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*Comment Received From: Nikola Lakic
Submitted On: 2/17/2022
Docket Number: 20-LITHIUM-01*

**Nikola Lakic - Comment following the virtual Lithium Valley
Commission Meeting conducted on Thurs, Jan 27, 2022 (1 of 6)**

Additional submitted attachment is included below.



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February 17, 2022

California Energy Commission

Docket: Unit, MS-4

Re: Docket No. 20-LITHIUM-1

715 P Street

Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

LithiumValleyCommission@energy.ca.gov

Cc: docket@energy.ca.gov

Subject: Docket Number: 20-LITHIUM-1

Title: My comment following the virtual Lithium Valley Commission Meeting conducted on Thursday, January 27, 2022 – Nikola Lakic.

Greetings, Chair, Paz, and Commissioners:

Following the virtual meeting on Thursday, January 27, 2022, I am sending my comment to be included in the record.

A few observations:

I am thankful for the opportunity to say a few words during the meeting. I read the transcript of my short comment (I rolled up during the meeting) and was able to understand about 50% of what I commented. Very possible the voice recognition program has difficulties interpreting everyone's pronunciation. Also, very possible I am talking too fast trying to say too much in a limited 3-minutes. This is one of the reasons for writing this comment - to clarify me, and to write in comfort - without the pressure of being cut-off at any second during my comment.

To clarify my 3-minutes comment during the meeting: (Paraphrasing) –

Good afternoon. Thank you very much, Chair Paz and Commissioners for this opportunity to say a few words. I was listening to the presentation and debate, and I see some friction. Commissioner Jonathan (Weisgall) was saying that there is a plan for the restoration of the Salton Sea and a plan for what you are doing right now – a plan for extraction of lithium. That is true but that is wrong because there is a (single) solution. I happen to be the author of that proposal that unite restoration of the Sultan Sea and Harnessing lithium from geothermal brine.

Commissioner Steve Castaneda argued about revenue and how to share it. It will be more and more of that. Please read my proposal, I did send



you one extensive letter (15 pages). I hope you read it. If you didn't, please read it. This is not the opportunity for me to speak about my proposal.

But (I can say) it would unite all of you. It would be very good for the community. We are talking about half a billion, to a billion in revenue (every year) - in addition, that can be generated from the extraction of lithium from geothermal brine, - so it's not something to ignore. My expertise is exactly that, solving problems like this. I am a graduate engineer architect, with nine semesters, 38 exams, plus graduate work (5-6 months). I graduated (with a score) 10 out of 10.

I spent a lot of time working on it, unfortunately, nobody (none of you) invited me to explain it - nobody asked me a question about it. I will send some emails to all commissioners if you have time to take one hour (or two), of your time.

I will be glad to visit each of you separately if necessary. It is very important.

We are talking about the cost of the project which is only about 15 billion. But it is much much more than just importing seawater. We are talking about revenue between half a billion and a billion dollars. My proposed estimate numbers are very conservative. That is in addition to tourism and in addition to your way of producing lithium. So don't be selfish. Don't just look short into something (Don't be shortsighted). See a brother picture. I will be glad to see each of you. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

Sorry for the unclear sentences – I was trying to say too much in a limited 3-minutes.

It is frustrating seeing Commissioners repeating their statements which reinforces my earlier criticisms.

I would like to mention just a few noticeable moments.

(I) At one moment, Commissioner, Jonathan Weisgall mentioned the existence of two separate plans (projects) - **a**) Extraction of Lithium; and **b**) Restoration of the Salton Sea – saying that they (he) are not responsible and should not pay for cleaning already polluted Lake.

(II) It was noticeable the obvious tension between some commissioners about how much money will a certain group, agencies, counties deserve and will get from revenue generated from the production of lithium. Phrases such as “gloves



off” were used – implying that talk will be tough, if needed, to prove their deserved piece of the pie.

(III) On the same subject, at one moment Commissioner Ryan Kelley said that the Imperial County is the Lithium Valley – implying that the imperial County deserves the biggest piece of the pie. He also mentioned that he is one who started talking about lithium several years ago and with his effort make all this possible – obviously implying that he is important and deserves a substantial piece of the pie.

My comments:

Regarding the statement in paragraph (II), - It is realistic to expect more of such tension for control of the revenue. I would like to remind everyone involved not to be selfish and short-sighted, especially Commissioners who represent the environment, the health of the people, different communities, tribes, wildlife, etc., - whatever amount that you expect to receive is manipulative and insignificant. An appropriate analogy would be “carrots-and-stick” (a metaphor for catching a rabbit). Try to see a bigger picture – besides your limited and insignificant benefice – will be subsequent consequences for nearby communities if the “current course of action” continues and if the Salton Sea is lost.

Regarding the statement in paragraph (III), I would like to say that during the meeting, and the previous meeting too, Commissioner Ryan Kelley presented himself as an open-minded, friendly person working in interest to the community and the environment, willing to hear other pieces of advice, transparent in his doings, and offering tours to those who challenge his actions to prove them wrong. My experience with members of the Salton Sea Authority (SSA) where Mr. Rayan Kelley is the most influential and leading director, supervisor, representing Imperial County, is just the opposite. In fact, during one of the Salton Sea Authority Board Meetings, he consulted with the SSA’s attorney Mr. Robert W. Hargraves for legal advice on how to stop me from my frequent 3-minutes public comments (speeches) alleging that my language is derogatory. Thanks to pandemic and Zoom webinars, that was/is recorded on March 25, 2021. I am in dispute with the SSA since 2013 and my comments were/are not derogatory. In fact, they are powerful, truthful, exposing wrongdoing of the SSA and IID towards the wellbeing of the Salton Sea and nearby communities, with a slight element of frustration accumulated after eight (8) years of systematic ignorance and manipulative conduct. Mr. Robert W. Hargraves explained to Commissioner Ryan Kelley and his collaborators’ Supervisor, Manuel Perez, and GM, Patrick O’Dowd about the difficulties of such conduct because of the First Amendment. Also, regarding transparency, I would like to mention that once I read a transcript of one SSA’s Board meeting. The transcript had documented



the meeting word by word except for the period of my 3-minutes comment. (NOTE: Usually, in my 3-minutes comments (1-page), I would make 10-12 powerful points exposing the faultiness of the “current course of action”, and subsequent consequences, and offered to make a presentation to them of the better feasible solution). In that transcript, my 3-minutes comment was summarized in one sentence: *“Nikola Lakic (me) was talking about his proposal”*.

I am mentioning this because it is my moral obligation to correct the impression that Commissioner Rayan Kelley painted about himself. (NOTE: The truth matters.)

Although it might appear that the mentioned case is not relevant to the Lithium Valley Commission’s task – I think it is. The extraction of Lithium, as currently planned, - “Perimeter/Brine Lake” accepted in 2016 in collaboration with the SSA, CNRA, and Tetra-Tech is based on the destruction (shrinkage) of the Salton Sea for benefit of extraction of lithium.

It is important to say that my proposal which has been systematically ignored by the SSA does not interfere with the extraction of lithium from geothermal brine – actually provides an additional 1,000 tons of lithium per year from the Salton Sea’s water. My proposal prevents the destruction of the Lake and provides the restoration of the Salton Sea. Because Commissioner Rayan Kelley is also the leading Director at the SSA, - the mentioned case is very relevant.

Many people know that something is wrong with the “current course of action”. People complain about the current situation and are wary, rightfully so, about the incoming ecological disaster but have no necessary knowledge to argue successfully against it because they are not aware of the whole situation, or they have no technical background or are not aware of the existence of a feasible solution (my proposal). Therefore, it is my moral obligation to say it.

I would like to clarify that I have nothing personally against Commissioner Ryan Kelley or any other member, but I do strongly disagree with the “current course of action” and the manipulative tactics that have been used to achieve the current status, that Commissioner Ryan Kelley is taking credit for.

(NOTE: “manipulative tactics” are keeping the public, state, and federal officials intentionally misinformed about the existence of my proposal during the period when important decisions were made. Also, using wording, in brochures and during workshops, such as “Smaller, Sustainable Lake”, and “Healthier Lake” – knowing very well that the truth



is just the opposite – the truth is that the Lake would be smaller, saltier, smellier, and more polluted every year and would inevitably end up as smaller sustainable cesspool. Also, supporting several “wishful thinking” and “speculative” concepts just to “muddy the water” with a purpose to distract attention and reduce a precious time for discussion of the real solution that interfered with the concept that they initiated and supported. Also, along this line, it is important to mention that ignoring my concept since 2013, and avoiding dialog perfectly works towards the fulfillment of their mission – the lake continues to shrink, and more lakebed is exposed).

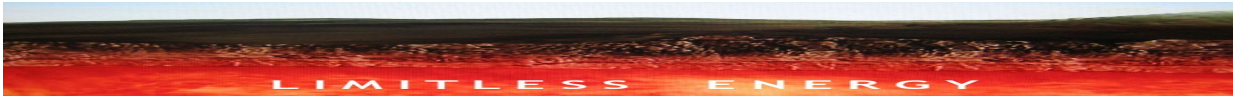
I am not mentioning the case above to degrade Mr. Kelley’s reputation but rather, hopefully, to prevent manipulative conduct from happening again. We must communicate and move forward together with the best solution that is in interest to the Salton Sea, environment, extraction of lithium, and wellbeing of the nearby communities. But first, I urge you (Commissioners) to wait for the results of the Panel of independent reviewers, and not to make critical decisions before it, as is, unfortunately, the case with the SSMP in collaboration with the management of the (US Bureau of Reclamation, Salton Sea Authority (SSA), Riverside County, Imperial County, Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD), and IID. Based on the current course of action they are already excluding the importation of seawater as a feasible solution, and they are proceeding with the implementation of nonsensical projects. Someone must be held accountable for such a serious and expensive mistake. (NOTE: The countability matters.)

I urge everyone involved to consider the following: “The ego, special interest, and personal interest must be taken out of the equation when dealing with the Salton Sea, Environment, and Health of the nearby population”.

I am not expecting you (Commissioners) to evaluate my work, especially not the technical aspect of it because I am not familiar with each of your educational backgrounds, but I do respectfully urge you to read my material at least summaries of the five segments, to familiarize yourself with my proposal before you vote on important issues and before you make your reports - to learn that there is a better solution for going forward than the “current course of action” that

some of the Commissioners pushing for - which is the destruction of the Lake for their selfish interest.

The absurdity of the situation is that with the implementation of my proposal the extraction of lithium could continue without destroying the Lake. All that needs to be done is to build a dike (levee) around their desired location. That is not difficult



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to understand, and it is not a difficult task. But it requires some reading, consultation, and open-mindedness.

The main values of my work are creativity and simplicity. At this junction, I would like to state the following: “Arrogance and ignorance are the biggest obstacles to the realization of any potentially successful business opportunity”.

As you might know, by now, I am fighting this war, alone, since 2013, to save and restore the Salton Sea against unreasonable but powerful and united opposition.

My concern is that some of you Commissioners who represent the environment, the health of the people, different communities, tribes, wildlife, etc., might prioritize the wrong issue – which is how much you will get from the revenue of the Lithium extraction - getting a few employments and silently go with the flow, and accepting the destruction (shrinkage) of the Lake as the only and inevitable course – instead of focusing on a feasible solution for saving the Salton Sea, Environment and the Health of the nearby communities and in the process transforming nearby communities from poverty into prosperity.

I respectfully urge you to use common sense – and not to make critical decisions (votes) on issues that reinforce wrongdoing and ignore the import of seawater which is a fundamental part of the whole project for the restoration of the Salton Sea which is, by the way, in harmony with the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA) and would be beneficial to the extraction of lithium from geothermal brine and much more.

A few additional useful information:

It came to my attention the article titled: **“In search of ‘Lithium Valley’: why energy companies see riches in the California Desert”**.

Here is the link to the article: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/sep/27/salton-sea-california-lithium-mining>.

In this article Commissioner, Rod Colwell was quoted saying the following - referring to shrinkage of the Lake: *“Let private enterprise deal with it”*. Also, he

said, *“We’re trying to commercialize an environmental disaster.”* Also, was written, *“Colwell keeps track of the Salton Sea’s water levels because as it evaporates, more land becomes available for Controlled Thermal Resources”*.

This article reinforces (proves) the accusations that I stated in my numerous public comments.



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I would like to use this opportunity to summarize for you again the critical part that you are dealing with.

As of today, there are two plans - **a)** Extraction of Lithium from geothermal brine; and **b)** An attempt for the restoration of the Salton Sea – SSMP – 10-years plan, and related nonsensical projects. The proponents of the plan “a” want to get rid of the Lake because they need several miles of dry land (lakebed) at the southeast part of the Lake for new geothermal power plants that would also extract lithium from geothermal brine. The proponents of the “destruction” of the Lake do not care that several miles of the exposed lakebed, (by shrinkage of the Lake), at the southeast part of the Lake that they desire, will also expose a hundred miles of lakebed around the shallow Salton Sea.

I understand the need for lithium and its importance – in fact, with the implementation of my proposal will be an additional 1,000 tons of lithium per year. All I am asking you at this time is to understand that by installing appropriate dikes (levees) around the desired area - the Lake would not need to be destroyed. By doing so, according to my plan, we would be able to fill up the central section of the Lake back to the water level of the 1950s and 60s which was about -225 feet, reinstate marine bays, beaches, etc., and manage the North and South Lakes (wetlands) at ease despite restricted (limited) water flow from All American Canal and Coachella Canal caused by the Quantification Settlement Agreement (QSA).

In my previous “Public Comment” letter (15-pages) dated January 4, 2022, titled: **My comment following the virtual Lithium Valley Commission Meeting conducted on Thursday, December 16, 2021 – Nikola Latic**” – I sent (docked) only a Segment (I) which summarizes my proposal for the restoration of the Salton Sea. I did not want to dilute the importance of my Public Comment with too much information at the same time. If you did not already, please read my Public Comment.

If you would like to learn more about my work and to see additional Segments (I-V) please visit my website preferably on the laptop, at:

www.GeothermalWorldwide.com. Click on “OUR TECHNOLOGY” => at the bottom of dropdown links => click on the “PRESENTATION AT EL CENTRO”.

Here are some links:

Harnessing Energy and Water in The Salton Sea (**Segment I**)
(System for Importing Seawater

<http://www.geothermalworldwide.com/images/ImportingSeawater-1.pdf>



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Harnessing Energy and Water in The Salton Sea (**Segment II**)
(Harnessing Hydro Power)

<http://www.geothermalworldwide.com/images/HarnessingHydroPower-2.pdf>

Harnessing Energy and Water in the Salton Sea (**Segment III**)
(System for Harnessing Solar Energy)

<http://www.geothermalworldwide.com/ppp-cnra.html>

Harnessing Geothermal Energy with the Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal
Generator and Self Contained In-Ground Geothermal Heat Exchanger

(**Segment IV**) (Harnessing Geothermal Energy in The Salton Sea Area)

<http://www.geothermalworldwide.com/images/HarnessingGeothermalEnergy-4.pdf>

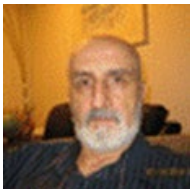
System for Drilling Deeper and Wider Wellbores (**Segment V**)

<http://www.geothermalworldwide.com/images/DrillingDeeperWellbores-5.pdf>

For the record, I am also including (docking) separately five Segments (I-V).

Sincerely,

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