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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION  
LITHIUM VALLEY COMMISSION

In the matter of, )  
)  
Lithium Valley ) Docket No. 20-LITHIUM-01  
Community and Tribal Workshop )  

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COMMUNITY AND TRIBAL WORKSHOP ON THE DRAFT REPORT OF THE  
BLUE RIBBON COMMISSION OF LITHIUM EXTRACTION IN  
CALIFORNIA

Desert Recreation District,  
North Shore Beach and Yacht Club  
99-155 Sea View Drive  
North Shore, CA 92255

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2022

6:00 P.M.

Reported By:  
Elise Hicks

## APPEARANCES

CEC Staff

Deanna Carrillo  
Erica Loza  
Silvia Palma-Rojas

Presenters

Lisa Ballin, Consensus and Collaboration Program,  
College of Continuing Education, Sacramento State  
Julia Csernansky, Consensus and Collaboration Program,  
College of Continuing Education, Sacramento State

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2 October 19, 2022

6:09 P.M.

3 MS. CARRILLO: Good evening. My name is  
4 Deanna, and along with a few colleagues of mine here  
5 today, we're part of the California Energy Commission,  
6 which is supporting the work of the Blue Ribbon  
7 Commission for lithium extraction. And tonight we're  
8 here because the Commission asked us to come out and  
9 host community and tribal workshops to solicit oral  
10 feedback on the draft report that's out for public  
11 comment.

12 Before we get started, I just wanted to  
13 highlight a few housekeeping issues. This is a public  
14 meeting. It's being transcribed by a court reporter in  
15 the back. And that's going to be part of a docket,  
16 which will have a 15-day public comment period. What's  
17 the docket? A docket is a virtual place where all the  
18 information related to the work of the Blue Ribbon  
19 Commission is housed and can be found on our website.  
20 And so, it's a way for the public to have more  
21 transparency and have all the information that the  
22 decision makers have as well. And we will show you how  
23 to find that on our website.

24 The CEC is going to be providing a summary of  
25 the information that we gathered today here as well as

1 two other workshops that we've hosted -- that we will be  
2 hosting. Last night we were down in Niland, and  
3 tomorrow night we will be in Salton City.

4           And at the back of the room or in the other  
5 room, you will find a few different resources. We have  
6 fact sheets on the Blue Ribbon Commission, the report,  
7 copies of the authorizing statute, copies of the  
8 executive summary, and we should have some workshop  
9 workbooks in a little bit, they're on -- their on their  
10 way.

11           We wouldn't be able to do what we've what  
12 we've been doing without the support of Comite Civico  
13 and Alianza. So, thank you for all your help in pulling  
14 these events together.

15           And outside of our public meeting today, you  
16 can submit comments to the docket on the draft report.  
17 It's due October 28th. So, I apologize for my  
18 informality, or keeping it informal. It's just a little  
19 more comfortable to sit than stand.

20           It's nice to see some familiar faces in the  
21 room. I've seen some of you before, and I have had a  
22 chance to meet you, but not many of you. And I just  
23 want to acknowledge that we all come to this meeting  
24 with a different understanding and information about  
25 both lithium extraction and the Blue Ribbon Commission.

1 It's been around since 2020. You might not have heard  
2 of the work that it's been doing until recently now that  
3 the report is out.

4 I recognize that many of you may have  
5 questions about lithium and some other information or  
6 processes or procedures, and I just want to reinforce  
7 that tonight as the opportunity to solicit comment on  
8 the draft report. And so, as you have questions, we  
9 might not have the right team here to answer them. But  
10 we will collect those questions and bring them to the  
11 Blue Ribbon Commission so that they're aware of what the  
12 community is asking. So just some background there.

13 We have comment forms that are in our workshop  
14 workbooks. Do we have any with us?

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have here.

16 MS. CARRILLO: Okay. We also have comment  
17 forums. So, as we start the small group discussion  
18 we'll be summarizing comments, but if you want to put  
19 your comment directly on the docket you can fill out any  
20 comments or questions on that comment form. And I think  
21 that is it for my housekeeping issues, and we'll get the  
22 workbooks distributed as soon as they arrive.

23 Okay, next slide, please.

24 This slide is the agenda for today's meeting.

25 I'll be providing a brief overview of the state's

1 Lithium Valley vision, and an overview of the report of  
2 the Blue Ribbon Commission for those of you who are new  
3 to the conversation. And we're going to spend most of  
4 our time today in a group discussion to solicit input  
5 and get oral feedback on the report.

6 We're here to get your input. What did we get  
7 right? What should be framed a little differently?  
8 What's missing from the report?

9 Okay. All right. Next slide, please.

10 So, what is lithium?

11 Next slide, please.

12 So, lithium is a naturally occurring soft  
13 white metal. It's an essential part of lithium-ion  
14 batteries, which are in our cell phones, electric  
15 vehicles, our computers, and in battery storage to help  
16 with renewable energy. So again, it's naturally  
17 occurring. It's a key material for the nation and the  
18 globe to move to a green economy, and improving our air  
19 quality and our environment.

20 Next slide.

21 So, some have heard this term Lithium Valley.  
22 What is the state's Lithium Valley vision? This is not  
23 a bound geographical space, right? There's no --  
24 there's Coachella Valley, there's Imperial Valley.  
25 There's no physical space called Lithium Valley.



1           Lithium Valley is a concept used to describe  
2 the potential economic hub or cluster bound around that  
3 economic activity of lithium extraction and recovery.  
4 And again, this lithium is found in a Geothermal  
5 Resource Area. That's a technical term, KGRA, or a  
6 Known Geothermal Resource Area, that is about a mile or  
7 two under the floor of the Salton Sea. So, it's not in  
8 the Salton Sea. It's under the floor of the southeast  
9 corner of the Salton Sea.

10           Next slide, please.

11           So, this opportunity led to the establishment  
12 of the Blue Ribbon Commission on lithium extraction in  
13 California.

14           Next slide, please.

15           It was authored by Assemblymember Eduardo  
16 Garcia. The Commission was created by AB 1657, and was  
17 supported by four legislative findings. That world  
18 demand of lithium is expected to grow as much as  
19 tenfold, but virtually none of it has been produced in  
20 the United States. That this geothermal resource area  
21 at the southeast corner of the Salton Sea is well  
22 positioned to become a competitive source of lithium for  
23 across the globe. And, that there's a national security  
24 rationale for these minerals to be collected, and are  
25 essential to our economy. And, that that opportunity

1 for lithium recovery has the potential to unleash  
2 billions of dollars of new economic development, both  
3 locally and across the state and nation.

4           Okay. Next slide, please. I might have  
5 skipped a slide. Oh, just -- I'm good. Here we go.

6           The statute established specific requirements  
7 of each of the 14 Commissioners. We have Commissioners  
8 that represent environmental justice, health, local  
9 government, the industry, so it's a very diverse group  
10 of Commissioners. It's a Blue Ribbon Commission, and  
11 their whole goal is to provide a report with  
12 recommendations to the legislature for consideration,  
13 and that is this draft report.

14           Next slide, please.

15           The statute tasks the commission with  
16 reviewing, investigating, and analyzing eight specific  
17 topics. These here are just summaries, they're longer  
18 in the statute, and there's more detailed language in  
19 both the statute and in the draft report.

20           Good evening, come on in.

21           And then after its review, the Commission is  
22 tasked with providing a report to the legislature. The  
23 report was due October 1st, but the Blue Ribbon  
24 Commission asked for more time to make sure that we had  
25 community input. And so, it's been taking -- it's taken

1 a little longer than October 1st. They wanted to make  
2 sure we got community input, and now we're doing these  
3 community workshops around the report.

4 Next slide. And I'm gonna pause for a minute  
5 because we had a few folks enter. We only have a few  
6 slides left, and then we're gonna get into community  
7 discussions.

8 Mariela, you're welcome to take a seat up here  
9 too, if you want. Your choice.

10 So, to date, the Commission has had over 21  
11 public meetings. Most of them were virtual during the  
12 pandemic. And then post pandemic, we've been having  
13 more community meetings mostly in -- I'm sorry -- in  
14 person LV Commission meetings, mostly in the fence line  
15 communities of Calipatria, Westmorland, Niland, Imperial  
16 Valley College, as well as at the Torres Martinez  
17 facility in Thermal.

18 Next slide, please. And this brings us to the  
19 draft report to the legislature. One more.

20 So, the draft report is again, the work of  
21 this body's research over the last 21 months, and are  
22 providing recommendations and findings to the  
23 legislature for consideration related to this work. It  
24 includes 44 recommendations for consideration. Several  
25 cross the topics, those eight topics I talked about.

1 And it reflects the discussions and the issues that have  
2 been discussed to date to ensure that the community and  
3 tribal voices are included. And that it's - yeah.

4           So, this note -- so we've I've described it  
5 here. It includes an executive summary, basic  
6 information, community and tribal perspectives. Chapter  
7 Four includes the findings and recommendations. If you  
8 don't -- haven't received a copy of the report or  
9 haven't had a chance to look at it, we have copies in  
10 the in the back in both English and Spanish. And that's  
11 -- the executive summary has also been translated in  
12 Purepecha.

13           Okay. Next slide, please.

14           So, this slide notes the timetable of our next  
15 steps related to this draft report. We're having these  
16 community workshops yesterday today, tomorrow. And  
17 Monday, we'll have one online. And the public comment  
18 period on the draft report ends October 28th. The next  
19 Commission meeting is October 31<sup>st</sup>, on the draft report.  
20 And then we will be tasked with making changes for the  
21 final report, which the commission intends to submit on  
22 December 1st. So that's our schedule today.

23           And with that, I don't have a big presentation  
24 on the whole report. It's 100 pages. What we're going  
25 to focus our discussion on today is the recommendations

1 in the back. Again, what did we get right? What might  
2 be missing? What should be different? We did have a  
3 workshop workbook, but it has gotten tied up in traffic.  
4 It hasn't arrived yet. So, we're just gonna pivot  
5 because that material isn't here. Yeah. We'll take a  
6 copy of the full report and we can review it, the  
7 appendix in the back, and so we'll just a-- we'll wing  
8 it. Pivot.

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, this won't be  
10 available throughout the whole workshop in Spanish?

11 MS. CARRILLO: Excuse me?

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So, the package won't  
13 be available for folks to use?

14 MS. LOZA: It just arrived.

15 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Oh, okay. Thank you.

16 MS. CARRILLO: There we go.

17 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have the packets in  
18 English and Spanish?

19 MS. CARRILLO: And could you go to the next  
20 slide first? Yeah, thank you.

21 So, the goal of today is to get oral feedback  
22 on the draft report. We have some options. Divide our  
23 small groups into English and Spanish to help with  
24 communication? I just wanted to get a sense of the  
25 predominant language, because we want those groups to be

1 even to see if we should -- how we should divide up the  
2 team or the groups for discussion.

3           And we're on -- with that said, I'd like to  
4 introduce Lisa Ballin. She is a third-party facilitator  
5 who's come in to solicit comments from everybody. So,  
6 Lisa?

7           MS. BALLIN: Thanks, Deanna. Welcome,  
8 everybody. Thanks for coming out tonight. As Deanna  
9 said, my name is Lisa Ballin. I am a neutral third-  
10 party facilitator. I'm with Sacramento State, and I'm  
11 here to help guide this conversation and this part of  
12 tonight's meeting.

13           We were thinking about whether or not we  
14 should all stay together as one group, or if we should  
15 go into two separate groups. I want to ask -- I know  
16 we've got some people that might have been here last  
17 night and are coming. And if there's people here that  
18 are just coming to listen? I just want to see about how  
19 many of those people -- so it's like about two people.

20           So, we have two, four, six. It's small enough  
21 that we could stay in one group, or we could have two  
22 very, two very small groups. I think if we stay  
23 together, everybody can hear each other's perspectives.  
24 So, I'm willing to give it a try in one group.

25           MS. CARRILLO: Yeah. Okay. Let's do that.

1 MS. BALLIN: But how do you feel? Okay, so if  
2 we find that, you know, we want to separate at some  
3 point we can.

4 MS. CARRILLO: Yeah.

5 MS. BALLIN: We're going with the flow  
6 tonight, as you can see. So, we'll stay in this group.  
7 Just want to let everybody know, we've got about an hour  
8 for this portion of the meeting. And let's just -- I'm  
9 wondering if you might want to rearrange --

10 MS. CARRILLO: Let's move this table up so  
11 we've got a nice square.

12 MS. BALLIN: -- so like we're all in one  
13 square. Or --

14 (Begin Small Group Discussion, 6:25 P.M)

15 (End Small Group Discussion, 7:44 P.M.)

16 MS. BALLIN: So, I was just saying -- just  
17 thanking everybody for coming tonight, and we really had  
18 some robust conversation in both groups. So, what we  
19 want to do now is to provide a summary of what we heard  
20 in each group, so that you can hear some of the comments  
21 and questions that were raised in the groups that you --  
22 that you didn't participate in. So just sharing kind of  
23 a summary of what we've heard.

24 So in in my group in this part of the room, we  
25 got a lot of questions about the potential environmental

1 effects of the facilities. Requests for a lot of  
2 information about health impacts, impacts on the  
3 environment, seismic impacts, et cetera. We also had  
4 some questions and comments about what Lithium Valley  
5 means? What is its geographical extent? And the  
6 concerns underlying that comment were really concerns  
7 aimed at making sure that everybody who is potentially  
8 affected -- that all of those concerns and effects are  
9 addressed, and that the benefits are also distributed to  
10 communities all around the area of the Salton Sea.  
11 Those benefits include infrastructure and economic and  
12 employment benefits. So, we had some questions about we  
13 have some questions about that.

14 We had some questions about the water supply  
15 that's needed to run these plants. We had a lot of  
16 questions about the process that would be used, so that  
17 people can understand the potential effects.

18 We -- let's see what else we talked about.  
19 There were concerns about potential odors in the area,  
20 but maybe existing from other natural occurring features  
21 in the area. Those were expressed, and questions about  
22 whether or not there would be any similar impacts from  
23 the plants.

24 Let's see. We got some recommendations about  
25 making sure that -- some suggestions to strengthen some



1 of the recommendations with specific wording about  
2 mandates, and expanding some of the opportunities for  
3 grants to community based organizations in the eastern  
4 Coachella Valley and not just Imperial Valley to help  
5 with outreach.

6           Let's see. Questions about potential leaks at  
7 the facility, that goes under the category I mentioned  
8 before about how the process works. Requests for long-  
9 term study about environmental health impacts and making  
10 sure that the information that does become available  
11 once the study is done is communicated to the  
12 communities. I'm going to turn to Erica, who was taking  
13 notes, to see if I missed anything to add to that.

14           MS. LOZA: To start from my last page --

15           MS. BALLIN: Maybe go a little close to the  
16 recorder.

17           MS. LOZA: So, I'll start from the back of my  
18 notebook. So, what I got last was the health impact  
19 assessment to -- for the assessments to include  
20 mitigation strategies. Bring in technical experts to  
21 answer questions for the community and a technical  
22 expert to -- that knows the environmental impact report  
23 to answer community questions.

24           There was a lot of concern about seismic  
25 activity and what will happen if there was large

1 earthquakes in the area? What mitigations will be in  
2 place? And the methods of extraction like Lisa was  
3 saying. And how is this going to affect the environment  
4 and public health. Not just near the facilities but in  
5 the Salton Sea area in general.

6 And a concern was to ensure that the lithium  
7 stays within the closed loop system, so there's concern  
8 about potential leaks. And association of like mud pots  
9 and the geothermal area, and the assumption of like  
10 lithium extraction within the area of the mud pots.

11 Let's see. A recommendation was that the  
12 Lithium Valley Commission should be the body identified  
13 for community education. Open grants for the Eastern  
14 Coachella area as a recommendation as well. Concern was  
15 that there's hard to reach areas from the southern part  
16 of the Salton Sea to the northern part of the Salton  
17 Sea.

18 The water use is important to explore, is a  
19 concern. And concerned about method. Water use, and I  
20 think that you've covered a lot of it, thank you.

21 MS. BALLIN: Thanks so much, Erica. I'm gonna  
22 add one more that I think I forgot, was that when the  
23 health impacts study is done to make sure it includes  
24 mitigation measures in addition to the assessment of the  
25 impacts. So, with that, I'm going to turn it over to

1 Julia to summarize -- Julia and Silvia to summarize what  
2 that group talked about.

3 MS. CSERNANSKY: Great. Good evening,  
4 everyone. We had a lot of overlap. There were some  
5 similar concerns expressed. Definitely also some  
6 differences in our group. So, we had some notes kind of  
7 on the report itself, and generally the information that  
8 gets disseminated to the communities and the public to  
9 inform them about what's going on -- that it should be  
10 more condensed. Less kind of repeated words, easier to  
11 understand and read for kind of the layperson who might  
12 not have, you know, an education in geothermal energy,  
13 so that they can actually understand what's going on in  
14 their area what the impact is.

15 There was gratitude expressed for the fact  
16 that the report is in multiple languages. And that  
17 that's really a good step forward in terms of including  
18 the community and making sure that the community is  
19 meaningfully informed.

20 We also had some concerns, a lot of concerns,  
21 about what the impact is going to be. And not just the  
22 environmental impact, but also the impact on public  
23 health. We also had, again, with the kind of like the  
24 formatting of information going to the public, a request  
25 that it be maybe more accessible to different learning

1 styles to include more images for people who might have  
2 different learning styles so that they are also able to,  
3 like, easily receive and process that information.

4           And we also had a lot of comments on how the  
5 impact studies are going to be done, and that they  
6 should be done with a lot of frequency and regularity to  
7 really keep track of with the impact on public health  
8 and the environment are going to be. Not just for the  
9 first year after, you know, this industry gets going but  
10 five years later, and 10 years later and 20 years later,  
11 to really have ongoing studies committed to assessing  
12 the impact of this industry in this area.

13           And then we also had a lot of comments on kind  
14 of requesting that the community be more informed, that  
15 there be different outreach efforts to make sure that  
16 the community, you know, all the impacted communities  
17 have access to this report, so that maybe they should  
18 pursue other avenues to make sure that they're actually  
19 getting in contact with all of these communities.

20           We also had a lot of concerns specifically  
21 about the environmental impact and who is going to be  
22 paying for the impact to the communities. So, we had a  
23 lot of suggestions that funding for paying for the  
24 impact of this industry come from, you know, taxpayer  
25 funding or from the funding from the government. But

1 then also a lot of money that should come from the  
2 industry itself, that it's important that those in the  
3 industry take responsibility in the form paying for some  
4 of these impacts.

5           One of the other suggestions that we had was  
6 that a public fund should be established to pay  
7 specifically for the public health impacts as a result  
8 of the industry. And not just health impacts as a  
9 result of the lithium industry but also existing health  
10 impacts that are that are already kind of happening in  
11 this area.

12           So also, kind of going along with  
13 environmental impacts, there were a lot of requests that  
14 the analysis and kind of suggestions for how to mitigate  
15 impacts happen before -- you know before the projects  
16 really get going so that they can actually be  
17 implemented in a meaningful way. And that those studies  
18 should be independent studies.

19           We also had a comment that the -- that in  
20 terms of outreach to communities, that this format is a  
21 really effective way to do that. That, you know, this -  
22 - that it was really effective for folks to come in and  
23 be able to get materials in person and take them home.  
24 And to be able to give feedback in this kind of an  
25 environment, direct verbal feedback, and that that was

1 effective and should happen more often, and from the  
2 beginning of the process.

3           We also had comments about infrastructure,  
4 that those funds should be intentionally dispersed to  
5 the community and not just to industry infrastructure  
6 needs, that they should also take into account the  
7 infrastructure needs of the community, and that it  
8 should go there first. And that industry should also  
9 pay for those infrastructures improvements.

10           Again, we had quite a lot of talks about  
11 public health, that it should be a priority in terms of  
12 where the money goes. And, and again, kind of echoing  
13 concerns from this group as well, concerns about kind of  
14 what counts as Lithium Valley, who is included in that  
15 definition, and that it should really be extended to --  
16 so that we really make sure that they're including all  
17 of the communities that are going to be potentially  
18 impacted by this industry. Specifically, Riverside  
19 County was mentioned.

20           And we also had a request that studies be  
21 included that have actual information now about the  
22 potential impacts so that folks don't have to wait for  
23 future impact studies. Although those are also --  
24 shouldn't be ignored, but that there be some inclusion  
25 of information about the actual impacts now.

1           And our last participant graciously agreed  
2 with everything that everybody said.

3           Silvia, I don't know if you have anything to  
4 add?

5           MS. PALMA-ROJAS: So, I think you covered  
6 everything. I just want to make sure that there is a  
7 very specific recommendation that people pointed out and  
8 was kind of Recommendation F, Item 3, that more kind of  
9 long term studies, and have independent parties to  
10 conduct the studies. And Recommendation F, that is kind  
11 of public funds to help mitigate the impacts to the  
12 community.

13           And also Recommendation E-1, that one means  
14 CEQA and one means that extends CEQA. And  
15 Recommendation G is about infrastructure. That is kind  
16 of like you said, like a part of the tax the communities  
17 because the industry, I think kind of just that kind of  
18 specific recommendation.

19           MS. CSERNANSKY: Yeah, so the CEQA. Thank  
20 you, Silvia, I totally forgot the CEQA one. Yeah, so  
21 the CEQA comment really is section E-1, A and B. And  
22 that the community should be involved in deciding what  
23 are the extra measures of before CEQA should be.

24           MS. BALLIN: Okay. Thank you so much. I'm  
25 going to turn it back to Deanna to do some closing

1 thoughts.

2 MS. CARRILLO: Yeah. I want to -- I started  
3 tonight by thanking everyone for taking time out of  
4 their busy day because life is busy. And so, thank you  
5 for reading your comments and for being here. I have a  
6 slide that can show the timeline again, and also how to  
7 provide comments to the docket. Is anyone interested in  
8 that? And we can move the projector back, or we can  
9 just say goodnight and drive safely. Up to you, if  
10 folks want to know how to use the docket.

11 Anyone?

12 MS. BALLIN: The presentation will be online  
13 also.

14 MS. CARRILLO: Yup. The presentation will be  
15 on the website, at [energy.ca.gov](http://energy.ca.gov).

16 MS. BALLIN: So, in that presentation, there  
17 will be the instructions and the timeline for next  
18 steps.

19 MS. CARRILLO: Yup. All right. Thank you,  
20 everyone. We appreciate your time.

21 MS. BALLIN: Good night, drive safely.

22 (Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 7:59  
23 P.M.)

24

25

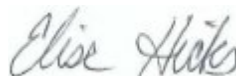


## CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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 4th day of November, 2022.



ELISE HICKS, IAPRT  
CERT\*\*2176

## 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.



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MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT\*\*367

November 4, 2022