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LITHIUM VALLEY COMMISSION

REMOTE VIA ZOOM

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Reported by:
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CHAIR PAZ: Welcome, everyone, to our Lithium Valley Commission Meeting. We are anticipating a few more seconds to allow people to be joining via Zoom.

Great. I think we can get started. So, again, welcome everyone. Just a reminder, we can go to the next slide, we are interpretation services in Spanish for attendees. Unfortunately, the Zoom interpretation function does not work if you're only joining by phone, so we do apologize for that.

At this point, I will invite the Public Advisor's Office to join us and give the public instruction on how to access the interpretation services.

MS. GALLARDO: Thank you, Chair Paz.

I'll do that now.

(Speaking Spanish)

Chair Paz, back to you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Noemi. And before I turn over to Elisabeth to give us our opening instructions, just a reminder for all the
Commissioners to make sure you are logged into the English Channel and that will ensure that everyone can hear us.

And now to you, Elisabeth.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you, Chair Paz. This meeting is being conducted entirely remotely via Zoom consistent with Governor Newsom's Executive Order to improve and enhance public access to state agency meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This meeting is being recorded, as well as transcribed by a Court Reporter. The transcript will be posted to the docket. The recording of the meeting will be available on the Lithium Valley Commission webpage. The Spanish interpretation will not be recorded or transcribed.

Members of the public will be muted during the presentations, but there will be an opportunity for public comment on each Agenda Item and an additional opportunity for public comments towards the end of the agenda.

To provide public comment, please use the "raise hand" feature in the Zoom application. If you've called in by phone, you will need to dial
*9 to raise your hand and *6 to unmute yourself.

When you speak, please provide your name and affiliation, and please say and spell your name for the Court Reporter. There is a Q&A window in the Zoom application, which you may use to type your questions and comments, and staff will relay those comments.

We also have a chat function available, but this is to be used only for IT support or other technical issues. Please do not use the chat function to provide comments or questions related to the content of the meeting.

We'll go over these instructions again during the time for public comment. Please remember to say muted until you've been called on to speak.

We will also be posting the meeting materials, including the notice and presentation slide deck that will be posted online for the Lithium Valley Commission docket.

And back to you, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I will now do a roll call.

Commissioner Castaneda.

COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Here.
CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Colwell.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Present.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Dolega.

COMMISSIONER DOLEGA: (No audible reply)

CHAIR PAZ: I'm not hearing. So,

Commissioner Flores.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: Present.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Hanks.

COMMISSIONER HANKS: Present.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Kelley. Vice Chair Kelley?

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Present.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Lopez.

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Present.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo. I'm not sure if Commissioner Olmedo can hear us or if he's here.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: (Inaudible response).

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Ruiz.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Present.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Scott.

MS. DE JONG: Sorry, Chair Paz. It does
look like Commissioner Scott is here and will be promoted to panelist in just a moment.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

Commissioner Soto.

COMMISSIONER SOTO: Here.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Weisgall.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Present.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Just waiting to see if Commissioner Scott -- can you let me know, Elisabeth, when Commissioner Scott has joined us?

MS. DE JONG: Yes. It looks like he's here.

CHAIR PAZ: Okay. And I see Commissioner Olmedo, but I didn't hear him. Commissioner Olmedo?

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: I'm here, I'm sorry, Chair.

CHAIR PAZ: And then Commissioner Scott.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Present.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So we do have a quorum. Before we begin the substance of our meeting, I do want to take a pause and allow Commissioner Soto some time to lead us through a request for a moment of silence. So, Commissioner Soto?
COMMISSIONER SOTO: Sure. So, everybody, as of Tuesday we lost one of our great icons in California history, and a great Latino leader, Congressman Esteban Torres, who many of you may have known of or known personally.

I knew him personally and he was a very close family friend and a great lawyer, along with my parents, Assemblyman Phil Soto and Senator Nell Soto. And he died at the age of 91; I think today would have been his 92nd birthday.

And as you know, he was not only a member of Congress, but he was also a great labor leader as head of the United Autoworkers during the 1960s. He was the founder of the East L.A. Community Union.

He became our Ambassador to the U.N. under Jimmy Carter in the 1970s, and then went on for a long tenure in our House of Congress and had a tremendous amount of victories during that time, including the passage of North American Free Trade Agreement, which he and I worked on very very closely on the Labor and Environmental Side Agreement.

So with that, I would just like to acknowledge and remember a great American Patriot
hero for our community, Congressman Esteban Torres, and maybe we could just have 30 seconds of silence and then we could proceed with our meeting. So, thank you.

   All right, Chair Paz. Back to you.

   Thank you so much for being so kind.

   CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Thank you,

   Commissioner Soto.

   So if we can put the agenda, the agenda has been posted and shared with all Commissioners ahead of time, and it is on the screen for your reference. Next slide.

   Well, I'm very excited about today's meeting. The goal of this meeting is to home in and come out of the meeting with actionable recommendations given the governor's budget, as well as having a window of opportunity through any legislative early action that this Commission is interested in exploring, so that will be a great focus of today's conversation.

   And to start us off, I'm going to invite Commissioner Douglas to discuss the highlights from the recent proposed governor's budget.

   COMMISSIONER DOUGLAS: Hi. Good afternoon. So I'm just making sure the audio is
okay. Thank you, Chair Paz, for the invitation to speak briefly to the Lithium Valley Commission this morning and, as you noted, the Governor in his proposed budget has signaled and set out a path of really strong support for the Lithium Valley vision, and for the work of the Lithium Valley Commission in helping us shape and frame and understand the issues and opportunities that we have before us today.

As was noted in the budget, and as has been discussed at this Commission, Lithium is a very critical resource as the state and the world move to capture our clean energy future and tackle the climate crisis.

California is a world leader in deployment of electric vehicles, we're a world leader in manufacture of electric vehicles, too, here in California, as well as deploying lithium-ion batteries for electricity storage and grid support.

We have a really strong need on the demand side, deployment of lithium-based technologies. And so we have a real opportunity to bring that together with this abundant lithium resource in the geothermal brines below the...
Salton Sea, and to do that in an environmentally responsible way and with community engagement and with guidance from the community and from the experts in this area.

So, the Governor's budget sets out a number of policies and signals for policy direction that I want to go through. It also sets aside a very significant amount of funding for investments in clean technologies that can help us realize the economic ecosystem that can be developed around Lithium and clean technology and clean energy.

The kind of multi-pronged policy approach that is being advanced here is to provide incentives to advance the clean energy market in California, provide Californians a share of the benefit of this development and these projects, develop labor standards that also deliver community benefits, economic development, and labor opportunities, and to really provide a model here of a way of engaging in and supporting these clean energy and climate solution driven opportunity areas that can guide our engagement in other areas.

Offshore wind is mentioned, but there are
many opportunities we have here with this clean energy transition to look at how we support our energy goals, maintain high environmental labor standards, engage proactively with communities with stakeholders, and provide real lasting benefits.

And so that's the very large charge in front of us as a state, and an area where we really will be looking to our dialogue with and recommendations from the Lithium Valley Commission, you know, and the members of the Commission in helping shape that.

So, the other aspect of this is in particular the budget puts on the table that the administration will work with the Legislature, the Lithium Valley Commission, and our County and Community partners to develop a model around revenues from Lithium and from this economic driver here that will help benefit Californians and it will help benefit the region. And so that's going to be an important conversation to have with our partnership and with the Lithium Valley Commission.

In addition to that, as we look at this opportunity, this expanded economic opportunity...
around the Salton Sea community, it will be really important to hear the voice of the community in terms of what this development and this can look like.

So, we're also very interested in working to advance long-term environmental protection and community benefits, and that's another important area of discussion. I think that's very much before the Lithium Valley Commission. And we want to have a dialogue about how the state can provide additional certainty and accountability in permitting, as well as the community benefits and labor standards side of this.

And so we're committed to working with the Legislature with input from the Lithium Valley Commission and the community, you know, and the County and beyond, to simplify permitting around geothermal facilities and lithium extraction in the Salton Sea area while maintaining our environmental standards.

And I want to say that kind of loud and clear because we have heard from the public and in some of the discussions in front of the Commission that more information is needed, you know, more understanding of what potential
impacts are, and this is an opportunity to just really underscore that that environmental vision here is an important part of this.

And so I think the last thing I will say, the budget proposal is extensive in the climate area. There are a lot of expenditures that are proposed that support the Lithium Valley vision. I'll just give two examples. There's a very substantial workforce development set of proposals that can very much be brought to bear to support the workforce development needs within the Salton Sea region and beyond, to bring forward the Lithium Valley vision.

There is also a number of investments that the state is proposing in electric vehicle and technology manufacturing, for example. And the clean tech, technology, and business development side -- and I'll just bring out one example, which is that we are proposing a clean energy loan program where, in coordination with U.S. Department of Energy Loan Program Office, we would be able to provide predevelopment financing for projects and technologies that focus on mitigating climate change in disadvantaged communities and communities where private capital
has not adequately been able to invest through mechanisms like loan guarantees and direct loans, and so on. And so in that particular program, lithium extraction and geothermal energy production are both called out specifically, that's just one example, there are multiple examples and we really see this as an opportunity to bring this broader vision to fruition. And we want to do it in close coordination and with input from the Lithium Valley Commission and local voices and stakeholders. So I think that's my summary and I'd be happy to answer any questions or engage in any discussion if that’s helpful.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Douglas. And actually, we will be having a little bit further in the agenda a deeper discussion and I would invite you to stay on and participate so that we can be balancing ideas and then, if questions come up, we can have you back to answer them, as well.

COMMISSIONER DOUGLAS: That's fantastic. I'll be here. I may turn my video off for some of this, but I'm right here. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So next we also
have a representative from Assemblymember Garcia's Office and I know recently Commissioner Douglas and others visited the area where Imperial, Coachella, and the Salton Sea Region and other important conversations had with the Assemblymember's Office, as well. And again, there's an opportunity with the budget before us, and I want to invite Lina Malova from Assemblymember Garcia's Office to share just one of the pieces that I think have been discussed both, again, the Energy Commission and other Assembly's visits and conversations. So, Lina?

MS. MALOVA: Hello, can you hear me?

CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

MS. MALOVA: Thank you. Good afternoon, Chair Paz and Commissioners. Thank you for the invitation to speak. As introduced, my name is Lina Malova. I'm a consultant to the Select Committee on California's Lithium Economy, which is chaired by Assemblymember Eduardo Garcia.

Chair Garcia is also very excited in the efforts for Governor Newsom to build Lithium Valley. As a follow-up on Commissioner Douglas' presentation on the budget, we also think there are opportunities for us to look into some of the
recurrent concerns brought to our office by the local community as relates to any environmental or public health impacts connected to this industry.

Our office supports the idea for the state pursuing funding, and they will take a look at this issue and will relay what the locals are saying. The Assemblyman also believes that the Lithium Valley Commission should engage relevant stakeholders such as Regional Water Board, local Air Districts, the local Public Health Director, and others to provide input for the benefit of the local community.

Thank you. And I look forward to continuing in this discussion.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Lina. So, we've heard highlights from the budget. I'm sure most of you have followed and done a search on the number of times that lithium development or lithium was mentioned in the conversations, so this will be an opportunity for us to get into a deeper conversation about -- having seen some of those budgets, there were many items that are mentioned that don’t necessarily have a value added right now next to it, not necessarily
funding, we have many great statements of intent and I think it's the right direction; again, we have an opportunity to maybe respond to the budget with some of the requests that VCO (phonetic) will advance, the vision of Lithium Valley. So I see, Commissioner Soto, I know he's going to have to step up early, so I'll call him in first.

COMMISSIONER SOTO: Thank you, Chair Paz. And Lina, nice to see you or at least hear your voice, I didn't see you on the video. But thank you for bringing Chair Garcia's concerns. Among the few that you've expressed on his behalf, I would like to emphasize the need to look at this sector, not just the economics, not just the need for meeting the demand of Lithium in the State of California where it should be noticed that there are great economics that we're creating for others, and we can have those economics and we can have them in the Imperial Valley, but not at the expense of good health.

And so I think I heard you loud and clear that Chair Garcia is looking to support efforts for frankly some form of health risk assessment that is needed in this sector as we, as a
Commission, move forward. I believe if you've been in some of our discussions, we've very much highlighted the need for assuring to the community and to our elected families that, in fact, we are concerned about the health risks and exposures that may occur as a result of lithium extraction in the valley.

So, all of that said, I would urge that we, as a Commission, urge either the Department of Health Services, or the Energy Commission, to perhaps determine a path where some form of health risk assessment could be done within the life, sooner than later, of this Commission so that we have that datapoint, those datapoints, as we move forward toward our own conclusion.

I don't want to overstep bounds with our Chair, with Sylvia, but I believe strongly in this, I'm sure that our colleagues on the Commission believe strongly in this need, and I hope that we could find a place where we could actually get this assessment discussed and hopefully executed by some agency or interest that has the expertise to do so. I don't think it's the responsibility of the Commission itself, but we do have to find a pathway to execute that.
CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Soto.

COMMISSIONER SOTO: Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: While the rest of my colleagues are maybe starting to brainstorm or think about what sorts of requests or recommendations we would like to think about, it's important for us to think about the time that we have.

So, if we go to the next slide, you see that we have a short window of opportunity for us to make our requests. February 18th is the last day for bills to be introduced, and so anything that we think should require legislative attention, we need to submit that before or by February 18th.

And then the May Revise would be for any budget recommendations that we want to make, as well.

So again, the purpose of the timeline is just for us to visually see the narrow window of opportunity that we have, but nonetheless, an opportunity to start thinking about these requests.

So, I'm going to start adding to some of the things that I noticed and that I think we
should consider as recommendations for either
budget or legislation, based on what I saw called
out in the Governor's Budget.

So, the Governor's Budget is highlighting
the commitment to engage in public participation,
community engagement. I know that this
Commission has been proactively asking for that,
and there's members of this Commission who have
had their own meetings at the community level,
but what I keep hearing time and again, and
you'll hear it later from Commissioner Olmedo
when we give updates on the Ad Hoc Committee
Group, is that to be able to do community
participation and engagement, it needs to be
resourced.

And I didn't see that necessarily in the
budget, so maybe that's something that we want to
consider, that there is funding available to
effectively engage our community members and with
a recognition that, as we saw with the letter
that was submitted by Chairman Tortez from the
Torres Martinez, that there's a need for
information so that people have a good
understanding of what's happening, what the
technologies, what the opportunities, what the
impacts are. So along with addressing the health impacts, the environmental impacts, the economic impacts, there's a need to resource that effort, so that's something I want to uplift.

The other piece that I feel is important is around the benefits conversation, I think everyone is on the same page from what I've heard about ensuring that the community surrounding and in the geothermal resource are benefitting from these efforts and when mentioned in the Governor's Budget, I believe I read something, consideration for royalties, fees, taxes, those are conversations that we need to be having along with the community.

There's going to be -- I think we're going to come from different perspectives and angles as to how to make this happen, but again, there's a need to resource that and have a dedicated either space, I don't know if that's going to be this Commission because if we want to move quickly, right, and still meet the deadlines that we have for the report, we might need a different space.

But again, resources -- I think these are going to have to be negotiated by the different
sectors, like we need to find out where the industry is on priorities and what their abilities are, what the community needs, and what their requests are, labor, labor agreements, all those things require time and attention and effort to be done right. So that's another area that I feel needs to find a path to borrow Commissioner Soto's language.

I was going to get into some of the labor workforce, I mean, maybe consider the carve-out for the Imperial Coachella Valley that's dedicated for Lithium and training. So, I've put out a list of things, I'm sure you've probably thought about your wish list for this project, but at this point I will again open the conversation to the rest of you.

I'm looking through the screen to see who has their hands up. Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDA: Thank you, Madam Chair. Yeah, definitely very supportive in the conversation, both as a priority that Commissioner Soto brought up, as well as the points you brought up, Madam Chair.

I wanted to begin the conversation with a little bit of sensitivity of what's been
happening in the recent months, but rather than focusing on what's been happening, I want to more focus on starting by thanking the delegation of the State and including Department of Energy who visited us recently, so I do want to thank Commissioner Karen Douglas, Chairman David Hochschild, E.D. Meyers from GO-Biz, Department of Energy, Loren Sanchez from the Governor's Office, who have committed and have been making plans to do repeated visits -- that's what's necessary.

Traditionally -- and the other piece I want to concur with Madam Chair Paz is that one of the reasons why there's such an urgency to develop all the necessary elements for lithium to succeed, and why it wouldn't be at a more advanced stage, and why there's such an urgency, and I'm thankful to the Governor's Office for putting forth the priority on an anomaly, the lithium, recognizing that, yes, we're going to be looking at the health, the environmental, the economics, the jobs, workforce, the entire A-Z of these projects.

For one is, organizations as well, not just in the hat of a Lithium Commission, but also
organizations serving these areas, it's going to be important that we don't add burdens. In fact, subscribe to the do no harm policies that have been persistently expected by Environmental Justice and to a greater extent, disadvantaged communities.

First of all, I want to support this idea of putting forward a list of recommendations. I think that, as we deliver on our expectation of a full report, we cannot miss these critical deadlines and I'm here with fellow Commissioners, I know these are conversations that I've had at great lengths with Commissioner Kelley, as well, I've had conversations with Madam Chair Paz. I think it's fair that we create a local list of asks.

One thing that is going to be critical is that we need to create these subregions. The regions that have been created in the past, whether it's for census, for the economic development in the past, they don't work. And the reason why we're not where we need to be is because of the type of maps that get created that are not informed by Imperial and Coachella.

We live at a time that we've been pushing
equity and justice and we have administrations at
the Federal level and State, that have repeatedly
committed. We need to start to begin to utilize
language that recognizes our region as we know
it, which is Imperial Coachella. We need to
recognize that we have been put at a
disadvantage.

To some extent, we've been discriminated
because our border region daytime population has
been excluded and we have been excluded and
discriminated when it has come to climate
investments. Still today we are not being given
a fair equitable distribution of climate dollars.

So it is going to be important that we
continue to utilize language that characterizes
the opportunity, the region, the community, in a
more accurate way. And the other is that I
appreciate these delegations coming out here
because that way we can inform directly to the
Commissioners, to all the leaders, and to
everyone who is involved in looking at the
possibilities that already tap into some extent
and the possibilities of what the opportunity
could be. So, with that, thank you, Madam Chair
for the time.
CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Olmedo. I mean, I think more recently when we were speaking about the surf investments, right, and the CERF investments are a great opportunity for all of California, particularly for our region, could be -- again, if implemented right -- better aligned with where this region is and what they're exploring. Unfortunately, the CERF regions have split the Salton Sea Region into two, and that's what Commissioner Olmedo was saying, the Coachella Valley is part of Inland Empire, so we are at a disadvantage competing with metropolitan areas like Riverside, Imperial Valley with San Diego, again at a disadvantage, competing with San Diego, where really Coachella and Imperial share so much more in terms of the region, our lived experience, and the opportunities and challenges we're facing.

So, I think again, although somewhat unrelated specifically to the budget, but the more that we can start aligning all of these investments that the Governor has dedicated to disadvantaged environmental justice equity communities, then once that we can start aligning those, the better so maybe every quest for this
Commission to support our request to the State to allow for a subregion that combines the Salton Sea Region in their CERF. Indirectly related item, but -- I see Commissioner Colwell.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Thank you, Chair Paz. I just wanted to weigh in and I totally agree with Commissioner Olmedo, I mean, I think a lot of this information we appear to be going around and around in circles and the information hasn't been clearly shared with the public and the community.

Might I suggest, and I know it's on a topic on the agenda, the CEC fact sheet that we need to put together because, you know, we can probably deal with quite a few, I mean, you know, it's not connected to the Salton Sea, it's not evaporation ponds and it is a closed loop system. And I think that's a very very simple fact sheet that people can read, ask questions, and reference links, and you know, if I may, Chair Paz, you know, with CTR, happy to pull a first draft together. We understand how it all works and that might deal with not all of it, and I agree that public engagement is important, you know, and we might be able to sort of deal with
this because I'm sensing that we're going around
and around asking the same questions, but we're
not getting the answers and therefore I totally
agree with Mr. Olmedo and yourself, Chair Paz.
And if you feel that's helpful, we're
happy to engage. Thank you.
CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner
Colwell. You're absolutely right. I feel the
same way, that we've been going around in
circles, and I did make a request from the CEC,
and they'll be giving us an update as to where
they are so that we can start answering those
questions because that's one piece of the
engagement question, having the tools that then
need to be distributed out.
So thank you and we appreciate any
support. I was actually looking at websites to
reduce some of your work and Jonathan's work, to
get ideas of, okay, this is maybe some
information that's needed, as well. So, thank
you.
I will call on Commissioner Castaneda.
COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Thank you, Madam
Chair. I appreciate the CEC and the Governor's
Office and everything, and I think this is a
tremendous opportunity for us. We don't have a quick turnaround, so obviously we've got to start putting our collective brains together and come up with something very tangible that we could show to the people of Imperial and Coachella Valley, that not only are there protections there, there are opportunities there.

And the conversation we just had reminded me of a conversation I had with a friend of mine the other day and he was raised and grew up in Brawley and graduated from Brawley High, and in his early 20's he moved to San Diego, and he's been pretty successful here.

But he knows I'm on this Commission and we were talking about it, and he was asking me about how it's going and so forth, and just really what the prognosis for success was. And I told him, look, there's investment out, clearly a lot of very very well-heeled interests are there. Everybody is committed to do the right thing.

And he stopped me and he said, "You know, Steve," he said, "you're going to have to show the people of our community that this is real because in all the time that I was there in the Imperial County, I can't count on both hands and both feet how
many times there was a new industry coming in, or a new economy coming in, or everything that was going to transform our community underneath our feet. And it was all fly by night. None of it ever happened. We were told when we sold water to San Diego that that was going to transform our community. That didn't happen."

So, I think that the Governors' overtures are very positive because I think that if we can come up with something tangible that the state can start to invest now, ahead of the development and the implementation of the recovery process, we're going to show folks that this is for real, and this is exactly what the future of both Coachella and the Imperial Valleys looks like and will look like.

And so, I mean, I'm probably about as exhilarated right now by hearing the charge that we've been given and the opportunity that we have in front of us as I had when I was told that I was going to be able to serve on this Commission. So, I'm looking forward to doing it. I support -- I've heard what everybody is saying, I agree completely, and believe me, I think if we can put the dollars on the street, people will
start to understand this is real and this is something different than they've experienced over the last 50 years. So thank you, Madam Chair. I appreciate that.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Again, I know this is the first time we're having this conversation, but as we go through this meeting and you think of those tangible things, maybe something in the conversation gives you an idea, this is something we could request, please bring it up so that we can be documenting that we can find a way to move towards making those recommendations. Thank you. Commissioner Ruiz.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes. Thank you, Chair Paz. I think to appeal well to the community engagement initiative that has been discussed here, a communications campaign should also be developed rather than just putting an infographic, or a Fact Sheet here and there. I think it will be better to take a comprehensive approach, rather than a piecemeal approach. It will allow the information to percolate to the different layers in the community.

For the importance of this endeavor, I think it is important to do it in a systematic
way that will allow community to be well informed and not just producing information here and there. I think it needs to be consistent, it needs to be intentional, and I think it needs to be comprehensive.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Kelley.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Thank you, Chairperson Paz. So I heard Steve Castaneda talking about Brawley, so I had to jump in. So I totally agree with his assessment, and the Salton Sea is a perfect example of the promises and the tenor of the community not accepting what they're being told.

And I hear yours and Frank's and Ruiz's about engagement and producing information sharing what the potential is, but the truth of the matter is, as our community wants to be able to see, touch, smell. A promise is not going to give them any solace of what we are talking about.

So, yeah, I understand exactly what Steve is talking about, but I can hear it when I'm out and talking to people, "I'll believe it when I see it." We talk about species conservation.
habitat and, you know, some people may not even
know what's happening out there at the bale right
now. It is happening. So we encourage everybody
to go see it now. But that's a long time coming
and that lots of promises have been made over
time. And we can point to, you know, the beef
plant is going to change Brawley, or we're going
to have a new housing project that's going to
make more opportunities for commercial
development, and things like that.

And so I'm in agreement, but that
tangible part is about being able to see, touch
and smell.

CHAIR PAZ: You're completely right, Vice
Chair Kelley. As you were talking about, you
know, what are the tangibles -- and I heard that
"what are the tangibles?" request, what are
things that can be made tangible to our community
members, and one of them we heard about were the
workforce development allocations in the budget.

So, there's the opportunity -- how do we
tap aid to not only those, but I'm sure there's
other investments in workforce development, and
start building up those trainings, the education
pathways, so that the community is going to be
ready to fill these jobs and we don't end up again with people coming from outside, taking jobs. So that, to me, is a tangible investment that we could do, like how do we, again, outline these resources under workforce development and the training partnerships grant that was shared with us at the last meeting, and very holistically start dedicating those fundings and attention to something that's going to lead our community or give our community a path up. So that's one thing. The other thing I know that you and I have discussed is Brawley came up in our forum; there is this conversation about jobs and the jobs that may or may not be available. But again, there's missing gaps and analysis to really understand the quantity, the quality of these jobs, so maybe that's another opportunity and, again, the budget might be a slow process to get this, and we needed this analysis before, but that's something that if we had a true understanding of what those jobs are, how many, then we can again better prepare our community for those jobs, and not just the jobs, but then there's the infrastructure that's going
to support all of that.

So those, I think, are things that we can start making requests on this budget, and also start working with the agencies to help us align the resources that are available for our community around this vision that, again, as Commissioner Olmedo said and I think you probably agree, that the Salton Sea region has a lot more in common and if the resources are aligned and we don't have to compete with San Diego and Riverside, we could achieve so much more.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: I do agree, and I think you did hit it, that the funding cycle is too far. I know that we need to make these asks, put them forward, but the funding cycle is a ways away. If there is the opportunity to make these investments now and start moving things along today, that would pay a dividend.

CHAIR PAZ: So give us your lists, Supervisor Kelley. What are the investments besides what's been mentioned? What are they needing now?

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: So we've been working in that way for the County and these are just mine because the Board hasn't taken a position,
but we'd like to see that delegation for the 49 to 99 megawatts happen now. I know that the Energy Commission has been working through that process, but I think that could happen sooner and it would allow things to move for development sooner.

And then the County of Imperial is moving forward. We've released a Request for Proposal over a specific plan and a program EIR, over -- it's over 10,000 acres. And that would be a full Environmental Impact Report meeting the requirements of CEQA and taking in the entire area.

But beyond mineral extraction, it would also take on any of the ancillary businesses of battery manufacturing, cathodes, battery recycling, hydrogen capture, and we're still coming up with more. We'll have the ability to add Addendums and Amendments to that RFP, or, if we are successful and we award it, that we would be able to add to the scope of work for the consulting company.

So, we're waiting to see back what those results are. And that would help all the industry, be able to develop having the
Environmental Report, and the community would have the opportunities for public hearings, to be able to participate, the elements that are inside there, including housing, transmission, utilities. It's a big endeavor, but I think we're moving in that direction to help the overall project area be successful.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Colwell, I saw your hand raised; do you still want to speak?

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yeah, thanks, Chair Paz.

I mean, weighing on to what Commissioner Kelley's points, I mean, really one of the focal points -- I think we're all aligned here, you know, with part of it, you know, on Steve's comments, doubles on the ground or, you know, how that's going to work, or Frank's comments about misinformation. We ought to get in a full study of the Environmental Impact Report, which we've offered before. The energy source will provide a Fact Sheet.

So, really the point here, I mean, to attract someone here like big auto and batteries and all those things we've been talking about,
until they have clear direction and until they understand where they can house, you know, they've got the local workforce, which we believe is here, the education is here, it's a sure track to permitting.

Now, one of the parts that the Governor announced which I thought was extremely intelligent, and I know that Commissioner Kelley has been working hard on this, is the royalty stream. Now, there's no pushback as a commercial developer on that at all, but I think that's one of the points that would be very helpful to dive into because it's a royalty and it's the administration thereof, you know, administration to Salton Sea repair, if it's administration to the community, administration to the County, administration to infrastructure, fast tracking of permitting, you know, all sorts of things that we're all aligned here, and we all want to sort of get this moving forward.

So what they are saying is not my quote, but 2024 these things need to be up and running, 2025, it's more because the auto industry have to make decisions now that see their future. If they don't get some sort of comfort or simply get
back to Asia or China, and none of us want that,
I think the United States and particularly the
Imperial Valley can benefit. But no one is
trying to shortcut things, no one is trying to do
the wrong thing, but I think if we can align
ourselves here and focus really on the royalty
side and administration, that's going to lead to
certainty and lead to things that I think across
all Commissioners, I know speaking for myself,
would be very very helpful. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ Thank you. Anybody else? We
still have some Commissioners who have been
quiet, so before I wrap up this segment, thank
you. So I will call on Commissioner Flores and
then Commissioner Weisgall.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: You know, I mean,
I've had a chance to talk to the local building
trades regarding these and perhaps in another
subsequent meeting these are some people who can
invite community, talk to us about what types of
jobs or apprenticeships for locals that they
might have available. I know that a lot of times
during the apprenticeship they actually are
receiving a living wage and I definitely think
these types of opportunities are what get us to
middle class. So I would expect that conversation to continue. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Yes, there will be, as you'll see later in the agenda, there's going to be an opportunity to continue that. Commissioner Weisgall.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Well, let me weigh in on a couple of points here. I think the budget -- there are two parts to this proposed budget -- there are expenditures and there's revenue. It will be wonderful working on the expenditures. Commissioner Douglas talked about some of the big projects; the workforce development is something we've been focusing on quite a bit.

We're working with Imperial Valley College even just today on getting the numbers on projected hires and salaries for plant operators and lab technicians in order to get more funding for disciplines and faculty to create programs in those areas, not to mention other job classifications, you know, electricians and engineers and chemists and safety environmental procurement, and the like.

So that's going to be -- I don't want to
call it the easy part, but there when you're looking at distributing dollars to make things work, getting money on the street, all of that makes a lot of sense. And good creative thinking is needed, but the money has to be spent wisely. The second part of the budget is the revenue side, not the expenditure side. And the Governor's Budget Proposal specifically talks about how the Administration wants to work with the Legislature and, I'm quoting here, "The Lithium Valley Commission and county and community partners to develop a model for revenue sharing and a fund that benefits Californians," and Commissioner Douglas just talked about the need to develop a model around revenue to benefit California and the region.

So let me drill down a little bit on that. I guess I have three basic points on what Commissioner Colwell has talked about a "royalty," call it a "tax," call it a "severance," whatever. Point number one, the tax has to be reasonable. There are plenty of places in the United States and around the world where, if there is a natural resource either mined or extracted or removed from underneath the earth,
that revenue, royalty, severance, is paid. I think everybody can accept that.

The question is, what's a reasonable number? And it's obviously premature for this Commission to weigh in, but I have to remind you again of one principle, which is if the industry can't produce lithium at a commercially viable price that is competitive with other producers, we're going to be wasting our time. So that's something to keep in mind.

Point 2 on revenue, I've been in any number of meetings with Commissioner Kelley to talk about an Imperial County severance tax and I see in the Governor's Budget a model for revenue sharing. I would simply say one tax, not two, or one severance payment, not two, would be the way to go.

My third point, and I will proceed to be politically incorrect right now, or at least raise politically difficult issues, I'll put it that way, where is the revenue going to go? Is it going to stay in Imperial County? Is it going to stay in Imperial Valley? Is it going to go to Sacramento to the General Fund?

You know, I will just say 100 percent of
the lithium activities happen to be in Imperial County. My company, we've paid $45 million in property taxes in the last eight years to Imperial County. So, again, I put that to the group: where should that revenue go? And I'm not trying to answer any of these questions, but you wanted to do a deep dive, you wanted to kind of take gloves off, I think it's time to take gloves off and start addressing these questions because someone is going to be making these decisions and we may as well have that discussion ourselves.

I don't know if we can even make recommendations, and I don't know what our timetable is; it's October for our Report which is going to be too late if the Legislature is going to be thinking about this. But I do think that we can put a group together pretty quickly to at least address some of those issues. So, I'll get off of my soapbox.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you and thank you for raising those more difficult conversations that are on everybody's minds, right? And I think in terms of early action, what I see the opportunity here is a request for pathway, the resources
pathway where we can have these conversations and then, when I say "we," it's not only we, the Lithium Valley Commissioners, but these conversations need to be had with the community members, so renew the space where all of our perspectives are being put at the table, discussed, and we can come to an agreement and to answer these questions in community about what the money is going to be used for, where it goes, all of those questions that you've raised that are very appropriate questions.

The Administration has a new Office of Engagement, the Governor's Office of Engagement. I don't know if that's the pathway, but definitely we need to be having these conversations with industry, labor, the impacted communities, government, everyone who is involved and who will be affected by this.

So maybe that's as far as a recommendation, maybe, that we can make coming out of this meeting today and then figuring out and requesting that support so we can start having those conversations sooner, rather than later.

I see Commissioner Ruiz and then
COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yeah, thank you, Chair Paz. To add more complexity to the royalties question, I want to ask the Commissioners: how do you feel about benefitting the Salton Sea directly with the royalties? I know the State of California is legally obligated to address the issue, but this is an issue that pertains to the whole region. And this is something that we haven't discussed.

How can the royalties -- can a portion of it be allocated directly to benefit the Salton Sea, to benefit the intricacies, the problems there that go beyond just the environmental issue? And that is something that maybe we wouldn't want to discuss, but I think, like somebody said, remove the gloves. Gloves off, right? So, I think it is important to have these conversations.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a couple quick points. First of all, I want to thank Commissioner Weisgall for those comments; they were all very valuable and I...
care to differ, I think he's too kind of a guy, I
don't think he's taken off the gloves yet.

But I do want to say that, from an
Environmental Justice or disadvantaged
standpoint, we have a long history of industry
developing here -- successful projects or
sometimes projects that don't come to fruition.

But I would say the one thing that I would just
like to highlight as we need to work amongst
diverse stakeholders is the whole narrative of,
the whole sort of trade, right, what's the
tradeoff?

And I think we're living at a point in
time that we don't really need to, necessarily,
trade off quality of life, public health risk. I
think we're living at a point in time that all
can be balanced, and all can be successful, and
we're living at a point in time where the
expectations of industry pretty much having its
way with communities and its resources -- I'm not
really sure that the traditional way of doing
business is what we're trying to achieve here,
right?

And I think we're all in it for the same
reasons, at least I'm optimistic and hopeful and
that's why it's so important that this Commission was formed in its diversity that it is and having community participation. To me, I think it's perhaps a first that I've ever seen in my 20 plus years working on Environmental Justice in this region.

But with that said, I do want to highlight something for the list of asks, you know, something specific. The Government is getting, as of resources, it has greater possibility of having resources to develop in high rates consultants, to bring forth recommendations, bring forth whether it's economics, or this workforce development, you know, the industry certainly have a great interest and have their consultants to some extent, right, I don't mean to speak -- I'm assuming that they do all their market and other analysis, for whatever a regular analysis they are.

But historically, communities have not had their own consultants or access to resources to hire their own consultants that focus on community priorities. When we bring in the experts and the analysis from the industry from
Government and community, I think that we are going to create that balance that we seek, something that we can coexist, something that we can address all concerns, and something that can drive and succeed in this opportunity that's before us.

So, I will say that's going to be an important ask that I hope our Commissioners will support as part of the ask. I'm assuming at some point that we as a Commission would put forth an ask and I want to again thank Commissioner Kelley for being a good scribe and always trying to put pen on paper. I think definitely that is one that is important, and I like to uplift.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Kelley.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Thank you, Chairperson Paz. So Jonathan opened up the can, right? Look, I've got a different point of view and I don't want to take anything away from Coachella Valley or from Eastern Riverside along the sea. But Imperial Valley is Lithium Valley and I am very interested in making sure that the needs of our communities that have been left away from the spotlight of Sacramento for so long are
going to be addressed.

So, I'm not opposed to having some conversation about how there would be the State participating in revenue as a junior partner, very junior. But, you know, we're having this conversation today, but nobody wanted to talk about Lithium Valley three years ago. And you've got to believe me, I was making the rounds and I was talking in Washington, in Sacramento, and in San Francisco. Nobody was hearing the needs, the wants, the identifying of a critical resource that was here, and nobody was answering that call.

And then, quite similarly, nobody was answering ten years ago, nobody was answering the call on the Salton Sea. I was making those rounds, too, and nobody was paying attention to that need. We've been having these conversations in our community since May of 2021, talking about a severance tax, and balancing that with making assurance for business to be able to develop here, and how a severance or other model would be used so that we could address some needs, make infrastructure, litigation, and community enhancement -- community enhancement meaning...
making it much more attractive for those professionals to live here so that they don't migrate from San Diego, or Palm Springs, or Yuma, come in here and work, and then go back to their school districts, their municipalities, and they're not part of our community.

So, I am not closed-minded to having an open conversation, but I do want to reinforce that Imperial Valley IS Lithium Valley. And thank you for that.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Vice Chair Kelley, for uplifting those points. I mean, as someone from Coachella, I wouldn't contest anything of what you've said. I was born in the MexiCali, I've driven across, I've known the region and the needs and, I mean, my history and involvement in the Salton Sea here, I'm very familiar with because I've been in many meetings advocating for exactly the things that you have talked about, that it's about the quality of life, so putting how any royalties and fees and all that need to be worked out aside, I want to also put on the table that we are a region.

And what happens environmentally on one side of the lake affects the other side of the...
lake; what happens in public health, we are a connected region, our population has traveled across the valleys to work on the fields, so I'm with you and, again, I just want to bring to the forefront that we do need to figure out a way to enhance the region because if we are looking at this from a regional perspective, I think we're all going to win. And that shouldn't take away from all of the needs that you've mentioned and the priority that those needs should have in these conversations. So thank you for raising that up, too. Commissioner Hicks.

COMMISSIONER HICKS: Whenever you're dealing with geothermal, and you start drilling down deeper, it starts getting a little hotter, so let me take it a little deeper.

I hear comments today, and I have for some time, whenever you're talking about royalties, I think as a group the Commissioners need to bring in an expert and give us a little bit of background on royalties, mineral rights, leases, mining on federal grounds, and so forth. I think we need to be educated on that before we get too far down the road because it's going to be pretty much like water rights. I've lived...
here all my life and the water has always been an issue, and I've had the pleasure or displeasure, whichever way you want to call it, of going from Superior Court, all the way to the Supreme Court, more than once. And you find out it's not exactly the way you think it is.

So, I think it would be wise for us when we're discussing these royalties because we do have private owners, we do have public land, there is some fertile ground and I think most of it is underwater, but I think it would help us if we had that -- be timed a little bit more for us before we get too far down the road. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Absolutely. Thank you. So, I will take these last two hands that I'm seeing to wrap up and move on other items. So, we will hear from Commissioner Castaneda, Commissioner Olmedo, and then I'll try to summarize and put forward a recommendation for us to move.

COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Great. Thank you very much, Chair.

I think before we can talk about rock royalties or revenue splits and all of that, I think that one thing that probably -- and again,
I don't want to get between the Coachella versus Imperial, I think that's something that needs to work itself out over time because right now we don't have anything, we're just talking about concepts, right? But I think what is important is that before we talk about this community or that community, or the State, or anything -- and I agree with Commissioner Ruiz, I believe that there has to be some priorities with respect to the dollars that are derived from these operations.

I think one of the top priorities, at least for me, but I think for a lot of people, is restoration of the Salton Sea. There have been plans, I don't know if they're perfect, I don't know what those dollar amounts are, but there needs to be a little something put aside for that, obviously.

The other thing -- and again, this is like a snowflake, everybody sees it differently -- if we see this opportunity to its greatest potential, I mean, I think somebody talked about Western Detroit, you know, what are those impacts and what kind of infrastructure is going to be needed to support and sustain the quality of life.
and the opportunities for the people that are going to be impacted by these operations?

So, there's going to be significant investment that's going to be required to sustain all of these activities that are going on, and that has to be derived probably mostly, because I don't see Sacramento, basically, sending down a bunch of money for those purposes, from the dollars that are derived from these operations.

And so, I think that before we start setting up the table and figuring out who is going to get what card, and who is going to get what piece, and everything like that, I think our due diligence would be to say, what does this mean for the people of the area that are going to be impacted directly.

And what's it going to cost in the future to ensure that those impacts are mitigated and that the infrastructure and the environment -- and again, that takes on all kind of different meanings -- are taken care of? And what are those costs? And how long will it take to amortize and pay for those costs?

And then at that point you can start to see what you do in the long term about kind of
divvying up the revenues and all of these kinds of things.

But I think Commissioner Weisgall is right and we can't starve the golden goose here. I mean, this resource is only worth so much and if we want this to be all that we know it can be, then we have to be circumspect, but we have to take care of the homeland first.

That's the way I look at it and that's what I'd really like to support. And maybe that's what we ask the Governor's Office to do, is to help us understand what kind of infrastructure, what kind of planning would be required in order to sustain environmentally and, you know, I think equitably, for the people, the communities that are going to be directly impacted, and then look at those revenues after the fact. So, I just wanted to -- it came to mind, so thank you very much for indulging me.

CHAIR PAZ: I appreciate that.

Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: In the spirit of offering more asks for the budget, I think it may be worth asking to incentivize technologies that are clean, green, see what emissions, see waste
streams, to extend possible green certifications
of different industries.

I think that industries that do build --
because right now, even though we have some
established business and some pilot projects, and
maybe they need to characterize themselves beyond
pilots, but there will be others who may also be
interested in building. And I think it will be
fair to begin to start thinking about, if we are
truly committed to green energy, cleaner energy,
then we need to also incentivize cleaner
technologies. That's going to help us address
some of the concerns that we're discussing about
public health, about communities bearing the
burden of pollution, and so on.

Also, in terms of workforce development,
I think a low risk ask and low risk investment
that the state can do is in our higher education
and vocational institutions. And we need to
bring in what the state has been committing to,
which is environmental literacy, a stand, you
know, this education, even if let's say worst
case scenario this thing doesn't come to
fruition, we can build a workforce and we can
build an educated population that can begin to
innovate. It can begin to build start-ups.

We need to be able to educate beyond a certificate to work, for example what happened with the solar where you have hundreds of people who can't do anything with a certificate. We need to be able to give them more education and opportunities so that they can innovate and build their own small business, large business, or go to some other area. Even if they move somewhere else in California, they're taking that education with them, and they will be a ready workforce for that community. So, we need to think about it that way, not always think that all the entire investment is here and the workforce needs to stay here. We can be a community in our region that can build this type of workforce.

I also want to note that, just in the spirit of what I said earlier, characterizing, I think it's a really delicate matter of how we see ourselves; and I understand, Commissioner Kelley, I've had my own frustrations and I've spoken to, to mind, Chair Paz, that when we have too many external forces, putting pressures or trying to appropriate, or characteristics or dynamics as a community, as a region, it will create pressures.
So, I would say that I think there's understanding in our region. You know, we've worked here, we've coexisted, our population and our communities work together. But if these conversations are even happening about Coachella, Imperial, I don't believe that they're real tensions of our communities and the way we've existed here in the Salton Sea region, I think it's because other forces on the outside are not being respectful and are not consulting and not working with the local communities as they engage in this enthusiasm of this industry. Thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR PAZ: Please do not raise your hand when we have two more people, there will be other opportunities to continue the dialogue. So Jonathan Weisgall and then Vice Chair Kelley.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Well, thanks. I'll be brief. But I do think, as you summarize or as you try to, as Chair, look at these issues, clearly one of the big questions here is are we the Lithium Valley Commission, or are we the Salton Sea Commission. I think that I've got to differ on some of these points.

You know, the State of California is
I don't know the exact budget numbers, I want to say it's over $200 million, $40 million this year, I think $100 million dedicated in 2022-'23, and another 40 perhaps in '23-'24. Those are big dollars that are important. Can the industry create those kinds of dollars? I don't know. I mean, we'll start producing commercially in 2026. What about the Ag community? I mean, the geothermal lithium industry is not responsible for any pollution at the Salton Sea; it's pretty much the Ag community in the Imperial Valley.

So, I think you've gotten think a little bit more broadly about some of these issues. And frankly, I mean, as I think about where dollars should go from Lithium production, which did not cause any problems at the Salton Sea, I'm kind of more with Luis -- I want to see education, I want to see hiring, I want to see housing, I want to see healthcare.

You know, Commissioner Kelley, you talked about, you know, we don't want people coming here and then driving home to their homes, we want nice homes in Imperial County. We want better education. We want better healthcare. That's
where I would be spending the revenue.

Now, can we do something for Salton Sea?

Of course. I'm not saying that we ignore it, but that's a big-ticket item that neither the geothermal industry nor the impending Lithium industry, for which it has caused any problems.

My company has no leases whatsoever under the Salton Sea, we do not encroach on the Salton Sea at all.

Now, the same cannot be said for the rest of the industry and, again, that could be one area where we take the gloves off and start to lock horns. But anyway, Chair Paz, that's the issue: is the Salton Sea Commission going to be a subsidiary of the Lithium Valley Commission?

It's a question we have to ask ourselves.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Vice Chair Kelley.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: I promise to be short. Jonathan, you gave me quite a laugh opening up another box with Ag runoff. You should probably go on mute for the rest of the meeting.

So, I'll share with you -- these are asks, these are not the Board of Supervisors'
asks, but these are for contemplation. We would like the delegative authority from 49-99 megawatts. We would like the support and funding of our specific plan and program, Environmental Impact Report. And to Commissioner Castaneda's question, this specific plan would address all of these needs, including education, infrastructure, housing, environment, all of the CEQA requirements will be covered, and public comment would be part of this, many elements in this specific plan.

We would also like to develop a Lithium Valley Development Office and we are seeking support and funding of that, five people dedicated towards moving projects in with county permitting, planning, zoning, all aspects, so shepherding projects, limited term, higher wage, so that we can see this development go to its full potential.

We'd also like support and assistance in the creation of a severance tax or a resource levy in Imperial County. And there are different ways of doing it, but we would like to have that conversation.

And lastly, we would like support and
funding for a Cal Poly campus in Brawley, California. And that plays into our Ag history, and it plays into the engineering and technical vocational skills needed for this new industry.

And so those are just mine, but something to share.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So I will not repeat those things that you have shared, but to wrap up, I see -- I'll cover these very direct tasks, I see different layers and one of the things that you probably all agree is critical and foundational is how are we getting the information on the get go about whether it's the economic analysis that needs to inform the development, the response to the public health concerns, and those are two -- and then the other one, how do we build the capacity? I heard, and I'm forgetting which Commissioner, I think it was Commissioner Hanks, when we're talking about royalties and fees and, you know, community benefits, agreements, and other things, how do we build the capacity for us as a region to be able to start having those conversations. So those are, I think, things that are foundational for us to move forward, and things that I've heard from
this conversation.

The other piece is on the workforce development, making sure that those resources are being aligned and responding to where we are as a region in terms of these workforce developments trainings, needs, gaps.

Oh, and then there was the communications and outreach, I would say communication, outreach and engagement, because, first, it's critical that we're putting out the communications of the conversations. There are questions, what is Lithium Valley? How do we start defining what it is, how many projects we're talking about, you know, basic questions that I'm sure there's already answers to, but we're just not putting out there, so we need a communications -- an outreach campaign.

Outreach? It's how do we target the population that most of the time does not get access to be at the table. So we want to make sure that we're not leaving them behind and that their piece is the engagement when we are having -- at whatever point when we're ready to have the conversations around royalties, community benefits, things like that, we need to make sure
-- to Luis' point -- that the community is supported, has the capacity to come in at the same level that the County is going to come, or that the industry is going to come.

So there are also things that, taken from our conversation, including the last comments that Vice Chair Kelley mentioned.

I think my task after this, if you all agree, maybe Vice Chair Kelley, myself, we can huddle quickly with Energy Commission to find the adequate pathways, what we need to do if we're trying to make some of these recommendations or items into policy -- we have the February 18th deadline, or if it's going to be budget requests. At this point, I could not tell you.

There is some need for us to meet sooner rather than later so that we can be on the same page, but I think if Vice Chair Kelley, myself, and Energy Commission staff put our heads together, we can identify a pathway and then find a way to communicate with you if there is a need for us to come back together. Does that sound like a path forward? Okay. If you really oppose, you can just say "opposed," but other than that I am moving forward, then. Thank you
very much for this conversation and we will open it. Next slide, I think it is public comment.

This is an opportunity for members of the audience to comment on the budget discussion that we just had. Elisabeth?

MS. DE JONG: Thank you, Chair Paz. So if you're joining us by Zoom on the computer, please use that "raise hand" feature. If you've called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand, and then *6 to unmute your phone line.

We'll go first to the hands raised, then phones, and then written comments in that Q&A box.

The first hand raised I see is Ronald Spears. You should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. SPEARS: Okay, that was quick. I wasn't prepared to go that quickly.

Hi. Ron Spears. I'm President of the Bahia Del Mar Property Owners Association out at Desert Shores and a strong advocate of the Salton Sea Chanel Restoration. When I was listening to all of you, and you're probably all going to be shocked, I'm a 70-year-old American, I still believe in capitalism, and I believe that companies have a right to make a profit. They're
investing their money, their energy, their time, in order to create a product and a service that is going to reward them.

I think the way that these things should be resolved is on the back end where taxes are paid. Those taxes should go to things that improve the communities, improve education, improve schooling. It would be nice if the corporations involved in the Lithium extraction wanted to build schools or build education facilities that would help them to run their business better.

The main thing I would like to see is working on a solution that the product that is developed -- the Lithium, itself -- benefits the community. Most of the time in Coachella Valley, either through geothermal, or through wind with the windmills, and things like that, it seems like it's sold off to the highest bidder which happens to be Los Angeles, or San Diego, or wherever, so you're using the Valley and the product is going to the highest bidder.

Now, there could be a way that the Imperial County Board of Supervisors, or Imperial County Government, can work with the Lithium
extraction industry in order to make sure that
the profit that they deserve, and that they
should get, stays within the Coachella Valley,
Imperial County area, through either offsetting
subsidies, or carbon taxes, or whatever other
means you have available at your disposal to make
it economically feasible to sell that lithium
where the benefits go to the Imperial County and
Coachella Valley. And that's all I have to say.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Our next hand
raise is Alex Cardenas. You should be able to
unmute yourself.

MR. CARDENAS: Yeah. Good afternoon. I
do appreciate all the efforts of the Commission
and I appreciate the conversation. Alex
Cardenas, I currently sit on the IID Board and
have the privilege and honor to serve with
Commissioner Hanks, who I really appreciate.

My only comment is in relation to
transmissions, and I would just encourage that
we, the Commission, have a clear understanding of
our transmission capabilities and the feasibility
of moving energy to areas like the Coachella
Valley.

I would caution before we would make the
request for increasing the permitting for geothermal, that a good understanding of what our capability is and what's in the queue, and how much is available in terms of capacity, that the Commission have a clear understanding and the best Statesmen for that would be Commissioner Hanks.

But everything that I'm hearing today is exciting, but I think one of the challenges is going to be transmission. And I know that our system, which is strategically positioned for Lithium Valley, but there still needs to be an understanding of what capacity we have to wield the power to some of the most needed areas so that we can mine out that Lithium.

So, I'm going to stop there. And if I may make an inquiry, has there been any discussions regarding assessing the transmission capability, and who is currently in the queue, and what we're doing to maybe address that? And I'll defer to Commissioner Hanks, I don't want to walk on or step on his toes, he'll let me have it, but I just wanted to put that on the white board. Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Okay, the next
hand raise is Nikola Lakic. You should be able
to unmute yourself.

MR. LAKIC: Good afternoon. Can you hear
me?

MS. DE JONG: Yes. We can hear you.

MR. LAKIC: Thank you very much, Chair
Paz and Commissioners, for this opportunity to
say a few words.

I was listening to the conversation, and
a little debate, and I see some friction. The
Commissioner Jonathan Weisgall says, well, there
is paying for restoration of the Salton Sea, and
there is paying for what you're doing right now,
harnessing Lithium. That's true, but that's
wrong.

There is a solution, I happen to be the
author of that proposal, that you right
restoration of the Salton Sea and harnessing
Lithium from geothermal brine.

And also, Commissioner Steve Castaneda
mentioned restoration of Salton Sea, you are
arguing about revenue and how to share it,
expenses. There could be more and more of that.

Please read my proposal, I did send you
one, an extensive letter of 15 pages. I hope you
read it. If you didn't, this is not the
opportunity for me to speak about my proposal,
but it unites all of you, it would be very good
for the community. We are talking about a half
billion to a billion revenue, in addition that
you can generate from harnessing Lithium.

So, it's not something to ignore. My
expertise is exactly that, solving problems like
this. Engineer, architect, nine semesters plus
graduate work. I graduated ten out of ten. I
spent a lot of times working on it.

Unfortunately, nobody invited me to
explain that; nobody asks questions about it. I
will send some emails to all Commissioners. If
you have time, take one hour or hour and a half
of your time one afternoon, each of them
separately, I don't mind, it would be wise. Time
is passing. One year already passed. You have
to make a decision very soon. I see the deadline
is February 18 for some -- what it was, something
-- well, February 18, last day for Bill to be
introduced.

But you are making a decision without
really seeing the whole picture. Please invite
me. I will be glad to visit each of you
separately if necessary. It's very important. We are talking about only $15 Billion project cost, but much much more than just importing sea water. And we are talking about $1 Billion revenue. If it had been my proposal, the numbers are very very conservative; I didn't want to go - but it's between a half billion and billion in addition to your way of producing Lithium.

So don't be selfish, don't just look short-sighted into something. See the broader picture. I will be glad to see, interview.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

MS. DE JONG: All right. So thank you. And the next commenter with the hand raise is Jose Flores. You should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. FLORES: Good afternoon, Commissioners and Chair Paz. My recommendation is in regards to living in here, in the ring of fire, and maybe a good idea, I think, would be to have some sort of independent seismicity study since we live in proximity to three faults and we have plenty of earthquakes as it is, and a couple times even earthquake swarms. It is crucial, I think, to prepare and be proactive and have some
sort of emergency response plan and team in case this, hopefully this lithium reality comes to fruition in the proper way. And if, God forsake, some earthquake 7.2 or above comes to fruition, that we are prepared. And even though hundreds of workers that are working there are taken care of, because we cannot just pool resources from Niland and the CaliPat, worth one in Brawley which are the nearest Cities, so again just trying to be proactive with our seismic activity here in Imperial Valley.

My other comment was in regard to in support of the Lithium industry that will be coming in line after this takes off. If any future corporations, industries do come in, I think it behooves us to go totally green and, if possible, I don't know how that would be, but if possible it would be lovely to enforce some sort of mandate where these green companies that come in surely put their money where their mouth is, and other trucks and autos within their government fleet and bikes, if necessary, everything is electric. So they kind of show a model that they practiced what they preach, and that we are truly trying to change this region of
Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley and make it a model, not only for California, for the U.S., but also global, as well. Thank you very much for your time.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next hand raised is by Orlando Foote. You should be able to unmute.

MR. FOOTE: Can you hear me?

MS. DE JONG: Yes, we can hear you.

MR. FOOTE: My name is Orlando Foote. I'm an attorney practicing here in Imperial Valley. I've been here for 50 plus years, one of the rare birds that moved here from another area and stayed over the last 50 plus years.

I've had the pleasure of serving on part of the organizing group that formed the Imperial Valley Commission, the Imperial Valley Development Corporation, and as well I've served on the Workforce Development.

My comments are two: 1) I think the previous comments related to the outreach of members of the Commission and various others with stakes in the geothermal and in the Lithium development industries, they need to get out in the community and sell this. I think it's not
understood, but it certainly is going to help to appear before public agencies, service clubs, various governmental agencies, that's going to help a lot.

The second thing, and I think this is extremely important, is that with regard to the water issues, there is an inherent competition between the Ag industry and between industrial development here. It's been true from at least the last half century that I've been here.

And I think there is a sweet spot that can be reached, and I think that means overcoming some concerns on both sides with regard to water, water allocation, water use, and the seemingly inevitable litigations that follow. I would encourage the Imperial Irrigation District and also Lithium proponents and advocates to get down to the community and get to work on selling this to the members of the Ag community, as well as members of the communities, in general. Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next hand raise is by Eric Reyes. You should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. REYES: Hello. Eric Reyes, Executive
Director of Los Amigos de la Comunidad, Imperial Valley. And I think you as Commissioners have had a dynamic discussion and I'm able to pick up a lot of different ideas from what I'm capturing. As to some of the issues there, yes, we want the Lithium industry to be in Imperial Valley. We definitely need those jobs, we definitely need the investment from the State, the Federal, which is already happening. I think people forget that there's already been millions allocated, and millions more.

And we want it to be, to Weisgall's comments, we want the Lithium industry, regardless of you directly are funding you or not, or work on the Salton Sea, is that it would be part of the solution. You all know, you will not be able to cure the issues of the Salton Sea from Lithium extraction, let's make that clear from the beginning. You can be part of the solution and that is what we as a community are asking, that any taxes, any levies, any fees be part of the economic engine that we need in Imperial County and Coachella Valley Region, that it be part of the environmental mitigation and enhancement programs of Imperial Valley,
Coachella Valley Region, that is already environmentally impacted previously by many many years of many issues. And, yes, the Agricultural industry, Mr. Weisgall, I have to applaud your frankness and the fact that you as an outsider were able to see what is obvious to people like me that other people are afraid to say, so I thank you for that.

The Agricultural industry has had a very large impact on us, and they should also pay their fair share, as well. I appreciate that, and how we can do that is from water transfer money that is going towards it and we can enhance altogether in partnerships.

And we also want in the budget that there will be funding for CBOs such as ours to partner with local agents and we can find our own economists, our own consultants, so we can have direct impact on how those funds are spent as we continue to develop the region. I thank you for your time and I really enjoyed this conversation and much more to spin off of it. Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Our next hand raise is by Tom Sephton. You should be able to unmute.
MR. SEPHTON: Thank you and thank you for the moment to talk with you, Commissioners. And I appreciate what you've discussed. You've raised some key issues and one of them is water demand, that there will be some additional need for water for the Lithium industry in an area that has a limited supply of water. And the other is the Salton Sea which, granted, is a much larger issue to truly restore than what the Lithium industry and the profits thereon can probably pay for.

But what I'd like people to understand is that the Lithium brings with it a benefit that helps solve both of these problems. As you bring Lithium out of the ground, out of the deep aquifer, you're also bringing heat. Some of this heat is used to make power and that's excellent. But you're actually bringing more heat than what you need for power production and that is actually the key to taking some of the vast impaired water resources that we have in Imperial Valley.

Under the farms you have brackish water. Under the ground of these geothermal plants you have brackish water. In the drains, of course...
you have brackish water, that is sustaining the Salton Sea. And in the Salton Sea, itself, you have hyper saline water.

But bear in mind that if you take advantage of the brackish groundwater below all of these plants and below these farms, you have the opportunity to create new clean water supply in the Imperial Valley that helps provide the water needs for the Lithium industry without impacting the Ag needs, that helps provide the water needs for expansion of industry and jobs and homes, without diminishing the Agricultural industry.

The opportunity is here, and the ring source is there as you bring out the geothermal, the hot -- very hot, 500 degrees Fahrenheit geothermal brine. You have more heat than you need to produce power.

You have the opportunity to clean up the water resources, the currently unusable water resources that we have in the Imperial Valley. So bear in mind, this can be a win win. You don't have to take off the profits of the Lithium, you can use the extra heat that comes up with it to clean up the water resource, provide
warm water, and additionally clean water for environmental restoration of habitat areas around the Salton Sea. You can do all of these together.

The Lithium industry could actually be the Geothermal Lithium industry, it could actually be paid rather than cutting into their profit margin to help provide more water and restore the environment. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next hand raise is by Mariela Loera. You should be able to unmute yourself.

MS. LOERA: Hello. Mariela Loera with Leadership Council. And I just wanted to acknowledge this conversation in the public and thank you all for having it. I know that it's very tense and controversial, but it was good to see it happen, basically.

I hope that it is one of many and that community is meaningfully included in these same kind of conversations and that the feedback received by the community is implemented into the decision-making process and into the report that you all will be developing. Thanks.
MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next hand raise is by Luis Lopez. You should be able to unmute.

MR. LOPEZ: Hello. My name is Luis Lopez and I'm a resident of Imperial County. I just want to say that I do agree with Commissioner Kelley in regard to Lithium Valley being Imperial Valley. Imperial County is the poorest county in California and if the State of California is serious about achieving equity, then there needs to be a focus on Imperial County.

At the end of the day, Imperial Valley needs a lot more development than Coachella Valley, so it is concerning that other regions are being mentioned. It must be clear that Lithium Valley is not San Diego County, Riverside County, or Coachella Valley; it is Imperial Valley.

Another concern would be some of the revenue generated from a tax, or fees, levies, being sent to a General Fund to Sacramento, right? We want to be able to keep some of the funds here in Imperial Valley and make sure to create long-term jobs and make sure our workers have skills they can take anywhere. Thank you.
MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next hand raise is Isabel Solis. You should be able to unmute.

MS. SOLIS: Good afternoon. My name is Isabel Solis. I am Imperial Valley College Board of Trustee, Area 4. I am also President of a community-based organization, Los Amigos de la Comunidad.

We ask that for dedicated funds for workforce development related directly to this industry that makes the trainees competitive for other jobs in other regions, higher grade skill sets building also similar to STEM.

And as a CBO participant that concentrated outreach to the underserved by funding the budget for CBOs to partner with training agencies and educational institutions so that we can build our community up.

Our community has to progress with this. We want to make sure that our community is able to get that skill set so that they can get that wage, those jobs --

MS. DE JONG: I think we might have lost connection with Isabel.

MS. SOLIS: -- so this next chapter that
is going to hopefully take us to success. Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Okay, thank you. So we are going to move on to the written comments and let me go ahead and read through the items that were sent into the Q&A. The first is by Christina Marquez. It says: "Good afternoon honorable commissioners. Maybe suggest to include a Project Labor Agreement for Lithium Valley that can include local hire, state-approved apprenticeships, prevailing wages, and identifying all the disadvantaged communities to hire them. Thank you. Christina Marquez, IBEW Local 569, Environmental Organizer."

And then the comments from Hector Meza say, "'The Workforce' is here. IBEW and all of the Building Trades I am sure are ready to sit and have a talk."

And John Cubit wrote in: "To expand on Rob Colwell's comments: To counteract misinformation about the Lithium activities we need a central source of factual information about the Lithium extraction at the Salton Sea region. This is not expensive and could be done very quickly. It could be accomplished by
establishing an easily accessible website. As much as possible, it must communicate in clear graphics, not text. Can this commission do this relatively simple project soon?"

I do see Hector Meza who had written in comments has a hand raised. So if you would like to add to your comments, you should be able to unmute.

MR. MEZA: Hi. I just want to comment on something quickly. I'm a local journeyman with IBEW 56. I am an electrician, certified electrician with the state.

We have hundreds of local electricians with experience in photovoltaic, nuclear), and geothermal power here in the region. They can build anything that has to do with power. Our apprentices go through a five-year training that is a combination of hands-on at work, any class training, and our apprentices actually get college credit through the Palomar College.

And we are ready to build anything you guys need. And if you guys need to contact Building Trades, I could also get you that info.

Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. All right,
Chair Paz. That looks like all of the public comments at this time. Back to you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

MS. LEE: This is Natalie. I just wanted to take a moment. Isabel Solis, I just wanted you to know that we did not hear all of your comments. We had a break in connection, so if you would like to address them in written form to the docket, or submit them in another form, I just wanted to let you know we did miss a portion of your comment.

MS. SOLIS: Okay, you know what? I will do that. Do I put it in the chat? Is that where you would like for me to put those in?

MS. LEE: In the Q&A for -- and Elisabeth De Jong, can you just make sure we get the full comments into the transcript?

MS. DE JONG: Will do. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And thank you everyone. That was a very good conversation and I would like to have as much of a robust conversation in the next topic, so maybe we can take a five-minute break to stretch, recharge, and come back and take a deep dive into the other items that are, I think, equally important and
will generate a lot of conversation. So if everyone is okay, is a five-minute break -- is it too much or are we good with five minutes? So, Elisabeth, we'll take a five-minute break.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. See you back at 3:35.

(Break at 3:30 P.M.)

CHAIR PAZ: Elisabeth, thank you for removing the screen share, especially during conversation. That way, we can all see each other on the screen and it helps a lot when we can have access to that gallery.

Okay, I see that people are back. The next item on the agenda, it's a continuation of the conversation we had at the last meeting. We have been thinking about how to maybe make some changes to how we do the workshop planning, how to start highlighting in those conversations potential recommendations or actions that we can take.

So what I'm going to do is, instead of talking about the process or how we can do it. We're ready to demonstrate how this new process can look like when it comes to the sub bodies. There is, for example, a request that a month
prior to your workshop when you bring your plans
to the Commissioners and then give input. So,
I'll be demonstrating that with the Workforce
Development Workshop. Jonathan and I were able
to connect, this is before this, so that we were
ready for that. And to really focus the workshop
presentations to ensure that there's information
specific to the Salton Sea Region, making sure
that we're capturing findings and recommendations
during the meeting and not waiting until we come
back, encourage Commissioners that have
additional viewpoints or who want additional
viewpoints represented in whatever it is the sub
bodies are proposing, to have that opportunity to
bring that up. And where to focus on
conversations and dialogue that’s going to lead
to the recommendations at the end of the report.
So that's essentially what I'm going to
try to do in this next section as we are talking
about the Workforce Development Workshop that
will be taking place in February.
If you go to the next slide, thank you.
So again, originally it was Commissioner
Castaneda and I who started on these sub bodies,
so there are still some items here that we talked
about and then more recently there was that
switch with Commissioner Weisgall. This is what
we are proposing.

We are proposing that there's a
presentation that will focus on these two large
items, 1) identifying the landscape of workforce
development efforts that are related to Lithium
development.

I think that time and again we've heard
about the work that maybe Ryan Kelley is doing,
work that Jonathan Weisgall is doing, work that
the Imperial College maybe, steps that they're
taking towards workforce development, so this is
an opportunity again to hear -- get a landscape
of what's happening now, what are the efforts,
and inform us so we have that baseline.

The other topic that would be important
is to start identifying what are the jobs
associated with Lithium development. So those
would be presentation items. And then to have a
panel discussion around how do we create access
to economic and job opportunities. And again, if
we recall, the values of equity, inclusion, and
diversity are very important to the community and
I think to many of us here in the Commission, if
not all, so this is an opportunity to have a
panel discussion on what does that look like,
right, when we're talking about access to
economic and job opportunities, and what needs to
happen to ensure that those pathways are there.

So that is the overall picture. And I
can -- if there are any comments at this point,
and if you feel that those are the viewpoints,
the right viewpoints to represent, or if you have
additions -- but the next slide shows you like
the sub-questions under each one of them.

So these are the questions that would
fall under those topics. So when you're talking
about the landscape of workforce development,
it's getting speakers who can share about what
are the education and training efforts that exist
right now; what are the gaps that this region is
facing; and what are the potential
local/regional/ state actions needed to advance
workforce development in the Salton Sea Region.

So again, this is not only the approach
we want to take next, but let's get to some
tangible recommendations out of all of these
discussions, right? So that's what this last
question under that section is trying to do.
Under the other larger topic of what are the jobs associated with Lithium development, the sub questions would be what are the jobs and then what stage in the development of Lithium are they needed; what are the skills, the training associated with the Lithium development sector; and then what needs to happen to ensure that we have a workforce ready, on time. I think I heard Commissioner Weisgall talk about 2026. I mean, that's just around the corner, so what do we need to be doing now.

For the panel conversation, it's a dialogue around coming together on a definition of what is a good job, what are the tools or actions that are needed to increase opportunities for equitable, sustainable and inclusive jobs.

So that again paints the picture of the type of conversation that we want to have during the February meeting. And I will tell you, again, with the focus of getting people who are knowledgeable of what's happening on the ground. We have identified a list of potential speakers that would include -- and we haven't reached out to all of them, and this has been a work in progress, but on our list it's, you know, labor,
there's academic institutions including IID, Imperial Valley College. Also we have on the list the County, Workforce Development, and then some community and Environmental Justice groups.

So they're trying to get a mix and, again, focus it as much as possible with people who have an understanding of the landscape, but then maybe also people who from an academic perspective can especially speak to these other concepts around good jobs and pathways that we can create.

So that's a snapshot. Jonathan, is there anything that I missed? Do you want to add anything?

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: No. I think you hit on them. I think we also maybe talked about Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation, but no, no, no, that's a great list. And other Commissioners, other ideas, please let us know.

We want to get a broad range here.

Oh, yes, there's the Employment Training Panel, that's part -- it's not part of GoBiz, I think it's under Labor, but anyway it's the Sacramento group. And I'm sorry I don't have my notes in front of me, but they have terrific
training programs, as well. And that's for existing and new workers. So maybe hearing from them also. Thank you very much.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, yes. So at this point, if there are any feedback, input, things that maybe another perspective you would like to see that has not been covered, please, I will take those comments now. Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMedO: Thank you, Madam Chair. A lot of these are framed as questions, but I do -- let me see -- I think it's important to recognize that, while we're trying to customize a workforce, we can't ignore the fact that we've been excluded from developing a workforce to meet the current needs right now.

We need to be able to train a workforce that would be ready to enroll in more technical type of workforce opportunities. We're talking about timelines. We need to stay -- and perhaps this is also a direction of budget asks, we need investment right now. We need to put the money to work that is currently in the previous budget, and we need to put in -- ask for the existing negotiated budget. We need to have a workforce that is ready to engage in more technical and --
I think we need to consider even soft skills, right? Because if we're just focused on who is going to do the specific jobs for this industry, we're missing the opportunity for all of the other folks, industries that will accompany, you know, that will service or that will result as a result of this industry. We need to consider the whole spectrum of the workforce needs from the full perspective, the full range. Thanks.

CHAIR PAZ: You are absolutely right, Commissioner Olmedo. This is our pre-priming for the conversation that we want to have in February, so these questions are meant as guidance to the speakers so that they can give us information on some of the things that you're asking right now.

Like we want to hear from the experts, right, what are the gaps in the region? What are the skills that might include understanding what the skill sets that we have right now? Where do we need to go?

Again, I think part of the task ahead of us to provide recommendations, it's also being able to understand the landscape or what the landscape is so that we can be ready, then, to
provide a recommendation. So that's the intent for today is -- and I apologize if I didn't make this clear -- these are the questions that are going to be given to the speakers so that they can elaborate, they can bring this information, and then we can from there lift up. Okay, what are the recommendations based on this? And some of the items that you're talking about, I can see potential recommendations, and maybe they will be more targeted once we've heard from our presenters.

So that's the intent of today and, again, it's modeling an approach that we would like to see, or I would like to see as we're planning this workshop so that all of us have an opportunity to say, hey, maybe this information is missing, can we get someone to come and talk about that topic during this workshop.

Commissioner Weisgall.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yeah, you really hit the nail on the head. I couldn't agree with you more, Commissioner Olmedo. We are asking ourselves these questions already; I mean, we're doing job fairs, we're doing internships, we want to go to high schools. And we don't want to go
to seniors, we want to go to 10th-graders. We need that now. We're starting that now.

But these are questions where we as a company hope to learn even more. You know, what are our gaps? What more should we be doing?

But I couldn't agree with you more. No one, certainly our company, and I think the other two major developers, we're not waiting. But we need our skill sets embellished and that's what we're looking forward to. But your point is well taken.

CHAIR PAZ: I don't see any other hands up. And I will -- this is a specific request that maybe you can help me lift: from the list of potential speakers, we have identified speakers who can speak to the sub questions around what the landscape of workforce development ethics currently is; we can identify speakers who can talk about how we create access. But I'm being challenged around identifying -- and maybe this is industry who is going to have the information -- but identifying speakers who can speak to what are the jobs associated with Lithium development, and at what stages.

So, to your point, Commissioner Olmedo,
that this could include, if we can find the right
person to speak about what are the jobs
associated directly with the piloting and the
extraction of Lithium, and then maybe whatever
jobs associated with the related industries,
because I haven't identified someone who can give
us this information as of yet.

So if you all have any ideas, and I see
Rod Colwell.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Thank you, Chair
Paz. I would suggest our Chief Operating
Officer, Jim Turner, who has operated plants,
developing our plant, has been in the Salton Sea
since the early '90s, '90 or '91. So just a
suggestion. I haven't asked Jim, but I'll just
throw it in the mix.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Anyone else?

Just real quick, so then before we wrap this I'm
going to just ask you if you have any comments on
this process. Again, to clarify, in an effort to
give more voices or viewpoints into the planning,
the recommendation is that we would ask the sub
bodies to present to the Lithium Valley
Commission one month before their topic area, in
a similar way to tell us what the plan is, get
input, things like that.

So I will welcome any comments that you have around this new process that we want to implement. Jonathan.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Just real quick, I mean, much like Rod -- and I'll work with you before next month -- we have a very detailed list of job classifications and all of that. And, in fact, IBC also is working on it, so we'll have that well covered. And Jim Turner at CTR, I mean, between -- we have HR people and CTR does, EnergySource, so we'll make sure that's covered.

CHAIR PAZ: Perfect. I appreciate that.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Well, thank you again for the input. And again, I hope that this is valuable for the sub bodies and for the rest of the Commission because it gives us an opportunity to prepare ahead of time and think of questions we might have if we know sort of what is coming ahead in terms of the conversations. Next slide, please.

And Elisabeth, I need a reminder, I don't know if we go directly here to public comments or if we go into -- yeah, I think we probably do, or
am I missing a step?

MS. DE JONG: Yeah, so slide 16 actually will be next to talk about the schedule of those workshop meetings, and close out this agenda item with public comments.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Okay, so then next item is to find dates for these workshops. We've had sort of a gap, so the original timeline that we had needs to be updated.

Like I said, our workforce development, Jonathan and I are working on having that ready for the next workshop in February, and then I do want to recommend that we do a continuation of the environmental impacts.

And the purpose of doing a continuation of this topic is, again, that this idea of honing in on what's happening on the ground, I believe the conversation that we had, the workshop was a lot more like global and it provided that holistic perspective, and now would be a good opportunity to understand from the projects that are happening on the ground.

So my recommendation is maybe we do that in March, and I believe it was Commissioner Olmedo and Commissioner Flores who worked on
that, and I can touch bases with both of you just around the planning and all of this. Would that work with Commissioner Olmedo and Commissioner Flores to have the environmental impacts part 2 in March? I'm not sure if we've lost them. Anybody else? Do you think that would be -- or is there a reason maybe to push it to later?

MS. DE JONG: You have a hand raise from Commissioner Colwell.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Colwell.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Hey, Chair Paz. Just a suggestion, but I think that, you know, earlier that the legislative and regulatory recommendations very close knitted with environment here because, you know, the Governor's statement about a royalty and mitigation, mitigation meaning how things are going to be environmentally held and mitigated, could be a healthy subject for Tom -- Commissioner Soto and I to dive into in the background, and then bring that in line somewhere with the proposed environmental planning. I think it's a lot closer associated than what it was since the Governor's announcement. Thank
CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Thank you for that recommendation. And I think we should be having legislative and regulatory recommendations along all of our conversations. So I think maybe reframing or rethinking how this last sub body is going to be working, it could be a summation of the things that we are discussing along the way, but we shouldn't wait to discuss legislative and regulatory recommendations until the end. Does that make sense?

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Absolutely. And I think that, you know, it actually merges into workforce development, everything we've been talking about today. It really has, again, been accelerated for when we originally designed the agenda, the order, and order of magnitude here, but environmental workforce development is all going to sort of swing around legislative and environmental, also regulatory recommendations.

CHAIR PAZ: Correct. So I will rely on the sub body and obviously everyone else, but the sub body who is part of the legislative and regulatory recommendations, that when we're discussing these topics you come in with that
lens and you can help us uplift from the conversation or the topic, you know, these are things that we can already start framing recommendations around, and bring that conversation to the workshops so, again, so that we're not waiting until the end. Jonathan.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: And to state the obvious, if we really come up with very good creative ideas that need legislation, we've got the standing -- the select committee. We've got Lina Malova and we have Assemblymember Garcia, so even though we'll have a formal report in October, the door is open for us. We know that.

CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Thank you. And I think to the extent that we do that, I think we can bring a lot more life to these conversations and the action that not only the community, but these Commissioners have been looking for. It's like, okay, we need to get the ball rolling and take actions on these items.

So here is a recommendation, then, that I will put forth. Workforce Development, like I stated, is in February, continuation of Environmental Impacts during March. We can do Environmental Impacts and Economic Impacts in
one, and then we can have Benefits of Geothermal
Plants in April, overcoming challenges to Lithium
extraction along with the incentives workshop in
May, and then we can use June, July to wrap up
and bring up all of the recommendations that have
been discussed along the way.

    So, if everyone is okay with that
timeline, that's what we will try to follow.
Obviously if anything comes in the way and we
need to change it, feel free to reach out to me
if anything affects your sub body's ability to
keep the timeline. Maybe we can switch it.
Okay. So, Elisabeth, I think this concludes this
section. We have the dates already and we'll
continue to look in that direction.

    Now, this is an opportunity for public
comment relating to the workshop on workforce
development, the text of information that members
of the community would like to see there that
maybe we've not covered already. We're open for
those suggestions and the timeline for the
workshops.

    MS. DE JONG: All right, so to open
public comment, if you're joining us by Zoom on
your computer, please use the "raise hand"
feature. If you called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand and *6 to unmute your phone line.

First we'll go to hands raised in the Zoom application and then the phones, and then the written comments. So let me go ahead and -- Ronald Spears is the first hand raise. You should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. SPEARS: Yeah, hi. Ron Spears again. On the previous slide that you were talking about, you know, work qualifications and what types of skills employees might need, what you might look at is the companies that are already producing Lithium in other countries, such as China. I don't know what other countries -- I don't know if it's Chili or Peru, or somewhere in South America, I think they're doing that also. And use those as a prototype as to what type of job skills are needed, even though some of those might be from landfills that you're extracting the Lithium.

But I think the work of the operation itself to deal with the Lithium would probably be fairly similar, except converting it to the Geothermal portion of it. So I think the skills are already known by the companies that are
already producing Lithium. So that’s my two cents.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And the next hand raise, Jesus Arguelles, you should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. ARGUELLES: Hello, Rod. This is Jesus. Greetings. Jesus Arguelles, I'm a business strategist in impact investing. First of all, may I suggest, Chair, that you use your outline of the topics you're going to be addressing as your table to contents.

You in essence dropped an economic development strategy and that could be in essence your recommendation. So if I may, I've been on other Commissions and I'd like to work to the call (phonetic) that is known as reverse engineering. Also, your topics, what can be perhaps considers working groups. You don't have a budget, so as everything is penned in essence to the good will and resources of nonprofits, very little from government, and some from private industry. But I think you need to come out a collected genius if you will, and take that and rake it down into the pieces, management 101, and have those working groups produce an actual
product, and then present that to the total body.

So my recommendation is, 1) use the
workshop material in English and Spanish to frame
your recommendations with timelines, with
milestones, with benchmarks, with budgets, if you
will, and then follow it up by getting that
information to working groups. So that's kind of
a thought for your consideration.

MS. DE JONG: All right, thank you. So
to turn to the written comments in our Q&A, oh,
Jesus actually had said, "The Commission needs to
be funded immediately." And then there is one
more comment here from Luis Plancarte, and it
doesn't look like it went through, so if you
would like to try again, we can read your Q&A
during the next public comment period, or you're
welcome to submit to the Docket.

So that looks like all the questions at
this time. So, Chair Paz, we did just want to
apologize and say in all of our excitement to
return from the break, we did skip one of the
agenda items, the discussion on the development
of the initial findings and recommendations.

CHAIR PAZ: I was looking at that, too,
Elisabeth. Thank you.
MS. DE JONG: Thank you. So would you like us to go back to slide 11 and have that discussion?

CHAIR PAZ: Please.

MS. DE JONG: Okay.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And this will be to your point, Commissioner Colwell, about getting to the legislative and regulatory recommendations sooner, rather than later. And one of the proposals, or a practice that, again, I'm going to model briefly here, but there will be an opportunity to continue at the following workshop, is that after every workshop discussion we are highlighting and extracting, based on our findings and understanding, what are the items that we need to address as either a recommendation, how do we hone in and identify -- so the findings, if there needs to be quicker action than not, then we can also explore that, doing that workshop topic and not having to wait at the end. And although we haven't done the workforce development workshop, I just want to present to you some of the initial findings, potential recommendations that have arisen through the planning itself. So, again, this is
just an example. And, Elisabeth, was this shared with all the Commissioners, the findings? Was there a document?

    MS. DE JONG: I see Natalie --
    MS. LEE: No, it was not.
    CHAIR PAZ: It was not, okay. I mean, is there anything that we can put on the screen or -- I mean, I could just --

    MS. LEE: Yes. Let me send a document to Elisabeth. Elisabeth, are you able to facilitate bringing up a separate document?

    MS. DE JONG: Yes, I can do that.
    MS. LEE: Alright, it will take us just a moment. Why don't we go ahead and close off the slides and let the Commission start conversation, and we'll get that going.

    CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So like I was saying, in the process of planning the economic development workshop, we had specific findings that I think is relevant to the report that we're going to be creating.

    We have explored opportunities for workforce development and the Lithium Valley Commission has found that reports, studies and project development materials have provided
general job estimates and descriptions of anticipated workforce needs associated with the additional of Lithium extraction at existing plants, as well as the development of new geothermal facilities with integrated Lithium extraction.

So, we have, again, some information generally more so about the geothermal jobs and what the industry has provided us in terms of job estimates that are associated with the project. So, for example, the EnergySource project to construct and operate a Lithium facility co-located with an existing geothermal power plant is the furthest along in development and has obtained approval from Imperial County, following the County certification of an Environmental Impact Report, or EIR, prepared under California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The EIR states that approximately 200-250 workers are anticipated to be required at peak periods of project construction and begin with startup operations, will be operated by approximately 62 full-time on-site employees. The project developer expects to utilize available workers from the local and regional
area and is establishing a project labor agreement with local labor organizations to support employment in the county.

Okay, that's from one of the projects. Control of resources is currently in the development phase for the first stage of the Hell's Kitchen geothermal facility, which is planned to be built with integrated Lithium recovery. CTR documents indicate that when all its stages are fully developed, the estimated total local impact is over 4,000 jobs, inclusive of 1,400 permanent jobs at the facility, and 480 continuous construction jobs for the duration of the eight stages of this project, as well as 2,500 ancillary jobs based on an Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation Economic Assessment.

And then they have Berkshire Hathaway Energy. BHE plans to modify its existing geothermal power plants operating near the Salton Sea for Lithium extraction. BHE has estimated that the average monthly construction employment when projects begin construction will be 230 workers, and that the projects will support 400 full time and administrative jobs when completed.
So what we have in front of you and that I started reading, and I will stop reading because now it's in front of you, it's again an example of how we can start capturing these findings and then have conversations about what information is still missing, what recommendations we want to make. So an example, based on the findings that we have so far, we know we have a rough estimate of jobs. Back to the conversation we were having and what we're trying to fill in during the workshop is, well, what kind of jobs, what are the skill sets, and we have heard multiple times, even from the community, the importance of having that information. We have received input that additional and more detailed information is needed regarding the types of jobs that will be created, the skills and training, the anticipated time frame, for demand to increase first specific job types and the expected longevity of each job.

So based on these findings, one recommendation could be a workforce analysis and I know we've discussed briefly doing a budget conversation.

I don't know if there are any other -- we
talked about many potential recommendations ahead of this topic already, so maybe the benefit of me just going through this and going back to it is to hear from you your thoughts on how we can be uplifting these types of findings and recommendations in alignment when the workshops are happening. And again, this is an example of how we can do it. And if you think there's any support, what support do we need from CEC so that we can be elevating these findings ahead of time?

So, I will open it up for any comments, 1) do you feel that these are so far the accurate findings? Or do we have agreement? And 2) we've talked of multiple recommendations that can help us address some of the findings and the gaps. So I'll open it for discussion.

Commissioner Rodwell -- or Colwell -- I'm joining your first and your last name.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: That's fine. I've been called worse. Look, I think all of us, we have a very detailed breakdown of the jobs and we'll provide that stage by state, I think well ahead of the workshops in the coming days, we've got that broken out. And we'll get that through you, Chair Paz, and we'll go from there.
CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Jonathan.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yeah, as do we.

I mean, I'm just thinking of how to use resources. We'll have a pretty good picture of exactly what our workforce needs will be, certainly on job classifications we've got that nailed down. But again, in the coming months we'll refine that. And then if a study is needed, so be it.

CHAIR PAZ: Appreciate that. I don't see any other hands up. And again, in this example we already, or I came already with a specific potential recommendation, but the intent as we move forward is for all of you, as we are hearing, you know, the findings and gathering information, that we don't delay that and that we can start off for any additional recommendations ahead of time. That's this section.

Are we opening that for public comment, Elisabeth?

MS. DE JONG: Yes, we will. If we could put that presentation slide back up. And I will go ahead and open the public comments. If you are joining us by Zoom on your computer, please use the "raise hand" feature, and if you called
in, please dial *9 to raise your hand, and *6 to unmute your phone line. First, we'll go to hands raised in the Zoom application, then the phones, and then any written comments. Okay, I see a hand raise from Nikola Lakic. You should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. LAKIC: Nikola Lakic, like C-H. But thank you very much for this opportunity again. I'd like just shortly, less than a minute, just to say that with my proposal there will be many many employments, many people local and abroad. And again, please my letter summarizes -- I don't want to take your time, just to let you know we are going a little bit far away discussing some elements and missing big picture. Again, I don't want to be critical, but talking about extraction of Lithium right now and ignoring the restoration of the Salton Sea, it's wrong. And somehow later on we can -- "let's focus on extraction of Lithium, and then later on we can do a restoration of the Salton Sea." It doesn't work that way. It's like a Swiss watch, if you think one gear will not work, it's comprehensive in design that incorporates all those elements and, again, thank you very much for this opportunity.
Please read my letters, or at least something --
ask me some questions. I will try to reach you,
maybe hopefully, maybe explain a little bit more
in details. By thank you very much.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And the next
hand raise is Eric Reyes.

MR. REYES: Yeah, I didn't touch on the
original ideas that were presented at first about
community health survey, just that that is a
fantastic idea to see about this development.
One, the main point was that we can't make things
worse that were already used, so I hope you guys
move forward with that as a recommendation as
soon as possible. It's something we really truly
need, to have a baseline and move forward from
there. Thank you very much.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. All right, and
we do have one written comment and let me just
get to that. Okay, great. So Bjorn Paulson
wrote: "Is this document available on your
website? And if so, please provide the URL." So
that document, further recommendations, was just
an example for Chair Paz to discuss. But I will
share the link in the chat for where the meeting
materials for this meeting are posted. Thank
you.

And Chair Paz, there are no other public comments at this time, so back to you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, I think we will advance to slide 20. Yes.

We're coming back to the discussion and priming for further community engagement. Again, this is a discussion that we started at the last meeting. And since then, there has been action on multiple levels.

One of the things that I did is I did submit the request with specific asks to the CEC and those include the -- it's getting late -- what I will call the Fact Sheets. So they will give us an update a little bit later on those Fact Sheets, and I also asked them if they can respond directly to the questions that have been submitted by Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability, and those questions were submitted in October. So, CEC will speak to where we are with that.

And the other thing that has happened is that, if you recall, Commissioner Olmedo, Vice Chair Ryan Kelley, and Frank Ruiz were going to be meeting as an ad hoc committee to discuss this
topic and I was able to join them on this committee, and Commissioner Olmedo will be giving us an update from that conversation. So, I will start with Commissioner Olmedo first to speak about the ad hoc group.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just give me a second and I will try to find my document here. There we are.

So, in the last meeting I brought up the importance of making sure that community engagement, as we have repeatedly heard, be a critical element to assure the success of our efforts. And I appreciate highlighting the letters and the constant asks of Leadership Council, and I know about your organizations, as well, and all the community leaders that have asked. I think it's a fair ask. And what I'm about to read here -- and I'll read it word by word as to what we have.

So first of all, Commissioners and Madam Chair, we want to propose an ad hoc committee on community engagement. The meeting that we had as an ad hoc committee included Commissioner Ryan Kelley, myself, Commissioner/Chair Sylvia Paz, and Commissioner Frank Ruiz.
The background on it is on Monday, January 10th of 2022, Governor Gavin Newsom presented a new budget proposal that focuses on fighting climate change and developing green energy opportunities. This entire past week, there had been a series of online engagement and outreach opportunities by the state's different secretaries and agencies.

This roll-out gives a road map to continue on the Governor's plan of a statewide engagement. And it's important that the CEC and the Lithium Valley Commission allow the affected communities to continue to dialogue and not only inform the residents, but also to listen to the concerns and advice. And proper engagement can also be delegated to community-based organizations with approval record of engagement and productive engagement that provides equity that cannot be an occasional activity, but rather a constant continuous engagement throughout this entire endeavor.

So with that said, the Ad Hoc Committee on Community Engagement will consist of no more than two official Commissioners, if required, but actually I would correct that and I will say it
would consist of three. And the reason for that
is you're proposing as an ad hoc, not as a
subcommittee, which from what I understand it
would not trigger the Bagley-Keene limitations.

Point 2 is that the Ad Hoc Committee will
exclusively work with local community-based
organizations in the Salton Sea Region, providing
proper community outreach and education in regard
to the extraction of Lithium. And also,
considering the fact that there is still the
ongoing characterization of extraction and
recovery, but for the purposes of what I'm
proposing, I'm calling it extraction. The Ad Hoc
Committee would develop materials in English,
Spanish, Purepecha, which is necessary,
community-based organizations, continuing
information about Lithium. Information will
range from upcoming Lithium Valley Commission
meetings to what Lithium is and what it is used
for. We've had much conversation of that today.
And thank you to Commissioner Rod Colwell, who
also is focuses to, you know, your offers of
bringing forth information.

Point 4 is with transparency in mind, the
subcommittee will regularly update local
community-based organizations on any new
devolution and interim discussions within the
Lithium Valley Commission.
The Ad Hoc Committee will work with local
community-based organizations and exercise all
options for proper community outreach. This will
include, but is not limited to informational
flyers, social media posts, presentations,
workshops, and tours.
The Ad Hoc Committee will coordinate with
local community-based organizations in order to
estimate a number of community members reached
and report back to the Lithium Valley Commission.
The Ad Hoc Committee will prioritize community-
based solutions and present solutions to the
Lithium Valley Commission.
The Ad Hoc Committee will regularly
report back on any and all information to the
Lithium Valley Commission. Lithium Valley
Commissioners not part of the Ad Hoc Committee
can but are not obligated to participate in
community outreach strategies.
The Lithium Valley Commission needs to be
allocated a budget to assure community engagement
strategies are implemented to achieve equity and
meaningful engagement into all activities of the Lithium Valley Commission.

So that's the list of and a little bit of background as to the importance of this Ad Hoc Committee, that it will continue to meet.

So, Madam Chair, I bring it back to you and to the Commissioners for consideration and advice, you know, how we can proceed on this.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So in this case we are not establishing any formal body. The group has already met, they're going to continue meeting in the same manner that they did today, they are going to be doing report outs to the Lithium Valley Commission on the efforts that they've taken, the issues that maybe they are seeing in the community. So they want to be very proactive and I thank you for doing that and to share the result of the conversation that was had I don't know how many days ago, a few weeks ago, and this is what they want to do, right? So one of the things that I do want to encourage is pairing up or teaming up with maybe some CEC support, whether that's the communications, I mean, recognizing that you all are busy people, you have your own organizations that you're
running, and if there is that support that we can establish that and make that request from the CEC to meet with you and collaborate with you on how to continue the engagement that you want to see. But I will invite both Frank Ruiz and Ryan Kelley to see if you want to add anything else.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: I would just add, Chairperson Paz, that it was a good conversation. There has been plenty of follow-up, and it's been discussed here today about the reason, the rationale for being able to explain what this is. And I fully support it. I'm ready to go out with Luiz and Frank and yourself and engage.

CHAIR PAZ: Great. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ: I have nothing to add at this time.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Jonathan?

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I just want to say that we're intending to commission our Lithium Recovery Demonstration Plant this spring. Right now, things are under construction. We've got an outage there, a planned outage, of course, you know, upwards of 400 contractors on site. But when things settle down we very much want to bring in community-based organizations to see our
operations, to see the Lithium demonstration
plant, and really to contribute any way we can on
outreach, education, and the like.

So I don't need to be part of this group,
and I certainly will work this through you, Chair
Paz, and then others and then this would not be a
commission-type meeting, we just want to get as
many -- you know, you don't drive by the
geothermal plants, you know, they're somewhat
isolated. And as soon as we can get the
demonstration plant up and going, we really do
want to bring folks in. And I simply will make
that pledge.

We had a town hall meeting, goodness,
last March. We haven't really had much to report
other than we're building a one-tenth commercial
scale plant to see if this thing works. And I
think that is commissioned and going, we
certainly want to do as much outreach and
education as we can.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Jonathan. I don't
want to speak for the committee, but I know any
opportunity to be able to see and experience what
it is that we're talking about makes it more real
for all of us and the community members included,
so we will remind you in the springtime.

Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yeah, just recognizing that many times organizations and community leaders often are the go-to’s for community information, either messengers or trusted sources, and that happens in any community, but I do want to acknowledge and recognize that the industry folks and probably more frequently Commissioner Colwell has extended invitations. So I do look forward to learning more about the operations, the industry, and getting as much information as possible, and certainly making more information available to other community organizations such as leadership, and I know Alianza is highly engaged in all of this, but there's Los Amigos and many others who are working to gather as much information.

I also want to make note that representing Environmental Justice organizations, you also want to build a knowledge and experience so that when we do these tours, we need to ask the right questions, able to understand, come with some level of understanding. So, Commissioner Colwell, we look forward to doing a
tour soon, but if we haven't accepted it's
because we want to make sure that we come in with
some good questions once we get there. So, thank
you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. If there are no
other questions, feedback for the Ad Hoc
Committee, we now transition to updates from the
CEC efforts.

So, regarding the letter that was
submitted by Leadership Council for Justice and
Accountability, in October and then again in
November, I have sent out a response letting them
know, and you all received a copy of this
response, letting them know that we highly depend
on the support, administrative support, technical
support from CEC, and so I have asked the CEC and
they have agreed to look at those questions and
work to answer the questions. So, this has
already been communicated. I want to know,
however, that, you know, the questions might
require CEC to coordinate or collaborate and
involve other agencies. So it will take a little
bit of time. But thank you, and we appreciate
the patience as we're working to respond to these
-- you know, to the concerns that the community
The other aspects are the CEC is developing Fact Sheets and they are anticipated to be finalized and made available in the next few weeks. I have seen the draft of one of them, and I'm providing feedback based on discussions we've had here, the needs and what we've heard from the community. So those are in development.

The Lithium Valley Commission will continue to receive updates and if they're speeded and timely, we can discuss the materials at future meetings. But those are, again, the efforts that we are taking on to further our engagement with the community. Are there any questions? No questions. Elisabeth, next slide.

So this is an opportunity to hear from members of the public on the efforts to continue to engage the community.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you, Chair Paz. So, if you're joining us by Zoom on your computer, please use the "raise hand" feature. And if you have called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand, and then *6 to unmute your phone line.

We'll go first to any raised hands in the Zoom application, then to the phone, and then any
written comments. I do see a hand raised by Jose Flores. You should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. FLORES: Once again, Jose Flores and I want to show my appreciation for the consideration of having an Ad Hoc Committee, it's a great idea. The ideas and ideals of a community representation is imperative in our neck of the woods. Also, the traditional representation by proxy in our community needs to be to a minimum. And just to close, I think the nexus to our community must not only be informational, but also to have a platform to receive input, questions, and concerns. Thank you for your time.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And the next hand raised is Mariela Loera. You should be able to unmute.

MS. LOERA: Thank you. I just want to say thank you for all of the effort that went into doing this to give special tools for an ad hoc group that was put together and all of you who participate on that.

I do want to highlight the need, and this was mentioned earlier, but I wanted to mention it -- the transparency in these conversations with
community they need also for when community is asking questions, to respond to those questions in a direct way, and not in a way that is avoiding that question. If there's not an answer to that question, be very clear about that, as well, because that will also just discourage community and makes them more skeptical of what is being said.

And then also just to keep in mind, you know, a lot of folks in this group already know this, but to keep them learning the history of the region and the cumulative pollutants that they are already living with and all of that.

But overall, thank you for all of these efforts.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And the next hand raised is Victor Beas. You should be able to unmute.

MR. BEAS: Hello everyone, Madam Chair Paz, Commissioners. I just would like to support the idea to create an Ad Hoc Committee for engagement because, I mean, I've seen and you saw, as well, on the November workshop, there was a lot of participation from the community and there were a lot of questions and some of them probably were not answered because of the time,
so I think it's very important to being in contact with the community and there's a lot of expertise on this Commission, you know, Alianza with Mrs. Paz, and then also Comite Civico and so I think this is really an important topic and should be discussed. And of course, I agree to create a committee. So that's it. I just want to support the idea to create this. Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And the next hand raise is Will Pettitt.

MR. PETTITT: Hi. This is Will Pettitt. I'm the Executive Director of Geothermal Rising. So, thank you for allowing me to speak and hello Commissioners and Chair Paz. I just wanted to accept direct community engagement, but I just wanted to bring awareness to everybody about Geothermal Rising.

We are the Trade and Industry Association for geothermal energy. And we have about 1,300 members and over 90 industrial corporate members. And so, we really represent the geothermal industry. One of the things that we do each year is we have the largest annual conference, which many of you will know about. The conference is really dedicated to geothermal energy and getting
the kind of messaging out about geothermal, but obviously now with this fantastic opportunity for Lithium recovery, in co-production with geothermal, there's a lot of excitement about that in the industry.

So, the conference this year is in August, it's the 28th through the 31st of August in Reno, and obviously everybody is invited to attend. We have a great program coming together for that which Lithium recovery is a big piece.

In our technical program on our exhibition floor, as well as having workshops and field courses, as well, so you know, there's a lot of opportunities for engagement with the industry, as well as wider engagement outside with communities and specialists outside the geothermal industry, so, we welcome everybody's participation. And thank you very much for the opportunity to speak. And I just want to say, you guys, this is a fantastic commission and you're doing a really great job. So please keep it up. Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. There are no written comments at this time, so back to you, Chair Paz.
CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Thank you for those good comments. I do want to note and appreciate the response and the support from the members of the public for this Ad Hoc Committee, and clarify that the Ad Hoc Committee is active, they activated themselves the moment that they met a few weeks ago, and they will continue to be active.

And I want to thank the Commissioners who volunteered to be part of that work, which includes Frank Ruiz, Luis Olmedo, and Vice Chair Ryan Kelley. So those members of the LVC Commission, I have the members of the Ad Hoc Group, and they will continue to further our efforts to engage the community, as was presented by Luis. So again, thank you everyone for these efforts. Next slide.

We are coming down now to the acceptance of Minutes. So, I hope you all had some time to review the past Minutes. Are there any questions at this point around the Minutes?


CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Jonathan. I will come back to the vote after we open this section.
to public comment. So, Elisabeth, we can open
the public comment for the approval of the past
Minutes.

        MS. DE JONG: Yes. Okay, thank you. So
if you're joining us by Zoom or on your computer,
please use the "raise hand" feature, and if
you've called in please dial *9 to raise your
hand, and *6 to unmute your phone line. First,
we'll go to the hands raised in the Zoom
application, then any phone calls, and then
written comments.

        I don't see any hands raised. There is a
question, but we'll save that for the general
public comment period, as it's not pertaining to
the Minutes. So back to you, Chair Paz. Oh, I'm
so sorry, a hand just raised. Let me go ahead
and check. Will Pettitt, you should be able to
unmute yourself.

        MR. PETTITT: Yes, thank you, Elisabeth.
One thing I just wanted to raise awareness again
is that I forgot to mention in my previous
comment is that our call for abstracts is
currently opened for the Geothermal Rising
Conference this year and it closes on Monday. So
if you have a burning desire to get a paper into
the Conference, then please get your abstract in by Monday. Thank you very much. Thanks for the opportunity.

MS. DE JONG: All right, thank you. Back to you, Chair Paz, for the vote.

CHAIR PAZ: So, there was a motion by Jonathan. Is there a second?

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Second.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I think that was Rod. So, I will do roll call now.

Commissioner Castaneda: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Colwell.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I don't think Commissioner Dolega was here.

COMMISSIONER DOLEGA: Nope, I'm here.

CHAIR PAZ: Oh, perfect. Sorry.

Commissioner Dolega.

COMMISSIONER DOLEGA: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Flores.

MS. DE JONG: Does not look available on Zoom anymore.

CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Thank you.
COMMISSIONER HANKS: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Kelley. Vice Chair Kelley.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Lopez.

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Olmedo.

MS. DE JONG: He still shows on Zoom, so maybe you can come back to him.


COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Scott.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I think Commissioner Soto had to leave early.

Commissioner Weisgall.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Coming back to Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So we have a
quorum and they accepted the Minutes.

The next item is on the sub body member list. If there are no actions related to this topic, we just want to know that the CEC has prepared and will post an updated list based on the discussions during our last meeting. And also want to know that the CPUC Appointee seat is currently vacant, and we will update all the documents when a new appointment is made.

I think that's it. There are no questions on this item, it was mostly an informational item. We can go to the next slide.

So at this point, we're coming into our media and legislative updates. I believe we have some staff from the CEC. Lindsay?

MS. BUCKLEY: Greetings, Commissioners, Chair Paz. I will keep my update brief today. I provided this list of clips to staff, to docket, so everyone can have access because it has been a busy six weeks or so since we've spoken.

A significant amount of national coverage on the topic of Lithium at the Salton Sea from CBS, NBC, Politico, CNBC, Yahoo, as well, also International AFP and Euro News. So, there is a lot to go over and a lot to see.
There is also a significant amount of local coverage on the issues, Calexico Chronicle, does it review Imperial Valley Press reported Lithium at the Salton Sea in the last six weeks. We've also seen some coverage as a result of the Governor's budget announcement and mentioned during his press conference.

So again, this is a lot of coverage and I've provided this to staff, they will docket it so that everybody can check this out for themselves.

Also notable, there's a number of articles in Spanish, including the Yahoo article, and I'd encourage folks to share those, some good explanations of what's happening at the Salton Sea, and some excellent videos, as well, from the national coverage.

And then lastly, there is a poem that was printed in the L.A. Times, related to Lithium at the Salton Sea, that I included in the clips and it did get a lot of reach and it's an interesting piece. So that's it for me and I will pass it over to my colleagues in the Governor Affairs Office.

CHAIR PAZ: I don't think we have any
legislative updates regarding geothermal at this time. Is that correct, Elisabeth?

MS. DE JONG: That is correct. Seanna Griffis from our office is on if you'd like anything from her, though.

CHAIR PAZ: Unless there is anything from my colleagues. (Undiscernible) or someone from the office will continue to provide us updates as legislation gets introduced. So, thank you for that.

I will now move on to updates from Lithium Valley Commissioners. So, this is an opportunity where any of the Commissioners can use time to give us an update on things you might be working on, related to Lithium or Lithium activities.

I'd request that our Commissioners consider limiting their comments, so make them brief. I'm not going to be timing you, but we have been asked to be equitable with our public comment period, so maybe try to keep it under three minutes. And I will do this in the form of roll call to make sure that everyone has an opportunity to provide updates. I will start with Vice Chair Ryan Kelley. Any updates, Vice
Chair Kelley?

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: No. Thank you, Sylvia.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Any updates, Commissioner Castaneda?

COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: No. Thank you very much.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Any updates, Commissioner Colwell?

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Just a brief update, Chair Paz. First, I'd like to commend Vice Chair Kelley's work on the big vision and plan for the Valley. I mean, there's a lot going on here, well before the Commission, as was mentioned earlier, was formed. So a big shout out to Ryan.

On the Hell's Kitchen project, we've completed our second production well, very good wells, good Lithium content, good staying resource as far as physical work goes, and we continue to negotiate more Lithium offtake bills. Thank you, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Dolega.

COMMISSIONER DOLEGA: No update. Thank
you.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Flores.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: (Inaudible reply).

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Hanks.

COMMISSIONER HANKS: No updates.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Lopez.

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: (Inaudible reply).

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just a brief comment to say that, when we're planning the present and future, it's important to recognize that in the past we could have had a well-established Electric Vehicle charging station network in Imperial, and definitely in Coachella. But we can do it now. And I don't think we need to wait for a lot of what's being discussed here. That infrastructure should be built as we're speaking. This is stuff that we should have had. And I can't stress enough that we've got to play some catch up. And I'm hoping in the next few months that we're getting repeatedly good news about resources coming into our community to make them affordable and to be able to build it. Thank
CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Ruiz.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ: No.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Scott.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Not at this time.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Weisgall.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I've talked enough.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I don't have an update, but I do want to thank all of the Commissioners who are making themselves available when media calls and they're coming on tours and you're answering their questions. I know it takes time from you and your already busy schedules, but I've been aware of many of those requests to speak with some of the Commissioners, so thank you for that.

We will now go to public comment.

MS. DE JONG: All right, so while we're getting that screen back up, if you are joining us by Zoom on your computer, please use the "raise hand" feature. And if you've called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand, and then *6 to
unmute your phone line. First, we'll go to any
hands raised, then the phone lines, and then any
written comments.

The first hand raised is Thomas Tortez.

You should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. TORTEZ: Can you hear me?

MS. DE JONG: Yes, we can hear you.

MR. TORTEZ: Okay, very good. Thank you
for the opportunity to have me on, Chair Paz and
California Energy Commission members. My name is
Thomas Tortez, Jr. I'm Chairman of the Torres
Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians. We are a
Federally recognized tribe. And I did submit my
comments, so I hope that got on today's agenda
and can be memorialized for this meeting. Again,
I just wanted to make sure that my comments are
on there.

And just two concerns that the tribe
basically has. And when we're talking about the
rulemaking that the Energy Commission has
adopted, especially the Docket 210IR-02, when
we're talking about transferring the State
requirements to the County, the Torres Martinez
Tribe would greatly welcome the opportunity to
meet with the Energy Commission, the County and
the California Geological Energy Management Division on any regional Lithium extraction in the geothermal plant, proposals early in the permitting process.

The second concern the Tribe has is making sure that the Tribe is doing all that we can do to encourage the Commission to adopt an inclusive workforce. I know we talked about that earlier with the other public comments, developing workforce development opportunities within the Lithium Valley, Imperial County. So, we just respectfully request to be included again in the initiatives and the job opportunities that we'll avail during this event.

And those are the main concerns of the Tribe, so I appreciate the invitation to be here to discuss all of the opportunities abounding in the total Coachella Valley, Southern California, Imperial County, and even parts of Arizona.

Thank you for your time and consideration and, again, I look forward to hearing any comments on my submitted statement to the agenda. Thank you, Chairman Paz and Energy Commission members.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And I did just include in the chat a link to the Lithium Valley...
Commission Docket where you can find the
submittal that Thomas was referring to.

The next raised hand is by Charlene
Wardlow. You should be able to unmute.

MS. WARDLOW: Good afternoon. Charlene
Wardlow. I am the Geothermal Program Manager for
the California Geologic Energy Management
Division. We're one of the agencies under the
Department of Conservation.

And I just wanted to advise the
Commission and members of the public that on
Monday, January 31st, 2022, we will finally be
posting a Notice of a Public Workshop and Notice
of Public Comment Period on the Pre-Rulemaking
for the Development of Updates to the Statewide
Geothermal Regulations.

And there will be two public workshops,
they'll be virtual, one will be March 8th from
6:30 to 8:30, and that one will be in Spanish;
and then one on March 10th that will be in
English.

And I'll just say, these regulations,
many of them are 40-50 years old and we have
learned a few things in that time period, and
most of the regulations have to do with oversight
of the well drilling and well operations, and
oversight of the resource side of the operations.

They will be posted on our website: www.conservation.ca.gov under our rulemaking page, and we hope to get a lot of input from the public and the operators so we can get these regulations updated into the 21st Century. Thank you very much.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And the next hand raise is Tom Sephton. You should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. SEPHTON: Thank you. I'd like to say that, as current Board President of the EcoMedia Compass local nonprofit -- and directed to Jonathan Weisgall -- we would like to take you up on your offer to have a tour and learn more about your demonstration plant under construction at Region 1. We would appreciate any opportunity to learn more about how it works and to share that with the public. It's a very key part of our role as a community organization to share information with the public relating to everything in this Salton Sea Region.

And I'll give you a quick update, actually, your Region 1 plants are coming out of
their maintenance shutdown and are starting up today. We have beautiful columns of geothermal steam rising up right now, so you're about to be back on line. Thanks.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. We do have a written comment from Nilda Ruiz. It says: "Thank you for listening to the community's needs for engagement with the Lithium Valley Commission in the and the work put in to start a community-focused space. Have there been discussions about how these ad hoc committee meetings are going to be held, i.e., virtual, in person, or hybrid?"

That is the only written comment at this time, so back to you, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And we will open to general public comment.

MS. DE JONG: All right. So those instructions one more time: if you are joining us by Zoom on your computer, please use the "raise hand" feature. If you've called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand, and *6 to unmute your phone line. We'll go to hands raised in the Zoom application first, then the phone lines, and then any written comments.

There is a hand raise by Cristina
Marquez. You should be able to unmute yourself.

MS. MARQUEZ: Hello. Good evening, now, right? It's 5:04. I'll make this brief. I just wanted to say thank you so much for the time that you guys are putting into this. We really appreciate it and I'm very excited about the ad hoc group. Also looking forward to the Workforce Development panel next month and I hope that we can still possibly have somebody on that panel, that would be highly appreciated. We're so excited also because we do have 68 apprentices out in Imperial Valley, and that doesn't include all the journeymen and the electrical trainees that we have out there, as well, already working.

So, I just wanted to make sure you guys were aware that we do have the workforce, as Hector Meza had stated earlier, and we're excited to complete this work, especially the work like the Atlas Project that we have the project labor again at work. So again, thank you so much on behalf of IBEW Local 569. Take care. Have a good night.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And we do have one comment in the Q&A from Tom Sephton that says: "Nice to see the baby," and that's
directed to you, Chair Paz.

So with that, I don't see anymore general comments. Back to you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Thank you for the conversation today and for the public comments, I presume there was a recommendation from our group meeting and you all are still on our list.

Jonathan and I will be working to reach out to the speakers in time for the February workshop. So at this point, just a reminder that our next regular meeting is February 24th. And the meeting is now adjourned. Thank you everyone.

(The meeting adjourned at 5:06 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 10th day of February, 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

February 10, 2022