I think is very fitting for
21 this panel. Alianza Coachella Valley, their work
22 is centered on Leadership Development and "an
23 understanding that healthy and economically
24 prosperous communities exist only when our
25 population is represented in all decisions

1 impacting our daily lives." So I really hope we
2 take that to heart and understand that the
3 process is also as important as the outcomes that
4 we seek.

5 And lastly, Marco Cesar Lizarraga,
6 Executive Director of La Cooperativa Campesina de
7 California, it's an association of agencies
8 implementing and administering Farmworker Service
9 Programs, including employment and training
10 services, and funny sidenote, well, first of all,
11 Marco is from Calexico originally and a funny
12 side note is that when we were chatting I think
13 about a week ago, I invited him to this panel,
14 and he mentioned that he's been doing this work
15 longer than I've been alive, so I know he'll
16 bring some of that hubris spirit and levity to
17 this conversation.

18 So, with that, I think let's go down the
19 order as listed here for folks to give their
20 opening remarks, and then I'll come back on to
21 start with some moderated discussion questions.
22 So Chris, we'll give it to you first.

23 DR. BENNER: Thank you so much, Shrayas.
24 I think we can get rid of the slide now so people
25 can see everyone. And I'll try and be shorter

1 because I want to get to Marco's deep expertise
2 and knowledge of the region.

3 I just want to make a few opening
4 remarks. As Shrayas said I'm a Professor at U.C.
5 Santa Cruz. My expertise is broadly on inclusive
6 economic development, and so really thinking
7 about the connection between promoting High Road
8 jobs and their connections to broader regional
9 economies and labor markets. I've been doing
10 work in the Salton Sea for some time, working
11 closely with Alianza Coachella Valley and others,
12 looking at the environmental issues in the
13 region.

14 I want to start by reminding us that, you
15 know, for many places in the world with abundant
16 natural resources that need extraction, people
17 talk about a resource curse. And there's a
18 number of reasons for that. Part of it is that
19 they're often capital intensive industries that
20 don't employ a lot of people, they're often in
21 poor regions or poor countries, and so they end
22 up becoming enclave economies without a lot of
23 local multipliers with supplies and materials and
24 equipment and expertise connecting to them, and
25 part because of the tremendous wealth that can be

1 extracted from that. It can often distort
2 political priorities, you know, in some countries
3 worse cases of actual corruption. But often it
4 can distract the tensions from the importance of
5 building a diverse economy with local
6 connections. And then of course in many places
7 there are the environmental problems.

8 Commissioner Olmedo mentioned on Environmental
9 Justice issues. Of course, that's a huge problem
10 in many natural resource-based regions.

11 And I think we're all very hopeful that
12 Lithium, and particularly geothermal-based
13 Lithium extraction can be different in this area.
14 But to do that, it's going to require some very
15 deliberate attention, not just to the High Road
16 jobs in the extraction, but thinking about the
17 broader connections to value-added industries and
18 the connections with the other economies in the
19 region. So as part of that, I want to make
20 really three points to think about for the
21 discussion.

22 One, which Shrayas pointed to of
23 Alianza's work is the importance of real
24 participation of community and labor constituents
25 in the region. There's a growing body of

1 research, both internationally and the U.S. that
2 shows that those places that are more equitable
3 and have stronger social ties and connections
4 within the region actually have better economic
5 outcomes, and particularly in relationship to
6 Lithium, of all the importance of looking at
7 value-added jobs in materials refinement, battery
8 manufacturing, other applications in electric
9 vehicles, and others. That's going to take a lot
10 of additional policies and infrastructure and
11 support and training and investment to make sure
12 that's realized in any way locally. So that's
13 going to require connection with the broad
14 political constituency in the region.

15 So that participation has to be much more
16 than just a person informing and consulting, it's
17 really got to be about building real
18 collaboration. And part of that is recognizing
19 that there are long-term processes of histories,
20 of lack of opportunity that are coming in the
21 region, and lack of trust. Commissioner Olmedo
22 mentioned the solar industries that haven't
23 produced the promises there. So real
24 participation is the second one.

25 The second point, I'll say, is about

1 Community Benefits Agreements. Project Labor
2 Agreements are important. And Community Benefits
3 Agreements are an opportunity to connect to
4 broader constituencies in the region, connections
5 with other industry than what there can be in a
6 Community Benefit Agreement, it's quite broad for
7 things like wage floors, local hire agreements
8 and targeted hiring for disadvantaged
9 communities, also local procurement, local
10 contracting, labor piece if workforces want to
11 organize Labor Unions, Cross Training Education
12 and Workforce Development, community services --
13 childcare, investment in public transportation,
14 other things that help ensure accessibility to
15 those jobs. Green Building Standards, maybe even
16 creation of a Community Advisory Board to review
17 issues and advise on policies in the region.

18 So thinking seriously about how to
19 organize and put in place a Community Benefit
20 Agreement, I think, is very important.

21 And the final comment I'll make is just
22 the importance of linking workforce development
23 with economic development, which of course
24 requires the investment in innovation,
25 infrastructure, the collective resources. And

1 then I would really encourage the consideration
2 of some kind of severance tax as a way of
3 generating resources from what's essentially
4 common resources, collective resources from
5 nature, from the planet. And that becomes a way
6 of investing in the broader community, at least
7 potentially.

8 And I would also suggest people consider
9 the creation of a sovereign wealth fund, looking
10 at the long term economic opportunities. Many
11 countries in the world have sovereign wealth
12 funds, Norway has the largest, it's more than \$2
13 trillion. But 10 states in the United States
14 have sovereign wealth funds, as well, that mostly
15 come from severance taxes. The largest is Texas,
16 and it largely funds educational enterprises, but
17 Alaska, Wyoming, North Dakota, others have that
18 as well, so it's something to look at. I realize
19 I'm over my time, but hopefully that will give us
20 some food for thought and discussion. Thank you.

21 MR. JATKAR: Thank you, Chris. Let's go
22 ahead and move on to Marco.

23 MR. LIZARRAGA: Wow, what an
24 introduction. I don't know where to start or
25 what to say. Of course, you know, I have been

1 dated, but I did start working in Program
2 Training now, way back in '70-'71 when I was
3 still going to school. And in fact, my Master's
4 thesis was on a regression analysis model to
5 evaluate plumbing training programs, so I've been
6 on this for quite a long time.

7 At any rate, there's a lot of things that
8 I heard today that were very positive and very
9 encouraging. We need to really think about and
10 think through is a new way of collaborating and a
11 collaboration approach needs to be developed.
12 There's a lot of collaboration that's been
13 mentioned that has been required and funding for
14 employment training, but one of the things, for
15 this, if you recall, Efrain Silva drove out a
16 college metric, he's trying to do this training,
17 but the resource is to pay for the kind of lab
18 that they need to do the training is expensive
19 and it's hard to get funds.

20 That's why I say that the collaboration
21 is not enough. We have to integrate.
22 Integration -- what do I mean by that? Well, the
23 problem is companies have the best labs in the
24 world, but you're not going to be able to afford
25 it. So that training needs to be done there.

1 Sometimes, you know, it's not about thinking of
2 new ways of doing things, but sometimes it's
3 about -- there I go with my age -- going back to
4 what we know works, so obviously, you know,
5 bringing in all these elements that we mentioned,
6 you know, non-profit, City Colleges and training
7 institutions. The funding needs to be able to
8 let the people be afford to be trained. And the
9 training lab needs to be at the company, at their
10 site. And one of the things that we used to do
11 in the old days in the seventies, we would train
12 somebody for six months to a year and, guess
13 what? We used to give them a stipend and it was
14 the minimum wage. Because how are you going to
15 ask somebody who has got a wife and a kid to be
16 able to trained if there's no sustainability in
17 becoming trained, in advanced? So that's one of
18 the things that I think has to be done.

19 So OBG, it's an important program that
20 needs to be reimplemented. One of the things in
21 Imperial Valley, like I said I was raised in
22 Calexico and was born in Mexicali, economic
23 development efforts that we went through and in
24 Calexico and everywhere in the Valley, they're
25 difficult because on the one hand, it's difficult

1 to attract people to this heat, okay? We have
2 joke in Mexicali that it was the sinner that went
3 to hell, and when he got to hell, he was from to
4 Mexicali, when he got to hell, he asked the
5 devil, "Hey, do you have a little blanket?" It's
6 difficult to attract people.

7 So when we had small enterprises that
8 came to our area in Imperial Valley, again, and
9 I'm sure Hector and everyone knows this, they
10 would bring a lot of foreign workers, foreign to
11 Imperial Valley, that's one of the things they
12 don't have now. One of the things that I've been
13 going around for the last five or six years
14 talking a lot about is we're living in the
15 technology revolution that is not understood.
16 And it reminds me very much of the Industrial
17 Revolution when it first began. You know, they
18 didn't know what laws we had, they didn't have
19 any adequate laws, they didn't even have any
20 minimum wages, they didn't have eight-hour works,
21 they didn't have a concept of overtime pay, none
22 of that stuff. So we're going through a similar
23 experience with technology and the
24 transformational impact that it's having on the
25 workforce. It's enormous. And we're beginning

1 to see that in the farmworker world. And we're
2 talking about, you know, farmworkers in Imperial
3 Valley and Riverside, we're talking about over
4 50,000 farmworkers.

5 And let me say something here, and I hope
6 I don't take too long. But there's an article
7 that I read in 2018 in the *New York Times*, and
8 this is a quote, "Maria Guadalupe, a recent
9 graduate of a company-sponsored technology
10 course, has gone from packing salad into boxes,
11 to setting up and monitoring robots that do her
12 old job." So my thought here is also that we are
13 not only finding the wealth of the Lithium that
14 it's trying to provide, but we have another human
15 capital wealth that needs to be absorbed and we
16 need to create, the programs, the methods, and
17 the models that are going to be not collaborated,
18 but integrated in order to be able to benefit the
19 community. That's my opening statement.

20 MR. JATKAR: Thank you. And Marco, I
21 didn't know that you've been around since the
22 Industrial Revolution, so we have a lot to learn
23 from you, apparently.

24 MR. LIZARRAGA: No, that one I had to
25 read about.

1 MR. JATKAR: Thank you. Next up, let's
2 go with Hector of IBEW.

3 MR. MEZA: Hi. Good afternoon. My name
4 is Hector Meza. I'm a journeyman wireman, also a
5 state licensed electrician, and a business agent
6 for IBEW, and the son of farmworkers. I'm a
7 graduate from Imperial High School, Class of '02.
8 I went -- okay -- so finding my way around here
9 in the Valley, I had to look into different
10 institutions to mold myself to learn a trade, to
11 try to make something for my life.

12 In high school as a senior, I took IBROP
13 in construction. I went to Job Corps to install
14 tile Setting back in '03. I also went to CET
15 here in the Valley to learn building maintenance.
16 Now they call it Green Construction. I went to
17 IVC, I got my Associates, then I transferred to
18 Cal LA and got my Bachelor's. All that, I would
19 not give away for anything. All that molded me
20 to who I am. They do have great programs, but
21 none of them -- they weren't for me to work here
22 in the Valley.

23 I tried coming back and doing my trade,
24 and just I could not find a good job. I then
25 joined the IBEW Apprenticeship through the

1 Electrical Training Center here in Imperial.
2 That's a state approved apprenticeship program.
3 And after the second year, I was able to afford
4 my first brand new car out of the dealer.

5 On the my third year as an Apprentice, I
6 was finally able to become a homeowner in the
7 City of Brawley.

8 My whole apprenticeship took five years,
9 that's what the apprenticeship takes, five years.
10 Three out of those five years of the
11 apprenticeship, I drove back and forth to San
12 Diego in order to get the experience I needed to
13 become a well-rounded Electrician. It opened my
14 eyes to see how many people drive to San Diego
15 every morning. There's a lot of shuttles for
16 that that drive over there.

17 My experience that I got through the
18 Apprenticeship, I got to work on solar, I got to
19 work on battery storage systems, I got to work in
20 hospitals, schools, military bases and the San
21 Diego Skyline.

22 The Apprenticeship right now, they start
23 at \$19.88 an hour. Every six months they get two
24 to three dollar raises as they study in school
25 and as they train on the work, that's from the

1 job site. Once they graduate, a Journeyman right
2 now is making \$49.70 an hour. We have excellent
3 health insurance, dental, an excellent pension,
4 and all those on top of our current wages. We
5 don't pay anything, it's part of a package.

6 The Apprenticeship is totally free. We
7 get to work and we get to train on the job sites,
8 get paid. And with those wages, we aren't just
9 wire pullers, we are state certified
10 electricians, we work in every industry all the
11 way to nuclear. So we know about motor control,
12 reading screen, and trouble shooting. All trades
13 here, all trades in construction have
14 apprenticeships, and they aren't just skilled
15 workers. We're technical blue-collar workers.
16 Our five-year training, it's state approved, it
17 is backed by college records. I actually got
18 college credit for my apprenticeship.

19 And as a four-year college graduate, I
20 can tell you, being in the apprenticeship is no
21 walk in the park. Thank you.

22 MR. JATKAR: Thank you so much, Hector.
23 And last, Sahara from Alianza Coachella Valley.

24 MS. HUAZANO: Yes, hi. My name is Sahara
25 Huazano. I'm the Director of Programs for

1 Alianza. I'm happy to be here, happy to get to
2 know the panelists and hear their input, as well.

3 When I was invited to be a panelist here,
4 the words "equitable, sustainable and inclusive
5 jobs" were mentioned. And those words need to be
6 accompanied by "actions" and reflected to the
7 realities of the people who live in the region.
8 These words imply to look not just at the
9 workforce, but everything that comes into
10 developing an infrastructure to address the
11 barriers for people to get to work.

12 I wanted to briefly just play it off that
13 what is the term "equity?" That was one of the
14 questions that I asked, is there a common
15 definition of "equity" that is being used in this
16 space? Because I think we all come from
17 different backgrounds and expertise, but I just
18 wanted to frame what I mean by equity as somebody
19 participating in this panel.

20 So, the term "equity" is different from
21 the word "equality," which means providing the
22 same amount of something despite the existing
23 needs for assets. Equity means recognizing that
24 we don't all start from the same place, and must
25 acknowledged and make that adjustments to the

1 imbalances.

2 The process is ongoing, requiring us to
3 identify and overcome intentional and
4 unintentional barriers arising from biases or
5 systemic structures.

6 So overall what I'm trying to say is that
7 as we are thinking about this workforce
8 development and all the presentations that were
9 presented before our panel, there were a lot of
10 different opportunities. I was glad to hear that
11 there were some elements and I think somebody
12 mentioned childcare to different types of support
13 so that people can go to work.

14 So I think when we're talking about these
15 opportunities, that it's not just a blank slate
16 of like, "Oh, well, these are the opportunities,
17 please come and join the workforce," just like
18 that, just submit the application. I think there
19 needs to be several steps that need to be taken
20 in regards to is we want to address equity in an
21 underserved community in order to be inclusive.
22 That's all.

23 MR. JATKAR: Thank you. So let me go
24 through our panelists and pose a question or two
25 to them, and then as I mentioned we'll stop and

1 turn it back to the Commissioners for any
2 questions you have for this group.

3 So I'll just go down in the same order.
4 Chris, you know, rather than a question, I just
5 wonder if you wanted to say more about the
6 Sovereign Wealth Fund concept and some examples
7 or, better yet, maybe how that could be applied
8 here. And actually, I'll throw you another one
9 in case you want to answer this, or you have time
10 to do both, which is I found it very interesting,
11 your suggestion of an Advisory Council, a
12 Community Advisory Council for Community Benefits
13 Agreements, if I understood correctly. And so
14 that kind of recommendation, too, I think is
15 something that could really help take us to kind
16 of the next step of work that actually needs to
17 happen in the region.

18 DR. BENNER: Great. Thank you for that
19 question. Maybe I'll start with the second one
20 because I think it builds off of some of what
21 Sahara was just saying. I'll reference a sort of
22 framework that was developed by our colleagues at
23 U.C. Riverside in the Center for Social
24 Innovation, what they called a "Ready to Rise
25 Framework." And it's useful just as a way of

1 thinking about this, and the first thing is
2 readiness. You know, how ready is a community to
3 be able to absorb and benefit from the kind of
4 investment that is potentially here with Lithium.
5 And part of that, I think, is the workforce and
6 economic training, and the institutions that
7 we've been talking about today, which I think is
8 absolutely critical.

9 But part of that is also the strength of
10 the community organizations because they're the
11 ones who would know best the barriers to access
12 and the specific conditions that need to be
13 addressed. And I think supporting the kind of
14 sort of cross-regional community advisory board,
15 or connection, would be a tremendous way of
16 helping to support and assess the readiness of
17 the community to really benefit and to provide
18 sort of input into community benefit agreements.

19 The rest of that "Ready to Rise" is
20 resilience and then inclusion, sustainability,
21 and equity, very much in the way that Sahara has
22 talked about.

23 And getting back to Sovereign Wealth
24 Fund, I mean, I think one of the things that's
25 important is we have an opportunity here with

1 Lithium and the way that it is a pointer to a new
2 economy, really trying to present a more
3 sustainable economy, and one that can hopefully
4 get us off of fossil fuels. But part of that is
5 recognizing that we have to understand the full
6 lifecycle of Lithium and think about sort of the
7 long-term economic development strategies of
8 that.

9 And one of the most well-known examples
10 of a Sovereign Wealth Fund in the U.S. is the
11 Alaska Permanent Fund, which was put in place by
12 a Republican Governor and State Legislature in
13 the early '70s when they discovered oil in the
14 far north slope of Alaska, and recognized that
15 that's a non-renewable resource and wanted to
16 create a permanent fund that could provide a
17 resource for the long-term economic
18 sustainability of, in that case, the State.

19 But I think it is relevant to thinking
20 about sort of the long-term economic viability of
21 the Salton Sea Region. And many of the things
22 that Marco was talking about, of agriculture, of
23 course, is a very important industry in the
24 region that is in great need of investment,
25 improving wages, agriculture improvement, you

1 know, technology, that is going to lead to
2 displacement.

3 And so, what are the kinds of jobs and
4 connections that people displaced from new
5 technological innovations in agriculture are
6 going to be able to move to. And creating that
7 Permanent Wealth Fund then creates a long-term
8 asset and resource that is available for that
9 kind of investment long-term.

10 So again, I would encourage people to
11 look at that, and many of the Sovereign Wealth
12 Funds in the U.S. have existed for a long period
13 of time. The Texas one is from the 1800s, and
14 there's often a tendency, though the immediate
15 needs are so important and pressing, and that's
16 very true, but if we're going to be thinking
17 about building an inclusive economy in the Salton
18 Sea Region, we also have to have the long-term
19 perspective there, as well.

20 I will emphasize that, you know, a
21 Sovereign Wealth Fund is not a substitute for
22 Community Benefits Agreements, and the Project
23 Labor Agreements, and the kind of Workforce
24 Investment and Training, those are all very
25 important in the meantime, but I would encourage

1 us to think about the Sovereign Wealth Fund, as
2 well.

3 MR. JATKAR: Okay, thank you. And a
4 really good point, I think, about sort of the
5 time horizon and knowing that at some point
6 Lithium will -- we'll extract all of it and at
7 some point maybe battery chemistry will change,
8 and Lithium may not be as favored as other
9 technologies, so really preparing for the long
10 term, I think, is absolutely critical.

11 I think what you were bringing up with
12 the Ready to Rise Framework, I know Alianza has
13 been involved in that work around inclusive
14 economic development and so, Sahara, I might come
15 to you and ask if you could share a little bit
16 more about -- if you want to say anything more
17 about the Ready to Rise Framework, or also sort
18 of what's next, you know, good ideas and
19 recommendations have been coming together, and if
20 you're able to say a little bit more about sort
21 of what now, with that kind of framework, or how
22 it applies here.

23 MS. HUAZANO: Yes, definitely. I think
24 if we put the High Road framework with the Rise
25 and Ready framework, I think it can complement

1 each other in the way as I was listening, the
2 High Road is very skilled work and quality
3 focused, and it has a start in developing policy
4 from top/bottom approach. The Rise and Ready
5 framework provides a bottom/up approach, where
6 you're looking at the resilience of what are the
7 assets that exist in the community because we're
8 talking about what is missing, but there's also
9 already existing assets in the community, so how
10 can we uplift those, which is the "R" in RISE for
11 resilience, and the "S" which is sustainability,
12 which I think it was mentioned by one of the
13 Commissioners. What about public health, what
14 about the environment? How sustainable are we
15 talking about in developing our economies? And I
16 think that based on the Acronym RISE which is
17 resilience, inclusion, sustainability, equity and
18 readiness. Based on my assessment resilience and
19 sustainability is currently missing as we're
20 looking at this framework of High Road in that
21 they can be completely be work together to
22 complement each other and address equity in this
23 rising economy.

24 MR. JATKAR: Thank you. And actually,
25 maybe I'll just ask real quick, I think

1 Elisabeth, if we wanted to share a link to the
2 report where folks can find out or read more
3 about Ready to RISE framework, I was about to say
4 RISE to ready, but that makes no sense. Should
5 be throw that in the chats or is that something
6 that can be shared after the workshop today?

7 MS. DE JONG: Yes, thank you for asking.
8 I would recommend putting it in the Q&A, even
9 though it's not a question, and we will follow-up
10 by putting it as a link in the meeting action
11 minutes so it will be on that document, as well.

12 MR. JATKAR: Excellent. Yeah, I found it
13 very useful and appreciate your point, too, about
14 sort of the, you know, the alignment with the
15 High Road framework and sort of areas that maybe
16 are in need of some further refinement. So I'll
17 throw that in.

18 But as Sahara was mentioning, you know,
19 existing assets and one of those is people, of
20 course, so Marco, I remember, when we were
21 chatting last week, you were talking about this
22 myth that farmworkers can only be trained for
23 farm work and can't get into sort of more
24 technical jobs. And I wonder if you would like
25 to expand on that a little bit more?

1 MR. LIZZARAGA: Yeah, it was really
2 interesting to me that in Salinas, this huge
3 agricultural company, that they themselves are
4 training their workers into managing robots
5 because what I see in the future is, no, the
6 farmworker is not going to disappear, they're
7 going to be greatly reduced in numbers, and
8 they're going to be very techy and savvy, okay.
9 So for instance, let me give you an example of
10 one experience I had, and I'm going to be a
11 little bit implicitly critical, but seven or
12 eight years ago I put in a proposal to the state
13 to fund us to train farmworkers in Solar Panel
14 installation. Well, they said, that industry,
15 it's not going to last, and blah blah, so you
16 know, we're going to be training people for a
17 dead end, okay? Then, of course, training
18 farmworkers for that? And it was really
19 interesting because, you know, Hector had
20 experience with CET, which is one of our members,
21 that's who we use in Imperial Valley to carry out
22 our training, that CET in Coachella and the one
23 in Imperial. So one time that I was in Calexico,
24 we were talking about this training, there was a
25 couple of people that asked me, "Wait a minute,

1 farmworkers are learning how to do that?" You
2 know, there's this bias that somehow, you know,
3 and I always tell people, well, listen, you're
4 talking to a farmworker. I worked in the fields
5 when I first came here when I was 12-years-old,
6 that's what we came to do. We used to go pick
7 grapes in Fowler and Fresno, and then I was in
8 the fields all the way up to when I was a
9 sophomore in high school. In fact, we used to
10 get up at 2:00 in the morning on a bus to
11 Coachella to pick grapes. So there's this bias
12 that somehow every member, a national with 50,000
13 farmworkers, and guess what? They cannot afford
14 to live in Imperial Valley. Guess where a lot of
15 them live. Mexicali. And one of the things that
16 have happened in Imperial Valley is the
17 devastating economic impact of the Federal
18 policies, starting with Nixon and his Operation
19 Interception that killed the valley economically.
20 The commerce that they had was killed. So there
21 is a little bias about farmworkers having the
22 capability to be trained.

23 I'll tell you one interesting story.
24 There was a time that I worked in Imperial
25 Valley, you know, with a labor contractor also on

1 the other side of that path, okay, it was a labor
2 contractor company. And lo and behold, we
3 farmworkers were actually nurses and two of them
4 were doctors in Mexicali, so there's a lot of
5 human capital in that population that we need to
6 take advantage of and use. You know, we've got
7 to cut out that bias towards farmworkers.

8 MR. JAKTAR: Thank you. Hector, I want
9 to turn to you, then, if you could say a little
10 bit. You know, we've heard from Danny on this
11 point around solar and increasingly over time
12 more local folks finding employment on these
13 projects. And I wonder if you could say a big
14 about how that's possible, whether it's talking
15 about the Community Workforce Agreements, or
16 Project Labor Agreements, or other aspects, so I
17 think that's an interesting story that's worth
18 telling about the change over time and how that
19 sort of local share of the workforce really
20 increased.

21 MR. MEZA: Okay. So first, touching on
22 what Marco was saying, a lot of the electricians
23 going through either an apprenticeship or CWC
24 Programs, they have been farmworkers. So a lot
25 of electricians we have were farmworkers. So

1 they learn. Yeah, it's just knowledge, and
2 knowledge once it gets in you, you can't take
3 that out.

4 And regarding the solar, a lot of the
5 work, solar that has been done here in the
6 Valley, they have been PLAs, Project Labor
7 Agreements. Basically what that has done is it
8 has given us a place to work, projects to do. It
9 makes sure that the people working are being
10 trained correctly, and to do the project on time
11 and under budget. And PLAs help with that. And
12 it helps everybody who wants to be doing the work
13 here on solar. I don't know what else to say.

14 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: It sounds like what
15 you're describing is really like sort of the
16 Project Labor Agreement as a sort of policy
17 really helps to pull folks onto these job sites
18 and into these labor markets where training is --
19 this is a necessary complement for having pushed
20 people into those labor markets, but we need both
21 of those push and pull factors. That sounds like
22 that's one of the unique aspects of what a
23 Project Labor Agreement can do.

24 MR. MEZA: It also makes sure that people
25 are getting paid correctly and it makes sure that

1 people are getting paid right. Because there's
2 some plants that weren't done without the PLAs
3 and we didn't do those. And a lot of the people
4 working there, they were getting minimum wage to
5 be working on those plants. At least with the
6 PLAs, there's levels through the apprenticeships
7 and through the other programs that they can
8 escalate themselves and make a better living.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Shrayas -- sorry to interrupt
10 you, I know you're almost wrapping up, but I know
11 Commissioner Kelley has had his hand up and --

12 MR. MEZA: All right.

13 CHAIR PAZ: So, Commissioner Kelley.

14 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Thank you, Chair Paz.
15 I'm going to attend a community meeting and I
16 have to leave in a few minutes.

17 So I appreciate everyone from Sahara to
18 Hector, and Hector, we've met recently, and I
19 remember seeing Sahara at a community meeting in
20 West Shores, so we've been crossing paths for
21 awhile. Shayras, we've been on calls before,
22 too.

23 Chris, I did want to tell you that
24 Imperial County, yeah, we are ready. We're ready
25 for every challenge, if we have to lay our

1 foundation stone in front of everywhere we step,
2 we will. And this conversation is part of that.
3 Marco, I hear you about the farmworker. I may
4 not look like one, but I did cannery tomatoes for
5 six years, I was on the harvester, and I
6 eventually got promoted to the tractor, but it
7 took awhile. And then at one point they demoted
8 me from the tractor and put me back on the
9 Harvester. So, yeah, I don't look the part, but
10 I've felt the part.

11 And I hear these things about the
12 Community Benefit Agreement and the Sovereign
13 Wealth and the Permanent Fund, and those are good
14 ideas. I want to know more about it and I'm
15 willing to look into it.

16 I also note that there are huge social
17 needs in Imperial Valley, health needs in
18 Imperial Valley, and we've had, if you didn't
19 know, from the solar development we created
20 Community Benefit Programs for the Ag
21 displacement and for community enhancement.

22 Those two programs have done significant
23 things about being able to foster some new
24 industry like organic fruit packing and bringing
25 back a beef plant. So, there is a model, it's

1 already here, and we have Advisory Panels made up
2 of the community. So I'm willing to have that
3 conversation. But I wasn't sure if you guys were
4 aware of that.

5 And then we have been having these
6 conversations which, as you guys have heard, in
7 our community with Environmental Justice Comite,
8 some of the partner organizations, community-
9 based organizations where we've been talking
10 about Severance Tax since July and I'm happy to
11 hear it spoken about here. When, Chris, you
12 brought it up it was like, yeah! We'd like to do
13 that. But my question though to you, Chris, is
14 do you see that model as being a state model or a
15 local model?

16 DR. BENNER: Commissioner Kelley, thank
17 you so much for your comment and sharing some of
18 your deep knowledge from the region, I really
19 appreciate it.

20 The Sovereign Funds that I'm aware of in
21 the Severance Tax models that I know of in the
22 U.S. are state level models, not local models.
23 And I know that that was one of the proposals
24 that came from the County was potentially making
25 that possible at the County. I think that's very

1 innovative. I think there's some potential for
2 that. I think it's worth some exploration in
3 thinking about as a way of trying to ensure that
4 there is both local benefits maximized from
5 Lithium, but also ensuring that the
6 infrastructure, you know, the roads, the power,
7 the schools, the education that are so important
8 locally to help ensure the value-added industries
9 are able to build on the Lithium extraction
10 happen locally there, as well. So I think it's
11 an intriguing idea we're thinking about. I'm not
12 aware of models that have been done at a County
13 level or Local level, but --

14 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: There are, Chris,
15 we've looked at it. There are some that have the
16 authority, but not in California. And that's why
17 we're advocating for it. But thank you.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner.

19 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Thank you, Chair Paz.

20 DR. BENNER: Thank you.

21 CHAIR PAZ: Shrayas, back to you, and
22 then before we can open it to questions for the
23 rest of the Commission.

24 MR. JAKTAR: I think that might wrap it
25 up there because I'm seeing that we're already at

1 4:30. But if you are okay with it, we can give
2 our panelists, you know, like 30 seconds to do a
3 closing statement, or just sort of last thoughts
4 they want to share. Or how do you feel about
5 that.

6 CHAIR PAZ: I think we can open it ---
7 thank you, Ryan -- to questions. But thank you,
8 all of the panelists for your time. So at this
9 point, any questions from the Commission for this
10 panel? Commissioner Olmedo.

11 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: I just wanted to
12 thank all the presenters. It's definitely in the
13 spirit of tying it -- maximizing the benefits and
14 build a model. The elements are there.

15 I always mention that no community is a
16 cookie cutter, right? We have to be able to
17 customize, localize in making sure that we build
18 programs and community benefits that are
19 guaranteed, and making sure that they do so much
20 of what all of you said, making sure they are
21 responsive to the frontline communities, fence
22 line communities.

23 I think there's enough data, enough
24 science, enough policy that already says this is
25 where the impact is, this is the way that it

1 needs to be distributed based on a logical model.
2 And I think you have brought that to these
3 presentations today, so I want to thank you for
4 that.

5 I think there's still some work of how we
6 localize it, right. How do we make sure that the
7 frontline impacted communities benefit from this?
8 And Commissioner Kelley is correct, you know,
9 we're having many conversations. I mean, it's
10 important to note that we are a disadvantaged
11 community. The data shows that the population
12 here is considerably, and I would say alarmingly,
13 disengaged.

14 And one of the challenges we have is that
15 a lot of times the same people, same faces,
16 locally making decisions, so these models could
17 be great models to make sure that we achieve
18 equity and I would say that your models and ideas
19 that you brought today, that perhaps that work
20 well, but they need to be customized and
21 localized so that we can achieve the maximum
22 benefit, so the win-win language could be the
23 gold standard, you know, be the example for the
24 rest of this country as the country sees and
25 seeks out other similar types of ventures in

1 other areas, not limited to Lithium, but to other
2 industries.

3 As far as all the language that was
4 shared, I want to thank you for sharing it.
5 Those were certainly the same language that we
6 feel will deliver the wins for this area. And
7 for California and this country, so thank you.

8 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you Commissioner
9 Olmedo. And I want to build on what Commissioner
10 Olmedo just said in terms of how we adapt it to
11 our region because, you're right, that many of
12 the models that exist, exist elsewhere where they
13 have different challenges, different assets.

14 And for the question that I'm going to
15 tee up, I want to reference Alianza Salton Sea
16 initiatives that started sort of in the middle of
17 the Pandemic -- if we can consider that's a
18 middle, the timeline keeps moving -- but early on
19 during the Pandemic because we were thinking
20 about -- and I'm sort of switching a little bit
21 of hats here for all of you -- but Alianza
22 started thinking early on, how are we going to
23 recover, and what are those models, and how do
24 they apply to our region?

25 So, one of those things that we did,

1 Alianza did, was to reach out to researchers,
2 right, there's data that we don't have, a lot of
3 the data never captures our region. And then
4 Alianza modified that process of the research
5 data gathering to include community voice.

6 So, Sahara, if you can talk about how
7 Alianza included community perspective, what has
8 been done, and then maybe Chris, if you can talk
9 about how that has shaped and started to inform a
10 more regional approach when we're talking about
11 what is needed to truly have a thriving economy
12 in the context of the Salton Sea. So, Sahara?

13 MS. HUAZANA: Yes, definitely. So, part
14 of the research classes, we have it in three
15 different tracks. The first track wants to get
16 all the information that is out there, like the
17 framework, case studies, and that's what the
18 partners within the research institutions did.

19 In partnering with the community, we wanted
20 to ground truth that information by doing focus
21 groups established more than ten years, working
22 there in the community. We decided to have focus
23 groups with people that we knew that they knew
24 about the work and that they knew other people.
25 So, it was intergenerational.

1 I know the majority here are all adults,
2 but it's also the high school students, all these
3 programs that are being developed for them, where
4 are they at? Where are their thoughts and ideas?
5 So we brought in an intergenerational group into
6 these focus groups and we had a discussion about
7 what is a good job, what do they mean by
8 benefits, what do we want to get out of this in
9 these upcoming changes.

10 So we had an understanding about the
11 economic and social concepts of what it needs to
12 take in order to have a thriving economy, but the
13 process that Silvia was just talking about is
14 that, for building these frameworks, it's crucial
15 to have the community participate from the
16 beginning, not at the end.

17 So then I know that Chris Benner
18 mentioned an advisory Board and I know Supervisor
19 Ryan Kelley and Commissioner Olmedo mentioned
20 that there's already groups established. So as
21 the report is being put together, via the
22 guidance by this Commission and I think it's very
23 crucial to imbed it, a need to follow-up as next
24 steps, and it really has the community
25 participate in that process of informing the

1 different frameworks and anything that comes into
2 what is next for the region.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Sahara. So
4 essentially there was a research question, some
5 findings that our research partners did, and
6 before even publishing or putting everything in,
7 it's like, well, let's check this with the
8 community. Is this resonating? Is this local?
9 So, Chris, you've been part of this from the
10 beginning. How has that informed the findings in
11 any way?

12 DR. BENNER: Well, it's been fundamental
13 to the findings, and I'll just say, you know,
14 over many years we've done research on indicators
15 of inclusive economies that have been developed
16 in many different contexts. And part of that is
17 the real commitment to data-driven decision
18 making, and really being clear about letting
19 research-based and real understanding of what's
20 going on in the regions help inform everyone's
21 decision because it helps provide a basis for
22 conversations, for discussing how we understand
23 what the real opportunities were, and we brought
24 some examples from other regions, other
25 countries, around inclusion in conversation with

1 some of the community members that came in to
2 give us feedback.

3 And it fundamentally shaped some of the
4 recommendations we were making about specific
5 indicators. And part of that was being clear
6 about the distinction between equity, as
7 different from equality, but also equity being
8 different than the inclusion.

9 And part of that is being really clear
10 about, well, how do we measure participation?
11 What does it mean to be meaningfully involved in
12 decision making? And part of that is, how do you
13 measure a full understanding of the context? How
14 do you understand the impact of the decisions
15 that are open for collaboration? A lot of
16 decision making happens in places that many
17 community members are not invited to, or are not
18 part of, and so how do we make sure that decision
19 making is transparent.

20 It also helped highlight for us the
21 importance of health in the region, the health
22 challenges of the Salton Sea and really
23 prioritizing socioecological health, both of the
24 ecology of the region, and then community health
25 has been critical for understanding inclusion.

1 And that's a very specific thing, you know.
2 Other regions have that, too, but a very high
3 priority in the Salton Sea Region that we
4 couldn't have predicted ahead of time without
5 that input coming in.

6 And then the access to the opportunity,
7 part of that is thinking about commutes,
8 transportation, public transit, what's available
9 and all that, and then the infrastructure
10 including the affordable housing as being really
11 critical.

12 So all those things only emerged out of
13 the sort of participatory process that Sahara and
14 Silvia have described.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And again, I
16 think it was relevant to what Commissioner Olmedo
17 was asking, but it's also a model that could be
18 used as the Lithium Valley Commission gets
19 towards the drafting of the report and making
20 sure that there are ways in which the community
21 can ground truth sort of those findings.

22 And it also may be helpful for some of
23 the great work that's already happening in
24 Imperial when they're developing these programs,
25 they're like how do we engage people, or the

1 users. So, thank you for providing that model.

2 Commissioner Olmedo?

3 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Chris, again, thank
4 you for the great knowledge you bring. The work
5 that you've done, or the experience, there are
6 Environmental Justice principles. I don't know
7 if you've ever had a chance to read them. One
8 question would be, how do you see those
9 Environmental Justice principles playing out in
10 the development of an industry such as the
11 Lithium industry? And how would they be
12 incorporated into a Community Benefits Agreement?
13 How do you see that evolving?

14 The other question is, how familiar are
15 you with -- this of Federal and State but let's
16 say just focus on State now. So there are land
17 use policies on Environmental Justice, there's
18 planning policies on Environmental Justice,
19 there's CalEnviroScreen that characterizes and
20 identifies some of these areas where we have the
21 greatest impact.

22 I remember having worked on AB 1318,
23 which built a power plant, a fossil fuel power
24 plant, eco plant in Desert Hot Springs; and I
25 remember at the time that California Energy

1 Commission came out with an impacted area of
2 about six miles. Those types of things also play
3 out in these Community Benefits Agreements. And
4 how do you bring all of this in to make sure that
5 the equity and justice is built in, based on so
6 much policy that is already making sure -- and
7 I'm also thinking of like petroleum, you know,
8 refineries, and how they've affected communities,
9 and so like Wilmington or communities like in
10 Kern, you know, that fence line having to bear
11 the brunt of this. How do you, with all this
12 information I just gave you, build a Community
13 Benefits Agreement to make sure that these fence
14 line communities aren't, you know, further
15 disserved. And whenever you have an opportunity
16 like this, and we saw it initially, I mean,
17 there's interest from everyone. You know, bring
18 the lab over here, bring this over there, you
19 know, I mean, I don't know, I'm just curious.
20 Imperial has never had so much attention. Any
21 thoughts about what I just put in front of you?

22 DR. BENNER: What can I say? You put a
23 lot out there. And thank you, Commissioner
24 Olmedo. You know, one of the things I would say
25 is that what goes into a Community Benefits

1 Agreement has to come from leaders of the
2 community.

3 One of the Fundamental Environmental
4 Justice principles is, you know, the voices of
5 those at the front line have to be first and
6 foremost in conversations about that. That would
7 be the main thing, I would say.

8 And I am quite familiar with what the
9 CalEnviroScreen and a lot of Environmental Justice
10 work. I think one of the things to think about
11 in the context of specifically the Lithium
12 industry is that often when people talk about
13 Environmental Justice, they're talking about
14 mitigating or addressing specific negative
15 environmental impacts, you know, polluting
16 industries or others.

17 And I think we have to fully understand
18 the environmental context of geothermal Lithium
19 extraction, but it's certainly a lot cleaner than
20 open pit mining that goes on in China, or some of
21 the open pool, evaporation pool, Lithium
22 extraction in Chile. And I think that's a
23 positive thing.

24 I think there's a more comprehensive
25 understanding of Environmental Justice that

1 should be brought into this conversation which
2 is, you know, the environment is where we live,
3 work and play, and what are the ways that the
4 Lithium industry has an important member of the
5 Salton Sea Community and many people have pointed
6 to people in industry live in the region and work
7 with and are soliciting from the region, as well.

8 But what are the responsibilities of that
9 for addressing the broader environmental health
10 challenges of the legacy of pesticides and other
11 pollutants that are in the dust, that are
12 emerging from the Salton Sea and elsewhere. And
13 what does that mean also for investing in
14 community health?

15 You know, the parks, the green space, the
16 trees and other development to make the
17 communities of Imperial Valley and Coachella
18 Valley the kinds of communities that we all want
19 to live in. And I think that's an important part
20 I was thinking about Environmental Justice, as
21 well. It's not just mitigating the negative
22 impacts, but how do we invest in a healthy
23 environment where we live, work and play.

24 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair --

25 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

1 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Just a follow-up --

2 CHAIR PAZ: Luis, I really have to catch
3 you, very respectfully.

4 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair. I
5 just want to just make a point.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: What you brought up
8 about the Salton Sea, and I think it's great.
9 One of the risks of the local dynamics here is
10 that we do have a Trade Agreement with Mexico
11 that has contributed to the demise of the Salton
12 Sea, and we do have an agricultural industry that
13 has contributed too, and many industries to be,
14 in all fairness. So certainly I think, as we get
15 the expertise from speakers such as yourselves,
16 it's real important to understand also the
17 history to make sure that we're not taking away
18 from future opportunities and things that have
19 not received the proper care, but at the same
20 time addressing these legacy issues that have
21 been kicked down the road, right, like the Salton
22 Sea. So, thank you.

23 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I know
24 Commissioner Colwell also has to go to Nyland
25 (phonetic) for that community meeting that's

1 taking place. But thank you so much to the
2 panelists, great conversation, and if anyone has
3 any questions you can connect directly with them.
4 Thank you again, Shrayas, for all of your
5 support.

6 Arthur, did you -- did I cut you off?
7 Did you try to say something?

8 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: No, I'm good. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIR PAZ: Okay, and I called you Arthur
11 -- Richie! Thanks. Public Comment.

12 MS. DE JONG: Thank you, Chair Paz. So
13 if you're joining us by Zoom on your computer,
14 please use the "raise hand" feature. If you've
15 called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand and
16 *6 to unmute your phone line. First we'll go
17 through the hands raised in the Zoom application,
18 then phone, and then any written comments. I see
19 a hand raised by Nikola Lakic. You should be
20 able to unmute.

21 MR. LAKIC: Hello. Can you hear me?

22 MS. DE JONG: Yes.

23 MR. LAKIC: Good afternoon, Chair Paz.
24 Good afternoon everyone. My name is Nikola
25 Lakic. I am a graduate

1 Engineer/Architect/Inventor, and I am pleased to
2 have the opportunity to say a few words.

3 For the record, if you allow me, thirty
4 seconds extra I would appreciate it. Three
5 minutes time as is allowed for public comment is
6 very limited time, but at least I will try to
7 summarize several points. I took some notes
8 here.

9 If you already didn't not to read, I
10 respectfully urge you to read at least my two
11 recent public comments. As you may know by now,
12 I am an inventor of several breakthrough
13 technologies in the energy industry, hydro power,
14 solar, geothermal, drilling deeper by the their
15 well work.

16 Also, as you may know, my proposal for
17 the restoration of the Salton Sea which includes
18 the extraction of Lithium is under review by the
19 Panel of Independent Reviewers. If it's
20 premature for me to speak about it, I'm waiting
21 for the Panel's report. But I must say that I
22 have seen the other original competing proposals,
23 and I am confident that my proposal will be
24 accepted.

25 It is inconceivable to me that anyone

1 with common sense would reject a proposal that
2 provides a clean environment and that would
3 generate revenue in billions of dollars yearly,
4 than rather accept a proposal that does not
5 prevent incoming environmental disaster in each
6 government, state, governments plural, state, and
7 federal, constant help in hundreds of millions of
8 dollars to fix never-ending problems.

9 There is much more in involved than just
10 extracting Lithium from geothermal brine and/or
11 just importing seawater. As you already know,
12 I'm opposing the current calls of action, the
13 geothermal brine, and related projects that
14 supposedly will prevent the formation of toxic
15 dust storm. The projects that are initiated by
16 leaders at the IID, Salton Sea Authority,
17 California National Resources, officially
18 accepted in 2016. I'm sorry to say, but those
19 are nonsensical projects that leads to the
20 destruction of the Salton Sea.

21 Because of limited time, now, I will save
22 my comment in writing explaining in details why
23 it leads to the destruction of the Salton Sea,
24 and why current projects are nonsensical.

25 It is mindboggling that I have opposition

1 instead of being thankful that I have solved a
2 very difficult problem. And instead of being
3 united in asking the Government, State and
4 Federal, for funding, I had to argue with local
5 leadership. It is unbelievable. I'm doing my
6 best to introduce my proposal to stakeholders and
7 to protect my work through patent law. But there
8 is a limit to how much I can do alone.

9 I respectfully urge State officials,
10 relevant State agencies, to get involved. First,
11 the current course of action, which is
12 ridiculous, must be stopped because going forward
13 --

14 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Mr. Lakic. We are
15 up with time.

16 MR. LAKIC: Okay, I will send to you in
17 writing. But thank you very much for the time.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

19 MS. DE JONG: Next is Jose Flores. You
20 should be able to unmute yourself.

21 MR. FLORES: Again, a very informative
22 meeting. I want to show my appreciation for the
23 gravitas afforded by the Commissioners who are
24 always present and participate during the meeting
25 and show a great deference to this endeavor. I

1 wish I could say that about our other
2 Commissioners that kind of are here and there,
3 but I think this is very important to me and my
4 community, so I wish in the future that they are
5 also present because it's not only an important
6 matter, not only for our community here, but also
7 for our state and nation.

8 On the discussion of research with local
9 communities having a voice, again, I totally
10 agree with that; it's very important, but I feel
11 it must be strategic and efficient. The
12 information or the effort put forth cannot be a
13 mile wide and an inch deep, or a mile deep and an
14 inch wide; it must be balanced. To where
15 frontline communities are giving the proper
16 venue, the platform, a voice, their opinions,
17 concerns, comments, and any possible questions.
18 Once again, thank you for your support.

19 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. We have some
20 comments that were written in. One from an
21 anonymous Attendee saying: "How many geothermal
22 power plants are operating or are planned for in
23 Coachella or Riverside County?"

24 Another comment written in, Jesus
25 Arguelles, "The public health and mental health

1 aspects of the workforce were not addressed.
2 Perhaps this is something to include as an item
3 in the agenda, as well as workforce development
4 entities focusing on the local Tribes' employment
5 needs."

6 And the Leadership Council wrote: "The
7 first set of information shared by BHE and CTR in
8 regards to how many jobs will be created and what
9 these jobs are is the type of information that
10 the community has been asking about. It is
11 really important for this group or agencies in
12 the group who have this information to share it
13 with the public in an accessible way. A great
14 example of a way to do this is the letter to the
15 public CTR recently wrote. I would suggest a
16 similar action is done to share this information.
17 Given the questions I have heard from the
18 community, I would suggest that this
19 informational material include the information
20 shared in today's presentations, plus give
21 details on how many on each of the jobs will be
22 available (how many operator positions, how many
23 safety specialist positions, etc.) and what, if
24 any are the risks of these jobs? For example, if
25 employees will be exposed to any toxic materials,

1 then this person would also include information
2 on any effort you are doing to ensure these jobs
3 will be made available to local residents."

4 And I did want to note two more comments
5 that had come in --

6 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: A real quick
7 interruption from Jonathan. We'd be delighted,
8 and Chair Paz, please post Burt Short's slide
9 deck. We'd appreciate that. That would be
10 great, meeting one of these concerns. Thanks
11 very much.

12 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

13 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And, yes, we
14 will be posting the presentation in English and
15 Spanish after the meeting once they're
16 translated.

17 Okay, another comment that was written
18 in, "If PLAs are for large projects, what is the
19 criteria for defining which projects require
20 PLAs? Is there a minimum size for a project to
21 require a PLA? And Carol Zabin did write in a
22 response to that: "President Biden's EO has a
23 \$35 million threshold. California's is lower, I
24 believe."

25 And just to point out that, as Shrayas

1 mentioned, there was a link that was reference
2 earlier in the meeting, and that is also in the
3 Q&A.

4 I do see one more hand raised and that is
5 Eric Reyes. You should be able to unmute.

6 MR. REYES: Hello again. I just want to
7 thank the Commission for an excellent meeting,
8 lots of good dialogue, lots that I could look
9 into and come back with. But I want to first
10 reiterate some of what our colleague from
11 Imperial Valley, Marco Lizarraga said also about
12 people being able to adjust farmworkers and
13 anyone else, underserved communities.

14 First, we need to take away their
15 barriers and then show them their own abilities
16 to succeed. I also work for Los Amigos de
17 Comunidad, and I also work at the Community Basin
18 in Imperial Valley, and I also work for the
19 statewide organization, Farmworker Institute of
20 Education on Leadership Development (FIELD). And
21 at FIELD, we have implemented many programs in
22 rural California for farmworkers that came out of
23 the Caesar Chavez movement, now independent of
24 that, where we carry the same principle that
25 ordinary people are able to do extraordinary

1 things. And we have showed them the way. They
2 take the initiative; they make themselves
3 successful. They just need that initial support
4 to make them believe that it's possible.

5 And through FIELD we have CTE Programs in
6 Fire Science, Early Education, Conservation
7 Corps, and many other programs that we're
8 continuing to grow out of the need and necessity
9 in rural areas that have been underserved and
10 neglected by the powers that be and investment.
11 And this is not proper investment, we want to
12 make sure we have jobs at the end of the
13 training, not just training for the sake of
14 training and organizations receiving those funds.

15 So I just want to reiterate that from Mr.
16 Lizarraga, then I'm going to jump into the next
17 part that, as you're talking about investments,
18 it seems to me it's still driven from the top
19 down. And we as a community are demanding that
20 we be the drivers and the owners of that
21 investment portfolio, as a partner with everyone
22 else involved.

23 There is already one way to empower and
24 that's through ownership. And I've been on many
25 many many -- too many to count -- and just for

1 the last two or three years, Advisory Committees
2 where good intentions are made, yet it's not
3 followed through with true meaningful investment.
4 So I'm not that kind on Advisory Councils and
5 Advisory Boards, I'm more on board administering,
6 ownership, making a partnership with industry and
7 government.

8 And we thank the County for its initial
9 plan on their stakeholder group. We feel that is
10 still not encompassing all of the stakeholders
11 and tell you that we are working on the Community
12 Development Plans, Economic Plan that we're
13 hoping to have funded as well. There's plenty in
14 the Governor's Budget for that, even if he missed
15 this deadline, there are other plans that we can
16 go, add it on to bills and so on.

17 So I thank you very much. I think you
18 guys are doing tremendous work. We'll continue
19 to be part of it and engage to the very second.
20 I'm trying to finish my 12 seconds, as well.
21 Thank you all. I think I heard a lot from
22 industry, as well. You want to be players and I
23 appreciate that. I think that's fantastic.
24 Thank you, for everyone.

25 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. That is all of

1 the comments at this time. Back to you, Chair
2 Paz. Sorry, Chair Paz, you're on mute.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And thank you for
4 the people who are always providing us comments.
5 And I've just come to the realization that, well,
6 not today, but through the process as I hear
7 public comment, that our job as the Commission
8 that's uplifting all these findings and engaging
9 and hearing what you all have to say in so many
10 ways, but there's really going to be a lot more
11 work that's needed, even after we publish this
12 report.

13 So those conversations about investments,
14 about Community Benefit Agreements, I believe we
15 need to find the space for those conversations to
16 happen and to happen in the way that the
17 community has been requesting it to happen, but I
18 just wanted to make sure because I keep hearing
19 it in our public comments that you are being
20 heard, that's just the reality of what this
21 Commission is sort tasked to do, but the work
22 that is going to have to continue in order for us
23 to be successful in so many of the
24 recommendations that are coming forward. So
25 thank you again for giving us consistent public

1 comment. Next slide.

2 So we're now in the part of the agenda
3 where we're going to plan for upcoming workshops.
4 What you see are the workshops that still need to
5 be discussed and scheduled.

6 Right now, we're going to focus on the
7 continuation of the Environmental Impacts
8 Workshop, as we discussed in our last meeting.
9 And to provide a little bit of context, I had
10 requested that the Commission continue the
11 conversation about environmental impact with a
12 focus specific to the projects currently in
13 development and proposed in the region, and to
14 include a conversation on public health. Again,
15 items that we have continually heard from and
16 questions from some of our commissioners, as well
17 as the public.

18 So as the subgroup that is in charge of
19 this workshop topic, Commissioner Flores and
20 Commissioner Olmedo, I just want to first call on
21 you to hear your thoughts and what you've heard
22 and what you think at this point could be a way
23 to address some of these remaining questions
24 about what's really happening on the ground.

25 And so we'll just start. First from

1 whoever is ready, Commissioner Flores or
2 Commissioner Olmedo. And then we'll get input
3 from the rest of the Commissioners.

4 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Sure. You know,
5 I've been thinking about this and reflecting upon
6 our past Environmental Impacts Workshop that we
7 had.

8 I think really getting more specific
9 information on the actual projects that have been
10 currently permitted, you know, energy focused
11 projects, environmental frameworks they're
12 currently working under, you know, if that is
13 something that still works, or, if it's not we
14 can put them in the frameworks that we need to
15 start establishing to make sure that there are
16 minimal environmental impacts to the region.
17 It's something that I would really like to see.

18 Two, in our previous Environmental Impact
19 Workshop, we kind of touched upon the Salton Sea,
20 but I think we're really kind of digging in more
21 in depth on the Social Justice issues, the
22 environmental issues are all a part of that,
23 especially in my role in working with the Natural
24 Resources Agency, we have projects out there;
25 we're in charge of the restoration and

1 responsibility for work that's going on out
2 there.

3 And I think that we know definitely all
4 of us have a big interest in the intersection
5 between the geothermal and Lithium and just kind
6 of what opportunities that we have, to take a
7 look at all of that.

8 And I know the community has kind of
9 expressed concern over impacts to air, you know
10 just general health impacts that I think are
11 rightly so. I think being able to kind of talk
12 about that, those health impacts, as well, as
13 part of this Environmental Impact would be wise.
14 That is what I'd like to see.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
16 Olmedo. If anybody would like to add to what
17 Commissioner Flores mentioned.

18 COMMISSIONER FLORES: If not, I have more.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Well, you can tell us more and
20 we'll see if he comes.

21 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Sure. I think,
22 Chair, you and I have discussed that, really,
23 getting clarity on the use of the water and its
24 impacts to water resources in the community
25 within those projects. I know I've asked just

1 kind of on my personal time different entities,
2 and I haven't ever really gotten a really clear
3 answer on that. And perhaps when we really start
4 reaching out to those local entities, as well.
5 And I know Luis last time, Commissioner Olmedo
6 had last time brought in health experts, but
7 maybe taking another stance on that.

8 CHAIR PAZ: Uh huh. Thank you. Yes.
9 And as you're mentioning some of those local
10 agencies, I just want to highlight some of them
11 that I think could be helpful. The County who
12 oversees the planning could give us a very clear
13 idea of how they're considering like -- or
14 implementing the CEQA requirements, what is it
15 that they're looking at when they're permitting
16 projects, what are the impacts that they're
17 looking for. I think that Imperial County
18 Planning would be maybe a help for us.

19 The other one in regard to the water,
20 maybe bringing in the Imperial Irrigation
21 District, as I know that all of these projects
22 interact with Imperial Irrigation District at
23 some point.

24 And then for the air, I know that the
25 Imperial -- and I'm forgetting that the Imperial

1 has an Air Quality District, as well. So maybe
2 bringing them on board.

3 And I think I still have a question about
4 who the potential public health, who could speak
5 to that more directly, but maybe we can check in
6 with Commission Ryan Kelley to see maybe if their
7 Department of Public Health or for some guidance
8 on that, Thank you for all those ideas.

9 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Oh yeah, I totally
10 agree. We have lots of questions on CEQA.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Commissioner Olmedo,
12 are you back? Well, at this point, I will open
13 it to other Commissioners to see if there's any
14 addition to the things you've heard introduced by
15 Commissioner Flores. Is there anything else that
16 you think still needs to be addressed, or any
17 agency that could be helpful in answering some of
18 the topics that Commissioner Flores identified.

19 Okay, so I will take the silence as
20 Commissioner Flores, you have a go and I'm happy
21 to partner with you as support, the next
22 workshop, as well.

23 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Fantastic. I will
24 take all the support I can get. Great.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So next, so I'm

1 proposing that for the sake of time, we're going
2 to be deferring several items that are coming up
3 in the agenda. They're not any action items that
4 we have, but I will defer the discussion on the
5 Economic Impacts Workshop and the overall
6 schedule to our next meeting.

7 And now we will open the floor to public
8 comment, and specifically on the topic of the
9 planning of the workshops, and reminders that we
10 are limiting to two minutes per comment. Thank
11 you.

12 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. So if you're
13 joining by Zoom on your computer, please use the
14 "raise hand" feature. If you've called in,
15 please dial *9 to raise your hand and *6 to
16 unmute your phone line. First we'll go through
17 hands raised in the Zoom application, and then on
18 the phone.

19 I will just start by reading a couple
20 chat mentions here that I think circle over
21 really from the Workforce Development Workshop
22 where Hector Meza did say, just a little note:
23 "CBA is a contract between the Developers, the
24 community and the local government. The three
25 have to balance the wants, which means the three

1 can come back with a CBA that works fairly for
2 all. But the beauty of them is the importance of
3 having local communities being a part of it."

4 And there's a comment on there from Eric
5 Reyes: "There's well developed and equitable
6 CBAs that can be extremely useful and an
7 equitable distribution of resources."

8 I don't see any other hands raised at
9 this time, so back to you, Chair Paz.

10 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Next slide. I'm
11 going to defer the approval of the action meeting
12 to the next meeting, as well. Where else? I'm
13 on Administrative Items. So next slide, please.

14 We will be also deffering our Media
15 Legislative Updates to the next meeting. And I
16 will now want to Lithium Valley Commissioner
17 Updates and with a reminder, if we can keep our
18 updates to three minutes, and I know that some
19 people had to go to that Community meeting in
20 Nylan (Phonetic), but I will start with
21 Commissioner Castaneda.

22 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Thank you very
23 much, Madam Chair. I have received, as I think
24 all the Commissioners did, a copy of this -- I
25 don't know if it's a draft, I think it's been

1 approved by the Imperial County Board of
2 Supervisors, the Lithium Valley Economic
3 Opportunity Investment Plan. I know that
4 Commissioner Kelley probably was going to talk
5 about this. Is this going to be scheduled for
6 the next meeting?

7 CHAIR PAZ: Correct. Thank you for
8 bringing that up. It was distributed so that we
9 have plenty of time to review it, to read it, so
10 please everyone read it ahead of time and then it
11 will be on the agenda for the next meeting, I
12 believe for the next meeting, for a deeper
13 discussion on it. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Well, and thank
15 you very much because, as you know, I've been
16 beating the drum on long range planning with all
17 of this, which is inclusive of all these things,
18 so I have not had a chance.

19 I skimmed through it and I'm looking
20 forward to having a robust discussion on this
21 because I think that this is really the crux of
22 everything that we're going to be talking about
23 and hopefully deciding on. Thank you.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
25 Colwell had to go to the Community Meeting.

1 Commissioner Dolega also had to go to another
2 meeting. Commissioner Flores.

3 COMMISSIONER FLORES: No updates.

4 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Is Commissioner
5 Hanks here? I don't think he left.

6 MS. DE JONG: No.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Commissioner Lopez.

8 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: No comment at this
9 time.

10 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
11 Olmedo. Commissioner Ruiz is not here.
12 Commissioner Scott, I believe is not here.
13 Commissioner Soto is not here. Commissioner
14 Weisgall, I don't know if he also had to jump off
15 to another meeting, he might have. I don't see
16 him.

17 Okay, so I will conclude with my updates
18 I want to bring to your attention, but there are
19 two CEC Fact Sheets that were completed and
20 distributed to the Commissioners. I also want to
21 note that the Energy Commission has completed a
22 Draft Initial Response to the Leadership Council
23 which they will be finalizing in the next few
24 days and will be shared with Commissioners and
25 docketed to the Lithium Valley Commission Docket

1 as they're being provided to Leadership Council's
2 representative.

3 One more item is that the Energy
4 Commission and some State representatives did
5 visit Coachella and Imperial. I had the
6 opportunity to give them a tour, you know, really
7 seeing the Salton Sea. And I hope that tour is
8 also informing, just helping our State agencies
9 really experience some of the things that are
10 coming up here in the commission and putting it
11 in context.

12 So I want to thank everyone who came out.
13 I know they will continue to be coming to visit
14 our region as this is developing. So that is it
15 for my comment. We will now go to public
16 comment.

17 MS. DE JONG: All right, thank you. If
18 you're joining us by Zoom on your computer,
19 please use the "raise hand" feature; if you have
20 called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand, and
21 *6 to unmute your phone line. First, we'll go to
22 any hands raised in the Zoom Application, and
23 then phone lines, and then written comments.

24 I see a hand raised, Nikola Lakic, you
25 should be able to unmute.

1 MR. LAKIC: Can you hear me?

2 MS. DE JONG: Yes.

3 MR. LAKIC: Thank you. I'm just curious,
4 I don't need to bother, but would I be able to
5 finish another several of points that I wasn't
6 able to say previous comment or?

7 CHAIR PAZ: You have one minute and 50
8 seconds.

9 MR. LAKIC: Well point 15 was the first
10 the current coarse of action which is ridiculous,
11 sorry to say that. It must be stopped because
12 going forward without a feasible plan, must have
13 blueprint, is losing precious time and money. If
14 we continue with ten-year plans that means losing
15 another six to seven years and billions in
16 revenue unnecessarily. I'm hoping that my status
17 will change after the report on the Panel of
18 Independent Reviewers. I'm willing to help. But
19 without the dialogue. Without communications and
20 having the state continue funding, a nonsensical
21 project that is impossible. I would like to
22 emphasize again that I am not contractor, I am
23 the author of several breakthrough methodologies
24 that will employ many contractors and change the
25 world, starting with the Salton Sea Region. The

1 highest officials in California government have
2 been intentionally misled since 2013 about the
3 existence of the proposal, my proposal, that can
4 not just prevent the destruction of the Salton
5 Sea, but rather restore it and make nearby
6 communities very prosperous. I respectfully urge
7 state officials to halt current course of action
8 based on new important information.

9 And last one, the project for the
10 extraction of Lithium are not in conflict with my
11 proposal. In fact, those projects are with minor
12 adjustments such as implementing a dyke, levy,
13 around the desired land in harmony, in
14 cooperation, with my proposal. But first, people
15 need to be aware of the existence --

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Mr. Lakic. Time
17 is up.

18 MS. DE JONG: The next hand raise is Tom
19 Sephton. You should be able to unmute.

20 MR. SEPHTON: Thank you. I appreciate
21 the opportunity to listen to this workshop that
22 you've put on, I've learned quite a bit from it.

23 I would request as a member of the
24 Imperial Valley community and resident that you
25 incorporate into a future workshop or discussion

1 what the water needs will be for the Lithium
2 development and what you get up to 300,000 metric
3 tons per year of production, how much of this
4 water will be required for the processing of that
5 Lithium, and does the IID resource, is it
6 sufficient to cover that? Or will additional
7 water resources be needed in order to process
8 that much Lithium as we go forward?

9 That is one of the potential significant
10 impacts, both economic and in a sense
11 environmental on the community, so it would be
12 helpful to have some numbers on what the level of
13 need will be and what the level of impact may or
14 may not be. Thank you.

15 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Chair Paz,
16 there are no other hands raised at this time.
17 Back to you.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And we will now
19 do a General Public Comment.

20 MS. DE JONG: All right, those
21 instructions, if you're joining us by Zoom on
22 your computer please use the "raise hand"
23 feature, if you've called in, please dial *9 to
24 raise your hand and *6 to unmute your phone line.
25 We'll go to the hands raised on Zoom, then the

1 phone lines, and any written comments. Chair
2 Paz, I'm not seeing any additional comments at
3 this time. Back to you.

4 CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Well, I will conclude
5 by thanking everybody. We were successful in not
6 going too long after our time, so thank you again
7 for your support in this.

8 Our next meeting is March 24, 2022. Note
9 that it is not the last Thursday due to the Cesar
10 Chavez holiday. Our meeting is now adjourned.
11 Thank you everyone.

12 (Meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.)

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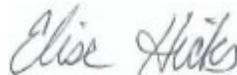
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I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were reported by me, a certified electronic court reporter and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of March, 2022.



ELISE HICKS, IAPRT

CERT**2176

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I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were transcribed by me, a certified transcriber and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript, to the best of my ability, from the electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.



MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT**367

March 14, 2022