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QUECHAN INDIAN TRIBE

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Dear Lithium Valley Commissioners:

Thank you for giving us this opportunity to provide consideration and discussion on the draft report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction in California. The Quechan Tribe works under a priority that involves helping tribes safeguard their land rights, water rights, environmental rights, as well as the protection of the people.

We are at a critical crossroads in our human existence on Mother Earth, and we now have a chance to affect the impact that humans have, by reducing our ever-destructive footprint, minimizing and repairing any damage that we can, and restoring the ecological and environmental balance that Mother Earth's ecosystems provide.

The all-important matter in question is the segment concerning Tribal input relating to environmental, planning, and implementation related to geothermal and lithium extraction. The Blue Ribbon Commission has shown negligence regarding the lack of legally required government-to-government consultation on lithium projects and the effect on tribal cultural landscape and cultural assets that are important to our cultural identity.

The Quechan Tribe respectfully submits the following comments on the Draft Report of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Lithium Extraction in California, dated September 21, 2022.

1. The current geothermal facilities have already had an impact on the Salton Sea landscape. The commission's report should include a summary of those impacts and explanation of the extensive disregard to consult with affiliated tribes.
2. The affiliated tribes were left out of the lithium project in regards to planning and the environmental review related to geothermal lithium development, including the Lithium Valley Economic Opportunity Investment Plan. This should be stated clearly in the report.
3. The report fails to acknowledge and examine the negative effects lithium and geothermal development may have on tribal cultural resources, including the cultural environment. This should be included in detail in the revised version.

4. The report should include a strong recommendation for the State of California to make a serious effort to include tribal communities in planning and mitigation efforts through meaningful consultation.

5. Imperial County lacks personnel competent in tribal engagement and consultation. The commission should consider adding a recommendation to fund and hire additional county staff and competency training in tribal consultation.

These steps must be taken before new development is considered, in order to bring the processes into legal compliance and to honestly assess effects and mitigation, including siting, design, and indirect effects on the tribes' sacred sites at the Salton Sea. Please feel free to contact us if you need any further information.

Thank you



Jordan D. Joaquin
Quechan Tribal President