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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)

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

West Shores High School
2381 Shore Hawk Ave
Salton City, CA 92276

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2022

6:00 P.M.

Reported By:
Elise Hicks

APPEARANCES

CEC Staff

Deana 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
Maximiliano Felipe Ochoa, Purepecha Interpreter, CA
Rural Legal Assistance, Inc.

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Reporter's Certificate	
Transcriber's Certificate	

1

P R O C E E D I N G S

1
2 October 20, 2022

6:22 P.M.

3 MS. CARRILLO: Good evening. My name is
4 Deana. But before we get started, if anyone needs
5 Spanish interpretation or Purepecha interpretation,
6 we've got interpreters in the back and they can give you
7 some headsets. Do you want to repeat that?

8 MR. OCHOA: Hola, buenas tardes, todos.

9 (Continues dialogue in Spanish).

10 MS. CARRILLO: Thank you, Maximiliano. We'll
11 just -- anyone need headsets? Okay. Then we're going
12 to go ahead and get started. I appreciate your
13 patience. We are starting a little later just to give
14 folks some time to get back home from work, and I
15 appreciate your patience as we've done that.

16 My name is Deana, and myself plus a few other
17 folks who are in the room are here with the Energy
18 Commission, which is supporting the Blue Ribbon
19 Commission on lithium extraction. Welcome. And if we
20 could go to the next slide? Thank you.

21 So, a few housekeeping items. This meeting --
22 this is a public meeting, and we're transcribing it so
23 that the Lithium Valley Commissioners and the public
24 have access to your comments and your feedback as part
25 of the record. And the CEC is going to be providing a

1 summary of the information we collect in our group
2 discussions, and providing it to the Commission on the
3 Commission's docket. Docket -- a docket might be a new
4 word for you. It was a new word for me, and that is an
5 online source of all of the information that the Blue
6 Ribbon Commission has been collecting in its work over
7 the last two years.

8 And at the back of the room, you will find
9 several resources in English and Spanish, and there is
10 some material also in Purepecha. There's factsheets,
11 copies of the statute, copies of the report, the
12 executive summary, and importantly for tonight, there's
13 a workshop workbook that we've handed out for folks to
14 help guide the conversation tonight, and as a resource
15 for you.

16 It's nice to see some familiar faces,
17 especially over the last couple days. I've had a chance
18 to meet several of you over the last several months as
19 we've been down here. And some of you may have some
20 specific questions for tonight, or might not have had a
21 chance to read the report. And I just want to emphasize
22 that tonight, the goal is to get oral feedback from
23 community members on this draft report of the Blue
24 Ribbon Commission.

25 So, I appreciate that some questions may rise,

1 and we'll be taking them back to the Blue Ribbon
2 Commission. I encourage you to use the comment forms in
3 your workshop workbook, and we'll also have more forms
4 if you need them. And again, we're focusing on
5 soliciting comments on the draft report. The public
6 comment period ends on October 28th, which is next
7 Friday.

8 And this is one of three workshops we've had
9 over the last three days. On Tuesday we were in Niland,
10 yesterday we were in North Shore, and tonight we get to
11 join you here. So, thank you.

12 Next slide, please.

13 This is the agenda for today's meeting. I'm
14 going to provide a brief overview of the state's Lithium
15 Valley vision, and an overview of the report for those
16 new to the conversation. And we'll spend most of our
17 time in a group discussion soliciting feedback on that
18 draft report and those recommendations. There are 44
19 recommendations currently in the draft report under
20 consideration. And while we've organized the
21 conversation around those recommendations, we welcome
22 feedback on any parts of the report.

23 So really, kind of the big questions that
24 we're asking today, you know, in that report what did
25 the Commission get right? What could be different?

1 What needs to be added?

2 Alright, let's get started. Next slide,
3 please.

4 Let's dive into a brief background to what led
5 us to today. Next slide.

6 So, what is lithium? Lithium is a naturally
7 occurring soft, silverly, white metal that is an
8 essential part of lithium-ion batteries for consumer
9 products. So, our cell phones, our computers, electric
10 vehicles, and battery storage and energy storage
11 systems. Again, it's naturally occurring, it's a key
12 material to the nation and the world making progress in
13 our climate goals, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and
14 improving air quality in our environment.

15 Next slide.

16 So, what is the Lithium Valley vision?
17 Lithium Valley is not a bound geographical area. Right?
18 We have Imperial Valley, we have Coachella Valley.
19 Lithium Valley is a term or a concept used to describe a
20 potential world class economic hub focused on the
21 recovery of lithium from geothermal brine in this
22 region. It's found one to two miles under the floor of
23 the Salton Sea at the southern southeast corner of the
24 Salton Sea. In a geothermal -- something called a Known
25 Geothermal Resource Area, or a KGRA.

1 Next slide, please.

2 So, this opportunity led to the establishment
3 of the Blue Ribbon Commission on lithium extraction in
4 California.

5 Next slide.

6 Authored by Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia, I
7 think I saw one of his staff members come in, thank you.
8 The Blue Ribbon Commission was created by AB, or
9 Assembly Bill 1657, and it was supported by four
10 legislative findings and recommendations. World demand
11 for lithium is expected to grow as much as tenfold in
12 the next decade, but virtually none of it is produced in
13 the United States today. The Salton Sea Geothermal
14 Resource Area, or KGRA, is well positioned to become a
15 competitive source of lithium that can satisfy more than
16 one third of today's development, and requires
17 investment and the removal of barriers.

18 And there's a national security rationale for
19 establishing this domestic supply of lithium. And that
20 opportunity for lithium recovery and production in the
21 state and here in the region has the potential to
22 unleash billions of dollars of new economic
23 infrastructure and development.

24 Next slide. Thanks, Erica.

25 The statute established specific requirements

1 for each of the 14 Commissioners. It's a very diverse
2 group, which ensured a broad and diverse representation
3 of perspectives.

4 And next slide.

5 And specifically, the statute tasked the
6 Commission with reviewing, investigating, and analyzing
7 eight specific topics. These here are just summaries.
8 There's more detailed language in the statute, which you
9 can find in the back, as well as in the draft report.
10 After its review, the Commission is tasked with
11 providing a report to the legislature, with its
12 recommendations and its findings. Now, this report was
13 due on October 1st of this year, so we're several weeks
14 behind on that deadline. But that was an intentional
15 delay. The Blue Ribbon Commission extended its meetings
16 to incorporate additional community feedback and tribal
17 feedback prior to developing the draft.

18 Next slide.

19 So, while many of you may be new to the topic
20 of the Blue Ribbon Commission, it has had over 21 public
21 meetings to discuss these issues. Most of them were
22 virtual. The first community workshop happened in
23 November 2020, and then the pandemic hit and then
24 activities moved virtual. And once we were able, the
25 meetings have been held at physical locations locally,

1 mostly in the fence line communities of Niland,
2 Westmorland, Calipatria, as well as Thermal, and at
3 Imperial Valley College.

4 Next slide.

5 So, this brings us to why we're here today,
6 the Commission's draft report, and its recommendations
7 to the legislature. The draft report, again, includes
8 44 recommendations for consideration. They cross over
9 the statutory requirements. And the Commission worked
10 to ground that report in the experience of residents in
11 Imperial and Coachella valleys. The report reflects the
12 discussion of these issues required under the law, and
13 also includes the Commission's focus to ensure community
14 and tribal voices are represented.

15 Next slide.

16 So, this slide tells us a little bit about the
17 timetable for the for the next steps of the report. The
18 public comment runs through October 28th. The Blue
19 Ribbon Commission asked that we host these community
20 meetings to get oral feedback on the report for those
21 that might not be familiar with a docket, or might not
22 be able to participate online during working hours. And
23 then the Commission will meet on October 31st, it will be
24 a virtual meeting to discuss and consider comments on
25 the draft report, provide the Energy Commission with

1 some direction. And then the final report is
2 anticipated to be released in November for the Blue
3 Ribbon Commission's consideration on November 17th,
4 ideally to be submitted on December 1st is the plan.

5 (Question from the audience)

6 I'm sorry, I can't hear you.

7 (Question from the audience)

8 The slide will be online, we'll post it. But
9 we didn't bring copies. Good question. If you want to
10 take a picture, we can go back to the timeline.

11 (Question from the audience)

12 Come on up, there's plenty of room. Okay.

13 Yeah, can you go back?

14 (Question from the audience)

15 Were you looking for the timeline?

16 (Question from the audience)

17 The website link isn't up here, but actually
18 why don't you move forward a few times. That's where
19 you can get information on the docket. Was that your
20 question?

21 (Question from the audience)

22 Yeah. So, the question for our court reporter
23 is whether we have this power point presentation printed
24 out? And the answer is no, it'll be on the website.

25 (Question from the audience)

1 Yeah. Yup. Okay. So, that leads us to slide
2 15. Okay.

3 So again, the goal today is to get feedback on
4 the draft report. And to do that, we're going to have
5 small group discussions. And so, what we would like to
6 do -- and these are the topics that we have in the draft
7 report -- is if those community members, if we could go
8 ahead and coalesce around these two tables and the back
9 two tables, and we'll have a conversation about the
10 report to get your oral feedback.

11 Great. And I see -- before we get started, I
12 want to introduce Lisa Ballin, who is a third-party
13 facilitator to help us today. And I did see that you
14 had your camera up, do you want us to pull back to a
15 different slide? No? Okay. Okay.

16 So, I'll introduce Lisa, and Lisa I'm going to
17 hand you this phone. I know it's a small group, it
18 feels weird to have a microphone. But this is for the
19 public record.

20 MS. BALLIN: Thanks, Deana. I'm wondering if
21 we might be able to have everybody in one group around a
22 table? Can every-- can we have people raise hands if
23 you're here tonight to give some comments in the
24 discussion period, just to see how many people want to
25 participate in that? Because I know we have some people

1 here to just listen. So, it sounds like we've only got
2 a few.

3 I was wondering if we could see if everybody
4 would fit around either -- maybe these two tables would
5 be -- which would be -- would it be better to be closer
6 to you, Leticia? Or would we be better closer to the -
7 we're not court reporting. We can have everybody either
8 sit at the back two tables or sit at these two. And I
9 don't know if it's better to be closer to you?

10 Why don't we do that, because -- Okay. Let's
11 have everybody come together. We're all kind of
12 scattered, let's see if we can all like sit around these
13 tables? And that way we're a little closer, since we've
14 got this portable mic, we might as well make use of it.
15 Let's just see. Okay. Alright. Thanks so much.

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

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

18 MS. CSERNANSKI: Okay. So, this is a summary
19 of the comments from our third community meeting on, you
20 know, to gather comments and recommendations on the
21 draft report to the Commission. So, we covered quite a
22 range of topics tonight, but definitely topics that
23 we've heard over the past two days.

24 So, we had comments specifically on Section E,
25 Number 1, as it relates to CEQA -- that that should

1 include really robust notification of the community and
2 disclosures to the community about who is doing those
3 assessments and what exactly -- you know what
4 information comes as a result of those. So, really
5 transparent disclosures about those impact assessments
6 going to the community.

7 We also had comments on Section F as it
8 relates to environmental impact. Recommendations 2 and
9 3, that you know support for the notion that there
10 should be ongoing studies of the impact, not just kind
11 of short-term studies or initial studies. That these
12 are things that should be ongoing for the life of the
13 project.

14 We also had some more comments on Section F as
15 it relates to environmental concerns. Again,
16 Recommendations 2 and 3 -- who is going to be monitoring
17 those assessments? And specifically, that there's --
18 that the permit language should be amended to include
19 already existing permits. Since one of the developers
20 already has a permit in process, that that
21 recommendation should retroactively apply to the
22 existing permit.

23 We also had comments on who will be
24 responsible for the impacts that may occur as a result
25 of the extraction. That, you know, so really wanting

1 more disclosure as to who is going to be, you know,
2 providing the funds to mitigate those impacts, to pay
3 for the impact on community health or environmental
4 health.

5 And we also had a kind of general comment that
6 in ranking of the recommendations, that the public
7 health and the environmental health should be
8 prioritized. So, if we're going to look at the
9 recommendations as a whole, those that relate to public
10 health and environmental health should be a top priority
11 for the legislature as they move forward.

12 Let's see. We also had a general comment that
13 the use of analogies to explain topics was very
14 effective, and that this is part of that plain language
15 approach. A commitment to the community to make sure
16 that they understand the information that's being
17 presented to them, and that they really get a meaningful
18 you know disclosure in terms of what's going on in their
19 community, so that they're able to understand.

20 We also had support expressed for the
21 definition of the Salton Sea Region. We also had a
22 comment requesting that there be more numbers and kind
23 of specific information as it relates to those community
24 and labor benefit agreements. And we also had comments
25 on Section F in Workforce Development, as it relates to

1 Recommendation Number 2, expressing kind of a preference
2 for local labor over developers bringing in outside
3 labor.

4 And again, kind of another comment under
5 environmental impacts, that air quality and water
6 quality impacts should be a primary concern, and that
7 the monitoring should begin before permits are approved,
8 ideally. And that mitigation efforts be included in
9 that section.

10 And that was it.

11 MS. CARRILLO: I feel so far away. I really
12 appreciate you coming out tonight. I know lives are
13 busy, and so I appreciate you taking time out of your
14 day. We are going to go to next steps. And just, I
15 wanted to reinforce the timeline again so folks
16 understood the process. This next slide shows a
17 summary of the schedule. We'll continue -- we have one
18 more webinar seeking oral feedback from the report on
19 Monday, and then the public comment period runs through
20 next Friday, October 28th.

21 As our facilitators mentioned, they'll be
22 summarizing the public comments today. If you have
23 specific comments, you know, no one can put your comment
24 in the right words beyond you, so we would suggest
25 putting it into the docket directly if you'd prefer.

1 And then this next slide shows where the
2 docket is to be able to provide some of the information
3 that folks have been asking for tonight. So, if you go
4 to your favorite search engine and search for the
5 California Energy Commission, and then search for
6 Lithium Valley Commission, you'll come to this page and
7 the docket is there in the right-hand corner, and you
8 can submit an e-comment.

9 And before we say goodbye for the evening,
10 again, just want to thank you again for your time,
11 because people are busy. And appreciate you taking time
12 out of your day. And also, want to thank Comite del
13 Civico for making all this happen, and supporting with
14 all of the outreach as well as Alianza, to let folks
15 know about this workshop and get input.

16 And so, with that we'll close for the evening.
17 And we appreciate your participation and the discussion.
18 Have a good night.

19 (Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 7:56
20 P.M.)

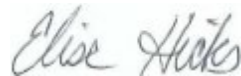
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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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.



MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT**367

November 4, 2022