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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION
LITHIUM VALLEY COMMISSION

In the matter of,)
)
Lithium Valley) Docket No. 20-LITHIUM-01
Commission Meeting)

IN PERSON AND REMOTE VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

Imperial Valley College
Planetarium
380 East Eten Road,
Imperial, CA 92251

THURSDAY, MAY 12, 2022

1:30 P.M.

Reported By:
Martha Nelson

APPEARANCES

Commissioners

Silva Paz, Chair

Ryan Kelly, Vice Chair

Luis Olmedo

Miranda Flores

Frank Ruiz

Jonathan Weisgall

Rod Colwell

Steve Castaneda

Staff Present

Natalie Lee

Erica Loza

Silvia Palma-Rojas

Susan Cochran

Seanna Griffis

Lindsay Buckley

Deborah Dyer

APPEARANCES (Contd.)

Panelists

Adela de la Torre, President, San Diego State University

Angelita Ortiz, Interm Superintendent, Califpatria
Unified School District

Daniela Flores, Imperial Valley Equity and Justice
Coalition

Trelynd Bradley, Governor's Office of Business and
Economic Development/Go-Biz

Rebecca Terrazas-Baxter, Imperial County
Intergovernmental Relations

Cecilia Estolano, Better World Group

Sarah Friedman, Better World Group

Jordan Sisson, Law Offices of Jordan Sisson

Public Comment

Mariela Loera, Leadership Counsel

Nikola Lakic

Alexis Castro

Gilberto Manzanares

Rusty Garcia

Ray Castillo, District 5 Imperial County Board of
Supervisors

Luis Lopez, Comite Civico del Valle

Jose Martinez

Daniela Flores

Janita Figueroa

Tom Stephen

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P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 May 12, 2022

1:32 P.M.

3 COMMISSIONER KELLY: Welcome everyone, to the
4 Lithium Valley Commission. Today we are meeting in
5 person and through Zoom. We are providing
6 interpretation services in Spanish for attendees at our
7 location here in Imperial, and those participating in
8 the Zoom meeting through their computers or tablets.
9 The Zoom interpretation function does not work for
10 attendees who are only joining by phone.

11 A representative from the CEC will now speak
12 in Spanish to inform our Spanish-speaking audience how
13 to use this service.

14 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Saludos. Me llamo Silvia
15 Palma-Rojas. Daré instrucciones a aquellos de ustedes
16 que quieran escuchar la reunión en español. Hay un
17 intérprete disponible a través de la plataforma Zoom.

18 Para unirse al canal en español, haga clic en
19 el ícono de globo pequeño en la parte inferior de su
20 aplicación Zoom. Seleccione el canal donde dice S-p-a-
21 n-i-s-h. Luego haga clic en la frase siguiente donde
22 dice "Mute Original Audio" para silenciar el audio
23 original.

24 Si tiene preguntas o si gusta hacer algún
25 comentario, favor de oprimir el icono de la mano alzada

1 y abierta o envíenos un mensaje en español a través de
2 la función de chat para ayudarlo.

3 Vice Chair Kelly, back to you.

4 COMMISSIONER KELLY: Thank you, Silvia. And,
5 to ensure that all members of the public have access to
6 the meeting under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, we
7 ask that all Lithium Valley Commissioners select and
8 remain on the English Channel for the entirety of the
9 meeting, preferably with cameras on.

10 Also, please note that the slides include some
11 text in Spanish, which is highlighted in grey.

12 CEC staff, can you please review the general
13 instructions.

14 MS. LOZA: Hi everyone. This is a hybrid
15 meeting, with a primary physical location here in
16 Imperial, and two additional publicly accessible
17 locations connected via teleconference in Sacramento and
18 Maryland. At least one Lithium Valley Commissioner is
19 at each physical location. Each of the three physical
20 locations were provided in the meeting Notice and is
21 publicly accessible. The public can also access the
22 meeting via remote teleconference as described in the
23 meeting Notice, to improve and enhance public access to
24 meetings of the State Bodies.

25 This meeting is being recorded as well as

1 transcribed by a court reporter. The transcript will be
2 posted to the docket. The recording of the meeting will
3 be available on the Lithium Valley Commission webpage.
4 The Spanish interpretation will not be recorded or
5 transcribed.

6 Members of the public connected via
7 teleconference will be muted during the presentations,
8 but there will be opportunities for public comment at
9 times throughout the meeting. There is a Q&A window in
10 the Zoom application which you can use to type questions
11 and comments and Staff will relay these comments. The
12 chat function should be used only for IT support or
13 other technical issues. Please do not use the chat
14 function to provide comment or questions on the content
15 of the meeting.

16 The presentation materials from the meeting
17 and workshop today will be made available through the
18 docket in English and Spanish versions after the
19 meeting. Please note that the Spanish version may post
20 a few days after the English version.

21 We also want to note that as shown on this
22 slide, public comments can be submitted at any time
23 through the e-commenting system accessed through the
24 Lithium Valley Commission webpage.

25 Back to you, Vice Chair Kelly.

1 COMMISSIONER KELLY: Thank you. Before moving
2 to Roll Call of the Lithium Valley Commission, we need
3 to det — and to determine a quorum, I would like to
4 introduce a new Lithium Valley Commission member, Alice
5 Busching Reynolds, President of the California Public
6 Utilities Commission. Commissioner Reynolds was
7 appointed by the Public Utilities Commission to fill the
8 vacant seat previously held by former Commissioner
9 Martha Guzman Aceves.

10 Welcome Commissioner Reynolds. I am sure your
11 insights and perspectives will be a valuable addition to
12 our discussions and ultimately the report to the
13 Legislature.

14 Commissioner Reynolds, would you like to make
15 any comment at this time?

16 MS. LEE: Vice Chair Kelly, this is Natalie.
17 Unfortunately, Commissioner Reynolds was unable to join
18 today.

19 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Alright, we'll give her
20 another chance next time.

21 As we move into the roll call, I want to
22 provide some information for all attendees about the
23 change in the format of our meetings.

24 Since the Commission was first convened in
25 late 2020, we have been operating under an Executive

1 Order and urgency statute to improve and enhance public
2 access to State Agency meetings during the COVID-19
3 pandemic, which waived mandatory Open Meeting Act rules
4 and allowed us to meet fully remotely, however that
5 executive order and statute have now expired.

6 The Lithium Valley Commission must comply with
7 the requirements of the Bagley Keene Act. Among other
8 things, Bagley Keene requires state boards and
9 commissions to publicly Notice their meetings, prepare
10 agendas, allow the public to address the commission
11 during the discussion and deliberation of each item, and
12 conduct their meetings in public.

13 Today, and moving forward, this will affect
14 how we conduct our meetings. And, as you all have
15 noticed, we are now meeting in publicly accessible
16 locations as well as online through Zoom.

17 To have a quorum of Commissioners, we are
18 required to have at least one Commissioner at the
19 primary physical location that is open to the public and
20 complies with the requirements of the Americans with
21 Disabilities Act, referred to as ADA. And all other
22 Lithium Valley Commissioners can attend remotely, from
23 an ADA compliant location that is open to the public.

24 We are required to provide the address of all
25 physical and remote locations in the Meeting Notice that

1 is posted at least ten days prior to the meeting.

2 Under the rules for teleconferencing, Lithium
3 Valley Commissioners may not participate in the public
4 meeting remotely via Zoom only, or from remote locations
5 that are not identified in the original Notice. The
6 only Commissioners that may deliberate, discuss,
7 comment, vote, or count towards a quorum on any item are
8 those attending in person at either the physical
9 location, or two additional remote locations listed in
10 the ten-day Notice. We will identify if we have a
11 quorum when the roll call is taken.

12 Because we have Commissioners and members of
13 the public in person and in Noticed remote locations, we
14 will also adjust how public comment is received and we
15 will discuss this later. All individuals that wish to
16 make a comment will have the opportunity to do so, we
17 will just have to manage the comment periods a little
18 differently than we have in the past.

19 With that said, I will ask the CEC to call the
20 roll of Commissioners. When you answer please indicate
21 if you are in one of the locations provided in the
22 Meeting Notice, including Imperial Valley College,
23 California Natural Resources Agency Building in
24 Sacramento, or Bethesda, Maryland. If a Commissioner is
25 listening in via Zoom only or from a different location,

1 they will be considered absent for the official roll
2 call and any discussions, deliberations, or votes.

3 Erica?

4 MS. LOZA: Ok. Commissioner Steve Castaneda?

5 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Imperial Valley
6 College.

7 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Rod Colwell?

8 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Present, Imperial
9 Valley College.

10 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Roderic Dolega?

11 (Pause)

12 Commissioner Dolega?

13 Commissioner Miranda Flores?

14 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Present, and in the
15 California Natural Resources Agency.

16 MS. LOZA: Commissioner James Hanks?

17 (Pause)

18 Vice Chair Ryan Kelly?

19 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Present, Imperial Valley
20 College.

21 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Arthur Lopez?

22 (Pause)

23 Commissioner Luis Olmedo?

24 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Present, IVC.

25 MS. LOZA: Thank you. Chair Paz?

1 (Pause)

2 Commissioner Reynolds?

3 Is absent, and then, Commissioner Frank Ruiz?

4 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Present, Imperial Valley

5 College.

6 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Scott?

7 (Pause)

8 Thomas So — Commissioner Soto?

9 (Pause)

10 And, Commissioner Weisgall?

11 (Pause)

12 MS. LOZA: Okay. Back to you — um — see if

13 we count how many — three, four, five, six are in

14 person, so no quorum. So, we don't have a quorum at the

15 physical locations at this time. We will not be able to

16 consider any motions or take a vote unless we have

17 quorum. For those in our physical locations, if a

18 Commissioner joins us at any time, please raise your

19 hand, or — and announce your arrival. We will continue

20 with the agenda and discussions and our workshop as

21 planned.

22 So, back to you, Vice Chair Kelly.

23 (Pause)

24 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Uh — okay, at this moment

25 we do not have a quorum, we will not be able to consider

1 any items, take a vote, unless we have a quorum. I do
2 know that Chair Paz is delayed, but she should be here
3 in the next five to ten minutes. Mr. Weisgall did
4 indicate he was going to be here. Did he?

5 MS. LEE: Hello Vice Chair Kelly, it's Natalie
6 Lee again. Yes, Commissioner Weisgall did intend to be
7 here from the Bethesda, Maryland location. He did have
8 a family emergency and hopes to be able to join at some
9 point in time. We'll watch for his name to appear in
10 the panelist login, and if he does arrive, we'll ask him
11 to introduce himself, and we can take a roll at that
12 point in time. Is that correct, legal ops?

13 (Pause)

14 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Okay, so then we will wait
15 to see when a quorum appears, and we'll continue with
16 our agenda and workshop as planned. It's a good thing
17 you wrote a script.

18 No, no, I have it. I'm reading it. I was
19 just congratulating you for the script.

20 MS. COCHRAN: Vice Chair Kelly, this is Susan
21 Cochran, from the California Energy Commission's Chief
22 Counsel's office. Given that some of your early — items
23 are requiring a vote, like the approval of the minutes
24 and stuff, as Chair, you have the power to re-order the
25 agenda. So, if there are certain things you would like

1 to take out of order, you might want to think about
2 doing that.

3 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Sure, Susan. So, for the —
4 some of the action items requiring consideration for a
5 vote would be delayed until we have a quorum?

6 MS. COCHRAN: Correct.

7 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Um —

8 MS. LEE: Vice Chair Kelly

9 MS. COCHRAN: So, you might be able to take
10 informational items. I'm sorry, go ahead, Natalie.

11 MS. LEE: Oh no, I apologize. Let me just
12 say, our original intent was to change the order of
13 items from what was Noticed in the Meeting Notice, to
14 move the administrative items, which were Noticed as
15 being later on, up to be your first item. Those are —
16 that is a voting item. So, your script reads that they
17 were to be moved up and deferred.

18 I suggest you do not make that announcement.
19 However, the informational items that were moved from
20 later in the script, if you could make the announcement
21 of that change in the agenda, and do the media and
22 legislative updates, then we can move forward in items
23 and address the administrative item on its original
24 schedule.

25 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Right. So, Alright. So,

1 Natalie, you're suggesting that we move two
2 informational items at this time for media and
3 legislative updates?

4 MS. LEE: Yes. Could you please announce, for
5 purposes of the record, that that is a change in the
6 order of items from the noticed agenda?

7 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Alright. So, to those
8 Commissioners that are in attendance, we will proceed to
9 informational items, media, and legislative updates at
10 this time. And, when those are concluded, we'll update
11 the quorum status. And I will direct this back to
12 legislative staff from CEC, do you have an update on the
13 Media and Legislative statuses?

14 MS. GRIFFIS: Hi everyone, this is Seanna from
15 the Office of OGIA from CEC. I do have three
16 legislative items to update you all on today. I do
17 think it's important to note that the CEC is only
18 actively analyzing one of the bills, because it falls
19 under the CEC purview.

20 The other two bills relate to different
21 departments. So, I will be able to answer questions on
22 the bill that the CEC is answering, and then I could
23 answer, like, surface level questions if there are any
24 of the other two bills.

25 But we have AB 2851, Salton Sea Geothermal

1 Resources Area, the Lithium Valley Office of
2 Development, by Assembly Member Garcia. The bill
3 establishes a Lithium Valley Office of Development
4 within the CNRA. This bill requires the office to
5 coordinate activities related to funding, economic
6 development, construction, manufacturing, technical
7 development, and reclamation of lithium located in the
8 Salton Sea Geothermal Resource Area.

9 So that's the bill that the CEC is analyzing
10 right now. And then the other two bills are also by
11 Assembly Member Garcia, and it's AB 2903, the California
12 Workforce Development Board. This bill would establish
13 the Equitable Access Program, to be administered by the
14 California Workforce Development Board, to prioritize
15 employment opportunities in construction, manufacturing,
16 technical maintenance, operations, or reclamation
17 activities for local residents in the Salton Sea
18 Geothermal Resources Area.

19 The bill would require the Board to provide
20 technical assistance to pre-apprenticeship, registered
21 apprenticeship, and other training programs, and to
22 monitor and track the rate residents of the Salton Sea
23 Geothermal Resources Area are hired on construction
24 projects in the Salton Sea that involve battery
25 manufacturing and lithium-based technology.

1 And then, finally, we have AB 2929, the
2 Lithium Production Report, and this bill would require
3 the Legislative Analyst's Office to annually report to
4 the legislature on the health, environmental, and
5 economic impacts, and benefits of producing lithium from
6 geothermal brines located in the Lithium Valley.

7 And that is the update that I have for you on
8 legislation.

9 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Thank you. Is there an
10 update for media?

11 MS. BUCKLEY: Good afternoon, Vice Chair
12 Kelly, members of the Commission, members of the public.
13 My name is Lindsay Buckley. I'm a Director of
14 Communications here at the Energy Commission. I have a
15 brief update for you.

16 First, I'll just draw your attention to the
17 Docket, where a year-to-date news clips report has been
18 posted, including links to more than 100 media stories
19 from a variety of outlets, including local, regional,
20 national and international press.

21 Interest remains high, as is evidenced by this
22 list, and some recent coverage in both CNN and CNBC, a
23 couple of great videos that I recommend everybody takes
24 a look at. Secretary Granholm's visit to the area
25 garnered a lot of attention last month, and we continue

1 to send inquiries to Commissioners as they come.

2 And that is it for me. If there are any
3 questions, I'm glad to take them.

4 (Pause)

5 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Are there any redirect
6 questions for media or legislative? No. Public, are
7 there any questions or comments about the media or
8 legislative updates?

9 That's at IVC, anything at Natural Resources?

10 (Pause)

11 Anything at Bethesda?

12 Okay. Then, we're going to move to public
13 comment, and we'll start at the physical location at
14 IVC. This is regarding the legislative updates — do we
15 have anyone wanting to make any comment at this time
16 while we wait to see if there's any additional
17 commissioners in attendance?

18 (Pause)

19 Sure.

20 MS. LOZA: Vice Chair Kelly, we do have a
21 question in the Q&A box. From Pat Seine, and it says,
22 "Is Lithium located only in the agriculture area on the
23 east side of the Salton Sea, does it stretch out as far
24 as the Coachella Canal?

25 MS. LEE: Erica, this is Natalie, from the

1 Energy Commission. Thank you so much for reading that
2 question. Because that's a general question, we'll
3 consider that at the end of the meeting. Right now if
4 we have any questions or comments specific to leg. and
5 media updates, we can consider those right now. And,
6 for the gentleman that — or the individual that, pardon
7 me — that entered that question in the Q&A, we will do
8 our best to make sure you get that information. We
9 don't really have Q&A sessions during these meetings,
10 but we will do our best to provide you the information.

11 (Pause)

12 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: — hear me — Luis
13 Olmedo.

14 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Ok. Mr. Olmedo.

15 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you. I'd like to
16 recommend that we have someone to walk around with a
17 microphone to make sure that we're making it easier to
18 take the step forward and—

19 VICE CHAIR KELLY: —Right. So, it — yeah, we
20 were just giving it a little bit more protocol. So,
21 this was for a Q&A on media and legislative updates.
22 There is the next item which is in process, Bagley Keen
23 Compliant, that we will be going to. And there — we
24 will continue to try and fill the gap until we have a
25 quorum.

1 MS. LEE: Vice Chair Kelly, again, I'm going
2 to ask if a representative from Chief Counsel can
3 confirm the understanding that you can move to the
4 discussion of the item, your next item on the agenda.
5 You'll not be able to consider a motion or vote, but
6 could that item be revisited if a quorum is achieved
7 later in the day?

8 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Thank you, Natalie. I
9 think she's talking slide 13 or slide 11.

10 MS. LEE: Slide 11 would be our next, but
11 Chief Counsel's office, can you confirm if we can return
12 to an item for a vote later in the agenda, should a
13 quorum be realized?

14 MS. DYER: This is Deborah Dyer.

15 MS. COCHRAN: How — I'm sorry.

16 MS. DYER: Go ahead, Susan.

17 MS. COCHRAN: Go ahead, Deborah. Your turn.

18 MS. DYER: We can return to an item, but the —
19 the vote would be limited to the Commissioners that were
20 actually there for the discussion or presentation of the
21 item.

22 MS. LEE: Okay, thank you, Chief Counsel. So,
23 that will not actually improve your potential outcomes,
24 Vice Chair. What our other options here be —

25 VICE CHAIR KELLY: It's okay, Natalie. We'll

1 just go into it.

2 MS. LEE: Okay.

3 VICE CHAIR KELLY: If people show up, we'll
4 ask for a vote. This thing's been on the agenda for
5 four months, so.

6 MS. LEE: I believe, Vice Chair, that Chief
7 Counsel said you will not be able to consi— the parties
8 that arrive after you've completed this — the discussion
9 will not be able to participate in the vote.

10 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Is that right, Susan? Was
11 it Susan?

12 MS. COCHRAN: It was Susan —

13 VICE CHAIR KELLY: —Deborah?

14 MS. COCHRAN: — but actually Deborah answered
15 your question, but yes, that's correct. Because they
16 have — because whoever is not currently present
17 appropriately in the meeting cannot be counted in
18 quorum. They will not have received the information on
19 which you are asking them to make a vote. So, if there
20 are other informational items on the agenda, you can
21 cover those and wait for any item that requires a vote
22 until later when you have a quorum.

23 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Susan, we have the item, the
24 — a discussion on possible actions on draft funding, the
25 recommendations. Can we start with that one?

1 VICE CHAIR KELLY: That would be another —
2 that's a potential action item as well.

3 MS. COCHRAN: Right. So, I had thought that
4 there were workshops that were not necessarily action
5 items on today's agenda.

6 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Okay, so we —

7 VICE CHAIR KELLY: The regional and — the
8 economic impacts workshop?

9 MS. COCHRAN: Yes.

10 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Regional, local economy?

11 MS. COCHRAN: Yes. Those are more
12 informational items, as opposed to information that then
13 is going to have action. So, my understanding is that
14 those are like, listening sessions, where you will be
15 taking in information, not necessarily acting on it at
16 this meeting.

17 MS. LEE: Vice Chair Kelly, I believe John —
18 oh, we have John — Johnathon Weisgall for a moment. Oh
19 there, I believe he may have joined the meeting.

20 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I have joined, I
21 cannot get my video to work. I apologize. But, anyway,
22 I hear you. So, apologies for being late.

23 MS. COCHRAN: And you're at — Commissioner
24 Weisgall, just to confirm, you're at the previously
25 Noticed location in Bethesda?

1 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes. And there is a
2 Notice outside, correct.

3 MS. COCHRAN: Thank you so much. That takes
4 you, I believe, to seven by my count. I thought that a
5 quorum was eight.

6 MS. LEE: It is.

7 MS. DYER: Yes, this is Deborah. This — a
8 quorum is eight.

9 CHAIR PAZ: I'm in the parking lot, just
10 trying to get in.

11 MS. COCHRAN: Excellent.

12 MS. DYER: So you'll have eight in a matter of
13 moments, Vice Chair Kelly.

14 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Well then, I suggest we
15 take a five-minute break and wait for Ms. Commissioner
16 Paz Chair to arrive, and restart.

17 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Vice Chair Kelly, I
18 wanted to make a recommendation.

19 VICE CHAIR KELLY: After five minutes. Okay.
20 So, we'll suspend for five minutes while Chairman Paz
21 enters the building.

22 (OFF THE RECORD FROM 1:58 P.M., UNTIL 2:04
23 P.M.)

24 CHAIR PAZ: Okay, so, we are ready to come
25 back from our break. Thank you, everyone, and I do

1 apologize for my delay. Getting used to meeting in
2 person, I guess. So, before we continue, I would like
3 to go back and have the CEC do roll call to establish
4 quorum.

5 (Pause)

6 MS. LOZA: Okay.

7 Commissioner Castaneda?

8 (Pause)

9 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Present, Imperial
10 Valley College.

11 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Colwell?

12 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Present, I.V. College.

13 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Dolega?

14 (Pause)

15 Commissioner Flores?

16 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Present, California
17 Natural Resources Agency in Sacramento.

18 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Hanks?

19 (Pause)

20 Vice Chair Kelly?

21 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Present, Imperial Valley
22 College.

23 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Lopez?

24 (Pause)

25 Commissioner Olmedo?

1 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Luis Olmedo, Present,
2 Imperial Valley College.

3 MS. LOZA: Chair Paz?

4 (Pause)

5 CHAIR PAZ: Present, Imperial Valley College.

6 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Reynolds?

7 absent, Commissioner Ruiz?

8 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Present, IVC.

9 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Scott?

10 (Pause)

11 Commissioner Soto?

12 (Pause)

13 Commissioner Weisgall?

14 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Present, Bethesda,
15 Maryland.

16 MS. LOZA: Okay. Let me count. One, two,
17 three, four, five, six, seven, eight. We do have a
18 quorum.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. If we could go to
20 slide number seven, please.

21 (Pause)

22 Okay. So, under administrative items, we have
23 a number of meeting action minutes that require
24 approval. The Notice identified Action Minutes from
25 four meeting dates for consideration, however the Action

1 Minutes from the March 24, 2022, meeting will not be
2 considered today. The remaining Action Minutes have all
3 been made available for review to the Commissioners, and
4 to the public through the docket and are available in
5 hard copy at each physical location.

6 Do I have a motion to approve any or all of
7 the meeting Action Minutes listed on the Meeting Notice,
8 with the exception of the March 24, 2022 minutes?

9 COMMISSIONER WIESGALL: Move to approve all
10 three, Jonathon Weisgall.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Do I have a second?

12 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: I second that, Rod
13 Colwell.

14 CHAIR PAZ: So, there was a second from Rod, I
15 believe.

16 We will now go to public comment. We will
17 first open the floor to any public comments relating to
18 the identified meeting action minutes.

19 For public comments on this item we will first
20 take comments from the physical locations and then
21 anyone participating through ZOOM. A reminder to please
22 keep all comments to two minutes or less, and comments
23 should be specific to this item only. So, if you are
24 here in Imperial, please raise your hand or stand and we
25 will bring a microphone to you. Commissioner --

1 (Pause)

2 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair, I had
3 recommended earlier that someone walk around with a
4 microphone. Was the mic already walked around the room?

5 Okay. What's that — just wanted to put that
6 as a —

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So she will —

8 CHAIR PAZ: If there are any hands, my
9 colleague here, Silvia, will bring the mic to you.

10 (Pause)

11 I don't see any hands. Commissioner Flores,
12 are there any individuals wishing to speak in
13 Sacramento?

14 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Nope, no one's here.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Flores.
16 Commissioner Weisgall, are there any individuals wishing
17 to speak from Maryland?

18 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Here are none.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We will now move to
20 people participating through Zoom. CEC staff are there
21 any hands raised or comments entered in Zoom?

22 (Pause)

23 MS. LOZA: I am checking for hands on Zoom,
24 and there are no comments related. Thank you.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

1 Next, let me ask if there are any edits
2 proposed by any Commission members? If so, please raise
3 your hand through the Zoom feature or here in the
4 Imperial Valley Campus, please indicate that you would
5 like to speak.

6 (Pause)

7 I see no one here in Imperial Valley College.
8 Oh, I do see one. Commissioner Olmedo.

9 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: I just wanted to — both
10 be sensitive, but at the same time just recognize the
11 importance of the Commission meetings, being accessible
12 to Imperial Valley. I do want to say that there was
13 initially an outreach to the High School in Calipatria,
14 and I know there was dialogue with the Commission the
15 Commission, the Energy Commissioner —

16 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo, If I may,
17 finally, we do have an item where will be discussing —
18 but just like we are reminding the members of the public
19 to speak to the administrative items, if you have any
20 comments on the administrative, the approval of the
21 agendas, the minutes, we'll take those. But later on in
22 the agenda, there is a conversation around meeting
23 locations and all that where you can make those
24 comments.

25 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Okay.

1 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

2 Okay, so there were no raised hands. So, next
3 item will be slide 11.

4 MS. LEE: Chair Paz, I believe you need to
5 take a vote on this item.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Oh. Thank you. So, no public
7 comments, we had a motion and a second, and now we will
8 hand it over to the CEC staff to do roll call.

9 (Pause)

10 MS. LOZA: Ok. Commissioner Castaneda?

11 (Pause)

12 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Colwell?

13 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes.

14 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Dolega is absent.
15 Commissioner Flores?

16 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Yes.

17 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Hanks is absent.
18 Vice Chair Kelly?

19 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Yes.

20 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Lopez is absent.
21 Commissioner Olmedo?

22 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes.

23 MS. LOZA: Chair Paz?

24 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

25 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Reynolds is absent.

1 Commissioner Ruiz?

2 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.

3 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Scott is absent.

4 Commissioner Soto is absent.

5 Commissioner Weisgall?

6 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes.

7 MS. LOZA: Ok. Back to you, Chair Paz.

8 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Slide 11 please.

9 MS. LEE: I'm sorry, Erica. We need to
10 confirm the votes to know if the motion passed. Did we
11 hear a response from Commissioner Castaneda?

12 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Sorry about that,
13 maybe it didn't pick it up. I voted yes.

14 MS. LEE: Thank you.

15 MS. LOZA: Ok. Thank you. So, I have one,
16 two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, so it passes.

17 MS. LEE: Thank you.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Slide eleven, please.

19 Oh, I think we're there already.

20 At the March 24th meeting, we discussed a draft
21 letter of for Imperial County's Lithium Valley Economic
22 Opportunity Investment Plan, proposed by Commissioner
23 Vice Chair Kelley. Following that meeting, Commissioner
24 Kelley asked CEC staff to distribute and docket an
25 updated draft, but further edits were needed, and a

1 revised version was posted and distributed to the
2 Lithium Valley Commissioners early this week. Both the
3 Economic Opportunity Investment Plan and latest revised
4 draft letter are available for the public through the
5 docket and in hard copy at the physical locations.

6 So, I will ask for a motion at this point.

7 (Pause)

8 There is a request from Commissioner
9 Castaneda. We can, please, project the letter on the
10 screen.

11 (Pause)

12 While we bring it up, for clarification we
13 will take a motion first and then if there is a second
14 then we will go to public comment, and only after the
15 public has time to comment, then the Commissioners will
16 have our discussion, and then we'll do the roll call.

17 (Pause)

18 MS. LEE: While staff is looking for a copy of
19 that letter to display, I will mention that the
20 Commissioners received links to all of the documents by
21 email, and you may be able to find the letter in your
22 email, or in the Commission's docket for the Lithium
23 Valley Commission.

24 (Pause)

25 VICE CHAIR KELLY: So, um, Chair Paz, for —

1 for discussion purposes, and to move it along, I make a
2 motion to approve this letter of support for the IVEOIP.

3 MS. LEE: Thank you. We have a motion, is
4 there a second?

5 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I'll second, Johnathan
6 Weisgall.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Johnathan. We will now
8 take public comment. So, if you here are in Imperial,
9 please raise your hand or stand and we will bring a
10 microphone to you.

11 (Pause)

12 MS. FLORES: Hi everyone. Good afternoon, my
13 name is Daniela Flores. I'm a community organizer and
14 advocate with Imperial Valley Equity and Justice
15 Coalition.

16 So, I wanted to make a comment about this
17 proposal. I believe, you know, there's a lot of work
18 that's been done. I consider myself a pretty informed
19 person, but as many of our community of our members have
20 a lot going on, I don't think this plan has been fully
21 vetted with the community. I don't think that our
22 community members, especially the front-line commu—
23 front-line communities have had an opportunity to see
24 their feedback reflected in this plan.

25 So, I feel like it's still premature to lend

1 support for this at this moment. I don't think I've
2 seen the community engagement that really ought to be in
3 place for an equitable plan that centers the voices of
4 those that will be most impacted, and have been impacted
5 by the conditions in that region.

6 So, you know, there's been, over the last few
7 weeks, there's been a voicing of, you know, concerns,
8 rightly so, from the frontline communities. In
9 particular Calipat. That's all through public
10 information and those meetings and in council.

11 So, you know, again I think the Imperial
12 Valley — Imperial County Board of Supervisors missed a
13 step, and that was to meaningfully engage the fence line
14 communities. And so, that's why I believe it's
15 premature. And, you know, there should be — I'll be
16 speaking later and I have some recommendations for how
17 the community engagement can be done in a more equitable
18 way, but thank you for your time and I hope that, you
19 know, these comments are considered.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Anyone else here in Imperial who
21 would like to speak on this item?

22 (Pause)

23 CHAIR PAZ: I do not see anybody else. So, I
24 will then go to Commissioner Flores. Are there any
25 individuals wishing to speak in Sacramento?

1 COMMISSIONER FLORES: No.

2 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

3 Commissioner Weisgall, are there any
4 individuals wishing to speak from Maryland?

5 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: No.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We will now move to
7 people participating through Zoom. CEC staff, are there
8 any hands raised, or comments entered in Zoom?

9 MS. LOZA: Yes. We have a hand raised from
10 LCJA. I will allow you to talk, you can unmute
11 yourself.

12 MS. LOERA: Thank you. This is Mariela, with
13 Leadership Council. I'm going to read off my comment.
14 The proposed investment plan describes the possibility
15 of Lithium Valley as an opportunity for economic growth,
16 via future industry development and subsequent
17 employment opportunities.

18 However, while the promise of economic growth
19 might not seem appealing to the region's political
20 leader, it is vital that the overall well-being and
21 quality of life is seriously considered in the
22 communities I represent.

23 We need to acknowledge that there is a number
24 of uncertainties of the potential impacts that not only
25 geothermal expansion and Lithium extraction will bring,

1 but also the development of assembly and manufacturing
2 infrastructure.

3 Communities in the Salton Sea region, who have
4 historically endured cumulative environmental impacts
5 impacting public health and their quality of life,
6 cannot afford to endure the cost for ensuring the
7 nation's energy independence, as the plan suggests
8 Lithium Valley will do. And if this is the case, then
9 there needs to be clear language describing how the
10 local community will be meaningfully engaged, and all
11 conversations related to community benefits far beyond
12 just employment and education opportunities.

13 Thus far, employment opportunities and
14 economic growth has been the main benefit discussed on
15 the topic. However, the quality, safety,
16 sustainability of these job opportunities, and how they
17 will be accessible to the existing local communities,
18 have not been clear.

19 Instead, AB 2903 asks for educational programs
20 to prioritize employment opportunities for things like
21 construction, manufacturing, and operation jobs. But
22 there's no career opportunities delineated for things
23 like chemists, finance, engineers, or more technical job
24 descriptions.

25 It is extremely inappropriate for this

1 commission to support any action that's going to exempt
2 any CEQA or extensive environmental impact report
3 process, given the amount of uncertainty that we have
4 about this technology. Thank you.

5 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Are there any other
6 hands on Zoom?

7 MS. LOZA: Yes. We have Nikola Lakic. You
8 should be able to unmute yourself.

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

10 MS. LOZA: Yes.

11 MR. LAKIC: Yeah Thank you. Thank you very
12 much for this opportunity to say a few words. My name
13 is Nikola Lakic.

14 I would like to say — that we have two
15 projects separately — Lithium Valley Projects and
16 restoration of the Salton Sea. It's fundamentally
17 wrong, because they cancel each other.

18 It — there is in process, right now, a panel
19 of independent reviewers, who are reviewing possibility,
20 feasibility on the import of sea water, which is an
21 important component for restoration of the Salton Sea.
22 I respectfully urge Commissioners to halt, to stop all
23 activities before — before panel of independent rigors
24 announce their results. This is very, very important.
25 Again, please wait for it.

1 There is a project that will be complementary
2 for extraction of Lithium, but you have to wait a little
3 bit. It's — one comparison would be, like, building a
4 country club, and then just putting sewer lines without
5 knowing where houses are going to be. You have to wait
6 for a master plan, then we can work together.

7 Again, I respectfully urge Commissioners to
8 wait for a little bit, and then — then we can work
9 together on this one. But, thank you very much for this
10 short opportunity to say a few words. Thank you.

11 (Pause)

12 CHAIR PAZ: Are there any other hands?

13 MS. LOZA: Yes. Next hand raised is Alexis
14 Castro. You should be able to unmute yourself.

15 MS. CASTRO: Yes. Hi, hello everybody.
16 Alexis Castro, with IV Equity and Justice. Calling on
17 behalf of folks like my mom, who is a single mother,
18 farmworker, who has lived in Imperial County for most of
19 her life.

20 I really just wanted to take this time to
21 remind this body that the reality is that our community
22 has had very extractive relationship with our governing
23 bodies. Whether it's from NAFTA, to the agricultural
24 production that happens in Imperial County, from water,
25 to our air quality, the reality is that we've seen, time

1 and time again, when entities come — you know, and
2 promise everything between the sky and the moon, right,
3 and those benefits don't get realized.

4 And so, I just wanted to make sure, that as we
5 are making this decision, that we are taking the
6 proactive steps that are needed to make sure that we're
7 building trust with community members. I think that
8 that is something that is really, really important,
9 particularly again, from a region that has had a very
10 extractive relationship with external bodies, or
11 governing bodies.

12 You know, I want to make sure, particularly
13 because it's very difficult for farm workers, and any
14 other worker, to be able to make these types of
15 comments, that we do take the time to make sure that we
16 educate and do the outreach. But also, that we build
17 the autonomy for communities to be able to make
18 determinations for themselves. Because, ultimately, I
19 think that's what's really at stake here, right? And
20 just want to make sure that we do afford our community
21 the opportunity to be deeply impro— involved in this
22 decision making process, and at the center of all these
23 decisions.

24 Thank you for your time.

25 MS. LOZA: We have a hand raised from

1 Gilberto. You should be able to unmute yourself.

2 MR. MANZANARES: Hi, good afternoon. My name
3 is Gilberto Manzanares, I'm a resident of Calexico,
4 California. I also just want to make my comment and say
5 that as a regular every day working class citizen of
6 Calexico, I understand that this billion-dollar industry
7 will happen one way or another, but I really want to
8 remind this commission that the air quality here in our
9 Imperial Valley, which I've been a life-long resident
10 in, it's so bad. Really bad. The children in this
11 county are hospitalized and visit emergency rooms more
12 often for asthma more often than anywhere else in the
13 state of California.

14 Myself, I also suffer from asthma, and I
15 probably will for the rest of my life. Living in this
16 county does not make it any better. So, I really want
17 to just make — I know there's a lot of people involved
18 in this project that are not from here and they don't
19 really understand the impact of what even the most
20 minimal amount of pollution in the air that — it can
21 have on current citizens, and the future of our
22 children.

23 So, I just really want to stress to the people
24 that are working on this project, and the Commissioners,
25 to please take into consideration the well-being and

1 health of the citizens.

2 Thank you.

3 (Pause)

4 MS. LOZA: Those are all the hands raised,
5 Chair Paz.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I do see a hand raised
7 here in Imperial Valley College.

8 MR. GARCIA: Good afternoon. My name is Rusty
9 Garcia, citizen of Brawley for the past 64 years. Can
10 you tell how old I am?

11 I agree with some of the comments that have
12 been made a couple of minutes ago, except it seems to be
13 negative. And — I take offense to such negativity
14 because there's so much positive that could come out of
15 this whole project. And, you know, we need to see it
16 through. I believe that the air quality, it's not —
17 it's just not a whim, it's — last night they said, "Oh
18 yeah, the air quality's going to be good."

19 There's been studies. I know Commissioner
20 Olmedo, and he's not going to be involved, if there's
21 going to be air quality problems. Because, you know we
22 deal with air quality problems at Brawley Union High
23 School, and we're involved with him, and we — we take
24 him serious about it.

25 So, you know, I think that we need to build it

1 and they will come. They need jobs. And — and as I see
2 there's stage one, two, three and so on, the more
3 stages, the more jobs, and that's all we need here
4 because of our unemployment rate. For our students that
5 maybe don't, can't go to college, but want to work, and
6 use their hands and so on, and are able to. So I — I'm
7 for this this project, anyway, thank you.

8 CHAIR PAZ: Any other public comments?

9 Okay. So, this concludes the public comments.
10 Now I will go to —

11 MR. CASTILLO: One more.

12 CHAIR PAZ: Oh, one more. Sorry, I didn't see
13 that.

14 MR. CASTILLO: My name is Ray Castillo, I'm a
15 County Supervisor, District 5, here in Imperial County.
16 I represent the all of East Imperial County from east
17 side of El Centro, east side of Brawley, east side of
18 Imperial, north side of El Centro, even a part of
19 Calexico.

20 And I'm 74 years young. I graduated from San
21 Diego State, Calexico, in 1977, and I can tell you, 50
22 years ago I went fishing, Salton Sea. It was a
23 beautiful, beautiful sea at the time, and since then,
24 for the last 50 years, it's been deteriorating. A lot
25 of it has to do with the Salton Sea, it's been in a

1 sense — you deposit all of your ag runoff, which is your
2 herbicides, pesticides, fertilizers and so forth, and
3 it's damaged the sea. But, I believe that we can
4 restore it. There's technology now that can help
5 restore it. Now, let me tell you something. I've been
6 on the Board 11 years now. And When I got on the Board,
7 my mission was to diversify the economy and create jobs.
8 I'll tell you, California is the fifth largest economy
9 in the world. Double the economy of Russia, if you can
10 just imagine that. But yet, we still live in a county
11 that's the poorest county in the state of California,
12 with the lowest per-capita income, and the highest
13 poverty rate. And how is that fair, living in a wealthy
14 state like this? So, for once in my life, I see a
15 tremendous opportunity that's going to lift us out of
16 poverty and bring up our median income tremendously.

17 Now, I heard the comments about impacts and
18 stuff, the environment and so forth. Well, let me tell
19 you. Geothermal energy has been with us forty years,
20 and what do you hear about the environment, pollution,
21 and contamination from there? You see, non-existent.
22 In fact, geothermal energy is the cleanest energy in the
23 world. It's cleaner than fossil fuels, cleaner than
24 natural gas, cleaner than any of those fossil fuels.
25 So, what we're doing here is nothing new.

1 The only thing that's new is the extraction
2 from the brine that comes out of the geothermal plants,
3 and I think it's a real positive. So, for once in a
4 lifetime, we have an opportunity to create good jobs,
5 good paying jobs, and we're - IVC is working with the
6 developers of those extraction plants to give our
7 students here an opportunity to get certificates to work
8 in the plants. And just like when the prisons came here
9 to the valley, the Board of Supervisors said, "We need
10 our local people to be primary, you know, the ones
11 working in the prison."

12 And at the time they said a 60/40 percentage
13 of employment. Right now, the Department of Corrections
14 employs 80 percent local hires from the valley, 20
15 percent from the outside. And I foresee that same thing
16 happening here. So, we graduate thousands of students
17 from the high school —

18 CHAIR PAZ: Uh, supervisor? My apologies.
19 Can you wrap up your comments? Time is up. Thank you.

20 MR. CASTILLO: Sure, Okay. Sorry. But
21 anyway, thank you for that, and maybe I'll comment at
22 that point later. Thanks.

23 CHAIR PAZ: I believe this now concludes public comment.
24 So, we will now move to Commissioner discussion. As we
25 discuss this item, since we have already discussed this

1 at prior meetings, I request that all Commissioners keep
2 their comments as concise as possible, and please
3 identify specific edits that are needed to the recent
4 draft of the letter.

5 I will start with Commissioner Kelley who
6 initially proposed the letter for consideration. So,
7 Vice Chair Kelly, do you have any comments or edits to
8 discuss?

9 MS. LEE: Chair Paz, I'm so sorry to interrupt
10 you. We do have two public comments that were entered
11 in the Q&A. I'll ask Erica to read those quickly, and
12 then return to your commissioner comments.

13 MS. LOZA: The first comment was from Tom
14 Stephan. It says, "The need for additional high quality
15 water supply to separate lithium from geothermal brine
16 should be addressed as an impact on local economy.
17 Though not insignificant, there are ways to solve this
18 by reclaiming impaired local water supplies, and
19 recycling water used in the lithium process, but this
20 should not be ignored."

21 The next comment is from Patricia Carrillo.
22 And it says, "How will it affect our water consumption?"

23 And those are all of the comments.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, back to you, Vice
25 Chair Kelly.

1 VICE CHAIR KELLY: I'll be quick and concise.
2 There has been a lot of public engagement, and this has
3 been going on for almost a year. Actually, a year. And
4 it's been happening in those fence line communities in
5 Nyland, Calipatria. It's been happening in El Centro,
6 where a group has been gathering to produce this plan
7 that we are now considering for action. These all came
8 from comments from industry, labor, community-based
9 organizations. If there was a better path on specific
10 plan, programmatic EIR, we asked, and we looked. This
11 was inclusive over an area to give assuery to industry,
12 and to also ensure that all environmental considerations
13 were going to be considered.

14 So, I just wanted to let you know that there
15 has been, and anyone that is coming now to the
16 conversation, you're welcome, and there will be more
17 conversation. Much more, in detail, about how the
18 development and disbursement is going to happen.

19 I can assure you, for myself, for some of my
20 colleagues, that I was in Nyland all summer long, at 122
21 degrees in the shade, and I continue to converse — to
22 have conversations in Calipatria, Brawley, Westmorland,
23 Bombay Beach, and all the areas directly in contact with
24 the geothermal resource area. And I know that we are
25 doing our level best to bring something forward, and

1 fortunately at this moment we have an opportunity to see
2 something happen.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I will now ask any of
4 my colleagues here in the room. Commissioner Castaneda,
5 I see your hand.

6 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Thank you, madam
7 Chair. First of all, I wanted to thank both you and the
8 Vice Chair, Supervisor Kelly, for the work that you did
9 to bring this letter before the Commission. The reason
10 that I wanted to see if we could bring it up, and
11 because there are some people that may not have access
12 to it, for various reasons, and the fact is, is that it
13 has changed over time. This is not the same letter that
14 came before our board just two months ago.

15 I think it's much improved. I think it's much
16 improved. I think that some of the comments that we've
17 heard just a few moments ago are indicative of the fact
18 that providing people with the information that's in
19 front of this Commission is extremely important.

20 Because, I heard comments about, you know,
21 foregoing the environmental process and so forth. And
22 while in an earlier iteration of this letter that was
23 part of, not completely foregoing environmental process,
24 but that was part of the, part of the letter that has
25 been removed. I think that there are extremely positive

1 things for the county and the people that live within it
2 as a result, if we are successful.

3 The one thing that I wanted to just ask, and
4 ask the crafters of this letter — you know, tomorrow, I
5 got invited to a press conference by Senator Hueso, who
6 happens to be my senator where I live, and Assembly
7 Member Garcia, regarding the May revise of the state
8 budget, and specifically issues that would be, kind of
9 in a wish list in the Governor's budget. And one of
10 them, clearly, is moneys that would be available to
11 expand higher education in Imperial County.

12 I have seen, as all of us have on this
13 Commission have over the last couple of weeks, the
14 letters coming in that support an institution, and I'm
15 just wondering why we're calling out a specific
16 institution when there are a few that are in the mix.
17 And one of the, I think one of the things that I would
18 not like to see is that us for — us to forgo this
19 opportunity with State funding because we've got our
20 eggs in a basket, and that may not have the political
21 wherewithal in Sacramento.

22 And so, I would just like to ask the sponsors
23 of the letter if we could just remove reference to any
24 specific campus, and basically just allow the folks that
25 make those decisions, both in Sacramento, and in the CSU

1 and the UC system, to determine what is the best
2 institution, and what is, essentially, going to be
3 politically supported. And that way we don't — we don't
4 chew on ourselves, you know. And that's all I would — I
5 want to do.

6 I am very — I have a lot of friends that
7 graduated from Cal Poly and they are extremely
8 successful, and they are very, very, I think very
9 enthusiastic about their institution. But I also know a
10 lot of people who have gone to UC Riverside, I know a
11 lot of, more people, that graduated from San Diego State
12 University, in fact I work with a few of them. So, I
13 just think that — let's give ourselves the best shot.
14 Basically just, let's not put ourselves into, you know,
15 into one hole. That would be my request, if we could
16 just make that simple amendment, and then I would love
17 to support this letter. Thank you.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And any maybe
19 amendments we'll take at the end to your motion,
20 Commissioner Kelly. Anybody else here in Imperial?
21 Okay. I'll go down the line, I guess, since everyone
22 has a comment. So we'll just take them in order this
23 way.

24 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Thank you for the
25 opportunity. Similar to Steve's comments, who have

1 careful time to review the letter, and certainly Ryan's,
2 I know his commitments and collective commitments to
3 community engagement and all the rest of it.

4 I guess the only comment I'd like to better
5 understand is, once we get into this, since the proposed
6 excise, or royalty, and how that's — we get that sort of
7 equitable distribution of people on board with the
8 concept. But, we've just got to be careful that, you
9 know, we're talking about just lithium products, we're
10 talking about actual battery cells, are we talking about
11 water exporting to Coachella or San Diego, are we
12 talking about broccoli, carrots, hay, grain, are we
13 talking about power generation, anything that's sort of
14 exported out of the valley, and we've got to be careful
15 here in how this is, sort of, you know, socialized, but
16 also how it's worded out.

17 So, I'd — I'm respectfully supportive of the
18 letter, but would personally like to sit down with the
19 Governor. I think the Governor — Government of
20 California could mend a little more, I believe, into the
21 permitting process here. Namely tiering and things like
22 that, to accelerate development without going around
23 CEQA, of course, and getting these moved, so and sitting
24 down, of course, with the county itself. Thank you.

25 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: There's a lot to be

1 said. I think it's clear that Imperial Valley has
2 historically been neglected. You know, we're kind of
3 sandwiched here between the Salton Sea and emissions
4 coming from Mexico. And I know for years, decades,
5 we've tried to resolve those issues.

6 It's clear that it's an economically depressed
7 area, and sadly, we keep coming up as being the last,
8 right. Or some might refer us that we keep winning the
9 last place, right. Being first in poverty, or being
10 first in jobs, or lack of economic development, or even
11 diversity and economic development.

12 Now, I'm going to make a recommendation to
13 Commissioner Kelly. It's not an indication of the
14 direction I'm headed, but I do want to recognize that
15 San Diego State University is the university in the
16 Imperial County. And just like we want to see the
17 opportunities at the fence line communities, right? I
18 keep coming up with Calipatria, because I don't
19 understand why Calipatria isn't in every billboard out
20 there, in every document in saying, "your closest
21 proximity." We can't recognize Calipatria being the one
22 city that — the one government that is the closest,
23 right? I think there was just — fortunately — well, I
24 mean at least a s— a government seat that is the
25 closest, right that —

1 (Pause)

2 Right. Well I'm not trying to tell you what
3 to take away from it, I'm trying to establish the fact
4 that there is a fence line community, right, and as the
5 impact grows out, then data and information and
6 demographics and so on, there's a lot of information out
7 there that can help us define, you know, as to how that
8 impact, and how those opportunities grow out.

9 So, that's not to take away from Imperial
10 County, right, or from the Salton Sea, or from our
11 brothers and sisters in Coachella, Eastern Coachella,
12 cause, I mean that's what we recognize as a
13 disadvantaged environmental justice community as well.
14 Again, there has to be a logic on how that grows out,
15 and it can't leave Imperial County out, cause that's the
16 fence-line community.

17 Now having said that, I think it's important
18 to recognize San Diego State, just like we want to
19 recognize our community, just like we want to make sure
20 that the opportunities are here. I'm ready and willing
21 to — and optimistic about what can happen here in terms
22 of building out — I don't think San Diego State can't do
23 anything that any other UC can't do, so I don't want to
24 set expectations that — or under set expectations that
25 San Diego can't do anything.

1 It's like the same narrative historically.
2 It's like people talk for us, people think they no
3 better than us, people think that people here don't have
4 the same capacity. With the right opportunities, with
5 the right investment, we can do anything here.

6 Now having said that, I am not a
7 representative of any industry, I was put here as a
8 representative of disadvantaged communities. And I
9 would add to that environmental justice, right. And I
10 would add that, you know, is very grounded on equity.

11 I'm not a representative of the government. I
12 am not the Chair, or the Vice Chair, whose roll I
13 understand is to pull everybody together and try to find
14 common ground. I understand the direction where the
15 letter is headed, I really do, and I commend the county
16 for what it's doing. It is representing the people of
17 Imperial County, right.

18 But with that said, I do — would have
19 preferred seeing more equity, more justice, and I know
20 that's the direction that it's headed. The County, and
21 the people in Imperial Valley want that. I've heard it
22 at the state level, at the Governor's office, you know.
23 I've heard it plenty of times, we need to make sure
24 Imperial's a center of gravity, because if we can't
25 build a strong foundation here, it's not going to work

1 for the rest of Imperial, for the rest of the region,
2 for the rest of the State.

3 So having said that, I hope that San Diego
4 State does get recognized, and that here we continue to
5 work with everyone, and our community in particular has
6 a representative of — Commissioner of disadvantaged
7 community, to make sure we continue moving in that
8 direction that we are going, which, I've seen it. And
9 I've heard it. We're moving in the right direction.
10 We've just got to keep doing it, and keep doing more of
11 it. And I comment the county for your letter. Thank
12 you.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Olmedo.
14 Just for the record, and also the people who are viewing
15 us via Zoom, I want to establish the order of the
16 speakers, and then whenever you speak if you can
17 identify yourself so people know who is talking. And
18 that was my bad, I would have put that in before.

19 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, madam Chair.
20 To be clear, you called us up, I —

21 CHAIR PAZ: Yes, I know.

22 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Luis Olmedo, co— Luis
23 Olmedo, I don't know if an affiliation is necessary,
24 but.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo. Thank you.

1 CCOMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yeah, Commissioner
2 Olmedo.

3 CHAIR PAZ: So, the order, just to go back on
4 the record, after we closed public comment, Vice Chair
5 Ryan Kelly spoke, following Vice Chair Kelly it was
6 Commissioner Castaneda, followed by Commissioner
7 Colwell, followed by Commissioner Olmedo, and I will now
8 call on Commissioner Ruiz.

9 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Thank you, madam Chair. I
10 want to commend the drafters of this letter. We've come
11 a long way some, and, uh, fr— I remember reading the
12 original draft, and uh—

13 But I have an item, you know, that I would
14 love for the draft to continue expanding, and that is
15 the support and assistance of in the creation of
16 Imperial County's severance tax. You may agree or
17 disagree, and I think, but I think it's important to
18 raise, you know, this item.

19 I would love to see the Salton Sea somehow be
20 included here. We have to make a provision to foll— to
21 intentionally bring allocations to the Salton Sea. And
22 this shouldn't preclude the County, or the Salton Sea
23 altogether from receiving money from the State, who is
24 legally obligated to fix the problem. But I think this
25 is the biggest elephant in the room, and I think we need

1 to be mindful.

2 And I don't mean to double tax the industry
3 here, I think we just need to be — we just need to be
4 crafty, how to continuously bring in funding to the
5 Salton Sea for infrastructure, habitat restoration and
6 whatnot. So, I would love to see, somehow, some
7 provision here on this item. I think, you know, that
8 will be really, really helpful.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Ruiz. I
10 will now call on Commissioner Weisgall, whose hand I see
11 on the screen.

12 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Thanks very much.
13 Yes, Commissioner Jonathan Weisgall speaking. I want to
14 make one comment about the letter, and then I want to
15 respond to some of the public comments, which were —
16 which were really quite interesting.

17 One aspect of the letter talks about creating
18 an Imperial County severance tax, or some sort of
19 resource levy. Is lithium production going to be taxed?
20 Absolutely. Should the revenue benefit the local
21 community, and as Commissioner Ruiz was talking, assist
22 in Salton Sea issues? Absolutely.

23 The one point I want to make about that, is
24 one tax should do it, not two. In other words, if there
25 is a state tax, no need for a county tax. If there is a

1 county tax, no need for a state tax. But there is, you
2 know, no question that if a company like ours at
3 Berkshire Hathaway Energy is removing a natural resource
4 from the earth, even if it's 250 parts per million of
5 geothermal brine, yes, taxing that is certainly
6 appropriate.

7 Now, I want to make some comments about — I
8 want to respond to a couple of the public comments.
9 Mariela talked about — at the Leadership Council —
10 about the need to learn more about the jobs and the
11 training. I want to stress that our company is
12 absolutely committed to local hires. And the — her
13 comment talked about — seemed to imply that if we are
14 talking about chemists and engineers that that might not
15 work for Imperial County.

16 The fact of the matter is that in our existing
17 work force of about 200 at our geothermal plants, at
18 least 70, I think maybe 80 percent of our employees come
19 from high schools and community college. We're moving
20 forward on that, we're working with Imperial Valley
21 College, we're looking at internships, we're still two
22 years away from starting construction, but during that
23 time, we are want to move forward with training,
24 education to create good jobs. Some of our employees at
25 the geothermal facilities, where, as Supervisor made —

1 commented earlier, have, some have been — where we've
2 been for 40, some have been for 35 of those 40 years.

3 On the comment about, "Let's wait until we
4 learn more about importing water to the Salton Sea," I
5 want to stress that, while our company leases or
6 controls a total of about 18,000 acres of land, of which
7 we use about 5,400 for our operating resources, none
8 encroaches on the Salton Sea.

9 We have every interest in restoring the Salton
10 Sea, and pursuing the best option of all, which we
11 happen to agree, is importing sea water. That action
12 will not encroach on Lithium, and Lithium will not
13 encroach on the Salton Sea, at least as far as our
14 company is concerned.

15 A third public comment was about the need to
16 build trust with community members, and more on
17 education and outreach. I couldn't agree more. We are
18 planning to commission our demonstration project, a
19 lithium recovery demonstration project, very soon.

20 As soon as that is running, and there are no
21 dangers in terms of, you know, of contractors and
22 employees connecting valves and vessels and we have it
23 running, we are going to have a town hall. We want to
24 have tours. We want to bring people in to educate them
25 and let them know how this is going to work.

1 Last comment, someone was talking about health
2 impacts for the Salton Sea. Everyone knows about the
3 high asthma rates; everyone knows about those problems.
4 This does need a study, I would say to be fair, a study
5 coming from a developer just will not have the
6 credibility that's needed. What's needed is a state
7 study, or a study from a well-credentialed third party.
8 We certainly would welcome that.

9 Thank you. I'm sorry, I tried to keep that
10 quick, but I did want to comment on the various — very
11 interesting public comments that were made. Thanks very
12 much.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Weisgall.
14 Commissioner Flores, do you have anything to add?

15 COMMISSIONER FLORES: No, not at this moment.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Okay, thank you. So, it's my
17 turn. I forget that I'm a Commissioner not just here
18 facilitating.

19 Thank you for the public comments and thank
20 you to my colleagues for your points. I — I mean, on my
21 other hats, right, I'm all about community engagement,
22 and I've felt it. I've felt it — Ms. Flores, the
23 comments that you've made a lot of times, there is that
24 disconnect, right. And when we're on the other side, it
25 feels that we're not heard, or you know, our comments

1 maybe didn't make it the way we wanted, and a lot of
2 times we feel disengaged, or not engaged.

3 So, I want to recognize that I hear you,
4 because on my other roles, my 100 percent job, that is
5 one of the commitments that Alianza has in improving
6 community engagement. Being on this other side, I also
7 recognize that the position that Vice Chair Ryan Kelly
8 has is to hear from everyone, right? Finding that
9 consensus from everyone, it's a lot of times going to
10 leave some people feeling not 100 percent heard and
11 recognized. So, it's a tough job that you have.

12 And Oh yes, this is Chair Paz. We did want to
13 put this letter before you, so that you can give us
14 specific comments right. And I heard so far, maybe a few
15 that I want to highlight.

16 From Commissioner Castaneda, that we do not
17 make a reference to any specific campus, that we leave
18 it open and one campus, and maybe there's already a
19 campus that's better positioned, right. I hear
20 Commissioner Olmedo, we — well, we, — Imperial County
21 has had San Diego as an extension for many, many years.
22 I hear the comments, and going back to specific changes,
23 maybe we just leave that open, and just ask for funding
24 for a higher education campus.

25 The other comments that I heard were around

1 the levy. Different opinions. Commissioner Weisgall
2 wanting to make sure that we are not double taxed, I
3 think those are conversations that eventually do need to
4 happen with the Governor, and — and hopefully in an open
5 process. That we are having those conversations where
6 the community can hear, and the community can be part of
7 the conversation. But, more specifically, to this
8 letter, and I think a recommendation is that we do
9 include in the list of things that could be funded by
10 the tax — I use the word sustainability of the Salton
11 Sea. Because I understand how we here at the local
12 level feel that the State has a commitment, a
13 responsibility, and a duty to the mitigation and the
14 restoration of the Salton Sea.

15 But I am not against us thinking creatively
16 about how a potential tax can build on the
17 sustainability of the Salton Sea, whatever that may look
18 like, right? That we're ensuring that the Salton Sea is
19 healthy. So that's, in terms of language, that's the
20 recommendation I would make for that point.

21 Let's see the other one. And I did speak with
22 Vice Chair Kelly, as — on this particular topic as well,
23 or this bullet point, that, perhaps we could consider
24 doing participatory budgeting, right? Because the needs
25 of the community are going to change. I don't think — I

1 mean if this is successful and there is a severance tax,
2 it will continue, you know, yielding. And so, having a
3 participatory budgeting process, even if it's already,
4 you know, framed under this infrastructure,
5 environmental mitigation, community enhancements,
6 sustainability of the Salton Sea, it still allows the
7 community to prioritize and determine which issues we
8 tackle first, which locations, things of that nature
9 that will continue to allow the community to feel
10 engaged in the process that's not going to end any time
11 soon.

12 So those are, specifically, recommendations
13 that I would add to this letter, and then I will hand it
14 back to Vice Chair Ryan Kelly to see if he wants to
15 amend his motion.

16 VICE CHAIR KELLY: I appreciate everyone's
17 commentary and comments. I would only offer the
18 amendment to remove Cal Poly from reference. That was
19 an original, from the — from the plan that was produced
20 in mid-February, and many things have changed. I've
21 heard what Commissioner Olmeda said, and I am very
22 supportive of the CSU's STEM building, and their campus
23 creation in Brawley. And so, I am personally, but I
24 also recognize Commissioner Castaneda's opinion not to —
25 not to be specific, and I'd like to be able to stay

1 there.

2 Commissioner Ruiz, I heard your comment in
3 regard to the Salton Sea. In our letter is basically
4 what the County of Imperial is moving forward. Things
5 will change, and conversations will happen. The Salton
6 Sea is always going to be part of geothermal and
7 lithium, but I would not want to make any amendment to
8 it now, but that — that is happening, right?

9 So, I recognize it, but I am not offering an
10 amendment. And Chair Paz, your comments in regard to
11 the community participation in how such a fund would be
12 allocated and prioritized. I make a — I am not offering
13 to make an amendment, but I can ensure to you that yes,
14 that is where we are going. And if this is successful,
15 that that will be direct community involvement, and
16 there will be sharing with other jurisdictions within
17 this county.

18 And to Mr. Colwell's comment, it is just —
19 what we are asking is coordination and support from the
20 state that you, as well as I and others, know that that
21 conversation has occurred.

22 And so I only offer the amendment to remove
23 the Cal Poly reference from the action.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, we have an amended
25 motion by Vice Chair Ryan Kelly. There was a second —

1 does that second stand, Commissioner Weisgall?

2 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes, it does.

3 CHAIR PAZ: There is a motion and a second,
4 and I will now call for roll call on this item.

5 (Pause)

6 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Castaneda?

7 (Pause)

8 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yes.

9 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Colwell?

10 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes.

11 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Dolega is absent.

12 Commissioner Flores?

13 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Yes.

14 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Hanks?

15 Commissioner — Vice Chair Kelly?

16 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Yes.

17 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Lopez?

18 (Pause)

19 Commissioner Olmedo?

20 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: No.

21 MS. LOZA: Chair Paz?

22 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

23 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Reynolds?

24 Commissioner Ruiz?

25 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.

1 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Scott?

2 (Pause)

3 Commissioner Soto?

4 (Pause)

5 Commissioner Weisgall?

6 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes.

7 (Pause)

8 MS. LOZA: So we have one, two,
9 three, four, five, six, seven yesses and one no, but I
10 believe it passes.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Are there, I believe the motion
12 passes, but I don't know if legal — I don't know if
13 there's anything that — I think we're good.

14 MS. DYER: This is Deborah Dyer, yeah. A
15 simple majority will carry the motion.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, next slide.

17 (Pause)

18 Okay. So, this is a discussion and possible
19 action on Draft Findings and Recommendations identified
20 during the Environmental Impacts Workshop.

21 At our March 22, 2022, Meeting the Lithium
22 Valley Commission held a workshop on Environmental
23 Impacts. CEC staff prepared a document that summarizes
24 potential proposed findings and recommendations that the
25 Lithium Valley Commissioners identified in the workshop.

1 Just a note that all of those documents are in the back,
2 in case anybody wants to have them in front of them.
3 This document is designed for our review and
4 consideration as a body to generate discussion and begin
5 to develop areas of consensus now on finding — findings
6 and recommendations for the report due in October this
7 year.

8 This draft summary of potential findings and
9 recommendations, based on the discussion of the members
10 present at the March 2022 meeting, was provided to
11 commissioners, and English and Spanish versions of this
12 document were docketed on April 20, 2022, and are
13 available to the public . Members of the public have
14 also been provided a hard copy of these documents at the
15 Noticed physical locations.

16 I want to reiterate that these are not the
17 final findings or recommendations that will be in the
18 report, but rather an unfiltered summary of the
19 discussion of the Commission so far, on the topic of
20 environmental impacts. These draft findings and
21 recommendations will help CEC staff compile a draft
22 report based on our ongoing discussions, and there will
23 be opportunity for more feedback on these items and the
24 topic in the future.

25 So, for this discussion and in the interest of

1 time, I will not read each finding or recommendation in
2 the document. Instead, I will request public comment
3 and then we will hold Commissioner discussion during
4 which I ask for Commissioner feedback on the draft
5 document and any additions or changes you would like to
6 propose at this time. The findings and recommendations
7 presented here are not intended to indicate final report
8 content but rather they summarize what we have heard.

9 If there are certain findings and
10 recommendation you feel are fine and others you wish to
11 propose edits to or request further discussion on, you
12 can indicate this and request more conversation on those
13 that you feel warrant additional discussion.

14 Our goals here is to identify those areas
15 where we have consensus and to work toward a group of
16 draft recommendations that can inform the development of
17 the draft report.

18 So, I will first take public comments on this
19 topic, and I will start with members who are here in
20 Imperial.

21 (Pause)

22 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: No public comment.

23 CHAIR PAZ: I do not see any hands.

24 Commissioner Flores, are there any individuals
25 wishing to speak in Sacramento?

1 COMMISSIONER FLORES: None here.

2 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Weisgall, are there
3 any individuals wishing to speak from Maryland?

4 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: No.

5 CHAIR PAZ: We will now move to people
6 participating through Zoom. Are there any hands raised?

7 MS. LOZA: Yes. We have LCJA. You should be
8 able to unmute yourself.

9 MS. LOERA: Hello this is Mariela Loera with
10 Leadership Counsel again. As described in this document
11 the CEQA process should be considered the floor and not
12 the ceiling, to ensure that the review provides a
13 transparent and inclusive process for community
14 participation. Not only should you all develop — not
15 only should all development go through a full
16 environmental assessment, but this process and
17 information sharing should be done in a collaborative
18 manner with community in the Salton Sea region.

19 You have meaningful community engagement, and
20 using extensive outreach as well. This document that's
21 — this document does a great job in highlighting the
22 need to acknowledge the region's current and historical
23 context, and therefore the need for an extensive health
24 impact assessment.

25 We support the recommendation's outline in

1 this document, such as that there's clear language
2 mandating a meaningful community engagement process and
3 outreach when developing any community benefits
4 agreements, and what agencies are responsible to do
5 this, and how they will be given the resources to do
6 this engagement, and the environmental assessment in the
7 decision-making process. Thank you.

8 (Pause)

9 MS. LOZA: Those are all of the comments on
10 Zoom.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, moving to
12 Commissioner discussion. Commissioners, at this time
13 can you please indicate those areas where you feel the
14 findings and recommendations represent content you feel
15 should move forward to inform development of the draft
16 report. And please, indicate if there any other
17 recommendations from the Environmental Impact Workshop
18 that you would like us to consider.

19 Are there any comments from Commissioners here
20 in Imperial?

21 Okay, I do not see any. Are there any
22 comments from — I cannot see the screen anymore. So
23 Commissioner Weisgall, do you have any comments? Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes, I do. Okay,
25 yeah, I'm off mute, thanks. It's a small point. In the

1 proposed preliminary findings, C talks about how the
2 Energy Commission has exclusive licensing jurisdiction
3 for generating capacity at 50-megawatts or more.

4 I just think that this needs to be revised to
5 say that — I guess it was just a couple of days ago, but
6 regulatory amendments were adopted by the California
7 Energy Commission that essentially would give any county
8 the ability to petition for delegated authority under a
9 revised process for power plants above 50-megawatts, up
10 to 100.

11 I think that's not final yet, but I believe
12 that the effective date is supposed to be around August
13 1, so I just think it would be useful to include what is
14 in that Energy Commission decision. It's — this is from
15 — let me guess, I'm totally forgetting on time, it's
16 Thursday. Anyway, it's been in the last week. But I
17 think that it should be revised to reflect the latest
18 CEC regulations.

19 Thanks very much.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Flores,
21 are there any comments?

22 COMMISSIONER FLORES: No, thank you.

23 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Thank you. I do have a
24 couple. So, the first two points in the draft
25 recommendations speak to the needs and funding for

1 health impact assessments. I would like to add another
2 point related to those two, and that would be that the
3 public health assessments need to encompass the entire
4 Salton Sea region. I know that we are divided by a
5 county line, but the health of the Salton Sea is the
6 health of the Salton Sea. So in any, again, any public
7 health assessments should be done for the entire Salton
8 Sea region.

9 The second point I would like to add, let's
10 see. There is conversations about — points four, five,
11 and six talk about robust community specific outreach.
12 It talks about, you know, the CEQA review. I would like
13 to add that the lead agencies who are moving projects
14 together should have a civic engagement budget, or
15 resource allocation, for each project that is going to
16 be moving forward. That way we can ensure that there is
17 dedicated money to do the type of outreach that is
18 needed, and that, you know, people are not having to do
19 that un-resourced.

20 So, those are the two points that I would like
21 to add.

22 Commissioner Castaneda?

23 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Thank you, madam
24 Chair, and I agree with the points that you raised, and
25 also, Commissioner Weisgall as well, if there are

1 changes in policies and regulations, then our
2 information should reflect that.

3 So, maybe an amendment to item number six, in
4 terms of the recommendations, where I think you had
5 talked about adequate resources in order to ensure that
6 the public participation and the, you know, the product
7 that's derived from that participation is well funded.

8 CHAIR PAZ: So, at this point I will entertain
9 a motion. So maybe Commissioner Castaneda, if you want
10 to state that as a motion?

11 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yeah, I can — so I
12 would go ahead and move this document, which is referred
13 to as Preliminary Proposed environmental — well the
14 Proposed Environmental Impact Findings and
15 Recommendations by the Lithium Valley Commission — that
16 there is an amendment to proposed preliminary findings,
17 sub item C, which would include to reflect the latest
18 regulations and requirements adopted by the California
19 Energy Commission, and that we move to the
20 recommendations. And please remind me if I am missing
21 something here, but we move to the preliminary or the
22 recommendations if we adopt this.

23 This would be an amendment to sub item six,
24 which would be a statement that, and again, I would
25 suggest that you and the Vice Chair, once that

1 information is inserted should this motion be
2 successful, that you make sure that it reflects what our
3 intention is — is that in order to ensure robust and
4 effective public participation, the legislature should
5 develop legislation mandating blah blah blah, and that —
6 and that public participation program is adequately
7 funded to ensure the greatest participation possible,
8 and the most reflective feedback from the local
9 community.

10 CHAIR PAZ: And there is one more around the
11 public health.

12 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Oh I'm sorry, excuse
13 me. And that — that was item number one, I think.

14 CHAIR PAZ: One and two. Two-A.

15 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yeah, the H-I-A that
16 the Health Impact Assessments include the regions around
17 the entire Salton Sea.

18 CHAIR PAZ: So there is a motion, is there a
19 second, Vice Chair Kelly, second — second it?

20 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Second.

21 CHAIR PAZ: There is a motion and there is a
22 second, and we already did the public comment, so roll
23 call.

24 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Castaneda?

25 (Pause)

1 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yes.

2 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Colwell?

3 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: No.

4 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Dolega?

5 (Pause)

6 Commissioner Flores?

7 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Abstain for now.

8 MS. LOZA: I'm sorry, what did you say?

9 COMMISSIONER FLORES: I will abstain for right

10 now.

11 MS. LOZA: Okay, thank you.

12 Commissioner Hanks?

13 Vice Chair Kelly?

14 VICE CHAIR KELLY: Yes.

15 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Lopez?

16 (Pause)

17 Commissioner Olmedo?

18 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes.

19 MS. LOZA: Chair Paz?

20 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

21 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Reynolds?

22 Commissioner Ruiz?

23 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.

24 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Scott?

25 Commissioner Soto?

1 Commissioner Weisgall?

2 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I vote yes
3 for the longest motion I've ever heard.

4 MS. LOZA: Thank you, back you to you, Chair
5 Paz. Oh, I forgot to count, sorry. One, two, three,
6 four, five, six. So, there's six yesses, one no, and
7 one abstain.

8 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Thank you, and the motion
9 carries.

10 Slide number 15.

11 (Pause)

12 And I know we have Commissioner Kelly who has
13 personal matters to take care of, so thank you for being
14 here and thank you for starting the meeting. Thank you.

15 (Pause)

16 Thank you for the discussion on findings and
17 recommendations from our last workshop. We are now
18 going to hear from speakers on the topic of Economic
19 Impacts. I first want to invite Commissioner Flores and
20 Commissioner Olmedo, the members of the subgroup on this
21 topic, to introduce the first panel for the workshop. I
22 will note that today, I have asked CEC staff to identify
23 potential findings and recommendations during the
24 presentation and discussion, and we may have the
25 opportunity to review these notes at the end of the

1 workshop.

2 Commissioner Olmedo and Commissioner Flores?

3 COMMISSIONER FLORES: I'll defer to

4 Commissioner Olmedo.

5 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: You just want us to
6 provide an opening? Okay. Thank you to the panelists
7 who agreed to participate in today's panel. Thank you
8 to the CEC, as always, for helping us put it together, I
9 know it's a lot of work and coordination, helping us
10 make, you know, formal. Thank you.

11 Welcome, to Daniela, from Imperial Valley
12 Equity and Justice Coalition. I am glad that you are
13 here. President de la Torre, you know, warm welcome to
14 you, over here. And, you know, to the Superintendent, I
15 appreciate you, as well, coming out here.

16 And I want — it is my understanding
17 we also had Jordan, from — is he also here, or is he on
18 the second panel? Second panel. Okay.

19 Well, Commissioner Flores, I know you're out
20 there somewhere, so, thank you for the work that you've
21 put into this. We feel that we really have a really
22 strong panel here, to be able to really take a deep dive
23 in the environmental concerns, so, thank you.

24 So, we're not sure if there's a particular
25 order that we provide? Oh, okay. Sorry about that.

1 I'm looking in all types of places. The only thing that
2 I — we don't have a camera facing to the panel, do we?
3 We don't? Is there any way to get the camera? Thank
4 you, appreciate it. Is it possible? They couldn't do
5 it?

6 (Pause)

7 Okay. Well, without further delay, President
8 de la Torre.

9 PRESIDENT DE LA TORRE: Thank you so much,
10 Luis, and I want to thank also Silvia. This is a
11 wonderful invitation, and I do appreciate it.

12 First of all, I want to give you a little bit
13 of background. I am the President of San Diego State
14 University, I'm Adela de la Torre, I'm the ninth
15 president, the first Latina, and the first woman
16 president of San Diego State University.

17 The Imperial Valley has tremendous — I have a
18 tremendous affinity. My family grew up in the Central
19 Valley, and I'm a product of public institutions, and I
20 really feel that public institutions are critical to our
21 success to address issues of equity and justice.

22 So, from my vantage point, I want to start
23 with what our vision is, and I want to also thank Luis,
24 because he recognized that we are part of the valley.
25 We are the only four-year institution in the valley, and

1 we have many alums here, and it's really wonderful to be
2 here in the Imperial Valley because we've had such a
3 great relationship.

4 So, if the slides are on, if we can get to the
5 second slide. I want to talk a little bit about the
6 vision and the promise of San Diego State. So, when I
7 came here four years ago, I was excited about the
8 opportunities here in the valley. This is an
9 institution that's been here since 1969, so it has a
10 long history.

11 But, it hasn't reached its potential. And
12 when I say its potential is — that yes, we have our 11
13 majors, we have graduate programs and we've trained
14 many, but we have to think about how we grow more of our
15 own, how we can create synergies with the new
16 industries, and particularly with the Lithium Valley
17 project.

18 So, most recently, we have received \$15
19 million from NIH in the Forte Grant, focused on
20 environmental health, and also in the area of Latina
21 health. We'll be bringing in environmental scientists
22 to work, and this is, the synergy is great here. The
23 faculty who will be on our campus will be able to work
24 on these issues affecting equity and justice in terms of
25 environmental risk factors.

1 But, we also have our College of Engineering,
2 that's very committed with expertise in material
3 science, particularly in Lithium Val— in that area. Why
4 is that important? Because, when you look about
5 creating synergy, you need to create synergy that's
6 local. You need to create commitment with faculty who
7 want to work and teach here, and you have to have a
8 student base who you can engage, and we've done that for
9 many, many years.

10 Early on, within the first 18 months, I
11 invested \$3 million into creating more positions for
12 staff and faculty here, and this was pre-pandemic. Most
13 recently, and something I'm very proud of, is that we've
14 invested about \$15 million in the BSN nursing program,
15 critical due to the shortage. Critical, because as you
16 know, when COVID hit there were not enough nurses. That
17 has received tremendous support from the community, but
18 more importantly, we are structuring on the Brawley
19 campus moving forward, the necessary labs required for
20 the licensure.

21 I also wanted to mention what the real vision
22 will be for us, and that is going to be the new STEM
23 building. And this is going to be, hopefully, with the
24 success of the announcement from the Governors, we don't
25 know yet, but the idea is to build a 65,000 square foot

1 innovation campus in Brawley that will house science,
2 technology, chemistry, engineering, mathematics
3 programming.

4 Why is that important? Because when we look
5 at bringing a new industry that is really rooted in
6 engineering and science, we have to have a work force
7 that does that, and we have to have a work force that is
8 local, because it's by creating the opportunities for
9 our local community we'll be able to have success.

10 So, under the current plan as supported by the
11 Resolution of Imperial County Board Of Supervisors, and
12 by Senator Hueso and Assembly Member Garcia, we will
13 have this new STEM education campus in Brawley. For
14 those who don't know, we have 200 acres in Brawley, but
15 we have one building. The idea is that will be the one
16 closest to Calipatria, that will be the one in which we
17 will do the expansion.

18 Interestingly enough, I heard comments about,
19 "Can any campus do that?" I've been in higher education
20 40 years. I was a Vice-Chancellor at UC Davis, I was a
21 graduate of Berkeley. It is not easy for a university
22 to build infrastructure if they don't have
23 infrastructure. You cannot bring faculty who are in
24 Berkeley to the Imperial Valley if they don't have the
25 labs.

1 So, the fact is, we have thought through this
2 for the last two years. We have thought very closely,
3 we have worked with the community, Luis has been
4 engaged, many people in the community have been engaged,
5 with the idea that this is a unique area where we can
6 develop this particular partnership — bringing in the
7 faculty, the infrastructure, the labs, and the partners.
8 And this will be both public and private partners.

9 I wanted to say that, if we could turn to the
10 slide three, is that — what I am particularly successful
11 is Imperial Valley — San Diego State Imperial Valley
12 Campus has been incredibly successful in the impact of
13 education. If you look at our students, we have about
14 1,000 students. We'd like to grow that to 2,000. That
15 has been a goal of mine for four years. But, we have a
16 85 percent graduation rate. Our students are 97 percent
17 Hispanic/Latino — identify as such, and are 76 percent
18 Pell eligible, low income.

19 The fact that we have such a successful
20 graduation rate with this population is unheard of. In
21 fact, the graduation rate is higher here than it is on
22 the Mesa. Both in terms of the four-year graduation
23 rate, and San Diego State has one of the highest
24 graduation rates, if not the highest in the CSU system.

25 So, we have something very special here. And

1 the metrics are very important to us, because as we
2 bring in, through our Imperial Valley Community College
3 partnership, students who are going to transfer into our
4 engineering and science program, we want to make sure
5 that they graduate on time, and they go into the
6 industry. We also want to make sure, as we move forward
7 with our four-year engineering program, that they
8 graduate on time. So, the investments are critical to
9 us, but success is even more critical to us.

10 So, let's turn to the next slide in terms of
11 the regional economic need. One of the things that I —
12 my background is as an economist. My degrees are from
13 Berkeley, my PhD is in agricultural resource economics,
14 and actually my field is in Labor, and particularly in
15 the area of collective bargaining, as well as in
16 development.

17 So, if we look at, and I think it's been
18 mentioned time and time again, the unemployment rate
19 here is about 15 percent. It is an — one of the highest
20 rates, but more important to this is that thirty percent
21 of adults over the age of 25 don't even have high school
22 degrees or diplomas.

23 When we look at the importance of higher
24 education it isn't just taking students to get the
25 degree to become an engineer. It's also working with K-

1 12 to make sure the students are well prepared. Just an
2 aside, we produce about 100 credentials for student —
3 for teachers that teach in the Imperial Valley through
4 San Diego State. But what we want to strengthen is our
5 relationship with in K-12 and STEM education, and
6 particularly in the area of math education, where there
7 has been a real issue of a lack of teachers in that
8 area.

9 So, I mention this to you, because when we
10 look at the structural issues of inequality, education
11 becomes key, but it would mean that we have to be true
12 partners, and we have to work with those students with
13 the least support structures to make sure they can take
14 the most advantage of our opportunities here.

15 What are the important factors that we can do
16 as well? Well, if we look at the new innovations in the
17 energy sector, we know that the job impact is huge. And
18 that as we move in tandem with our community, with the
19 private sector, we'll create an educational pipeline
20 that will allow for those high wage jobs. With high
21 wage jobs what else can we have? That's going to create
22 a multiplier effect in terms of demand for housing,
23 retail, services. And in fact, my hope and my dream is
24 this is going to become such a dynamic region that we
25 will attract people from across San Diego county, from

1 the Mesa, to study here and create partnerships,
2 families, and new communities here in beautiful Imperial
3 Valley.

4 We have, right now, completed three workforce
5 studies. So, we actually hired a consultant, HRM, to do
6 to look at where the needs would be. Let's assume the
7 Lithium Valley project would occur. So we took this
8 nationally recognized consulting firm. We asked them to
9 look at where the areas of interest would be, and we
10 found that there are many, many opportunities for
11 chemists, environmental scientists, electrical and civil
12 engineers, and experts in accounting and finance, in
13 order to really support this new energy for Lithium
14 Valley.

15 This is going to be strategic on our part.
16 We're going to be looking at degrees, demand, and
17 workforce. I actually think it's going to be something
18 that many universities of the future will look at as a
19 model, and the economic impact of that will be clearly
20 in the millions, if not billions of dollars as we move
21 forward in this great industry.

22 So, what's key for us here is that we are
23 going to be working in Brawley, the STEM building will
24 be situated there. The Calexico campus will still be
25 invested in, so there's no fear there. Indeed, we are

1 actually going to be building. For the first time, we
2 were able to secure almost close to \$10 million in order
3 to build the first housing structure in Calexico near
4 the Calexico campus, so that we can give students the
5 full opportunity of living on a campus, having the full
6 experience, and then again, test that model for success.

7 It also is going to allow low-income students
8 in Imperial Valley Community College, who their pathway
9 will be to San Diego State, to live with our SDSU
10 students. And again, through that peer environment,
11 through that support, become more successful in their
12 educational dreams.

13 If we can get to the next slide, I wanted to
14 just bring a couple of the partners that we've had with
15 this particular project as it develops. So, we could
16 not do what we are doing today, had we not had the
17 partners that we had. We had about 56 different
18 companies that worked with the Southern California
19 Energy Innovation Network, 39 of which are currently
20 active in the program. Together, these companies have
21 employed nearly 400 people, and have raised more than
22 223 million in capital investment from public and
23 private sources.

24 So, it covers a wide range. It's not San
25 Diego, Imperial, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties,

1 but again, what is most important to me at this point is
2 that we do need to have an Imperial Valley first
3 perspective. And that goes back to, I think, Luis' —
4 your point, and I think a number of members mentioned
5 this, is that when we talk about equity and social
6 justice, it's often been the case that Imperial Valley
7 is last considered in these processes.

8 So, as well as working with each other,
9 collaborating, we need to always put first of mind that
10 the resources that the Imperial Valley have are rich,
11 the opportunities are rich, but the policies and the
12 education have also need to be rich in prioritizing the
13 interest of this county and these communities. If not,
14 I think we have failed in our goal for social justice
15 and equity.

16 The other thing that I wanted to mention to
17 you is that many of the projects, such as working with
18 controlled thermal resources, that has focused on
19 improved silica removal for the geothermal plant
20 performance, is already employing SDSU students and
21 faculty. So, our faculty and students are really
22 excited about this. This is an opportunity like no
23 other when you can partner in an emerging field. And
24 then, after you are there as a student you have the
25 opportunity to get a job in something you love.

1 What is the scalability of lithium? Well,
2 used batteries can be used for millions of purposes.
3 The main two drivers of this project that we're involved
4 in is to upgrade the nation's power grid, the
5 electrification of the transportation system. We know
6 that right now electric cars, electrification, and in
7 fact when we look at California, the growth of electric
8 cars is just going to continue going upward in the near
9 future. Projected to be 54 million in annual vehicle
10 sales by 2040.

11 Lithium extraction is going to be key to this,
12 and Imperial Valley alone can most likely serve a third
13 of the global demand. The opportunities here for
14 growth, investment, opportunities to change the
15 environment in a good way, ensure environmental health,
16 this is going to be, really, the opportunity for this
17 particular community.

18 So I wanted to just talk to you — get to the
19 next slide, if we could. I think I'm talking, and then
20 I passed it. Let's get to, I think, the next slide
21 here. I talked briefly about there.

22 I just wanted to give some examples here of
23 the number of jobs that our consultant looked at. This
24 is a conservative estimate of the types of jobs and
25 multiplier effect that we will have when we move

1 forward, but also requires again, with partnerships with
2 higher education. If you look at management, general
3 operations managers, bachelor's degrees, these are just
4 — these are conservative and current salary levels,
5 recognizing that these salaries should probably go up,
6 given the competition for these types of jobs.
7 Engineers, mechanics, electricians, laboratory chemists,
8 laboratory techs, EHS and admin.

9 All of these are going to require some form of
10 STEM education. All of these are going to require our
11 university to work very closely with the Imperial Valley
12 Community College, and all of them are going to create
13 the multipliers that allow us to grow in multiple ways
14 beyond — beyond what we see in terms of the actual
15 extraction of the product. So I did want to make sure
16 that we are aware of that.

17 Can we get to the next slide? Possible? Yes.

18 So, this visual is really important. This is
19 the first schematic that we have for the Brawley campus
20 for the new STEM building. Obviously, there is an
21 iteration, there will be a community process, but I
22 wanted to give you a visual of this new laboratory space
23 that is going to transform this region. It's re — so we
24 have 200 acres on the Brawley campus. We have one
25 building, people have been there, you've seen the one

1 building. This would be the next one. We would then
2 have the P-3's that would emerge on that. What we are
3 hoping to do is create the kind of environment, through
4 public-private partnerships.

5 We have a proposed battery recycling pilot
6 line project that we're working on that we, right now,
7 have submitted a \$60 million proposal to the department
8 of energy to help support in that area. And then, we
9 want to have a proposed testing lithium facility. So,
10 we will have these laboratory facilities for our
11 faculty, our students will be working on this, it will
12 be very much a public-private partnership with the idea
13 that we will begin to engage other industry partners who
14 want to be part of this wonderful opportunity for
15 growth.

16 The multiplier effect of this, within the
17 surrounding the community, is huge. The areas around
18 there as this grows will become one in where people may
19 want to move in these areas. Again, to be closer to the
20 worksite, closer to their research, and closer to the
21 opportunity for our students to have, if you will, the
22 opportunity to live closer to campus. So we're really
23 very excited of it. I know it looks a little modern,
24 but we'll be — we're open to discussion and comments on
25 that as well.

1 So, I wanted to make sure you have an idea
2 that we have really begun to invest in this area. As we
3 expand also our nursing program, that's an area where
4 we're looking at too. We would like to co — have them
5 closely aligned, because of the laboratory issues, and
6 again the idea of having this collaboration and
7 opportunities. So, I just wanted to have that as well.

8 I just wanted to conclude with a couple of
9 points. We're very optimistic about the new opportunity
10 to grow our STEM program. Imperial Valley has never had
11 a four-year institution that has offered a diversity of
12 STEM degrees. In fact, it wasn't until I came as
13 president that we brought in the first mathematics
14 major. So, think about it, a campus that did not have
15 STEM programs. So, we will be able to offer them to our
16 students.

17 But what's really critical, and why, I think,
18 we have worked well here, is because we have a community
19 coalition. If we did not have a community coalition,
20 and if we were not capable of working well with you,
21 none of this could occur.

22 And the multiplier effects are not simply the
23 economic effects. Yes, we're going to have higher
24 salary, we're going to have more jobs, we're going to
25 create industry, expansion in the service industry, in

1 the industries of housing and other areas of investment
2 that we aren't even aware of today. Those are all
3 wonderful. But what's important is that we are going to
4 steward these natural resources and advance the
5 environmental remediation of the Salton Sea.

6 We can't move forward without understanding
7 that with our plan for economic growth, opportunity,
8 that the environmental equity and justice issues of the
9 community, and really of the world and the globe are
10 critical.

11 So, I think we're in a very good place. I
12 think San Diego State has not just come up to the
13 valley, but we've been rooted in the valley. But now we
14 need to go a step further. We need to help you, in
15 partnership, to realize your dreams.

16 So, thank you so much, and I appreciate the
17 opportunity to speak to you today.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Next slide, please.
19 So, next, Angelita Ortiz, Interim Superintendent for
20 Calipatria Unified School District.

21 MS. ORTIZ: So, thank you for the opportunity
22 to be here this afternoon. I do want to thank the
23 Commission for inviting me to represent the north end of
24 Imperial County. I do want to thank Dr. de la Torre for
25 coming to Imperial County, and also for the great

1 opportunity you give for communication with San Diego
2 State to our community. My son just graduated in 19-20,
3 I'm also an alumni from San Diego State, main campus, as
4 well as local. But, I do want to say, the communication
5 is important. So, she provided that opportunity for
6 parents to know what's going on.

7 I want to be here today to provide you the
8 opportunity to know what's happening in Calapatria
9 Unified School District. First and foremost, we are the
10 district that is right next to the growth industry that
11 we anticipate for our area. Calipatria Unified, if we
12 can go to the second slide, just again to share with you
13 who we are.

14 We have four school sites. Up in Nyland, we
15 have Grace Smith School, which services Bombay, Slab
16 City, The Spa. And then in Calipatria, we have all of
17 our school sites come together for middle school and
18 high school.

19 I provided you with some information on our
20 demographics. We truly are a county that is of need.
21 We have our families that have access to limited
22 resources, but our families are resilient. They make
23 the most of what's available. And our students are too.

24 Our students here that attend IVC, as Dr. de
25 la Torre said, many go on to San Diego State, and they

1 are accomplished educators, they are accomplished
2 members of their fields. What I want to say, is that
3 the partnership is essential.

4 So members of the commission, we need you to
5 fight for us. We need you to make sure that you have
6 the voice that will ensure that the opportunities that
7 Dr. de la Torre — do come to fruition. And so, let me
8 go to my Slide Three to make sure that you hear a little
9 bit about what I want to see at K through 12 or, I'm
10 sorry, we are actually TK through 12 and even going
11 younger.

12 I want to make sure that you know that we, in
13 our industry, in our profession, will look to make sure
14 that we employ activities that align to the industry.
15 We have done that with agriculture. We have very strong
16 agriculture programs, and we are building STEM. But
17 it's not throughout all of our districts, and that is
18 definitely something that Calipatira Unified will be
19 moving forward in. And, we want it to begin in the
20 early ages. So, you will see that activity going on
21 throughout our schools.

22 CTE, Career Technical Education, that's
23 essential. That's been a keystone of our schools for
24 many years. We have success with our students in these
25 pathways. But, it is true. We are not ready to do what

1 you need us to do to move forward, so you will see
2 growth in that area. We need your help to make sure
3 funding is available to expand our CTE's and maintain
4 our relationships with our industry partners.

5 One of the asks is to build internships and
6 work-based learning experiences for our students and our
7 staff. Our staff are dedicated to our students
8 throughout our schools, and in Calipatria, our staff
9 give more. They are there pretty much from seven in the
10 morning till ten o'clock at night doing what teachers do
11 best, giving their all to students.

12 But they need to learn about your industry.
13 If you can ensure that our industry partners work with
14 us so that we can get opportunity to get hands-on
15 learning, that would be a plus. Again, advocating for
16 the funding for start-ups, advocating for the funding
17 for continual renewal of federal and state programs.

18 Next slide, please.

19 Educator opportunity. As Dr. de la Torre
20 says, San Diego State graduates our local teachers.
21 That is true, and we want them to do more. And yes, in
22 the area of math, and science, and engineering. I
23 appreciate the development of the BSN opportunity for
24 our community. We have individuals who are dedicated to
25 our local community, and they are here to help. So, I

1 do appreciate that. My love for math, way back when —
2 but, my focus switched to psychology, and I do, again,
3 advocate for the sciences because that is something that
4 we are short in. So, the opportunity for the visiting
5 professors, visiting members of the industry to come out
6 to our schools and give workshops, to give internship
7 opportunities, those will be a blessing.

8 One of the things that we have to recognize is
9 the use of distance learning. We all have had that for
10 the past two years, and it's a benefit. But we have to
11 make sure that balance is there, so we get the hands-on
12 learning. There is no way you are going to compete in
13 the field that we anticipate of growth without getting
14 some hands-on learning. So, again, advocating for lab
15 activities advocating for hands-on work.

16 Scholarships and grants. It keeps going up.
17 Even to attend IVC, even though we have a great use of
18 funds to make sure it's free for many this year, it will
19 not be free forever for everyone. And if we want to
20 build our county, then we definitely need to invest in
21 those scholarships and grants that go beyond just
22 undergrad. We need support for upper grades. So,
23 again, Lithium Commission, if you have the pull, if you
24 can tell the people up in Sacramento, that needs to
25 support us.

1 Local conferences and workshops. We want to
2 make sure that we know what's happening, we know what's
3 changing, right? So, we can prepare. I believe the
4 opportunity for myself to come to the Commission today
5 really only was realized a few weeks ago. And so, I've
6 been taking advantage of going to different meetings,
7 and I do hope that you hear from me today that we want
8 to continue our discussions.

9 I'm going to just — two more areas I want to
10 talk about, and that's social-economic opportunity. I
11 cannot sit in front of you without talking about our
12 community. You — next slide, yes, please, sorry.

13 We need to advocate for our adults in our
14 community, and alternate programs for students to be
15 able to obtain entry level positions. Of course, we
16 don't want to stop there. If we can to certificate
17 programs that can push some forward into higher paying
18 wages, we want that, and we want to advocate that, and
19 we ask for your support.

20 I appreciate San Diego State for stepping up
21 and making the access for us north-end community much
22 closer. Utilization of the Brawley campus is going to
23 be a blessing for us. And, as I already shared,
24 technology. If we can find that balance, if we can find
25 that ability to gain access for all, that would be

1 essential. And something that I really haven't heard
2 too much, except I believe one time, creation of local
3 training centers. Everyone may not want to go on to
4 IVC, or even pursue their four-year degree, but they
5 still need formal training. So our high schools are
6 going to do our best, but there may be more for those
7 adults who are at home.

8 Finally, my last area of opportunity I would
9 like the Commission to hear, is community. Yes.
10 Housing and community development is essential. And I
11 think most of you Commissioners have been working
12 towards that for all of us. But, we're going to need
13 it, and please do what you can to make it happen for us.

14 Health and safety. As we already know, our
15 medical needs are essential. I learned at a recent
16 meeting, that to build some of the housing opportunities
17 that are provided by the federal government, you must
18 have emergency services within your town site, within
19 your community, or ambulance and medical. The
20 communities of Slab City, communities of Bombay,
21 communities of Nyland do not have that. So, please make
22 sure that the opportunities for us to expand health and
23 safety services is within your plans to make it happen.

24 Public transportation. You can't buy a car
25 right now with the funding that we have. And if we're

1 going electric, let's see what we can do to make that
2 accessible to our community. But public transportation
3 for the north-end families is a challenge. We only have
4 one route at a crazy time. So, we can go through the
5 communities of Westmorland through Brawley to get to
6 IVC. So, again, the role you have to make changes
7 there, we would appreciate.

8 And I have to advocate, priority to ensure
9 it's in my community, Nyland, Bombay, Calipatria. But
10 if that can't be done, make sure you access it locally
11 for our county. It needs to be within our ability to
12 get to these services. Going over the hill, going up
13 north, going into Yuma, it might not seem like a long
14 drive, but it is. So, please make sure you advocate for
15 that.

16 And then, just in my closing remarks, which
17 will be the next slide. I thank you for the opportunity
18 to renew an interest in our local resources here. But,
19 the advocacy for linkage with TK through 12 is vital to
20 ensure we grow. We need to grow in creating college and
21 career ready high school graduates. I want to tell you
22 here, that K-12 is doing that. We are revamping and we
23 want to move forward. Grow in creating local thriving
24 communities with investments for local needs and
25 economic growth, and you've heard several of those

1 points today. Grow in partnerships that will set the
2 stage for long-term commitments. Yes, we do not want
3 come in and leave, we would like those long-term
4 commitments. And enrich our valley.

5 So, Calipatria Unified is excited for the
6 future possibilities working with Commissions, looking
7 at growth for our townsites, for our cities, but more
8 importantly, we just thank you for the voice to be here
9 today and let you know who we are, and giving you a
10 glimpse of Imperial County.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. That was perfect
13 timing, you had the exact ten minutes, so thank you for
14 sticking to the time. And now, my pleasure to introduce
15 also Daniela Flores, from the Imperial Valley Equity and
16 Justice Coalition.

17 MS. FLORES: Thank you. I might need a cue if
18 I do go a little bit over. In full transparency, I have
19 long-COVID symptoms, so my breathing is not 100 percent.
20 So, I say that because it takes me a little longer.

21 But anyway, welc — thank you so much for
22 having me. Good afternoon, everyone. I know it's been
23 a long meeting, and, yeah it's, you know, we're getting
24 down to — to the — to a lot of items that we've
25 discussed. But, thank you for having me.

1 My name is Daniela Flores, I am born in
2 Brawley, raised in Calexico, and, you know, the programs
3 that you are talking about today, that is such a
4 blessing that is coming to our community. Like health.
5 My background is in public health, but I had to leave
6 the valley to get my MPH. I went to Berkeley, I also
7 went to school in UC San Diego, and had the benefit of
8 training in Biology and public health, and, you know, I
9 get to kind of come back and support, as a community
10 organizer, and an advocate in the space of equity and
11 justice.

12 I work with this group of community folks from
13 the valley, and we came together amid the pandemic, amid
14 the inequities that were taking place during the
15 pandemic. And so, that's how we were born. You know,
16 and I mentioned that because, as I talk to you today, I
17 think the presentation that I have for you is very
18 complimentary to what was discussed already. So, I'm
19 really happy about that. I'll be putting some numbers
20 and data behind some of the lived experiences that were
21 described today to really make the case for why the
22 advocacy is important on those fronts.

23 Okay, we can go on to the — oh, well I mean
24 I'll just share with you, you know, I'm sure that's
25 familiar to you, but that's the IVAN Network, and it

1 shows the air quality around the Salton Sea area, and
2 that was just in this week. So, I know there's a —
3 that's after the lots of wind that was here in recent
4 times. But we can go to the next slide and I'll share
5 more.

6 These are the questions that we were given to
7 prepare on this panel. Just for background, you know,
8 we're looking to answer what the current economic and
9 social conditions in the region that should influence
10 the development of recommendations for this Commission
11 report to the legislature. And, of course,
12 recommendations that would support the Commission in the
13 report as it relates to policies, legislative bills, and
14 regulations. We can go to the next slide.

15 I'm going to begin with some history. Since
16 1930's, as you see on this report to the left, it's been
17 noted, right, that the air quality and the dust and in
18 this case — affects our health. You know? And so,
19 that's why, after, you know we — I think it's clear that
20 everyone's in agreement that there are issues, there are
21 environmental issues, and, you know, I think the reason
22 that we really want to see some significant commitments
23 are because of how unheard we have felt. So, I'll get
24 into that in a second, but just to share here, on the
25 right side, just a really neat picture from 1937 from

1 Imperial Valley, one of our farmworkers back then.

2 I begin with this history because it's so
3 important for me to center our history. You know, a
4 history that I grew up not knowing. I don't think, when
5 I was growing up, I don't think anyone told me about the
6 history of Imperial Valley. There's a lot to say in the
7 name, "Imperial," right?

8 So, if anyone knows the history about
9 Imperial, it was identified for development by Imperial
10 Company. And since this land was colonized, it was
11 about, you know, building the development for
12 agriculture. And so, we have an intricate canal system
13 that allows us to do that, and that's how our
14 communities are able to sustain themselves.

15 I do want to be really clear about this
16 history, that this history, since back then when this
17 person was working the fields, there were harsh working
18 conditions, they were being poisoned at that point.
19 There are some projections that haven't improved, for
20 sure.

21 But, let's not make a mistake that in Imperial
22 County there are a few hundred families that get to
23 benefit from the billions of profits that come from the
24 agricultural land, and the farmworkers are still making
25 \$26,000 a year on average. And many — we benefit from

1 migrant workers, right, that have vuln— extra
2 vulnerabilities, don't have documentation status, and
3 reasons that keep them oppressed from being able to
4 speak out.

5 So again, I know people get tired of, like,
6 the negativity around it, but communities have been —
7 there are — this is an area where they've convinced us
8 that militarization is something that — that is for our
9 best interest. What I mean by that, the Calipat — the
10 prisons, the border, right. So, there's militarization
11 in this region no matter what, and they've sold us by
12 the promise of jobs. That's and — that's why we have
13 prisons here, because of, you know, the opportunity for
14 jobs.

15 So, I share that very directly because,
16 thankfully, I'm not tied to an institution where I can't
17 say these things, and that's the reality of what — our
18 history. So, I thought it was important to ground it
19 there, and I'm going to move on and talk about other
20 items on here. But, I really do want to — I'm going to
21 read it off my notes, because it will be best said.

22 The disparities that exist in Imperial Valley
23 are the outcome of decades of extraction and of the
24 community's self-determination. The harsh conditions
25 and the low wages for workers, like farm workers, have

1 existed for decades. So, Lithium Valley is another form
2 of extraction of our community's natural resources, and
3 that's why it needs to prioritize accountability and
4 real community benefits and democratic participation in
5 an enterprise that will generate billions, and could
6 potentially be an important global source of lithium,
7 and cleaner lithium, or a cleaner source. So, again,
8 I'll start with this history and kind of move on to kind
9 of share some of the specifics on the next slide.

10 So unfortunately, in the next slide — we can
11 go next — oh thank you. So unfortunately, the decades
12 of disinvestment and the structural racism has resulted
13 in devastating harm in the pandemic. On the left, you
14 will see a graph that is from an article that is called,
15 "Worked to Death." Latino farmworkers have long been
16 denied basic rights. COVID-19 showed how deadly racism
17 could be. So, that image shows just how great that
18 disparity is. On the X-axis, you'll see the percent of
19 residents who are people of color, and then on the Y-
20 axis you see the COVID deaths.

21 And so, if you look for the black circle,
22 that's Imperial County. Check out all the red dots
23 where you see all the other counties. If you look at
24 the higher percentage of people of color, the higher
25 death. And so, if you look at the outlier, that's

1 Imperial County. So, this county is the deadliest
2 county when it comes to COVID-19, and that's a fact.
3 Documented, and you can see the chart on the right to
4 make it more explicit how that compares to the county,
5 I'm sorry, to the rest of the state, and how it compares
6 to the rest of the country. Next slide, please.

7 Again, more data. I didn't mention it, but my
8 background is in research, evaluation, and public
9 health. So, I really think it's important to kind of
10 highlight this. On the left side, you see the
11 California Healthy Places Index. It might be familiar
12 to you because Governor Newsom was a champion of using
13 the Healthy Places Index during the pandemic to bring
14 equity. So, he made — recommended decisions and
15 allocations for vaccines based on these scores,
16 basically. And so, if you look at towards the middle,
17 I've put a box around it, the HPI score. So Imperial
18 County gets a 1.8 percentile. So that means that there
19 are 98 percent of counties that are healthier than
20 Imperial County, 98 percent.

21 So we — there are only about two percent of
22 counties that are healthier, or have healthier
23 conditions than this region. And I'm sure that's
24 similar for the Eastern Coachella Valley as well. So if
25 you look at the colors, basically dark blue means the

1 most unhealthy living conditions, and all the way is a
2 gradient to the right, dark green means the healthiest
3 living conditions.

4 Sadly, this region is full of dark blue. If
5 you look across the different policy action areas,
6 economic, social, transportation, neighborhood, we're
7 all in the dark blue, unfortunately. So, lots of room
8 for improvement.

9 On the right side, you see a third graph, and
10 again the sources are there and it's interactive, you
11 can look at this. It shows all the counties in the
12 Southern California region, and it shows you — I mean,
13 it's intuitive, red is like high disparity/low
14 performance, and on the right — like the yellow and
15 green is obviously lower, like lower disparity, it's
16 like a better thing, right? So just looking at the
17 colors, Imperial County has high disparities/low
18 performance basically across all the areas.

19 Okay, next slide. I'm doing much better with
20 my breathing, actually, when I — it's, thanks.

21 My final slide with data. It's a snapshot of
22 some of the socio-economic conditions. So for health
23 care, as folks have mentioned, it is so inadequate, the
24 health care infrastructure that we have. And,
25 unfortunately, what that looks like, was that people had

1 to be helicoptered out to a different hospital during
2 the pandemic, it was devastating. I heard people that
3 lived around there, that there's like, trauma from the
4 helicopters that were like standing around the hospital.
5 There were hours before people could land and find a
6 bed. So it was devastating.

7 To paint the picture, Imperial County has one
8 provider for every four thousand people. And that, when
9 you compare it to average, state-wide it's one provider
10 for every one thousand people. So, you can see the
11 disparity there.

12 Number two, socio-economic status, just diving
13 a little into the poverty level. Not a surprise, one
14 out of every four people live in poverty. That includes
15 children, that includes food insecurity, and so if you
16 look at the gauge here, you can see that Imperial
17 County, across these main areas, they're worse off than
18 the rest of the state and the rest of the nation.

19 So housing, finally, as my fellow panelists
20 mentioned, is an important component. And just to give
21 you a concrete number — um, so, in order to afford the
22 average priced two-bedroom home in Imperial County, a
23 person would have to work 84.82 hours per week at an
24 average wage in order to afford their home. So, that
25 really leaves no time for anything and it requires, like

1 — we can imagine how hard it is for single family
2 households, single income households.

3 Next slide, please.

4 Wonderful. So, I'm getting to the end of the
5 presentation, and that really is about recommendations.
6 I shared data, and I shared information that you
7 probably already heard of. Why do I keep making the
8 case?

9 So, You know, there's so much good
10 opportunity, and we're all, I think, just trying to wrap
11 our minds around how transformative this can be, and we
12 are very excited, and you know, we are going home to our
13 families and trying to, like, raise awareness about it
14 because we care about our community and we want to see
15 this investment come into fruition.

16 But, because of those disparities that I'm
17 showing you today, it's so important that this
18 Commission is an advocate for us out there for
19 investment. Because there has been decades of under-
20 investment in this region, and I think the state
21 recognizes that, I think the federal government
22 recognizes that, and I think even external funders will
23 recognize that as well.

24 So, because of that, I want to — our
25 coalition, from the equity and justice perspective, want

1 to offer the recommendations that to ensure equity in
2 Lithium Valley, and that includes the community benefit
3 agreements, but beyond that the tax revenue, the
4 planning and the permitting, to uphold equity in those
5 processes, we are recommending that you critically
6 address the key questions that come from — that were
7 developed by health equity experts to really ask — ask
8 and critically consider and document it in writing.

9 Are those most affected by lithium extraction
10 actively involved in defining the problems and shaping
11 the solutions? How do policies, legislative bills,
12 regulations improve the conditions for those most in
13 need? Will those most negatively impacted by lithium
14 extraction benefit the same, less, or more? What
15 barriers or unintended consequences should be accounted
16 for to make Lithium Valley effective in underserved
17 communities? And how can we ensure effective
18 implementation and enforcement of strategies identified
19 for these communities?

20 I'll go to my next point, because it really
21 does — my — the next slide will help bring home my
22 final point. I heard a lot of discussion about
23 community engagement. Community engagement means so
24 many things. There are so many frameworks. To many of
25 you, community engagement simply means outreach. It

1 might just mean getting the information to the people.
2 And it's pretty sad that that is, like, the bare minimum
3 that sometimes that's the only thing we get. And even
4 then, we don't even get that sometimes, right?

5 So, I'm offering here recommendation for a
6 framework that really centers equity and justice. And
7 that's this spectrum of community engagement to
8 ownership. So, this framework recognizes that there are
9 many levels and stages of community engagement. And
10 rightly so, like, we are building trust, right? I think
11 I heard consensus that it's going to have to take work —
12 working with the community to build that trust, and so,
13 this is one way that we can honor that, like, yes, we're
14 not doing the best in many ways, but there's room for
15 growth.

16 And so, here, unfortunately, on step zero,
17 we've been ignored and we've been marginalized. The
18 impact has been marginalization. You know, when
19 decisions are made in closed door meetings, you're
20 marginalizing us. When there's misinformation out
21 there, we're getting marginalized.

22 So then the next level, number one: informing
23 people, right? The impact would be that you provide the
24 community with the information that they need. Through
25 fact sheets, open houses, bill boards, videos, I have

1 yet to see a whole lot on lithium, but I know we're just
2 getting started, so, you know, that's — those are some
3 of the activities that you can think of if your goal is
4 to inform people.

5 Now next, is to consult people, right? Want
6 to hear directly from people. I heard consensus around
7 the importance of the participation, so that was great.
8 So, you know, it's important that, you know, there's
9 public comment options. Both these groups, community
10 forums, surveys, so that you can gather the input from
11 those with lived experience.

12 But even better, is to go three, four, and
13 five. Three being involving, ensuring that the
14 community needs and assets are integrated into the
15 process. So, that is through community organizing and
16 advocacy, interactive workshops, polling.

17 And then, even better, collaborating.
18 Delegation power, ensuring that the community capacity
19 to play a leadership roll in implementation of decisions
20 is there. Unfortunately, there's a lot of capacity
21 building that needs to be invested in so that all of our
22 CPO's and all of the community, you know, mom's that
23 are, like, excellent at organizing, like, their own
24 family things, that we can transfer that into organizing
25 for Lithium Valley. And that they have ownership over

1 it. So, that's some activities that you can consider
2 for that kind of goal, would be citizen advisory
3 committees, open planning forums, and community
4 organizing.

5 Finally, the best practice is community
6 ownership. Because of — you know, the community is the
7 one that, you know, is impacted the most, especially
8 those in the front line communities that have been
9 disinvested for so long. It's important that we foster
10 democratic participation and equity of community driven
11 decisions. That's why I was really disappointed that
12 the recommendation that the Chair made, to include
13 participatory budgeting, was not included in writing.
14 Not included in writing is not a commitment to the
15 community. We needed it in writing, because we've been
16 left out, so we don't trust.

17 We need to build that trust, and so we want to
18 — we want to believe it, but we've been proven wrong
19 otherwise, that's why we have those outcomes. So, we
20 want to see community driven planning, we want to see
21 consensus building sessions, we want to see
22 participatory action, research, and we want to see
23 participatory budgeting as Luis suggested, it's so
24 important. And so, again, giving the community
25 ownership to realize the kind of life that they want to

1 see, the kind of vision that they have, the kind of
2 impact that they want for themselves and their families.

3 So, again, I — could we go to the next slide?
4 I'm basically reiterating what I've already said. So,
5 I'm not going to read those, you can look at them. But
6 it's basically what I've been talking about but, it's so
7 important for me to, like, you know, we all want this to
8 succeed. We can't afford it not to succeed. Our, my
9 kids — my future kids, and their kids are — we're
10 counting on this to succeed. Our planet is counting on
11 this to succeed. So, we really do want to support it.
12 But we won't for — we will never forget to remind the
13 disparities that must be front and center, the
14 communities that have not been invested in, and that's
15 why there's so much catch up to do now.

16 But — but we believe that the heart is there.
17 So, Commissioners, as much as you have the power, please
18 take these very specific activities and definitions of
19 community engagement and incorporate them in as much of
20 the writing as you can, because if it's not in writing,
21 I don't believe it, our community organizers don't
22 believe it, and frankly, that will show the commitment.

23 So, those — the Salton Sea that Commissioner
24 Ruiz had proposed, the Salton Sea commitment and the
25 community participatory is disappointing to not see

1 those in writing, because that is a way to start
2 building trust. So, again, very positive, I have to be
3 an advocate, and so, you know, some people might be
4 offput by that, but these are all validated sources, I
5 have a link in the next two slides. If you can go to
6 them, you can look at the — there, you can look at the
7 additional, just, like, links to the sources and then,
8 after that it's my contact information.

9 But, thank you so much for your time, and
10 again, we look forward to making this a success and
11 doing it together in collaboration. So, thank you so
12 much for your time.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And you did great on
14 your timing. So, now we will go to public comment. CEC
15 staff — oh no. We are — I thought I was on Zoom. I
16 will first take any public comments from those of you
17 here in the College. Do I have any? There is a hand.
18 On the presentation.

19 No? Okay. So. Commissioner Flores, are
20 there any public comments?

21 COMMISSIONER FLORES: None here.

22 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Weisgall,
23 any comments from Maryland?

24 COMMISISONER WEISGALL: None here.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Are there any hands

1 raised on Zoom?

2 MS. LOZA: No, there are not.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Discussion among
4 Lithium Valley Commissioners, are there any questions
5 from the Commissioners, or comments? And I will first
6 call on Commissioner Olmedo.

7 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Luis Olmedo. Well,
8 thank you for your presentations, and I just wanted to
9 highlight just, the importance that is shared with us
10 today of how it's — it's not one entity, it's not one
11 educational institute, but it's the collective all
12 across the board, from K through 12 to higher education,
13 the partnerships between San Diego State and IVC, the
14 entire K through 12 as I said, but also the importance
15 of the community based organizations, you know.

16 So, I just wanted to thank you for
17 enlightening us with all the information and the
18 expertise that you bring alright. Because I think we
19 cannot forget the value of what is already here, and how
20 that will be instrumental to getting us to where we need
21 to go. So, again, I share, you know, these sentiments.
22 Hopefully — or my fellow Commissioners also hear you
23 loud and clear, and I appreciate your presentations.
24 Thank you.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Colwell.

1 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Thank you so much. I
2 just reflect Luis' comments here, so. Higher education,
3 middle ground education, the town of Calipat, housing,
4 you know, transport, all the dots that need to happen
5 here, but just — just to sort of, you know, I guess,
6 using the term misinformation, you know.

7 This is an extension of an industry that's
8 been around for 40 years. So, really, what we're
9 finding on the education front that you know, 90 percent
10 of the job and workforce is existing industry. You
11 know, it's pumps and it's sort of more mechanical than
12 anything else. And then you've got the science
13 elements, you know. So, roughly 90/10, what we're
14 finding may be 15/85, and we'll refine that as we go.

15 But really — and if you think about it — and
16 I'm from, obviously from Australia, but brought up on a
17 farm. My wife says you drive half-way around the world
18 to go to a place where you grew up at, you know. And
19 so, if you can operate a John Deer tractor and operate
20 pumps and things like that on a machine, you can come to
21 IV College or go and get operating jobs because it's
22 very, very familiar. If you're smart enough to do that,
23 there's this sort of organic opportunity and an organic
24 industry.

25 Furthermore on, you know, information — just

1 to be real clear, there's no connection between Salton
2 Sea dust and the lithium industry. This industry is the
3 world's cleanest form of recovering lithium from brine.
4 It's not evaporation ponds and it's not anything to do
5 with the sea. I mean, it's coincidental location is
6 about 1.8 miles from the sea, and the lithium source is
7 eight thousand feet below it.

8 So, you know, it's — you know, I agree with
9 every comment here. But, I think organic growth and
10 joining dots that's something. Maybe lithium industry
11 did not exist globally, I mean, really, economically 10
12 years ago. It's only really a couple of years ago that
13 it's really started to fire up. But just think about it
14 like this — an existing power plant with the people of
15 those have gone out and reviewed the power plants. An
16 extension of an industry, so it's an extension of a part
17 in a closed loop system that — that, you know,
18 environmentally recovers lithium through techniques that
19 have been around for 60 years.

20 And with that, I say thank you so much for
21 your time and all three presentations are very, very
22 helpful. I really appreciate it and if we can get a
23 copy of those that would be great. Thank you.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Any other comments from
25 Commissioners? Commissioner Castaneda.

1 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Thank you very much,
2 madam Chair. And, I appreciate all of the
3 presentations, clearly. I didn't grow up in Imperial
4 County, but my family owned a business here for many
5 years, and I did live here for a few years during that
6 time. I have a lot of friends in San Diego that are
7 from Calexico, Brawly, and other areas.

8 We have an opportunity here that is
9 tremendous. With the education, very very much excited
10 about the planning that's been done and the enthusiasm
11 that you have for the expansion of the opportunities.

12 But, I think what is different from what has
13 been in the past, because education has been here, is
14 the opportunity right here in Imperial County. The
15 opportunity for people to learn here and to stay here
16 where they grew up and where their families are.

17 Part of my work is I do focus groups and so
18 forth, and it wasn't — I've done work here in Imperial
19 County, but I was in another farming area in the Central
20 Valley and I sat with a group of high school students in
21 a focus group. And we kind of culminated the discussion
22 with the basic questions, "How many believe you have an
23 opportunity to stay and flourish here and have a family,
24 if that's what you want to do, and raise right where you
25 grew up." And nobody in the room raised their hands,

1 because they knew that their economic opportunities were
2 limited, and if they stayed where they grew up that they
3 would be, Daniela, part of the statistics that you've
4 showed. And they didn't want to do that.

5 And so, I think that, you know, we have to be,
6 I think, bullish about the opportunity. We have to —
7 and again, this organization, this Commission wants to —
8 we want to lobby and promote the opportunities at the
9 state level that are going to make this work. And not
10 only economically for the folks that are going to make
11 the money here, but also for the community and the
12 environment.

13 So, you know, I — this is very helpful and,
14 you know, clearly, our work is challenging because we
15 don't want to kill the golden goose, or the lithium
16 goose, because we're outpricing ourselves out of the
17 market, but we also want to make sure that the
18 opportunities are there, and that this community has an
19 opportunity to take part in those.

20 So, thank you very much, and this has been
21 very helpful for me. Thank you.

22 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Castaneda.
23 Thank you to the panelists. I know in the past there's
24 been questions about Eastern Coachella, and why am I
25 Chair, and all those are very valid questions.

1 And I grew up in the Eastern Coachella Valley,
2 farm working community, grew up in a mobile home park
3 with many of the challenges that I've heard you say.
4 Right? Like, Calipatria, Nyland, Brawley, remind me of
5 Mecca, Oasis, North Shore, Thermal, right? Communities
6 where I grew up, and where I still live.

7 So, I still — that does not give me any
8 authority to speak for anything, you know, about the
9 decisions that need to be locally made. So, I just want
10 to make that clear, but tell you that I hear you, and I
11 hear your passion and I share your passion. The report
12 should be grounded in the context that you laid out for
13 us, Ms. Flores, I'm really bad with first names, for
14 whatever reason. I'm a former teacher, and I don't know
15 I remember last names.

16 So, I do believe that context needs to center
17 the conversations, because a lot of what I hear from you
18 and from other community members, it's not so much
19 necessarily with lithium and lithium extraction, but
20 it's about the context upon which there is this new
21 industry being proposed. It's a context that has many
22 challenges and a lot of, you know, racism, and
23 environmental racism as well.

24 So, I just want to echo your sentiments. And,
25 also there is no reason why this Commission cannot

1 continue to recommend that when the state is spending
2 their dollars that they do embed some of these community
3 ownership elements like participatory budgeting, or you
4 know, just more robust community engagement. It is
5 public dollars that they're investing, so I think it is
6 a fair sort of request to say, well, we're investing
7 these public dollars, what can we expect, right, back.
8 So, there's no reason, again, why that couldn't be
9 included as a recommendation to the state.

10 And, I do have a particular question regarding
11 the siting of the campus in Brawley. What informed the
12 decision to locate it in Brawley versus, say,
13 Calipatria. And that's a question that someone from
14 Mecca or Thermal would say, like, why Coachella and not
15 Thermal? So, I'm just very curious about why Brawley,
16 and if you can just inform us.

17 PRESIDENT DE LA TORRE: Excellent question.
18 We have 200 acres. So, one of the beauties is that we
19 own that land. We have, also, already infrastructure in
20 place where we have a building there. And, obviously
21 the location is closer to the industry than Calexico.
22 Calexico, we're actually building the housing piece. So,
23 we have a \$9 million project we're investing there. And
24 as we grow, we'll be able to also have some shuttles.

25 That doesn't mean that there aren't — because

1 it's very applied, the type of research and work, and
2 because our students will want to work in the field,
3 most likely you're going to have a lot of students in
4 these areas, right, because the scientists themselves
5 have to go to those spaces. It's not like they stay in
6 a lab.

7 So, what you're going to find is, I think, a
8 lot of community engagement in that process. And I
9 think, you know, how things evolve will be critical
10 because we will be also opening the opportunities, as I
11 said, it's a public-private, public-public. We're
12 hoping industry will also want to work with us in that
13 area too. And so, by expansion, we're also hoping with
14 the K to 12 that our — as we expand in that area there
15 will be opportunities to get future funding to seed our
16 students in Calipatria to want to come into, and
17 recognizing that not every student will necessarily want
18 to go to a four-year institution, but what we want to do
19 is seed the thought, right? The opportunity.

20 So, you know, if I had it my way, I'd have —
21 I'd have these campuses everywhere, but I think we have
22 to recognize it's where the land is that we have that we
23 grow, and we're growing — we can grow in terms of the
24 land we have, it is in Brawley.

25 But, I love Calexico too. So, it is — these

1 are always difficult decisions.

2 CHAIR PAZ: I was going to say why not
3 Calipatria, we're even closer to — but thank you for
4 your response and providing that context.

5 So, that concludes then, unless there's any
6 other comments or questions? I think Johnathon
7 Weisgall, I see a hand up on the screen.

8 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yeah, very briefly, I
9 really just want to, like the others these were terrific
10 presentations. I — education is something near and dear
11 to my heart. I've been an adjunct professor for 32
12 years. I guess it was Benjamin Franklin who said, "An
13 investment in knowledge pays the best interest," and I
14 think that, you know, this — we've got to work on the
15 education. That's — that's the building block for
16 everything else.

17 My company recognizes that we've made — we've
18 made charitable contributions to Imperial Valley
19 College, to Westmorland Unified School District totaling
20 more than about \$150,000. We'll be making more
21 donations. This is — this is critical, and this is just
22 terrific. These really were wonderful presentations,
23 and I must say I learned a lot. So, many, many thanks.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, this concludes
25 this panel. We do have another panel, so, thank you.

1 And the next panel, thank you. The next panel
2 will speak on the potential state and community economic
3 impacts including benefits of Lithium Valley
4 development. And, I gave my sheet to Commission Olmedo,
5 so you can introduce the next panel.

6 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, madam Chair.
7 Okay, so I'll introduce now, for the economic impact
8 workshop, potential state and community economic
9 benefits of Lithium Valley development. So, I'd like to
10 introduce here Trelynd Bradley, Miguel Figueroa, and
11 Miguel had to step out, so it will be Rebecca Terrazas
12 with Imperial County, Sarah Friedman, and Cecilia
13 Estolano, Jordan Sisson and I think that's it. Alright,
14 I don't know if there — are they all online?

15 CHAIR PAZ: Are they all, yeah, on Zoom?
16 Okay, so they are all on Zoom. We will start with Tre
17 Bradley, Senior Business Development Specialist from the
18 Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development.

19 MR. BRADLEY: Thank you. Good afternoon,
20 everyone. My name is Trelynd Bradley, I know that first
21 name can kind of be a tongue twister if you say it three
22 times or four times fast. So, Tre is what I go by, I
23 think some folks are familiar with.

24 I want to say thank you to the Lithium Valley
25 Commission, Commissioner Olmedo, and Commissioner

1 Flores. I also want to thank the California Energy
2 Commission and the staff at the California Energy
3 Commission, who are always incredible to work with. At
4 GO-Biz, I am a Senior Business Development Specialist, I
5 work with businesses across the globe all the way down
6 to small business and innovators with ideas in their
7 communities. We're providing a range of services. In
8 addition, I currently work to facilitate much of our
9 work on supply chain and freight transport, as well as
10 industry cluster development, such as critical minerals
11 supply chain.

12 Prior to this, I worked at the Governor's
13 Office of Planning and Research and Renewable Energy
14 Permitting, as well as other climate efforts. Prior to
15 that I worked in the office of Congressman Raul Ruiz,
16 working on Veteran's Affairs across the entire district.

17 I'd say, personally, I — you know this area of
18 the state means a lot to me, you know, from helping my
19 grandpa move mother's cookies from San (INDESCERNIBLE)
20 the way down in Imperial Valley. And, and you know, I
21 guess in the Riverside County side, volunteering at, you
22 know, Thermal Airport to do air shows with Civil Air
23 Patrol when they would absolutely not let me have hair
24 this long. So, I hope no one from the Civil Air Patrol
25 is in the audience.

1 But, you know, I — in spending my time with my
2 dad around this area and going to, you know, UCR, it was
3 really great to hear the presentation from the higher
4 education perspective. You know, just in thinking about
5 inland Southern California.

6 It's really a dynamic time to be in the
7 conversation, but I think what Chair Paz said, that I,
8 you know, I think was really great before, was about,
9 you know, something I've noticed from the very beginning
10 of being in this is the incredible amount of passion
11 that people have everywhere in the — in this discussion,
12 and these engagements. Especially displayed locally in
13 the communities for the things they care about because
14 really, no two experiences truly are the same.

15 So lastly, I want to thank the folks here at
16 the public and local agencies, the community
17 organizations and members within the region. It's truly
18 an honor to have the opportunity to present here given
19 the fact that you've taken the time to be here. Again,
20 I am truly thankful for your time.

21 Next slide. A little bit about Governor's
22 Office of Business and Economic Development, or GO-Biz.
23 We are ten years old in state government this year, so
24 we're still fairly new within state government. We
25 provide a range of services at no cost to business

1 owners, communities, and site-selectors: incentive
2 navigation, site selection service, permit assistance.
3 We also have a new part of our office, which is called
4 Community Based Solutions, to you know, provide tailored
5 consultation to communities, local governments and
6 economic development organizations, to help utilize
7 place-based economic development tools.

8 And then we have other folks that — permit
9 assistance, we have a zero-emission vehicle market
10 development team, Office of the Small Business Advocate,
11 and a California Competes Tax Credit Program. Next
12 slide.

13 So really quick, I — I you know, in sharing
14 into the presentation and from the Commission, you know,
15 just a little bit about kind of what I've been talking
16 about as well as giving some — just one example just
17 because of given time. The market opportunities for
18 lithium, you know, some of the economic impacts
19 associated with recovery and what are those
20 possibilities, and then supporting lithium recovery from
21 the region. And so, go ahead and go to the next slide.

22 So really, you know, it is a dynamic time
23 because, you know, the global demand for critical
24 minerals and we're — we've labeled three here that are
25 really growing rapidly within California: lithium,

1 boron, and rare-earths. Expected to surge 400-600
2 percent in the coming decades, primarily driven by
3 demand in the clean economy. You know, California has
4 set forth ambitious climate goals, and of course, you
5 know, with zero-emission vehicle sales and our goals for
6 clean energy, and as well as the rapidly growing demand
7 for clean technologies across the world. For zero-
8 emission vehicles, wind turbines, solar panels and
9 battery storage systems.

10 And the last piece here is really kind of just
11 to give you the scale. The existing battery supply
12 chain is approximately 50,000 miles long, currently. It
13 is a humongous supply chain that spans every ocean
14 across the planet and all parts of every continent. And
15 I think that just to really kind of underline that
16 point, is that the opportunity with critical mineral
17 supply chain, inclusive of lithium, is to bring that
18 onshore, and bring back the supply chain as localized as
19 possible here within the United States, within
20 California, within Imperial County, and in Lithium
21 Valley. And so, go ahead and go to the next slide.

22 This is just an illustration we have from here
23 in GO-Biz, just kind of highlighting some of the
24 critical minerals. Of course you have lithium, here
25 there's other opportunities within the desert. Of

1 course rare-earths. California has the only operating
2 rare-earth facility in the western hemisphere, providing
3 near 15 percent of rare earths in addition to China as
4 well as filling the other large amount. And, just to
5 say that, you know there's a lot of these critical
6 mineral opportunities here within Southern California.

7 The supply chain is such in a way that often
8 times, these critical mineral in certain areas are where
9 they are extracting the resource, the critical mineral,
10 and it is having to be going to the Port of Long Beach
11 in Los Angeles, to then go to, for example, China, to
12 then be, you know, put in magnets or battery, you know,
13 cathode material.

14 If folks want to look, you know, there's an
15 example of a company, Tesla, which just recently
16 actually released their impact report. They actually
17 list their supply chain for battery materials like
18 nickel, cobalt, and lithium, and it just gives you the
19 true global scale of how that supply chain, and you
20 know, really is listed in all of these other countries.
21 Both for extraction of, for example, lithium, then
22 refining of lithium, and then the product manufacturers
23 then make it before it then comes over to the battery.
24 So, the supply chain is very, very widespread for these
25 minerals that are essential for these technologies.

1 Next slide.

2 And that's to just kind of say this is to
3 just a little bit illustrate, you know, what are the
4 different sectors we are talking about. I know we spend
5 a lot of time talking about batteries, and folks think,
6 you know, electric vehicle batteries and you're thinking
7 about that car company that I just mentioned and the
8 battery that goes in it.

9 But there's a lot of other applications for
10 lithium outside of batteries. There's, you know, in
11 ceramics, for alloys, you know you think about, you know
12 lubricating greases in metal-to-metal scenarios that are
13 used in aerospace and defense, you know. Energy storage
14 systems, not just, you know, moving and mobile systems
15 and a battery.

16 But even those mobile systems that are in
17 transportation are very widespread. You know, we have
18 electric vehicle takeoff and lift. EV toll companies
19 who are looking at lithium-ion batteries, who are
20 planning to be completely electric. We talked to zero-
21 emission vehicle submarines. We — I'm actually in —
22 right now I'm in Long Beach at aerospace and defense and
23 commercial space applications that will use lithium
24 batteries to power satellites in space which will
25 monitor the effects of climate change and agricultural

1 degradation and all these other factors that are
2 important to see things in a way that we cannot see
3 before.

4 And so, it's, it's so much more beyond what
5 you might think just peripherally. The amount of
6 sectors in different applications is very wide spread,
7 you know. Hearing aids, pacemakers and then — you know
8 defibrillators and the medical space, batteries to power
9 those devices, special glasses and ceramics for
10 different medical devices.

11 And this graph on the right-hand side is
12 really just kind of just to demonstrate the immense
13 demand that is going to be for some of these critical
14 mineral technologies, especially the ones listed here
15 that have to deal with the electric vehicle, which
16 probably the most noticeable demand that will be
17 increasing associated with the battery. Hence, why the
18 image below with, you know, the event that took place
19 between Governor Newsome and President Biden for the
20 American Supply Chain's Executive Order, highlighting
21 our Mountain Pass Rare Earth operation in San Bernardino
22 county. But then also, here, in Imperial County, with
23 Lithium Valley. So, go ahead and go to the next slide.

24 This is just an example of companies we
25 recently, with our partners at the California Energy

1 Commission, GO-Biz, we have sort of Battery Day, just
2 for those technology companies to, you know, kind of
3 share their experience and opportunities in their supply
4 chain efforts. But just to just list of all of the
5 companies that were involved in that event, who all have
6 a tie potentially to Lithium Valley. It just gives you
7 the immense scale of the amount of companies in the
8 supply chain and the opportunities for them to be a part
9 of the complete vision here within California to, you
10 know, make the supply chain as localized as possible.

11 So, and of course that spreads all the way to
12 the complete life cycle, you know what I mean. We're
13 also talking about, you know, recycling, you know, and
14 um — um, you know, aviation folks and electric aircraft
15 are talking about recharging and reuse application of
16 batteries. There's companies who take lithium-ion
17 batteries that are already been used and they stack them
18 and then make energy storage systems that have already
19 been used in vehicles. So, it's a lot of different
20 companies, a lot of different folks in innovation and in
21 research and development. Next slide.

22 The economic impacts, you know, I think
23 really, you know, there's R&D, there's innovation,
24 there's entrepreneurship that results from having the
25 new sector involved in these processes. I'd say that

1 R&D and innovation is already ongoing there in Imperial
2 with some of the companies that are a part of the effort
3 there.

4 Of course, there's the R&D opportunities with
5 co-location with manufacturing. So, you think about a
6 company that manufactures batteries at scale, you have
7 different battery technologies, companies who have
8 different ideas of doing it in the way that they want to
9 do it, you know partnering with the manufacturer at
10 scale to develop — to push those technologies. Those
11 companies may want to be inside the manufacturing
12 facility, you know providing the R&D expertise on site,
13 nearby where the resource is. So, you know, the
14 applications are really endless.

15 And then of course you have the university,
16 you have the federal lab and other academic partnerships
17 that bring in the fold. You have the, you know, the
18 value proposition of supply chain proximity, you know,
19 the example of cathode material batteries all the way to
20 the end with recycling. And then you have, you know,
21 the exp — aerospace example of the industry of aerospace
22 and commercial space with ceramics and other metal
23 alloys in California, Southern California particularly
24 being so large. You just think about the different
25 applications of supply chain, bringing it into the

1 region.

2 And then, of course, you know the supply chain
3 and these transportation products within the region and
4 the investments that will be associated with building
5 those out, you know, if you're building batteries to be
6 able to export them out, to then vehicle or so on and so
7 forth.

8 And then there's the value generation from
9 project investment, which I think is really kind of the
10 straightforward one which would be property tax, sales
11 tax, the amount of Cap-Ex, capital expenditure that
12 companies are making in investments and equipment in
13 building within the area and the project-sphere.

14 And that, you know those projects, those
15 investments then, they, with the tax generation and the
16 way things traditionally go is they facilitate other
17 real estate projects and amenities like work force
18 housing and broad band deployment and community centers
19 and so on and so forth, you know. It's kind of all
20 interconnected. So, next slide.

21 This is, kind of just, you know, I know this
22 is a slide with a lot of bullet points, but I just
23 wanted to split it up and kind of some of the support in
24 the lithium recovery effort is kind of some of the
25 economic development, community development and

1 infrastructure.

2 I'll dive into an example. You know, some of
3 the things is just, you know, technical assistance and
4 local capacity at the community level, staff, you know,
5 just bread and butter staffing, grant writing, match
6 funding. Think about, you know, there's some great
7 programs out there that have worked in this space, kind
8 of the Boost Program with SGC, or the Strategic Growth
9 Council. There's the Distressed Cities Technical
10 Assistance Program, which is provided by the U.S.
11 Department of Housing and Urban Development. The
12 Strategic Growth Council also just released a
13 presentation on — or released an application for
14 regional climate collaboratives.

15 I worked on that effort when I was a fellow
16 there at Oak PRN-SUC, you know, about uplifting
17 communities to be able to access California climate
18 investment funds for their technical assistance
19 capacity. Because applying to some of these programs
20 are understanding challenging and knowing which one to
21 pursue at what time. So, I think that's a really
22 important piece.

23 Local lending capacity is something that is —
24 always been something, you know, CDFI's, all those types
25 of organizations within inland areas, this is something

1 that happens all across the nation. Really big piece in
2 economic development, community development.

3 The Place Based Inventory Incentives that are
4 in the area that de-risk investment for investors and
5 allow the project capital stack to take place for things
6 like housing, community centers, right. And some of
7 those de-risking things are, like, new market tax
8 credits, opportunity zones, tax increment financing.

9 Feasibility studies for those types of
10 districts, right. So that you can build an affordable
11 housing, community centers, parks for the community
12 members, transportation, utility infrastructure. Of
13 course planning, permitting and zoning, building the
14 project and ecosystem readiness for the industry and
15 development.

16 And then, you know, for the people in the
17 businesses and entrepreneurship in the workforce, and
18 some of those other things I share is accelerators,
19 innovation hubs, we have inclusive innovation hubs, new
20 iteration of innovation hubs that we've just launched
21 here within GO-Biz, you know, that access to capital for
22 venture capital, for small business capital.

23 There's alignment of incentives, you know
24 there's the California, that's CAEATFA, California
25 Alternative Energy and Advanced Transportation Financing

1 Authority, it is a long acronym. It's the designation
2 of lithium as an emerging industry with their incentive
3 program.

4 There's new employment tax credit areas that
5 give tax rate incentives for hiring folks who have maybe
6 been recently unemployed, folks who are maybe formerly
7 incarcerated receive something like Cal-Works, there are
8 Veteran's separated from the armed forces. And then,
9 you know, business incentives that, you know definitely
10 de-risk and, compared to other states, maybe including
11 those states next door.

12 Creation of workforce training partnerships.
13 There's a lot of different programs out there, and
14 there's, like, multiple employer contracts with the
15 Employment and Training Panel, with partnerships with
16 community colleges to build the kind of expertise and
17 pipeline for talent and to allow the folks in the area
18 to work with the companies there.

19 High-road training partnerships, we see a lot
20 of it and there as well and, you know, creation of
21 incentives for infrastructure development that supports
22 the supply chain, aligning the supply chain, things that
23 will be needed — railroad spurs, transloading
24 facilities, road access, those types of activities. So,
25 Next slide.

1 And that's kind of one I ju— I'm just going to
2 go in one example from that is, you know, something that
3 we speak a lot about is, kind of these place-based
4 economic development tools such as tax increment
5 financing districts. I list here up on our site — I
6 will have the link too, as well, to share. But there's
7 a lot of place-based tools that thing — like facilitate
8 affordable housing, and they, you know, build
9 infrastructure, do broadband, do water, do these types
10 of parks and recreation, libraries, you know community
11 centers.

12 You know, one of the big things is that there
13 will be, you know, property tax that is generated within
14 from development and investment for these projects and
15 associated projects. And so, there's financial methods
16 that local governments have in areas in the region to be
17 able to capture the increment from the, you know, future
18 tax revenue that will result from the development and
19 the property tax.

20 So, capturing that future value from property
21 tax to bond against, to build infrastructure and
22 projects in community areas. There's examples of lots
23 of communities around the state who have done this
24 effort, Fresno — with really small rural communities,
25 even up in Humboldt do these types of tools. And I'll

1 actually use the next slide to talk about, you know,
2 just the two of them that are probably the most popular.

3 This is just an example of these types of
4 tools that do that, that is Community Revitalization and
5 Investment Authorities, Enhanced Infrastructure
6 Financing Districts. You're just seeing the types of
7 activities some of these tools can fund over a 50 — you
8 know 40 to 40 year lifespan or more. You know,
9 affordable housing, roads, bridges, parks, libraries,
10 transit, civic infrastructure, healthcare clinics, they
11 can actually fund services to community members.

12 So, you know, these — a lot of different
13 communities across California are thinking about
14 different types of tools, and I will call them value-
15 capture, because they are capturing things like property
16 tax increment to be able to bond against, to be able to
17 do infrastructure development for some of the things
18 that will address community needs and local economic
19 development needs within — with the city and county and
20 in the region. So, go to the next slide.

21 And that's really to wrap it up, you know,
22 just to think about that example. It's like, what is
23 that type of example and what does that type of Economic
24 Development District in that example facilitate. And
25 some of these other place-based economic development

1 tools that can support that effort develops the goals
2 that the community has, because there's engagement
3 principals build into them that require community
4 engagement to be able to understand what are those
5 infrastructure needs more specifically, and how to
6 finance them.

7 So, actually getting into what is the capital
8 stack that is needed to deploy that piece of
9 infrastructure. There's an extra cherry to address that
10 issue, and aligning those goals — inclusive of all
11 parties to actually address and then build that capital
12 stack.

13 It allows you those types of applications of
14 place-based tools, from a perspective of supporting an
15 industry cluster like this, allows you to utilize other
16 sources of funding such as federal funding, other state
17 funding. And then you're building that narrative and
18 pipeline for future positive investment, because the
19 investment is long-lasting. We're talking about 40-year
20 runways with some of these tools from an infrastructure
21 and community development standpoint.

22 So, really, next slide, that does it for me.
23 Again, I want to thank everybody so much for your time.
24 Appreciate it wholeheartedly. And with that, I hope I
25 made it on time. So, thank you again.

1 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Tre. Next slide,
2 please. Rebecca Terrazas, director for Imperial County
3 Intergovernmental Relations. I'll welcome Rebecca.

4 MS. TERRAZAS-BAXTER: Good afternoon, all.
5 How are you. I want to thank the Imperial — Lithium
6 Valley Commission, and also the California Energy
7 Commission for the opportunity to present this
8 afternoon.

9 I know that you were expecting a different
10 presenter, but once again, I am Rebecca Terrazas-Baxter,
11 I am the Intergovernmental Relations Director for the
12 county, and I'll speak on behalf of our CEO, Mr. Miguel
13 Figueroa this afternoon.

14 I think Mr. Bradley gave a very comprehensive
15 view of the various economic impacts that this
16 development can bring to the area. So, I'm going to
17 just maybe focus a bit more on our current situation
18 here in Imperial County, how the county sees this,
19 really, as a tremendous opportunity, and what the county
20 is doing currently with our community's best interest in
21 mind to ensure that this area benefits from this
22 development.

23 We appreciate the opportunity to share with
24 this group and the community about the importance of
25 this potential development, and also the Imperial County

1 Lithium Valley Economic Opportunity Investment Plan that
2 I'm also going to refer to as the Outfit.

3 This is a plan that was unanimously adopted by
4 the Imperial County Board of Supervisors in February,
5 and the Board really took that proactive action to adopt
6 this formal — what we are calling a plan of action —
7 early on, so that it's intended to help bring new
8 economic investment to the county.

9 I also want to express our appreciation to
10 this Commission for the letter that they adopted earlier
11 today as well. If I can go to slide two please.

12 Thank you very much. So, as many of you know,
13 over the years Imperial County has really faced many
14 economic struggles, including chronic double-digit
15 unemployment rates, high poverty rates, and lower median
16 household incomes in comparing them to the state and the
17 nation.

18 You can see some numbers in front of you right
19 now, where, as of March 2022, Imperial County's
20 unemployment rate was 12.3 percent. That's about two
21 and a half times the unemployment rate of California,
22 which is currently at 4.9 percent. We'll tell you, 12.3
23 percent is very low. We're used to seeing these more in
24 the high teens, even in the 20's. During the recession
25 in 2009-2010 we saw them in the 20's and we hit 30, I

1 think, at one point as well. So, this is, you know, a
2 chronic issue that we've been dealing with.

3 Our median household income is three quarters
4 of the national average. Our poverty rate is two times
5 the national average. That's even though our Imperial
6 County current gross domestic product is, you know,
7 encompassing all the industries here in Imperial County,
8 \$9 billion.

9 The Imperial County Board of Supervisors does
10 see this increased interest in lithium as an opportunity
11 to really improve the lives of those in our community
12 that are looking for a chance to earn an honest living
13 and provide for their families. So we really perceive
14 that the future is bright for us, and we're glad that,
15 you know, this is something that is coming at this time
16 as well.

17 You can also see, you know, it's believed that
18 the largest concentration of lithium in the United
19 States is right here in Lithium Valley. As you know,
20 it's estimated to contain about 15 million metric tons
21 of lithium. And with that being said, the 30-day
22 average price of lithium actually floats between \$70,000
23 to \$75,000 a metric ton, which means that the potential
24 for what we have is truly a game changer.

25 As the technology to extract the lithium is

1 refined and perfected and environmentally responsible
2 and the process becomes more efficient, we anticipate
3 that thousands of jobs will be created.

4 So the benefits from extraction and ancillary
5 businesses created from it will fundamentally change our
6 entire region. I think you've heard from Mr. Bradley
7 earlier about the various, you know, impacts that it
8 could make and the other industries that it could lead
9 to, because lithium is not just utilized for electric
10 vehicle batteries.

11 We're looking at vertical alignment. Aside
12 from just being in Imperial County for extraction
13 purposes, you know, leading to manufacturing, leading to
14 end-of-life battery recycling, and other industries as
15 well. So, this new industry could really, potentially
16 double Imperial County's GDP in the next five to ten
17 years. Next slide, please.

18 The plan that the Board adopted really calls
19 for intentional actions of the county, and makes
20 specific requests of both the state and federal
21 governments. The county has created a Lithium Rare-
22 Mineral Subcommittee. It's made up of our Chair —
23 Chairman Jesus Escobar, and also Supervisor Ryan Kelly,
24 who is the Co-Chair of the Lithium Valley Commission,
25 and also with key staff members. So we have some

1 executive staff, but also key staff that are department
2 heads, focusing on planning, public works, workforce
3 development and so forth.

4 So as of yet the County of Imperial has
5 conducted about 12 or more briefings of local, state,
6 federal officials and more scheduled over the next
7 month. And I'm sure, more to come. There were some
8 really great ideas out there by Ms. Flores that were
9 shared earlier that we can definitely look at
10 incorporating into any additional engagement that we do
11 in the future as well, because, this is longer term,
12 this is not all going to happen right now.

13 And so, the County — next slide, please. The
14 County is also negotiating to begin a Specific Plan and
15 Program Environmental Impact Report for the Lithium
16 Valley area, that is really intended to help, to provide
17 the industry with some certainty and also with some
18 dead— you know, some time frames that they know that
19 they can work with.

20 The county is partnering with Southern
21 California Association of Governments, also known as
22 SCAG, to begin the process and really explore the
23 feasibility of an Enhanced Infrastructure Finance
24 District and how that would help, as well, to provide
25 any type of incentive and benefit for the area.

1 The county has also retained an economist to
2 produce economic and job and fiscal impact analysis of
3 what the Specific Plan and Program Environmental Impact
4 Report will do for Imperial Valley and for Lithium
5 Valley. Imperial County is also in direct discussions
6 with state and federal officials on different portions
7 of the LVIP, which is the plan, and we had specific asks
8 in it, and I believe many of those are outlined in the
9 letter that you guys adopted earlier.

10 The county is taking action to support San
11 Diego State University in Imperial Valley campus to
12 expand facilities in the region, more focusing on
13 Brawley. That way they can provide the science,
14 technology, education, and math opportunities. So,
15 focusing on that STEM expansion. We've really been
16 supportive of those efforts, and we will continue to do
17 so until, you know — in hopes that they get the funding
18 request that they have.

19 The county has taken action to support
20 California Energy Commission proposed rulemaking that we
21 need to provide additional local control. And actually
22 we did support that and that was something that was
23 approved yesterday by the California Energy Commission
24 during their regular business meeting as well. Next
25 slide, please.

1 I've kept it pretty brief. I think Mr.
2 Bradley, as I've said, covered it thoroughly earlier, as
3 far as its impacts, but really wanted to paint the
4 picture as to how this would help Imperial County, who
5 has always faced numerous challenges. So, I wanted to
6 share that with you.

7 The success of this plan really relies on the
8 support and collaboration of all so that we can really
9 achieve success for the betterment of our community and
10 for the residents here. So, once again, I just — I want
11 to keep this brief, I know we're coming up close to
12 time, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to
13 present today.

14 Mr. Figueroa apologizes that he wasn't able to
15 be here, but I hope that I was able to substitute for
16 him positively. And right here, we have our website,
17 it's lithiumvalley.imperialcounty.org, where you can
18 learn more about the plan and other efforts that the
19 county is doing, you know, towards supporting and for
20 making sure that this community benefits from this
21 development.

22 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Rebecca. Our next two
23 panelists will complement our state and local agency
24 perspectives with community perspectives. So, Sarah
25 Friedman and Ceclila Estolano, from Better World Group

1 will be speaking about Community Benefits Agreements.

2 MS. ESTOLANO: Thank you very much. I'm
3 Cecilia Estolano. I'm with the Better World Group. The
4 Better World Group's been around for about 20 years,
5 working at the intersection of economic justice, racial
6 justice, and environmental justice. We're here today to
7 talk a little about the work we've been doing regarding
8 delivering community amenities for the Salton Sea, how
9 that affects and intersects with your work here at the
10 Lithium Valley Commission, and then, really more to the
11 point, we want to provide some perspective on how you
12 can center community benefits in the report that you're
13 going to provide to the legislature.

14 But then, some very specific recommendations
15 to make sure we harness some of the benefits that
16 Rebecca and Tre outlined and ensure that those are
17 actually getting delivered to the community. So, it can
18 address some of the disparities and severe health
19 outcomes that Daniela outlined in her earlier
20 presentation.

21 So again, Cecilia Estolano, I'm the CEO of
22 Better World Group, I'm an urban planner and land use
23 and environmental lawyer. I used to be the CEO of the
24 Community Redevelopment Agency at the City of Los
25 Angeles, and while I worked in that capacity, I came to

1 negotiate Community Benefits Agreements, and since that
2 time have advised local government, other government
3 entities, non-profits and philanthropy on how best to
4 use things like Community Benefits Agreements and
5 Community Workforce Agreements to deliver tangible
6 benefits in community driven processes.

7 With that, I'm going to turn it over to Sarah
8 Friedman, who is going to outline what our scope is,
9 what we've been doing around Salton Sea, how it
10 intersects with you all, and what we've learned to date.
11 Take it away, Sarah.

12 MS. FRIEDMAN: Alright. Thank you, Cecilia,
13 and thank you, Chair Paz. I am going to be extremely
14 short, because we have four minutes left in this
15 presentation and I want to respect everyone's time.

16 So first off, next slide please. We want to
17 share a little bit about our scope with the Salton Sea
18 and explain a little bit of how we got here. So over
19 the last decade, community leaders, including many who
20 are here today on the Commission, have advocated for
21 Salton Sea management program projects to provide
22 community amenities, benefits, and community
23 infrastructure.

24 There have been regulatory, technological,
25 cost, and land ownership barriers to integrating

1 community amenities within project design. Other needs,
2 such as broadband, stable electricity or other vital
3 community infrastructure, which has surfaced repeatedly
4 today and at other meetings of the Lithium Valley
5 Commission, are intersectional with the experience of
6 Salton Sea communities, but have appeared to be beyond
7 the scope of the Salton Sea Management Program.

8 In response, the California Natural Resource
9 Agency secured resources for a consultant to develop a
10 Community Amenities Strategy, and with the goal that
11 that strategy be developed with input and involvement
12 from community representatives. So, the intent is to
13 identify community needs to incorporate into Salton Sea
14 management projects, both near term and long term, and
15 also related efforts where possible.

16 The key deliverables on our scope are
17 research, interviews, landscape assessment, an amenities
18 concept paper, a participatory engagement plan,
19 supporting locally led engagement, and to develop an
20 agreement vehicle, or series of vehicles, to actually
21 realize these community amenities.

22 So our scope is pretty broad. It's to develop
23 and implement a strategy to implement community
24 amenities for the Salton Sea, and Salton Sea is defined
25 fairly broadly. But as mentioned, the Salton Sea

1 Management Scope is limited to habitat and air quality.

2 The thought was by employing us to kind of
3 look and develop a concept paper, it's acknowledging
4 that these issues are intersectional. That they're
5 bigger than the Salton Sea Management Program, they're
6 bigger than the Salton Sea, but it is impossible to
7 separate them out.

8 One of our roles is to identify the needs and
9 the amenities that are both within and outside the scope
10 of the SSMP, and to look at those which may be outside
11 of that Salton Sea Management Program, where big-
12 picture, multi-agency solutions might be out there to
13 address many of these systemic issues which have been
14 raised repeatedly in the Lithium Valley Commission and
15 elsewhere.

16 So how does this intersect with the Lithium
17 Valley Commission? The short answer is that it doesn't
18 really directly. But, it's also impossible to separate.
19 In all of the interviews that we have conducted, Lithium
20 is at the forefront of people's minds. There's concern
21 about housing, gentrification, environmental impacts,
22 stress on services in a region that's already
23 underserved.

24 We definitely don't need to tell the Lithium
25 Valley Commissioners this. How are — we also

1 acknowledge that the needs that have been raised in
2 these meetings, and otherwise, go beyond lithium. We
3 hope that the process that we are moving into with the
4 state can help inform multiple processes in the
5 information we gather and the levers we gather, will be
6 helpful for these efforts and beyond, including matching
7 some of the needs and benefits that have been identified
8 to some of these different funding policy changes and
9 potential processes like Community Benefits Agreements.

10 As we describe in our next slide, one of our
11 goals is to use Resource Policy Engagement to identify
12 what these are and then match them. Great. So, I'm
13 going to go very fast in this slide.

14 But essentially, this describes our work to
15 date. We have done many interviews, and we have done a
16 literature review of everything we could find that was
17 publicly available that spoke to the Salton Sea,
18 environment issues, socio-economic issues in the greater
19 Salton Sea region.

20 We did this operating out of the point that
21 people have been asked for their thoughts, their
22 opinion, their needs many times. There has been a huge
23 amount of meetings over the years around the Salton Sea,
24 where folks have really — residents have really given up
25 their time, their expertise, their energy, and their

1 knowledge, and it's not always been clear what comes out
2 of it.

3 So, we wanted to start from the point that we
4 heard you, this is what we heard, and then take that and
5 ground truth it back. So the ground truthing back is
6 hopefully going to occur through a few mechanisms. One
7 is community outreach, which hopefully will be led by
8 community based organizations who know their community
9 best rather than BWG, who does not.

10 And the second is a Regional Working Group
11 which we hope to convene shortly. With key leaders,
12 some of which were involved in the Salton Sea, and
13 others who may be engaged in other complimentary efforts
14 in the region. We know there's a lot going on. There's
15 this effort. There's CERF effort. There's many other
16 opportunities and efforts, and we want to make sure that
17 we're using everyone's time effectively and that this
18 BWG process is creating a resource, rather than another
19 meeting that people just have to go to.

20 Our next step is then mapping the benefits
21 that we've heard so far, and those that might be
22 prioritized or confirmed through these different forms
23 of outreach with what's out there. We can go into this
24 a little bit, but we have basically broken out here the
25 categories of what we've heard to date.

1 The first is community infrastructure at the
2 Salton Sea. Those are things like trails, shade
3 structures, boat ramps, new and improved gathering
4 spaces, greening, lighting, or essentially ways to make
5 the Salton Sea more accessible, welcoming, and usable
6 for communities that live there.

7 It seems like those programs would fit pretty
8 neatly into Salton Sea Management program processes.
9 And there's a few that are underway. The 10-year plan
10 process, the environmental review document for that will
11 be released soon. And so we see as a key lever making
12 sure that there's a clear understanding of opportunities
13 and constraints in Salton Sea management projects, so
14 that community members can inform their comments
15 specifically, and that there's a clear pathway and
16 parameters for how that information will be incorporated
17 into project design of near-term projects so community
18 residents can see what they've asked for actually
19 realized. Then — and I think there's probably also
20 opportunities to augment some of this with some of the
21 funding around outdoors for all and equitable access
22 programs.

23 The second category, and I want to be
24 cognizant that people have said this a lot of times in
25 this forum, is programmatic benefits. These are a

1 number that have come up, but the few that have surfaced
2 that have been public health — most repeatedly are
3 public health.

4 As Daniela mentioned, as others have mentioned
5 every meeting, this region has just a huge lack of
6 health infrastructure, as well as an amount of public
7 health impacts, and that definitely has to change. And
8 that goes both from the monitoring stage to actually
9 building out the infrastructure and clinics in places
10 like North Shore and Calipatria that need them.

11 There's also opportunity to build off some of
12 the work that's been underway to date for many years,
13 through leaders like Comite Civico, around, you know,
14 building greater air quality monitors, the IVEDC
15 network, and, you know, ways to really augment some of
16 that work that's been leading in the region.

17 And then the other piece is workforce. So, I
18 think there's been a recognition, as we've heard in
19 Lithium Valley over the years, that Salton Sea
20 restoration projects, and other restoration projects and
21 the management in the region, have to bring local hiring
22 requirements. They have to provide jobs to people in
23 the region, they can't go to outside region jobs
24 anymore. And that's really what was explained today.
25 That network between really commitments to local hire,

1 and then building those pathways and pipelines through
2 the different educational and training mechanisms, and
3 building up that infrastructure is incredibly key.

4 And then the third, and I'm going to go really
5 fast, is regional benefits. Those are many things that
6 have been discussed in this context, like broadband,
7 affordable housing, reliable electricity that doesn't go
8 out, access to safe drinking water, and sidewalks and
9 infrastructure, and those — what we are trying — what
10 we are planning to do, is to map to some of the exciting
11 funding opportunities that are out there now and in the
12 future.

13 With that, I'm going to pass it off to
14 Cecilia.

15 MS. ESTOLANO: Let's go to the next slide.

16 I'm going to go quickly, because we know it's
17 late in the day. How do we take what you all identified
18 as a potentially exciting opportunity to elevate the
19 economic circumstances and the health outcomes of this
20 region — how do we link that to ensure that we're going
21 to deliver tangible community benefits to the community.
22 It doesn't just happen because we want it, you actually
23 have to have intent, policy, standards, and processes
24 that make sense.

25 So, I just wanted to highlight a few things.

1 I've worked on community benefits for the better part of
2 the last two decades. There are a few really consistent
3 elements that happen when you are able to deliver
4 community benefits through specific structures.

5 One is, they get done in clear commitments in
6 a legally enforceable document, which we can call a
7 Community Benefits Agreement, or can also be called a
8 Community Workforce Agreement. Many names, but the
9 point is that it's a community driven list of benefits,
10 a collection of benefits that is negotiated with a
11 developer, or maybe a developer and a government agency,
12 and it's in an enforceable legal document.

13 Folks get a — developer gets a development
14 approval, or a subsidy, or some other public approval.
15 The community gets a set of benefits in exchange for
16 either supporting or not opposing that proposal. In
17 that Community Benefits Agreement, there's going to be
18 ongoing monitoring and enforcement.

19 Actual specific mechanisms. Enforceable
20 mechanisms. Things like liquidated damages, fines,
21 things that actually make a difference to force actual
22 compliance. There has to be ongoing community oversight
23 and accountability. It can't just be, "We signed a
24 document, we have a press conference, it's all over,
25 yay." No. There has to be ongoing detailed community

1 oversight and accountability to make sure that the
2 benefits are actually delivered.

3 There also needs to be a forum so that all the
4 parties can collaborate in solving problems. In these
5 agreements and in these processes, we often try to
6 predict how the next 10, 20, 30 years lay out. Well,
7 things change. So, we have to have a forum by which we
8 can together solve unforeseen problems, or just sort of
9 get to the bottom of it.

10 And lastly, there has to be a way in which
11 this document, this process, this relationship lasts
12 beyond six months, a year, or even as long as it takes
13 to build a project that goes on for quite some time.
14 Because often times the benefits that we're trying to
15 deliver and secure are long term. Let's go to the next
16 slide.

17 So, I heard Chair Paz talk a lot about
18 participatory budgeting, and it's a really excellent
19 proposal, and I'm sorry, too, that it didn't get
20 included in the resolution, but all is not lost.
21 Because in fact, if there is a forum of Community
22 Benefits Agreements or framework, you can build in the
23 type of community driven monitoring, enforcement and
24 implementation that Commissioner Paz, or Chair Paz was
25 talking about.

1 I'll give you an example. We worked on a
2 community stabilization fund, the first of its kind,
3 that was crafted out of Google's major investment in the
4 city of San Jose. It was a case where Google knew they
5 were going to get a multiple decade entitlement for a
6 big project, money would flow into the city over a
7 certain amount of time, over decades.

8 The community had a number of concerns, a
9 number of interests that they wanted to see met. That
10 community coalition wanted to negotiate the Community
11 Benefits Agreement, wanted that money to be deposited
12 somewhere that they could control. Working closely with
13 the city and the city attorney's office and the city
14 government, the community conceived of a Community
15 Stabilization Fund that would be paid into over time,
16 that would be administered by a third party administrator —
17 administrator, probably a local foundation, but that
18 would be governed by an advisory board that had a
19 majority of seats from the community.

20 Already there had been a plan for how to spend
21 the money, but obviously the details would need to be
22 worked out through this grant making process that would
23 ultimately be controlled by the community. And this
24 type of structure could be something that might be
25 useful for you all to consider asking the state

1 legislature to authorize. The creation of this type of
2 Community Stabilization Fund into which funds could be
3 deposited, whether they're from a severance tax or from
4 other funding mechanism, something that gets
5 replenished. Community can make a five-year spending
6 plan, can monitor, can enforce.

7 Another critical element of this Community
8 Stabilization Fund as it was done in San Jose is that
9 the community members that sat on that board represented
10 a variety of interests, including technological and
11 lived experience. That's critical for the credibility,
12 and frankly, the efficacy of this type of fund. It
13 amplified the local voices, it focused on equity, and it
14 created a transparent accountable decision making
15 process that gained the support of community members.

16 So, we use that as an example to talk about
17 the types of things you might want to consider in your
18 final report to legislature. Let's go to the next
19 slide.

20 How do we make sure we deliver the types of
21 benefits that have been talked about, that were
22 represented in all of the analysis that we did and all
23 of the collection of interviews and data and literature
24 review that we've put together. How do we make sure
25 that actually gets delivered when something as exciting

1 and potentially, you know, game changing as lithium
2 extraction happens.

3 So, here are some recommendations. One is,
4 that you actually heard from Carol Zabin in a
5 presentation that she made back in February there's a
6 lot of talk about the importance of jobs, what we really
7 need to have is that there are actual enforceable local
8 hire and high road commitments, along with metrics.
9 Ways to measure that everyone agrees on, data that's
10 collected regularly, made available publicly, and
11 troubleshooting processes to work things out if those
12 goals are not met.

13 There also needs to be training commitments
14 for residents, but they have to be directly linked with
15 the actual need of the employers. And you guys have
16 heard a lot about that, and we commend the commitments
17 the developers have already made, but that needs to be
18 enforceable.

19 There also, most importantly, has to be
20 technical assistance and funding so that community
21 members can actively engage, participate, and drive the
22 way these Community Benefits Agreements are negotiated
23 and enforced. You can't just expect the community
24 members who work all day and have a number of different
25 responsibilities are going to be able to mix it up with

1 folks who are represented by multiple counsel, getting
2 very high-priced lawyers with quite a bit of experience.

3 So, we think it makes a lot of sense to
4 recommend to the legislature that part of what they do
5 is to set aside some money for capacity building and
6 technical assistance for the community members that are
7 expected to participate and actually negotiate and
8 oversee what we hope would be a Community Benefits
9 Agreements or Framework.

10 There needs to be oversight authority over the
11 implementation that's enforceable. And another really
12 important piece that we think makes a lot of sense to
13 put in your final report, and you heard in previous
14 presentations from other folks, is that there should be
15 some source of funding for ongoing operation and
16 maintenance of those Salton Sea projects. That's not
17 something that could be funded by the SSMP, by the ten-
18 year plan, but it could be funded as a package of
19 benefits coming out of Lithium Valley's development.

20 So, that's why it's so important to be very
21 specific with the legislature about the unique
22 opportunity that Lithium Valley presents in addressing
23 the ongoing health concerns, and the mitigation, and the
24 environmental concerns for this region.

25 And lastly, we think it makes a lot of sense

1 for this Commission to recommend to the legislature that
2 they mandate the negotiation of a Community Benefits
3 Agreements that is community driven, that goes along the
4 far end of what Daniela described in her spectrum of
5 engagement. This is not just appearing at a workshop,
6 this is about community members being resourced,
7 staffed, and assisted to actually engage in meaningful
8 negotiations, well informed negotiations to set forth
9 the community benefits they expect, they demand, and
10 that they will oversee through this process.

11 And with that, we'll set it — we'll let this
12 go, we know there's one more speaker. Thank you for
13 your time, we're happy to answer any questions.

14 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Next is Jordan Sisson.

15 MR. SISSON: Hi all, Jordan Sisson. I'm a
16 land use CEQA attorney, often representing many of the
17 same sort of E-J organizations you see here. I want to
18 thank you all for inviting me to provide my perspective.
19 I am very mindful that we are 15 minutes over, so I will
20 try to avoid repeating anything that my fellow
21 presenters have already commented. I just want to hit
22 on a couple of really important points.

23 First. Yes. This is a unique opportunity.
24 Unique opportunity for Lithium Valley, unique
25 opportunity for the local E-J community and the public

1 to work together. Having represented E-J groups in
2 development agreements and environmental reviews, I can
3 safely say that it's not always the case where the
4 public interest, the public agency and environmental
5 justice groups on the ground level can have a unique
6 opportunity to really work together to make sure that
7 the local community really is an equal partner in such a
8 unique and perhaps once in a lifetime opening of an
9 industry as we see here with the Lithium Valley.

10 Ultimately, I think the goal here, from
11 everybody, from all walks of life, want to see the
12 promised jobs, the shared economy, and that multiplier
13 effect come to fruition for this local E-J community. I
14 don't think that's any doubt. But how do we get there?
15 I really want to focus on three things in doing that.

16 It's that — how you get that E-J community
17 ownership, versus just being really engaged. That's
18 going to require a framework that does not merely say,
19 "Hey we've talked with the local group," but actually
20 put them at a seat at the table where they have some
21 decision making authority.

22 Second, is how do we prioritize that local,
23 again I think you heard it from my fellow panelists,
24 putting very specific requirements in — on paper, in
25 word, that really focuses on that local. And putting

1 some definitions to that. Really defining fence line
2 communities, and making sure that funding opportunities
3 and mitigation and that community benefits is at least
4 localized from the fence line community perspective, but
5 also maybe from a Salton Sea Air Basin perspective, to
6 ensure that the prosperity and the mitigation is local.

7 And the last, third, kind of component is, how
8 do we leverage the public agency discretion here. This
9 is not only in terms of the permitting of these
10 processes, of these facilities, but also the development
11 on public land. And using that leverage to really
12 encourage a CBA model where it puts a bonafide community
13 group in the steering, in the steering — behind the
14 steering wheel.

15 Now, obviously you heard earlier from a
16 panelist, local CBA process, whether it's the Google
17 facility, that's, you know, one context. We've also
18 seen CBA's in Los Angeles, whether it's a large
19 developers. We've also seen it at the state legislation
20 level such as AB 734, where the state has come in and
21 tried to provide incentives, but say high-bar.

22 We look at AB 3, or 734, this was a stadium
23 project that provided some incentives and encouraged a
24 CBA model, as well as putting a high demand on what sort
25 of project would be produced, what is a project supposed

1 to achieve in order to achieve some of those incentives.

2 And so with that in mind, I kind of just
3 wanted to focus on a handful of areas where you can
4 really inject these three concepts of, again, getting E-
5 J ownership, prioritizing local, and really leveraging
6 the public agencies discretion. And some of the
7 concepts we heard earlier today, one of which —
8 apologies, bear with me —

9 The first area I want to kind of focus on is
10 an environmental review. As you've heard, there's quite
11 a few pilot projects. And while geothermal is an
12 established industry, the extraction is fairly new. And
13 you heard that. We're seeing pilot projects, and it
14 will have to go through environmental review of some
15 sort.

16 Now, the public agency has, obviously,
17 tremendous amount of discretion in how they analyze
18 those sort of projects, and I would urge this commission
19 to consider making recommendations that local agencies
20 should demand the highest and most rigorous
21 environmental review, with high levels of deliverables.
22 Taking a real hard look at growth inducing impacts,
23 looking at the kind of life-cycle of the battery that's
24 to be produced, looking at supply chain impacts, and
25 looking at their entire GHG profile of expanding lithium

1 extraction at this area.

2 This is important, because this provides a
3 framework in which a public agency can look at what is
4 mitigation, what should be mitigated. This provides a
5 tremendous amount of leverage for the local agency to
6 advocate for more stringent mitigation measures.
7 Perhaps even really looking at a closed loop system,
8 where you look at not only extraction, but also the
9 manufacturing of various products using lithium. That's
10 an opportunity to leverage that discretion to ensure
11 that you get co-location. That's obviously very
12 important.

13 A second area we've heard about are specific
14 plans and infrastructure plans and the severance tax.
15 How can one really provide that community ownership? I
16 think it really comes down to specifying that in that
17 specific plan framework, that there is an actual seat
18 for the local bonafide community, whether it's labor,
19 environmental justice organizations, other local
20 grassroots organizations, being at the table developing
21 what that infrastructure need is. Developing what those
22 community asks are. They really need to have a seat at
23 the table with voting authority.

24 Additionally, what's so important is that
25 these cannot be stale documents. They really do need to

1 have an annual review component to it, especially if
2 they are going to serve as a framework of where that
3 severance tax dollars will go to. I think,
4 additionally, specifying what is to go to community
5 needs, those sort of projects, versus what's being used
6 to mitigate, you know, the environmental impacts of
7 these various projects. Having that clearly specified
8 in that framework is going to be very important.

9 The other area I kind of want to look at is
10 the Development Agreement dynamic with development on
11 public lands. This is a tried-and-true area where we
12 have seen CBA's being very effective, as you heard from
13 some of my other panelists. They have an annual review,
14 and an enforceability and, I cannot stress enough how
15 important a CBA with a bonafide community group is,
16 because it's an enforceability that the rubber meets the
17 road.

18 All too often, we've seen Development
19 Agreements in the past be crafted, be negotiated, and
20 not come to fruition due to lack of enforceability.
21 These are especially true in areas where it involves
22 just a Development Agreement with a public agency and a
23 developer or an applicant. A CBA is unique in that it
24 provides that third party accountability, where it
25 provides enforceability by that third party, that

1 community group. So, here, I think any sort of
2 recommendation that this committee can advocate for is a
3 framework that, where there is development on public
4 lands, that that CBA model will really be enforced, and
5 really be pushed for.

6 Lastly, looking at some of the other
7 discussions we've heard today in terms of delegate
8 authority, increasing from 49 megawatts up to 99, and
9 other sort of discussions about streamlining CEQA
10 review. I think it's important to note that, while
11 program EIR's are very effective at looking at
12 cumulative impacts of new industries and projects, this
13 is a very new industry. We are going to see
14 developments of new externalities from this industry,
15 more than likely, in the future. It's important to
16 ensure that we do not lose that leverage.

17 Providing a program EIR makes sense,
18 definitely for best practices, and maybe trying to
19 codify a CBA model, whether it's tied to a specific
20 plan, severance tax, best practices, that's all very
21 noble. But, if there is going to be any sort of program
22 EIR or streamline review, I think it's important to set
23 the goal high, right?

24 And by setting that goal high, it's demanding
25 the most environmentally superior project that does have

1 that multiplier effect. That may include not only the
2 extraction of lithium, but also looking at where that
3 lithium product goes. Being able to encourage that co-
4 location of manufacturing. Being able to leverage that
5 environmental review and that program EIR to ensure that
6 any of those facilities on public lands are subject to a
7 Community Benefits Agreement. And in that Community
8 Benefits Agreement, not only looking at the construction
9 jobs, which are temporary, but also those operational
10 jobs. Those long term jobs, and also the secondary
11 contracts that go with that. Who will the vendors be?
12 Looking at that entire ecosystem of that facility. If
13 that is the demand, you know, demanding that level of
14 closed-loop, entire supply chain wholistic review of the
15 projects, the agency has the unique opportunity to
16 actually bring those local benefits. To actually ensure
17 that those jobs come to fruition. That the industry, as
18 well as the community are co-equal partners in the
19 prosperity of this unique mineral in this unique area of
20 California.

21 I thank you all for your time, and I will
22 submit.

23 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I will now go to
24 public comment. If there is anyone here in the campus
25 who wants to talk to the presentation?

1 (Pause)

2 MR. LOPEZ: Thank you. My name is Luis Lopez,
3 and I had a question for the County's investment plan,
4 if it was in Spanish? Because, I mean, our population
5 is over 80 percent Hispanic and part of community
6 engagement, you know, outreach, is making sure that
7 language barrier is not there. You can't expect people
8 to, you know, understand what's on any flyers,
9 documents, if it's not in Spanish. And, not even that,
10 right? I have family members that are bilingual, but
11 their preferred language is Spanish. So, you know,
12 again, that's just for the County. And just from here
13 on out, anything related to Imperial County, if it could
14 be translated into Spanish. Thank you.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Anyone else here,
16 physically, who wants to make a comment? Okay.
17 Commissioner Flores, is there anyone in Sacramento
18 wishing to speak?

19 COMMISSIONER FLORES: No.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Weisgall,
21 is there anyone in Maryland wishing to speak?

22 (Pause)

23 Okay. We might have lost Commissioner
24 Weisgall. I do recognize we are like 30 minutes late.
25 So, we're going to wrap up soon. Anyone, oh anyone on

1 Zoom, are there any hands raised or any comments
2 provided via the Zoom chat?

3 MS. LOZA: There are no hands raised on Zoom,
4 and no questions in the Q&A box.

5 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

6 MS. LOZA: Oh, I see a — I saw, I'm sorry — I
7 see a hand raised from Nicola Lakic. You should be able
8 to unmute yourself.

9 MR. LAKIC: Thank you. Thank you for the
10 second opportunity. I would like to know the quantity
11 of information the gentlemen, Jordan Sisson, that was
12 talking right now. Is there any way that I can get it?
13 I know that he is Community Benefit Plan only, but I
14 didn't see any email or something like that.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you for your comment, and
16 someone can follow up with you on getting his contact
17 info.

18 MR. LAKIC: My email address is N-L-A-K-I-C at
19 geothermalworldwide.com. Thanks.

20 CHAIR PAZ: If there are no more hands raised
21 or comments coming via Zoom, I will now transition to
22 our Commissioner comments or questions.

23 (Pause)

24 None? Yes? Commissioner Olmedo.

25 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair, I — on the

1 question, I wasn't sure, are we getting — I just wanted
2 to see, give an opportunity to the presenters to —
3 regarding the — well, I'll ask it, but —

4 CHAIR PAZ: Yeah, you can ask.

5 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: About the Spanish
6 translation of the County's plan.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Yeah.

8 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Well, that's one
9 question.

10 CHAIR PAZ: So, Rebecca, I think she's still
11 on.

12 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Rebecca?

13 (Pause)

14 Is she still on the — she's no longer on the
15 Zoom.

16 CHAIR PAZ: She may not be on. So, when that
17 plan was submitted to us, was it translated? No, it was
18 only — okay.

19 (Pause)

20 That question is pending, since Rebecca is not
21 here. Other questions, comments, Commissioner Olmedo?

22 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: No.

23 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner. Okay.

24 Seeing none, we lost Commissioner Weisgall.

25 Commissioner Flores?

1 (Pause)

2 Okay. Hearing none, I'm going to take that as
3 a no. Thank you to all of the panelists. Very, very
4 informative. Thank you for all of the information you
5 gave us.

6 And that concludes our workshop. We will now
7 move to the next slide please. There are, recognizing
8 that we are at 5:31, I will only address one more of the
9 planned discussion topics, and that is to — for the
10 planning for upcoming workshops, we wanted to speak
11 about the various workshops that you see on the screen
12 that are coming up.

13 Given the time limitations, I will only now
14 invite Commissioner Castaneda to speak about where the
15 planning and the vision is for the incentives workshop.
16 A reminder, we do have that workshop coming up May 26,
17 so now is an opportunity for the members who are
18 listening in and for the Commissioners to give input on
19 the types of conversations you want to see when we are
20 talking about incentives. So, I'll hand it over to
21 Commissioner Castaneda.

22 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Thank you, madam
23 Chair. So anyway, I have been assigned the incentives
24 workshop, and I'm working with Commissioner Soto who,
25 unfortunately, couldn't be here, but fortunately for him

1 I think he's in New York with a special event with his
2 son, which is always a good thing.

3 We have had a couple discussions, and we had
4 one of those with the Chair as well and the staff with
5 CEC. We've laid out a bit of a game plan. I've already
6 been in contact with representatives of the industry to
7 try to understand. I've already received some
8 information from Commissioner Weisgall. We are working
9 with the county as well to see, you know we heard about
10 the benefits, but we want to hear about the incentives
11 and so forth as part of their plan.

12 And, also, I've reached out to elements of
13 state government and the federal government. So, we're
14 still working on that, and hopefully we'll be able to
15 have a very — and I think we will — a very robust and
16 exciting workshop regarding incentives. And so, we'll
17 have certainly a lot more to talk about on the 26th. But
18 I would be very interested to hear from any of the
19 remaining Commissioners if there are ideas, specifically
20 about what we can talk about. Thank you.

21 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Castaneda.
22 And again, I was part of one of the discussions, and
23 just to echo what Commissioner Castaneda said, the idea
24 so far is to bring representatives at both ends, right,
25 like those who are providing the incentives, those that

1 are benefiting from the incentives, and those who are
2 impacted so that there can be a holistic conversation
3 about how maybe to strengthen those incentives. And so,
4 therefore there is a range of different people who are
5 being reached out to.

6 I do not have any additional recommendations
7 for who else to invite at this point. But if anyone
8 does, before I go to the Commissioners, we're going to
9 go to public comments, see if there is anyone from the
10 public that wants to speak on this and has any ideas.
11 So, I do see a hand raised here at the Imperial Valley
12 College.

13 Not yet, no this is about the incentives
14 workshop. Okay. Thank you.

15 So, none here. Are there any comments
16 specific to ideas or recommendations for the incentives
17 workshop coming via Zoom — oh, no — from Miranda
18 Flores, Sacramento?

19 (Pause)

20 Okay. And I believe we also might have lost
21 Commissioner Weisgall from Maryland. Okay. So, anyone
22 from Zoom?

23 (Pause)

24 MS. LOZA: There are no hands raised on Zoom.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

1 MS. LOZA: I'm checking the — nope, no Q&A
2 either.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Anyone from the
4 Commissioners who would like to give input to the
5 incentives workshop?

6 I do not see any. So, that concludes this
7 portion. Thank you.

8 And a little bit of housekeeping.

9 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair?

10 CHAIR PAZ: Go ahead, Commissioner Olmedo.

11 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Well, I just
12 wanted to bring back to what I had brought up early on.

13 CHAIR PAZ: It's coming up, yeah.
14 It's coming.

15 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: So, I guess I
16 will pick up where I left off. I just wanted to
17 acknowledge that there was an effort to get a meeting
18 going in Calipatria, and then that didn't come through,
19 and I just want to be respectful of the fact that it
20 builds enthusiasm. Clearly, today, when they can
21 identify and see themselves, and the map shows it,
22 they're in close proximity. They're fence line to the
23 industry, and have great concern and want to see it, you
24 know, want to see the — what the good or the bad may be,
25 right? And it would be very accessible.

1 But that didn't come through. Then,
2 a second location was identified, San Diego State, and
3 again, as I — okay, well, at least it's walking
4 distance. It's, you know, close proximity to the
5 community, it's there in the community and accessible.
6 And again, we would be giving a community access. But
7 then, nothing against IVC, I mean we use this space for
8 conferences, but we also coordinate with Department of
9 Transportation, the Imperial County Department of
10 Transportation, or at least we did with Mark Baza, but I
11 don't see why they wouldn't coordinate to make sure that
12 they make transportation available for this specific.

13 But that didn't happen. So, I want to just
14 acknowledge that, and, you know, as a body, even though
15 I don't take responsibility for everybody's decision, I
16 do want to apologize to Calipatria and to San Diego
17 State, because, you know, we should do better.

18 For the future location, I would like to ask
19 that Calipatria be the next meeting.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commission Olmedo for
21 your comments, and that was going to be further down the
22 agenda, but let me just close the — this conversation,
23 or this item, on future workshops.

24 And thank you, Commission Castaneda, for
25 planning that workshop. We look forward to hearing,

1 like, in two weeks. So, I know it's been a quick
2 turnaround and with a lot of things I think, there,
3 coming — , very quick. So because we will not have a
4 full discussion on the future topics or the future
5 locations, I do want to like give some background on
6 housekeeping items, because there's going to be some
7 things that have to happen in between the meetings.

8 So in between the meetings, there will be —
9 the CEC will be reaching out to all of us, so that we
10 can see if we can find quorum to meet twice, potentially
11 in June and July, so that we can, you know, advance.
12 We've met a lot of the topics, conversations, that have
13 been assigned to us, and we still have a few more. So,
14 we're going to be recommending that we meet twice, at
15 least June and July. It's going to be key, as we saw
16 today, that we can achieve quorum. And there's
17 different ways. That's not — if people can't come to
18 Imperial, they can Zoom in, they just have to be able to
19 Notice that their location, and they need to be ADA
20 accessible.

21 And ten days prior to the meeting, you would
22 have to say, "Yes, this is my location," and it needs to
23 be Noticed. Otherwise, we would come to a physical
24 location. So that's the first housekeeping. Please,
25 please, please — as soon as CEC reaches out, try to

1 answer and let them know so that we can plan for those
2 meetings.

3 In terms of the locations, I will take
4 ownership on the decision that I made — that we chose
5 Imperial Valley College. In my opinion, asking people
6 from Calipatria and Nyland to drive all the way to
7 Calexico was going to be just a really far drive, and
8 there was no ideal here, given the short time frame.
9 So, I felt this was at least middle ground. People from
10 Calexico could drive here, and people from Calipriata,
11 Nyland could drive here, and I know transportation is an
12 issue, but it was the best-case scenario. But in between
13 that, I did ask the CEC to continue reaching out to the
14 Calipatria schools, and that was the reason why we
15 couldn't choose Calipatria.

16 Just by the time that the meeting had to be
17 Noticed, there was still — they still couldn't — the IT
18 department still couldn't coordinate and make sure that
19 all the technology was going to be accessible and things
20 like that. But they have talked still since then, again
21 I did ask them to continue that conversation so that we
22 would know by this meeting whether a future meeting in
23 Calipatria would be possible, and the answer is Yes.

24 They have confirmed that they can work out the
25 technology and still be compliant with Bagley-Keene.

1 And again, people part of the issue is that we need to
2 be visible on Zoom when we're meeting, so that was part
3 of the challenge, ismaking sure that all the technology
4 was going to work. So, yes, there will be a future
5 meeting in Calipatria.

6 I think that was the housekeeping that I
7 wanted to share. And now, I think we're ready to go to
8 public comment, general public comment. So at this
9 time, I know we have people here on the campus who are
10 ready to offer general public comment.

11 (Pause)

12 MR. MARTINEZ: Hello everyone. Dear Lithium
13 Valley Commission, my name is Jose Martinez. I am here
14 today representing the voices of the most forgotten and
15 disadvantaged of communities that surround the future
16 home of the Lithium Valley. As a community health
17 worker carrying the Salud Sin Fronteras Initiative, I
18 have had several conversations with residents of
19 Calipatira, Nyland, and Bombay Beach who feel left out
20 of the lithium conversation.

21 The residents of these communities will be the
22 most affected by the lithium projects, however, they do
23 not feel heard. The greatest example of why they feel
24 forgotten is the meeting in which we are present. The
25 location at the Imperial Valley College is a long way

1 from those communities.

2 My duty as a community health worker and a
3 resident is to create a bond with the community. To
4 make it a community that is healthier, more confident,
5 and more informed. I have spoken with the community
6 members, and there are several concerns due to the lack
7 of resources. There's not the respect they deserve.

8 Help is needed for medical access, telephone
9 and internet coverage, including supervision in school
10 areas. Many students suffer from school bullying
11 because teachers force them to do activities beyond
12 their own limits. There are many students who suffer
13 from respiratory problems. So, what then happens? They
14 feel very insecure when dealing with the new lithium
15 projects, since they will be the ones affected, and
16 again, they will be ignored because they don't get the
17 respect they deserve.

18 Several members of Calipatria and Nyland were
19 unable to attend today due to several factors, starting
20 with the location. The limitation in public transport,
21 and the schedule of the meeting and internet access to
22 attend by Zoom. So, I invite you to consider new
23 options to be able to integrate these meetings in
24 Calipatria and keep them informed of all the decisions
25 that were taken about Lithium, please.

1 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We have somebody else?

2 MR. FLORES: Yes, this is Jose Flores,
3 community member as well. I want to thank all the
4 Commissioners that are still present. I know it's a big
5 commitment, but it's terrible that they sign up for
6 something as Commissioners and miss panelists, or they
7 miss meetings in general — because I've been present at
8 most of them, online or otherwise.

9 So, my comment real quick, is — since time is
10 of the essence, now more than ever community input and
11 the LVC updates are important. So, it is unacceptable
12 for scheduled LVC meetings to be cancelled or postponed.
13 This shows a lack of respect and gravitas to our
14 frontline community. This also sidelines your
15 Commissioners that are — have a vested interest in
16 bringing forth different perspectives, the ones that are
17 here and they show that they care about this process,
18 and input.

19 Also, the issue of not being — not having the
20 meeting in Calipat, it's another example that I could
21 see is, like, if there was an issue in North Shore, yet
22 that issue in North Shore, the meeting is held at Palm
23 Springs, which does not make sense.

24 As far as engagement of community, I have a
25 lot of family members in this area and the northern part

1 of Imperial Valley, and they simply disengage because
2 they see that there's not a lot of outreach for them,
3 and they truly don't trust — whether it's industry or
4 academia or CPO's that come in.

5 My family members, the Mexican proverb they
6 always use for me when I try to engage them is, "Te
7 lengua es como un taco," which is, they just don't
8 believe. In general, just — well just fatigued of
9 different entities coming — I'd term it as parachuting
10 fatigue, where again, we have industry, academia and
11 CPO's come in, and then they take and they leave, but
12 then our community is still left with a lot of
13 questions, a lot of burdens, and very little input. So,
14 this is a perfect time to engage these communities for
15 future meetings.

16 MS. FIGUEROA: Hello. Good afternoon,
17 Commissioners, my name is Janita Figueroa. I would like
18 to speak on the topic of the time, really. I think, as
19 mentioned previously, time is of the essence. So, I
20 think it is very important for the Lithium Valley
21 Commission to be respectful of everybody's time. To be
22 respectful of the public's time.

23 The fact that general comments are done 50
24 minutes after the meeting was supposed to be, you know,
25 considering everybody's time, we know that the public

1 wants to be engaged, they want to be at these meetings.
2 We want to be here, but we have to be considerate of
3 people's times.

4 Especially on Zoom. We see people that are
5 interacting, but it's always important to stick to these
6 timeframes, so that the public can trust these
7 Commissions to make the right decisions for them.
8 Having such a simple trust in time and commitment on
9 being here today, and ensuring that we're able to reach
10 quorum and make these important decisions, considering
11 that we have limited time on these issues, it's very
12 important. And with IVC being the location, I
13 understand the complications of Calipat and the
14 discussions, but I would really urge you to work with
15 local — other local entities if Calipat is not possible.

16 There is Brawley, there is Westmorland, there
17 are other locations where this can take place, because
18 IVC is not the most convenient location for our
19 community. Thank you.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Any other public
21 comments here in the audience?

22 MR. LOPEZ: Yes. Luis Lopez from Comite
23 Civico del Valle. And I remember back in November, we
24 had a community forum in Calipatria, and initially it
25 wasn't going to take place in Calipatria, but you know

1 we pushed and we wanted the fence line communities to
2 have a voice, to have community show up, and we had a
3 short timeframe. I know it was mentioned by you, Chair
4 Paz, that there was a short timeframe.

5 Well back in November we also had a short
6 timeframe, but, you know, we managed to get community
7 out there, to have the meeting out there. We worked
8 with the city. So, I really don't think there's an
9 excuse to not have a meeting in Calipatria. Comite
10 Civico del Valle is always ready to go. Thank you.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. No more hands raised
12 here, and I will, just for the record, I know we've lost
13 probably Sacramento, but is there anyone still in
14 Sacramento and are there any comments?

15 COMMISSIONER FLORES: There are no comments.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Oh, thank you, Commissioner
17 Flores. Anybody still in Maryland, and are there any
18 comments?

19 None. I will turn over to CEC Staff to see if
20 there are any comments coming in from Zoom.

21 MS. LOZA: There are no comments in Zoom

22 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, this concludes our
23 meeting. We will see you all May the 26, and the
24 meeting is adjourned at 5:50. Thank you, everyone.

25 (Meeting Adjourned at 5:50 P.M.)

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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 7th day of June, 2022.



MARTHA L. NELSON,
CERT**367

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

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

June 7, 2022