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QUECHAN INDIAN TRIBE

Ft. Yuma Indian Reservation

Chase Choate, Environmental

Director

Lithium Valley Commission Meetings

August 29, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

I understand the USA needs to curb and reduce carbon emissions, which are the sole purpose for transitioning to EV and eliminate fossil fuel combustion, and that Lithium is the battery source in which the EV need but I'm concerned about the amount of abandoned gas vehicles and the waste stream that can arise once gas vehicles are phased out. I do understand the power generating plants in this area are using geothermal water to create steam and energy and I do understand the concept of the ion exchange technology and the use of hydrochloric acid and that it's a closed water system no more water is being used for the Lithium extraction from Brine. But there are still many unanswered questions that no one may have an answer to at this time.

Is the system really a closed system? Is there any correlation between the time these geothermal plants were running 40 years ago, isn't that about the same time the Salton Sea began to deplete and dry up? I know Climate Change has a lot to do with the complexities of the sea and with increased Climate Change how can this project persist with constant changes or expansion? How much water more water will be depleted from the Salton Sea?

How will this affect the overuse of water from the sea? Is the brine/water returned back to the sea? If so, what's the time frame?

Will there have to be more pipelines to bring water from the sea to the plants?

How much hydrochloric acid is used? What environmental hazards do you see that can arise from this process?

What could an earthquake do to this project? Could it cause a leak in hydrochloric acid?

Will this just be a gateway to get a foothold in the area and then extract other minerals for a "Larger State Interest", for "National Security"?

But I'm very concerned about the "expansion" of this project and what that may entail for this has never been done to this large scale. The potential for lithium in the Salton Sea Valley has been labeled the New "Gold Rush". We must understand what the Gold Rush in the 1800's did to Indigenous people and the term "expansion" makes me think of how the lands were divinely taken in the name of "Manifest Destiny". I'm concerned that the amount of lithium and money associated with it will cause the project to expand and use more water and more geothermal plants and for extracting more lithium to what end. Lastly the lithium has been under the earth's surface for geological time and what could happen to the chemistry of the brine/water, if you take something out of the equation how will it react in time? For the duration of the project I would like to see no digging and mining for more lithium, no evaporation ponds and no excess water taking out for we don't know what the bigger picture of expansion entails. Furthermore I'd want particulate matter and other primary and secondary air pollutants monitored and measured. This area is not only very important culturally for all the tribes in this area have connections here but also the site is vital to the Pacific Flyway for migrating birds and other animal species. Animals are like our ancestors and we must protect and treat them with as much respect as we do with other people and the land the earth our mother.

This whole process doesn't seem like adequate consultation by the California Energy Commission and Imperial County. The permitting process seems like a loophole where the CEQA and NEPA statutes aren't properly being followed. At the first meeting we had in March of 2022 with CEC, there could have been a time to show Environmental Impact Report and other documents. In our last meeting with CEC on August 19, 2022 it was brought up that the past EIR was contracted out by Imperial County, but in the report the contractor documented false claims that the Tribe's have no cultural interest and that they did not respond. The process seems to be a way to streamline the project and not give enough adequate time for the public and Tribal consultation.

Sincerely,



Chase Choate

Quechan Tribe Environmental Director