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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

In the matter of:)
) Docket No.: 20-LITHIUM-01
Forum Presentation)
_____)

LITHIUM VALLEY COMMISSION

REMOTE VIA ZOOM

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022
9:00 A.M.

Reported by:

Elise Hicks

APPEARANCES

COMMISSIONERS

Silva Paz, Chair

Ryan E. Kelley, Vice Chair

Steve Castaneda

Rod Colwell

Roderic Dolega (Absent)

Miranda Flores

James C. Hanks

Arthur Lopez (Richie)

Luis Olmedo

Frank Ruiz

Manfred Scott (Absent)

Thomas Soto (Absent)

Jonathan Weisgall

CEC STAFF

Elisabeth de Jong

Lindsay Buckley

Natalie Lee

CEC PUBLIC ADVISOR

Rosemary Avalos

APPEARANCES

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jose Flores

Eric Reyes

Victor Beas

Tom Sephton

Brad Anderson

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P R O C E E D I N G S

9:00 A.M.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2022

CHAIR PAZ: Good morning, everyone.

Welcome to the Lithium Valley Commission Meeting.

We are providing Spanish interpretation for attendees who are joining us in this Zoom meeting through their computers or tablets. As a reminder unfortunately -- Zoom interpretation does not work for Attendees who are only joining by phone.

I will now invite the representative from the CEC's Public Advisor's Office to give instructions in Spanish on how to access interpretation.

MS. DE JONG: Rosemary has joined us.

MS. AVALOS: (Speaking Spanish)

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Next slide, please.

Just a reminder for all of us Commissioners to please select the English Channel so that everyone can hear us throughout the meeting. Next slide, please.

So now I will pass it over to Elisabeth to give us a welcome and instruction

MS. DE JONG: Thank you so much, Chair

1 Paz. This meeting is being conducted entirely
2 remotely via Zoom consistent with Governor
3 Newsom's Executive Order N-1-22 to improve and
4 enhance public access to state agency meetings
5 during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

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

18 To provide public comment, please use the
19 "raise hand" feature in your Zoom application.
20 If you called in by phone, you will need to dial
21 *9 to raise your hand and *6 to unmute yourself.

22 When you speak, please provide your name
23 and affiliation, and please say and spell your
24 name for the Court Reporter. There is a Q&A
25 window in the Zoom application, which you may use

1 to type questions and comments, and staff will
2 relay those comments.

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

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

12 Meeting materials, including the Notice
13 and presentation slide deck will be posted online
14 in the Lithium Valley Commission docket and on
15 the Lithium Valley Commission webpage. Thank
16 you. Back to you, Chair Paz.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We are now going
18 to do Roll Call to determine a quorum.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Castaneda.

20 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Here.

21 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Colwell.

22 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yeah.

23 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Dolega.

24 COMMISSIONER DOLEGA: (No audible reply)

25 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Flores.

1 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Present.

2 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Hanks.

3 COMMISSIONER HANKS: (No audible reply)

4 CHAIR PAZ: Vice Chair Ryan Kelley.

5 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: (No audible reply)

6 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Lopez.

7 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Here.

8 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo.

9 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Here.

10 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Paz; I'm here.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Ruiz.

12 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Presente.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Scott.

14 COMMISSIONER SCOTT: (No audible reply)

15 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Soto.

16 COMMISSIONER SOTO: (No audible reply)

17 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Weisgall.

18 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Present.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We do have eight

20 members, so we have a quorum. Next slide,

21 please.

22 This is the agenda that we will be going

23 through today. It has been posted online.

24 Next slide, please.

25 This slide is a reminder of the

1 legislative deadline we shared at our last
2 meeting and it's only for us to, you know, have a
3 context sort of what's approaching and where
4 there might be more of a sense of urgency. So, I
5 want to note that tomorrow -- is it tomorrow? --
6 no, February 18th, we have a couple days, is the
7 last day for bills to be introduced.

8 So, for this meeting, I think the
9 majority of the focus will probably be around
10 solidifying some ideas for bills. I know that
11 Assembly Member Garcia is interested in
12 supporting the ideas that come out of this body,
13 and they have a number of bills ready that they
14 can move.

15 So, for today the more concrete that we
16 can be with our ideas, I think the more
17 successful we will be in advancing those. But
18 also, as a reminder that even though the deadline
19 is February 18th, that is not the only time to
20 shape the bills, like we still have the
21 legislative process that we can go through. Next
22 slide, please. That was the same timeline in
23 Spanish.

24 Okay, so again, the day of the January
25 Commission Meeting, there was the members'

1 recommendations made by Commissioners and today
2 we are convening largely to continue our
3 discussion on these recommendations and, like I
4 mentioned earlier, try to define a little bit
5 more on the idea for the legislative actions we
6 might want to take.

7 In order to do that, we do need to talk a
8 little bit about the process, given the short
9 window and how often we need to say, Commission,
10 I would like to recommend that this body assigns
11 one or more, no more than two, maybe Legislators
12 and request the CEC to support those -- not
13 Legislators, Commissioners -- that we assign no
14 more than two Commissioners and request the CEC
15 to support those Commissioners in a meeting with
16 Legislators, be it Assembly Member Garcia, or
17 Senator Wessel (Phonetic), who have been
18 following activities of the Lithium Valley
19 Commission, and are supportive of our efforts,
20 and sort of assign them to represent the Lithium
21 Valley Commission and the priorities that come
22 out of our discussion today.

23 My recommendation would be perhaps that
24 it is myself and Vice Chair Ryan Kelley that can
25 take this on and, again, with a request of staff

1 or support from the CEC staff.

2 So that is the first sort of
3 recommendation in terms of how to move forward
4 with any ideas. Today, though, for this item, I
5 would need a motion and an action in order to
6 delegate that authority. Is there -- I'll open
7 it for a discussion before we go into the actual
8 legislative recommendation.

9 MS. DE JONG: We have a hand raised from
10 Commissioner Castaneda.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Yes, Commissioner Castaneda.

12 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Madam Chair,
13 citing the fact that there doesn't seem to be
14 anybody really stepping up to speak. I can go
15 ahead and make a motion to support your
16 recommendation.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
18 Weisgall?

19 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yeah. Before you
20 want to entertain that, I'm prepared today with
21 really a laundry list of, I don't know, eight to
22 10 specific recommendations. But I guess, no, I
23 guess I'm comfortable. I mean, I guess that's
24 appropriate for the Chair and the Co-Chair to
25 carry the water of the Commission. Yeah. I mean

1 obviously I will, to the extent folks are
2 comfortable with any role of my recommendations,
3 I'll embellish as much as I can and provide
4 whatever support I can.

5 And obviously, you know if Legislators
6 want specific input, I can. But, no, no, I'm
7 pretty comfortable with that. I just wanted to
8 think that -- I should have thought that through
9 silently instead of out loud but having done that
10 I guess I'm comfortable with it.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. No, it helps to
12 think it out loud. Again, we would be -- the
13 representatives would only be bringing forth what
14 we as a Commission decide, and that doesn't
15 prevent anybody else from having meetings and
16 doing your own advocacy with Legislators. I see
17 Commissioner Colwell.

18 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yeah, Chair Paz,
19 among the same lines, I think -- thinking out
20 loud like Jonathan -- but it would be good to get
21 an idea of what the Commission is thinking about
22 here. I mean, we're fully aware, I think there
23 was one proposed piece of legislation, but I'd be
24 curious to hear what's on the table, to what
25 specific task, before we make that decision.

1 Just a thought. Thank you.

2 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
3 Olmedo.

4 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: I just want to
5 acknowledge that we do have an Ad Hoc Community,
6 Engagement Committee, and I recognize that this
7 Commission has made a commitment to assuring that
8 community engagement remains a top priority. We
9 have seen a lot at the State level, and we have
10 seen that at the Federal level.

11 And to the extent possible, I think we
12 need to be aware that we need to create
13 opportunity and onramps for community to be part
14 of and be informing the way that we are
15 prioritizing. And I can see that we can very
16 easily, sort of along this process, make
17 decisions at high levels and exclude community,
18 and it's going to be really important to have the
19 type of facilitation, I know I've been one that's
20 been asking about that, but I'm not the only one,
21 but we do need to bring onboard to the extent
22 possible facilitation to help keep us honest and
23 making sure the community has a voice throughout
24 this entire process.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Thank you.

1 MR. OLMEDO: It's a matter of principle,
2 right, a matter of expectation, it's not
3 necessarily a comment specific to the
4 deliberations and actions that continue. I just
5 hope that those are foundational in the spirit of
6 steps that we take as we move forward.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Thank you, Commissioner
8 Olmedo. And, yeah, it's not the intent to leave
9 the community process outside, and perhaps once
10 this body comes up with a set of recommendations
11 that maybe we all agree, by consensus we'll vote
12 on that.

13 That gives the Ad Hoc Committee like a
14 really good roadmap for the conversations we want
15 to be having with the community, get their input
16 on some of the items that were listed up here,
17 and then there's the legislative process, as
18 well, whether it's Letters of Intent, whether
19 reaching out to the Assemblymember himself. So,
20 yeah, I appreciate that and let's keep that in
21 the forefront as we move forward.

22 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: But, Madam Chair, I
23 have seen models and I would have to go back to
24 the research and try to cite those models, but
25 they're the majority and minority voice to get

1 recognized. It would be great to see, again, in
2 the spirit of engagement and diversity of this
3 Commission that we try to find tomorrow. I'm not
4 sure that's the way the CEC can be of help, or
5 other Commissioners who may have seen similar
6 models, it would be great to think ahead. I'm
7 just thinking that at some point I think we have
8 a much greater opportunity to not necessarily be
9 sort of the majority and that's it.

10 I think here and knowing how
11 deliberations occur and how Boards and
12 Commissions tend to -- or even elected bodies --
13 I think we have a great opportunity here to
14 deliver the win-win that everybody is looking
15 for, right? And I think part of that is in the
16 way that we as a Commission deliberate and take
17 action. Thank you.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, I'm open. Let's
19 talk more about that for future meetings. Thank
20 you, Commissioner Olmedo. Vice Chair Ryan
21 Kelley.

22 VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Thank you, Chair Paz.
23 So, I'm in support of the request that is here
24 and the letter supporting that Regional
25 Collaboration for Coachella and Imperial. And

1 then also I shared with Chair Paz and others that
2 the County of Imperial has an ask, and I would
3 hope that all of the Commissioners are able to
4 see that. I will send it to Elisabeth and
5 hopefully it can be discussed in the next Lithium
6 Valley Commission meeting.

7 But those asks are of State and Federal
8 and I'm hoping that the Commission will recognize
9 the benefit of what is in that document and
10 hopefully be supportive and make recommendations
11 to give letters of support in regards to it.

12 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Ryan
13 Kelley. And I want to take a step back and maybe
14 summarize. I don't know at what point you jumped
15 in, but I just volen-told you and myself, and
16 that's the question before the Commission,
17 whether they would delegate to us for this short
18 period of time the Legislative processes to
19 engage in conversations with our Legislators and
20 put forth any recommendation that comes from this
21 body. So that is the request that is before all
22 of us right now.

23 I did receive a motion to accept that
24 recommendation and then I heard from Commissioner
25 Colwell that maybe we come to a vote on this

1 after we have put on the table what the potential
2 legislative ideas might be from this body. So
3 that's where we are right now. Thank you.

4 So, I will honor Commissioner Colwell's
5 request and not ask for a vote just yet. And
6 then if there is no other comment on this, we can
7 come back for a vote. And let me just check with
8 Deborah and/or Elisabeth whether we need to open
9 this section for public comment, or whether we
10 wait until before the vote.

11 MS. DYER: This is Deborah Dyer. You can
12 wait until before the vote.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Okay, thank you. All right,
14 so then we will move forward on the agenda, and I
15 think -- let me find my place now -- I'm going to
16 go through a summary of the recommendations that
17 we've heard at the January meeting. And I'm
18 going to propose, even though we did hear some
19 request for allocation of funding, I'm going to
20 propose that maybe we have a larger window for
21 that and that there is still room for us to learn
22 from the Governor's Office like his vision in the
23 budget when they decided to allocate about half a
24 page to Lithium Valley Development, 1) to
25 recognize that that's a great thing, it's created

1 a lot of momentum and, you know, sense of a right
2 and signals about the importance of Lithium
3 Valley. And in a conversation I was having
4 yesterday, it just dawned on me that before we as
5 a Commission are ready to start making budget
6 recommendations, that maybe we take a step back
7 and hear from the Governor's Office all the
8 details, right? Because in the budget they do
9 mention many of the things that were important
10 for us in terms of stakeholder engagement,
11 incentivizing clean technology, training and
12 education pathways, and other things that have
13 been a topic for us.

14 So, I'm assuming that there's -- he has
15 already thought out how these things will be
16 resourced and maybe how they would happen in the
17 budget. So, before we start making
18 recommendations of things that perhaps are
19 already there, we engage them in a conversation
20 just to learn more of those details.

21 In terms of the budget recommendations,
22 my ask of you is that, a) there's two options and
23 I'm open, one, we invite them to do and give us a
24 presentation on all of the details at a future
25 Lithium Valley Commission meeting. Just keep in

1 mind that, you know, timing, maybe we need to
2 schedule another meeting just for that. Or, b)
3 again that perhaps if Commissioner Ryan Kelley
4 and myself are delegated that authority to go
5 and, you know, represent Lithium Valley
6 Commission in this conversation, but maybe we go
7 and have a preliminary meeting, get all the
8 details, and bring them back. So those are two
9 options. I'm open for a discussion on how we
10 approach the budget recommendation. Commissioner
11 Castaneda.

12 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Well thank you,
13 Madam Chair. And I appreciate your willingness
14 to go back and look at how we approach this, you
15 know, because it sounds like with Jonathan -- and
16 I'm not sure what his recommendations are,
17 whether they're budget related, or they're policy
18 related, or whatever. But maybe it is important
19 that we go through these lists and we sort of
20 parse out those that are dollar related, that
21 could go into a budget, and obviously those that
22 are a policy or some sort of other incentives, or
23 whatever that might be, incentives always
24 obviously will have a budget impact.

25 You know, so I think just kind of

1 understanding what the playing field looks like
2 and looking at what the balance of everybody's
3 wish list, I'm not in the industry, I'm not in
4 workforce development and things like that, so
5 I'm very interested to hear what are the ideas
6 and give some background on those ideas and allow
7 us as Commissioners to kind of decide how and
8 what we forward. So, thank you.

9 CHAIR PAZ: That you. Commissioner
10 Weisgall.

11 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: In response to
12 your question, should we ask the State for a
13 presentation, I think we'd be better off, and I'm
14 prepared to lead the discussion if you want, but
15 let's look exactly at -- I mean, I can, you know,
16 pages 71, 72 of the Budget Proposal on Climate
17 Change, and then pages 88-89 specifically on
18 Lithium Valley contain some general ideas and
19 then we've also got the Governor's speech,
20 itself.

21 I think I would recommend that we -- and
22 those are general points -- so I think if we ask
23 the Administration, they would come and they
24 would say, "Well, here's what we've got in the
25 proposal. What are your ideas?" I think the

1 burden is on us to flesh out very specific action
2 items that incorporate those thoughts on those
3 pages. You know, they knew a tax credit for
4 certain technologies or an R&D, a new program
5 through Go-Biz, and things like that.

6 So, I would say that would be a better
7 use of our time. If we wait for the Department
8 of Finance to come talk to us, I'm not sure
9 they'll be able to embellish much more than,
10 "Gee, what sort of loan guarantees? What sort of
11 R&D? What sort of incentives do you want?" So
12 that would be my vote.

13 So, I'd like to proceed with their ideas
14 and then delegate you two, or whoever we want to
15 delegate. And if that runs into roadblocks, then
16 we'll have a give and take. That would be my
17 recommendation.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Commissioner Colwell.

19 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Thanks, Chair Paz.
20 I think, going to Commissioner Castaneda's point
21 about the industry itself, so I just want to
22 maybe relay what's really going on here as far as
23 industry goes.

24 So, we have -- we're actually working on
25 a submission for a battery cathode facility that

1 needs to be delivered in 2024-2025. Lithium did
2 subsequently -- they delivered in 2024, 2025,
3 2026, 2027 and beyond. And I think the
4 presentation of, you know, giving the Governor's
5 Office an idea of what the drivers are, breaking
6 the two others; Steve mentioned policy and budget
7 related points and I would like to, if we could
8 really focus in on those as two separate items,
9 personally at CTR we would love to focus on
10 policy, how this can be really fast tracked and
11 can we deliver or not, or do we sort of miss a
12 window of opportunity.

13 Budget related, of course, as you know,
14 related but separate type of presentation, I
15 think we could really hone in on what's really
16 required upfront and get to the purse string side
17 of it, maybe a little later, but just a
18 suggestion. Thank you.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, I'm hearing
20 some consensus here. Let's put our items, our
21 lists on the table, and then start the
22 conversation. So, I'm ready to do that. I will
23 start with a summary here on what we heard as far
24 as policy recommendations from last time.

25 And I did have the support of CEC so, I

1 want to thank them for that. They helped what
2 came through, what was said, and helping us think
3 what fell under each bucket. But again, if we
4 have a different opinion, we can move those.

5 So let me start with listing some of the
6 potential policy recommendations that we heard
7 last meeting. And the goal of today is for those
8 recommendations, if we can be very clear, like
9 what is the policy going to request. So as clear
10 as we can get on the requests, I think that's
11 going to be the most helpful for the Legislators.

12 So, in our last meeting, again, we heard
13 about one idea around incentivizing green
14 technology and extending possible green
15 certifications of different industries for
16 businesses. That is sort of all that I have and
17 can recall from the last meeting, so I would rely
18 on, if one of you made that recommendation or you
19 recall the context, could you expand a little bit
20 more on what that meant, what that would look
21 like, and what is the policy request? And we'll
22 take them one-by-one like that, that way we
23 wouldn't have to be jumping back and forth. Yes,
24 Commissioner Weisgall.

25 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Well, let me give

1 it a shot here on that green technology. I think
2 that this is one of the new credit proposals that
3 would be administered by the Franchise Tax Board
4 for companies -- and it's general, it's not
5 Lithium specific -- I think it is companies
6 investing in technologies that would mitigate
7 climate change. I think it's what's called like
8 an Innovation Headquarters Credit. I believe the
9 number was \$250 Million over three years. And I
10 would imagine that it's the Lithium technologies
11 or chain supply related.

12 I mean, Rod, you've talked about cathode
13 manufacturing; I imagine something like that
14 could qualify. So, I think really the ask here
15 is what do we think of this proposed new credit.
16 We're obviously not going to say, "Hey, great new
17 credit. By the way, here's where to spend the
18 money, you know, proposal A, B, C." I think it's
19 more, here's the concept of this -- as you said,
20 Chair -- of this green technology.

21 So, I think, I mean, my own view is I
22 think that's a great idea. But I think that's
23 generally what that credit is getting at.
24 Please, somebody correct me if I'm wrong, but I
25 think that's what you were getting at.

1 And my recommendation of course is, yes,
2 fully supportive of that proposal.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Any other hands? Is this
4 what everyone recalls? I just put out a reminder
5 that Commissioner Olmedo had on this topic at the
6 January meeting, so Commissioner Olmedo, is this
7 what you recall? Or your intent from the last
8 meeting?

9 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Sorry, Commissioner
10 Paz. Can you repeat the --

11 CHAIR PAZ: Yes, it was around
12 incentivizing green technology and to extend
13 possible green certification of different
14 industries or businesses.

15 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Correct. So, I
16 know that it's an ongoing discussion. There's
17 actually some certifications that are out there,
18 but I'm not really prepared to share the
19 specifics, the specifics on that because we are
20 doing our own research here and my colleagues
21 Comite Civico. We are members of various
22 coalitions that, you know, many of them are
23 concerned about mining in the traditional ways
24 and there's been some certifications that do
25 exists to certify projects, but I'm not sure it's

1 just on the certification, but about the
2 incentives and investments in making sure that
3 incentives are also being paired up with the best
4 possible technologies.

5 I did see a bill that is being proposed,
6 I'm pretty sure it still needs more development,
7 and it was proposed by Assemblymember Garcia, and
8 I don't remember the exact number where they were
9 asking for having a updated available technology;
10 this of course is an ask of the Air Resources
11 Board, a requirement that is being asked of the
12 Air Resources Board of these technologies, that's
13 available technologies. I have to go back and
14 read it. I got an alert that that bill was
15 introduced. It would be something similar, you
16 know, have -- (indiscernible) up the incentives,
17 the resources, and the best available
18 technologies which, again, would be a great
19 certification, you know, and a symbol of
20 confidence, right, to all who find it important
21 to be able to get these certifications.

22 As far as the conversations, somebody
23 actually does that. Those are associations that
24 are dedicated to that and there are auditors that
25 actually do that within the petroleum industry,

1 within the aerospace industry. Those are two
2 ways, specific conversations that I was having
3 with the actual auditor of this. And I think
4 these auditors are hired by the Association, so
5 you get a certification. Again, a lot of this is
6 fairly new to me . I'm not really prepared to
7 put forward a proposal, but I think a lot of this
8 should definitely be a conversation that this
9 Commission should put forth. I'd hope to hear
10 from others, this is something along the lines --
11 I'm sorry, Madam Chair Paz, if I went in a
12 different direction of what you were saying --

13 CHAIR PAZ: No, no, no, I think let me
14 just try to clarify because I think I'm hearing
15 the same thing, and I just want to make sure if
16 we can capture the intent today where, you're
17 right, like a lot of this is going to have to be
18 built out further and we'll have an opportunity
19 for that.

20 But if I'm hearing the intent, is that
21 there is a way, like a visual way, through a
22 certificate of some sort, right, that can be
23 displayed maybe in different industries or
24 businesses, and if they have this certificate or
25 display symbol, it means that they are utilizing

1 green technology and good environmental business,
2 in that sense.

3 And then, they're paired with this maybe
4 incentive to do that, right, incentives for
5 businesses to be maybe certified. If that
6 incentive doesn't match from what I heard from
7 Commissioner Weisgall, but it potentially could
8 be a credit, you know, of a proposal credit that
9 is managed by the Franchise Tax Board, you know,
10 I think in my head they sound like those two
11 ideas go together and based on what I have here
12 in the language. So, the intent would be that
13 there is an incentive for these businesses to
14 become certified and the public know that these
15 are green businesses using green technology,
16 things like that. Did I capture the intent
17 correctly?

18 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madame Chair, it
19 sounds like we're saying the same thing. Mr.
20 Weisgall, is that...? I mean, we are saying it a
21 bit differently, but it sounds about right.

22 CHAIR PAZ: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Agreed.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
25 Colwell, and then Commissioner Castaneda.

1 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes, thank you,
2 Chair Paz. I think, too, Jonathan's point and
3 Luis's point, I mean, a tax credit -- just
4 remember, we're nearly 15 tons less CO2 than hard
5 rock mining, so a metric ton would produce
6 Lithium from Lithium Valley.

7 So there are measures, very accurate
8 measures to what has been measures on geothermal
9 power, but taking that across to green Lithium
10 and sustainable Lithium that has been proven, the
11 technology is there, it's clean and green, and
12 regardless of what anyone says there is a direct
13 CO2 abatement for that and I think that can be
14 measured, whether it's a tax credit, or REC, or
15 whatever it may be. So, thank you.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
17 Castaneda.

18 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Thank you, Madam
19 Chair. And you know, when I was on the City
20 Council in Chula Vista, I represented the City
21 for eight years at Hinkley and I can't remember
22 exactly what it stands for now, but basically
23 it's an international organization that consists
24 of cities that are prioritizing green
25 technologies and policies that reduce greenhouse

1 gases, and so forth. And as part of that, there
2 are those kinds of programs, and one is like
3 Clean Cities. I know when I was working on the
4 childhood obesity issue, we tried to further a
5 Green Star sort of a certification for
6 restaurants that didn't use trans fats and, you
7 know, used different kinds of ingredients that
8 were locally sourced and so forth and so on.

9 So, there's a lot of examples in
10 virtually every kind of consumer industry that
11 there is, but I think Rod is right and Jonathan
12 that, you know, we have a technology and we're
13 investigating a technology that will
14 revolutionize the industry and basically remove
15 carbon footprints. So, there are ways to measure
16 and evaluate that.

17 So I think that's directly the kind of
18 thing, and maybe, you know, I can do a little bit
19 of research on some of the green cities and some
20 of the attributes of those programs can be sort
21 of morphed into what we're talking about.

22 CHAIR PAZ: Yes, that's a great idea. As
23 I was hearing about this, it reminded me of
24 something similar. So thank you, Commissioner
25 Castaneda.

1 So there are some of you that are very
2 quiet and, again, because I'm going to try to
3 take these recommendations sort of in this
4 package, I just want to hear -- so I'll call on
5 you if you have nothing to say or to add, it's
6 fine, but if you do find a concern with the
7 conversation, I would also like to hear that. I
8 see another hand, and then I'll call on some of
9 you that I haven't heard from. Commissioner
10 Colwell.

11 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Chair Paz, one
12 statement in the Governor's budget by the
13 Governor was the term "mitigation," and I think
14 it's a very very clever term and to a general
15 audience and other fellow Commissioners,
16 mitigation meaning that if we could accelerate
17 permitting, for example, and fast track to meet a
18 2024 delivery that we have taken on here, the
19 mitigation could be spent to Salton Sea repair or
20 this idea of royalties that we brought up at the
21 last Commission meeting, would give cover and not
22 be basically a project to bid up equal to or
23 better quality around the Salton Sea, just say
24 for example, instead of doing a salt mitigation
25 project on CTR, probably it might be best better

1 invested in, say, a new river project, or a DWR
2 project, or perhaps in Imperial County, or
3 whatever it may be, it was brought up in the
4 budget. There hasn't been really discussion
5 about that, but I think it's a very intelligent
6 term that was used by the Governor to be able to
7 get on time, because time is sort of everything
8 here, and also meet expectations, you know,
9 environmental to a better state or better
10 quality.

11 So, I just wanted to throw that one in if
12 we're finished with the Tax Credit part of the
13 discussion, or we still have that open. And it
14 could be a combination of both, you know what I
15 mean? That could be blended into the same piece
16 of legislation -- I'm not the legislative type,
17 but I do certainly get the concept and I think
18 it's a very intelligent way that the Governor had
19 pitched that at the budget. Thank you.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I'll come back to
21 that one. Let me stay a little bit just from
22 some Commissioners that I haven't heard from on
23 the incentives and certification. So,
24 Commissioner Ruiz, is there anything you'd like
25 to add on?

1 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: We need to have a
2 better understanding exactly what the green
3 energy certification, you know will entail, for
4 us to really take a better approach. Obviously,
5 we need to examine the communities and see what
6 are the benefits, what are the processes, where,
7 to get those certifications done, how it will
8 impact on both ends, economically and how viable
9 this is, and how enticing it will be for all the
10 industries to benefit from it, for the
11 communities to benefit from it, to reduce carbon
12 emissions, and whatnot.

13 So, I say let's dig in a little deeper
14 and let's be a little more dialectic on it.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Yes, and we can
16 do that, Commissioner Ruiz. I think right now
17 it's just getting an idea of this consensus on
18 just some of the ideas that then we can take them
19 at next step and building out. Or, you know,
20 having both conversations with our Legislators.
21 But I hear you, there is a lot that we need to go
22 on in terms of the research and finding out how
23 this would be of benefit. Commissioner Olmedo.

24 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: I wasn't sure if
25 this is where Commissioner Ruiz was headed, but I

1 think it's going to be important to not just
2 simply rely on certifications. Afterall, many of
3 these certifiers are for-profit, or chamber,
4 commerce type of businesses that may not
5 necessarily be paying attention to the
6 disadvantaged community or environmental justice,
7 you know, concerns. And I think that we should
8 have a focus on -- a laser focus -- on the
9 location, the locality, the demographics, the
10 vulnerabilities, the disadvantages, the
11 socioeconomics. I think that -- I'm not really
12 sure there's a certification that has really
13 taken in consideration many of our experiences
14 here, locally, our geography. There are just so
15 many things that I think should be brought to
16 discussion at some point to the Commission.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Yeah. Maybe the bill or
18 potential policy is going to have to be to create
19 a certification process because potentially none
20 exists, that in the creation of that
21 certification process, again, it's not only for
22 the Lithium industry, it could include -- it's a
23 certification process for different industries
24 and businesses that can then be proud of saying
25 "we're a green business," or, "we're a green

1 industry."

2 So maybe that's as far as we're going to
3 go in terms of creating this, and so all of this
4 is, again, really good conversation and where I
5 want us to get to today is where do we have
6 consensus so that we can move forward. If we
7 don't have consensus on anything, we don't have
8 to move forward on anything. And individually
9 you all as Commissioners may continue with your
10 proposals and then presenting to Lithium Valley
11 Commission, as appropriate. So again, I thought
12 there was a desire for some early actions from
13 this Commission, so if that is the case I think
14 that's the goal for today. So, I do want to
15 hear, are we feeling --

16 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Well, I think we
17 have to start somewhere, you know. And the
18 details with respect to, I think, what
19 Commissioner Olmedo is referring to are extremely
20 important and they need to be baked into the
21 system. But at least we need to create a system
22 in order to do the baking, right? So I think
23 that generally we all agree. I think that the
24 details are something that obviously there's a
25 lot of people up in Sacramento and throughout the

1 state that will work on that, and we can
2 certainly be part of that. But I don't know that
3 really at this level, and at this point, what the
4 resources and timely how we can design a program.
5 I just don't think we can do that right now.

6 CHAIR PAZ: I agree.

7 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair.

8 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

9 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: May I? And I like
10 the way that you framed it around -- I think it
11 would be fair ask, I mean, it's similar to what
12 Commissioner Castaneda is saying. We add it to
13 the list of asks. I think it would be a fair
14 ask. This is a new industry, a new opportunity,
15 and I'm not saying it's a new industry, it's a
16 new opportunity. It's an opportunity driven by
17 federal and state policy and local policy. I
18 think that it merits a customized approach to a
19 certification, something that would certainly
20 help the industry thrive, help our community
21 thrive. Thank you.

22 CHAIR PAZ: Okay, so then moving on to --
23 well, I think, Commissioner Flores, I just want
24 to make sure if there is anything you would like
25 to add.

1 COMMISSIONER FLORES: No, thank you.

2 Thank you for asking, Chair.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Okay, thank you. Am I
4 missing anybody who has not spoken on this idea?
5 Commissioner Hanks, is there anything you wish to
6 add to this conversation around green
7 certifications for industries and businesses, and
8 an incentive for that?

9 COMMISSIONER HANKS: No, I'm just trying
10 to catch up with the rest of you. It's almost
11 like you're speaking a different language than
12 me. So, I'm trying to, you know, I don't know
13 whether I need to put my arms up and ward off the
14 punch or whether I need to participate and need
15 get involved -- I'm still not on the same page,
16 really, with everybody.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Okay, thank you. And I'll
18 just summarize because I don't know at what point
19 you jumped into the conversation. But to
20 summarize the conversation we have been having,
21 is the potential of this body recommending as a
22 policy idea or exploring -- I'll use the word
23 "exploring" a policy idea -- that looks into the
24 development of a certification process that then
25 industries and business could be incentivized to

1 use and those incentives could be down the line
2 of potential tax credits, and it would be a
3 visible way of showing which industries are green
4 industries, which businesses are green industry.
5 So that's the concept right now.

6 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Chair?

7 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

8 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I have a question.
9 So would that incentive be on state and federal
10 land, or just on state land?

11 CHAIR PAZ: Good question. I think right
12 now we're talking about state policy. I will
13 rely on somebody else who can speak more to like
14 any better processes than how those would be
15 influenced. But right now, we're speaking about
16 state policy. Commissioner Weisgall.

17 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: My gut feeling is
18 that it would not apply to federal lands. I
19 think that gets us over to the whole federal
20 area. I'm ready to talk, by the way, about more
21 ideas, but you want to keep hearing from other
22 Commissioners, so --

23 CHAIR PAZ: I just want to make sure that
24 everyone has a chance to speak. Commissioner
25 Lopez, is there anything else?

1 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Yeah. I just think,
2 you know, because we have some tribal lands that
3 are down in that area that I think if we're going
4 to look at any type of incentive, I think it
5 should be for the whole community.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Uh huh. Good point. And
7 we'll note that so that in conversations we don't
8 forget that. Thank you. All right, anyone else?
9 I don't see any other hands.

10 Okay, so let's move on to the next
11 proposal. And I feel that on this there is a
12 consensus. There will be ideas, investing -- we
13 don't need to go back to the slide, thank you.
14 There was the idea of investing in vocation
15 around higher education and develop STEM and
16 environmental literacy at all grade levels to
17 build a local educated workforce.

18 I think there's probably several of you
19 that brought this topic. Right now, if you are
20 one of them, if you can give us sort of what the
21 intent of the bill would be, that way we can get
22 clarity. Yes, Commissioner Weisgall.

23 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I guess it would
24 be -- the specific ask would be more funding from
25 the -- and I'm sorry, I'm just blanking right now

1 on the state agency -- but more funding directed
2 for that specific training. We've got, I mean,
3 the state has very good training programs.
4 Individual companies can apply, so we're
5 certainly looking at that, but I think either an
6 increase in the budget, or an earmarking in the
7 budget for Lithium Valley specific training.
8 That would be my sense of the specific ask there
9 to embellish. I mean, we're all in favor of that
10 workforce development and of course that will be
11 the topic of our next meeting. But that, I
12 think, would be the specific point I'd raise.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Thank you.

14 Commissioner Olmedo.

15 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yeah. I certainly
16 haven't been the expert in the room. I know
17 Commissioner Weisgall has continually brought up
18 the need for workforce training, development; I
19 mean, I continually hear that from him.

20 The only thing I would add, and I want to
21 also acknowledge Commissioner Kelley's desires to
22 bring institutions of higher education,
23 Polytechnic expertise here to the Valley. I
24 certainly support all of that.

25 What I would add is, first of all, it's a

1 little bit unclear if we're talking about a
2 trailer bill, we're talking about a policy bill,
3 but I think there's different tracks and
4 different deadlines for those. And I wasn't
5 sure, I wasn't very, from the onset of the
6 presentation, so it would be helpful to get that
7 clarity.

8 We're talking about, in any direction,
9 investment in education. I often utilize the
10 reference of certain areas in our state become
11 hubs for workforce development, or innovation,
12 for a polytechnical and all these types of jobs.
13 I think we don't minimize risk, or we create risk
14 when we are customizing a workforce for a
15 specific industry.

16 Now, that's not to say that we shouldn't
17 have a track to create the workforce or
18 certification programs, but I think we need to
19 speak, you know, as an employer -- but I also
20 speak to many small and large employers -- there
21 is a workforce shortage in this country, in this
22 state, in this region, and our communities all
23 across the board, from nonprofits to retail, the
24 industries of discussion here in this Commission.

25 We need to be able to create a workforce

1 that not only works here, but a workforce that
2 would be able to transfer anywhere in this entire
3 state. We can't just focus on one part of the
4 state, or coastal areas of the state. We need to
5 start building institutions of higher learning
6 here in our own backyards, our own communities.

7 So, I would say if this became an ask,
8 which I hope it does, I'm fully in support of
9 creating a workforce, a certified customized
10 workforce, but only part of the larger workforce
11 that we should be building here. If we are
12 working from north to south, from east to west,
13 then we're going to be able to tackle this
14 workforce shortage that is out there right now.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
17 Ruiz.

18 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes. Following the
19 comments of our Commissioner Olmedo, if some
20 things, you know, might appear to me and perhaps
21 is an opportunity to perhaps, you know, discuss a
22 little bit more. I think it is important to
23 develop the workforce initiative and also
24 parallel to it, you know, bring more higher
25 education initiatives, as well.

1 But what is not clear to me is what kind of
2 training is required for the people that will go
3 through these processes. I know that we talk
4 about a certain number of jobs that will be
5 offered by this industry, but how many
6 technicians would we need? Will it all be high
7 level positions, hydrologists, or maybe half of
8 it will be territorial jobs, or -- so I think,
9 you know, I just don't have it quite clear and
10 the things we need to have a good understanding
11 in order to really shape it accordingly and make
12 sure that the workforce, the higher education
13 initiatives, do represent those needs and wants.

14 CHAIR PAZ: Uh huh. Thank you,
15 Commissioner Ruiz. And you are right, at the
16 next workshop on the 24th will be -- save all
17 your questions if they're not answered to the
18 presentations that people will be either on a
19 panel or a presenter will be there to start
20 answering those questions.

21 So for the sake of moving this particular
22 track forward, though, it's a question that
23 Commissioner Olmedo asked in terms of the timing
24 and the tracks, and if there is somebody from the
25 CEC staff that can tell us the difference or some

1 of the timeline for budget trailer bills, so
2 something like this could potentially be
3 legislated, or it could be a budget trailer bill.
4 Is there a different sort of timeline for that?

5 MS. GRIFFIS: Hi. This is Seanna from
6 the OGIA. So there is a different timeline for a
7 budget trailer bill versus a general legislative
8 proposal. I think we're all aware of the
9 deadline for Friday for new bills to be
10 introduced. That's not to say that we can't
11 introduce bills after the deadline, but that it
12 becomes -- I've gotten an amendment and it's a
13 completely different process, but there are two
14 separate timelines for the budget trailer bill
15 and a legislative proposal.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. So what does the
17 timeline for a budget trailer bill look like?

18 MS. GRIFFIS: I can get more information
19 on that and submit your way, but I do know that
20 there is the revise coming up for the budget, and
21 I believe that that is in May, so that is when
22 the budget undergoes a revision. For a revision
23 process, there's an option we can get in the
24 trailer bill.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Thank you. So we'll

1 get more clarity on that process but, yes, we do
2 have a little bit more time and right now what
3 I'm hearing from everyone is there is an interest
4 -- or everyone who has spoken -- is that there is
5 an interest on building a workforce, but keeping
6 in mind that our region requires a workforce in
7 many areas, many industries, with transferable
8 skills.

9 So, it would benefit this region to take
10 a broader look at workforce development and that
11 being inclusive of the Lithium, but not only
12 thinking about one sector, which is the Lithium
13 extraction process.

14 I think we can probably all agree around
15 that. And then we can mark that as an interest
16 we have and details will come later, but the
17 intent is to strengthen the workforce.
18 Commissioner Olmedo.

19 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yeah. I want to go
20 back to the comments that Commissioner Ruiz had
21 mentioned. I completely agree and I'm assuming
22 that most would agree that we need the full array
23 of educational opportunities.

24 You know, there are staff forums such as
25 this Commission has done. It's high risk, but a

1 lot of times we leave the community voice out but
2 reading the comments I've been reminded that
3 there is a lot of -- there are organizations out
4 here already providing those types of trainings.

5 So higher education, polytechnic, and
6 they have a role. We have a lot of institutes
7 that are providing trainings, as well. You know,
8 I'm just thinking right now, like Field is one of
9 them, La Cooperativa Campesina is another, Center
10 for Employment Training, you know, there's just a
11 number and it goes on and on and on of
12 institutions that are in our neighborhoods, in
13 our community, providing certifications,
14 providing soft skills, and it's so important to
15 bring in the community expertise.

16 You can't beat that, you know, because
17 regardless of the challenges, economics,
18 socioeconomics, there's resiliency that happens
19 in our communities and we need to make sure that
20 we need to bring it into these conversations to
21 the extent possible so we're not just thinking in
22 the one track, but we're seeing the whole
23 picture. Thank you.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
25 Weisgall.

1 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Just a quick
2 embellishment of my earlier point. The agency I
3 was thinking of was the Employment Training
4 Panel. It's a joint business labor, it's a state
5 agency that funds training programs, and in the
6 conversations we've had with them, we've been
7 very impressed by their flexibility, kind of a
8 willingness to let individual employers use their
9 tools, but to provide reimbursement for worker
10 training for both existing and new workers.

11 So that's one example where I think
12 increased funding might be useful. So just
13 that's a footnote to my earlier comment. Thanks.

14 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And, yes, ETP will
15 be presenting. So again, I think this is a good
16 foreshadowing of all the good discussion we're
17 going to have on the 24th. ETP will be
18 presenting on their program, as well.

19 And maybe, I mean, the next point, which
20 is a reminder of Commissioner Olmedo's comment,
21 is this idea of capacity for community
22 engagement. And I think I did hear we're moving
23 maybe towards some budget requests, but maybe
24 there's some legislative ideas that could also
25 enhance the ability for community to be engaged

1 not just in this Lithium Valley Commission
2 because, I mean, I'll remind us all that we're
3 done soon after the report is submitted, but this
4 industry and workforce and all these items will
5 continue.

6 So, I know that there have been bills in
7 the past considering via Assemblymember Garcia
8 around community workforce agreement. We have in
9 the Governor's budget there's mention of
10 community benefits, so they give communities
11 benefit agreements. And in my research in the
12 past year, now I'm learning more about both of
13 these two processes.

14 They happen behind closed sessions,
15 right, it's an agreement mostly between labor and
16 the employer. And there's a reason for that,
17 because these are legal agreements, but maybe the
18 question has been what is the -- it was A.B. 983
19 by Assemblymember Garcia, thank you Lina.

20 And the question is how we make these
21 processes so that there is more community at the
22 table, right? And it can be for processes that
23 are going to outlive this Commission, so it is a
24 worthy, I think, request and opportunity to
25 explore how we do that.

1 So that's another possibility to continue
2 exploring and see if this Commission wants to go
3 in that direction, ways in which there could be
4 community benefit agreements, community workforce
5 agreements, with a pathway for direct community
6 engagement. So, it's community, labor, and
7 industry, not only labor and industry.

8 So again, I've learned it's not going to
9 be an easy task because of the legalities, but we
10 still can continue to explore that potential
11 policy language. Commissioner Olmedo.

12 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes, Madam Chair.
13 I'm going to support that, and I apologize in
14 advance that sometimes my explanations take a
15 little longer than -- I wish I had the perfect
16 words, and fewer words, but I don't and that's
17 just the reality.

18 I would like to say that it's been over
19 25 years that I've been in this Environmental
20 Justice journey, and I remember years ago where
21 time and time, over and over, trips to Boston,
22 trips to D.C., trips to the coastal areas, and
23 people didn't know where Imperial was. That has
24 changed. People are knowing where Imperial is.
25 People know where East Coachella is.

1 And so, one thing that I think is really
2 important is that, while policies and politics
3 have now understood where our communities are,
4 for some reason the bureaucracy is a little
5 slower catching up and continues to sort of
6 utilize the old model of reaching out to their
7 immediate network that operate in Sacramento,
8 operate in D.C. So, any time they're cooking up
9 new strategies, new funding proposals, new
10 initiatives, that we tend to persistently in our
11 communities -- I know you know this very well,
12 Chair Paz in your work, as well, and on social
13 justice -- but we always end up just being a
14 "check the box." Just make sure you have the
15 local EJ or the local social justice and then you
16 can come after these dollars.

17 I would like to make sure that, as part
18 of these budget asks, I ask for support of the
19 Commission to consider making an ask for
20 resources allocated, to assure that local
21 communities have -- and I'll borrow the words of
22 Commissioner Kelley -- you know, self
23 determination.

24 We need to have a community plan, a
25 community plan that includes labor, community

1 plans that includes multi-stakeholders that are
2 now represented and necessary in this Commission,
3 whether it's from education, repeat labors,
4 social justice, environment, you know, workforce
5 development. I mean, there's just so many
6 stakeholders out there that need to be part of
7 this, and we need to have a community plan.

8 In an ideal world we would have the
9 government plans and we would have the industry
10 plans. And for the first time, perhaps, or very
11 few times, have a community plan. In order to
12 achieve that, we need to have a funding that is
13 made available, competitive funding to make sure
14 that it is sort of built in a way that can be
15 drawn down to help develop reports, look into
16 socioeconomics, the vulnerabilities, the
17 workforce development.

18 We need to have that done in order to
19 create a level playing field for our communities,
20 to have the wind -- wind plant. And if we can
21 get an Environmental Justice advocate such as
22 myself to believe that that is possible, if any
23 time ever there's a possibility it is right now.

24 We have the right state administration,
25 we have the right federal administration, we have

1 an appetite for transitioning away from fossil
2 fuels. The opportunity is right now, but we need
3 a community plan and that should be a definite
4 ask of the budgeting process and through
5 hopefully the support of this Commission to put
6 forward such an ask. Thank you.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And there have
8 been great examples of community plans in some of
9 like urban areas. I know Los Angeles has put
10 forward their community plan as well as Long
11 Beach. And, yes, I like your idea.

12 Most of these examples have been funded
13 through philanthropy, so I'm curious -- and maybe
14 this is something for us to continue exploring
15 and, again, making the request from the CEC to
16 help us explore options on how this could be
17 institutionalized so that, just like cities and
18 counties make their plans, that there's a way and
19 support for communities to have community plans.
20 Thank you. I see Commissioner Castaneda.

21 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Well, thank you
22 very much and, Commissioner Olmedo, thank you
23 very much because I think that, for me, this is
24 the kind of forward thinking that we need to
25 have, and we need to instill.

1 And maybe it's a Lithium Valley
2 Commission 2.0 or something like that, but there
3 needs to be investment that looks well beyond
4 just the recovery and the processing and moving
5 it out. We need to look at this as a far-
6 reaching industry and an economy that will
7 transform Imperial County.

8 I know that we've been talking about it,
9 bits and pieces, but those kinds of plans really
10 involve everything from environmental and
11 economic justice, to the kind of workforce, to
12 infrastructure, to the kinds of partnering with,
13 you know, perhaps our neighbors across the border
14 for manufacturing, and things of all those kinds
15 of nature that looks way out into the future
16 because, I mean, we only need to look at what we
17 pay when we go to the gas pump right now.

18 I was watching some news, a report on
19 what's going on, obviously, in Ukraine and an
20 expert in terms of gas prices was on. Gas is
21 only going to go up and he said, look, even if
22 the Ukraine situation is resolved, he said gas
23 prices are not going to go down, they're going to
24 continue to rise. And he said OPEC is pumping on
25 all eight cylinders and they can't keep up.

1 Our strategic reserve is basically down
2 to 29 days of supply. So, you know, we are just
3 not -- not only did we not want the oil to
4 continue to be the behemoth in energy, but we
5 just don't have it, but we just don't have it,
6 even if that changes.

7 And I think that we're at the center of
8 the Universe here and I think that we really need
9 to be very very visionary, visionary for what's
10 fair and what's right from the locals, visionary
11 on what is right and what is the best investment
12 for our state and our nation.

13 So, I think that that is a grand ask, I
14 think that the state should fund that kind of an
15 effort, it should be a multi-year sort of a work-
16 in-progress, but we need to start now because,
17 you know, I mean, obviously we're kind of nipping
18 at the edges right now. And I think that we need
19 to really look at what this will mean 20 years
20 from now.

21 And then all the things we're talking
22 about are included in that, so that would be my
23 preference, that we have this -- at least start
24 the discussion and start the advocacy for that
25 kind of an analysis and that kind of a working

1 document. Thank you.

2 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I want to be
3 mindful of time because we said this was going to
4 be a short meeting, and this is good
5 conversation, good ideas surfacing .

6 So, two reminders: first, any of the
7 attendees who are putting comments in the chat,
8 just a reminder to use the Q&A section so that
9 your comments can be recognized during the public
10 comment section, or you can also wait and raise
11 your hand during public comment. And then for us
12 as Commissioners, we still have another item that
13 we're going to have to vote.

14 So far, let me summarize some of the
15 things that I'm hearing as potential ideas. The
16 idea being incentivizing green technology and
17 extended possible green certification; the
18 investment and the attention to workforce
19 development -- and when I'm reading this in
20 summary, I'm taking into account all the comments
21 that have been made to expand on those items.

22 And then we then we talked about the
23 suggestion similar to Assemblymember Garcia's
24 previous bill on Community Workforce Agreements,
25 so something that will expand and give access to

1 community members to be part of and at the table
2 in those processes.

3 And then from there we went into just the
4 recognition that there needs to be some level of
5 investments for community planning so that our
6 communities have the ability to self-determine
7 their path, where they want to go.

8 So those are so far, I think four or five
9 ideas. I know that Commissioner Weisgall, you
10 had a few that we wanted to put forward, so I
11 will give you now time to do that. And again,
12 these conversations are going to be ongoing. So
13 Commissioner Weisgall.

14 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Thanks. Why
15 don't I do this. I'll tick them off quickly, I
16 mean each one. We don't have the time to go into
17 great detail but let me just outline the
18 different ideas.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: One would be a
21 state investment tax credit similar to the
22 federal program that already exists for solar
23 energy, with a direct pay to the Developer. It
24 would mimic the federal program.

25 A second would be a series of loan

1 programs generally coordinated with the
2 Department of Energy's Loan Program Office.

3 The third would be, I would call it
4 instead of "Buy America," "Buy California" and
5 kind of a domestic content labeling or
6 requirement. Assemblymember Garcia is already
7 working on that. That's A.B. 1397, which would
8 require -- this would be state contracts that
9 include electric vehicles, but disclosing the
10 source of the Lithium, or mandating a certain
11 percentage of Lithium and batteries to be
12 produced in California by certain dates. So that
13 was point 3.

14 Point 4, again, this requires more
15 embellishment, but amending what's called CDLAC,
16 the California Debt Limit Allocation Committee,
17 to include Lithium development, geothermal
18 development, possibly amending the California
19 Pollution Control Financing Authority to include
20 tax exempt private equity bonds, again, for
21 Lithium geothermal.

22 As we already discussed, fleshing out
23 that the budgets propose new Climate Change
24 Mitigation Credit. That's the one that would be
25 administered by the Franchise Tax Board. Another

1 new tax credit proposal from the Governor's
2 Office itself, which I think we should support,
3 would be this GoBiz administered tax credit for
4 green energy technologies that could include
5 supply chain with Lithium. I believe that -- I
6 want to say \$100 Million for three years.

7 A very specific ask, and this could
8 actually be in the form of a state grant, but
9 we've talked about this. I know that Co-Chair
10 Kelley has that in the County's ask, but
11 basically this high tech laboratory in Imperial
12 County to provide the fast turnaround chemistry
13 analysis that will be needed as this industry
14 grows, when we'll be measuring in parts per
15 billion, not per million, kind of an R&D facility
16 lab, not overly expensive, but that's an example
17 of a specific kind of a state grant.

18 So that's a laundry list and, again, I
19 can embellish, but I don't think we really have
20 time, but I'd love to and maybe what I could do
21 would be for next meeting just try to get
22 something in writing if you'd like. But those
23 are my ideas -- or some of them.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Any comments,
25 reactions?

1 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Madam Chair, I
2 like them. Obviously, I'm not in the industry,
3 I'm not sure what it takes to operate or to
4 create something like this, but it sounds all
5 reasonable and it doesn't sound like anything
6 that hasn't been done in other industries by this
7 state or by the federal government in the past.
8 So that's it. And I think that we've got a
9 pretty good list.

10 And I think that really, we should have a
11 general statement about the need for forward
12 planning with respect to Lithium and a Clean
13 Energy based economy in the Inland Empire and in
14 the Imperial County and start to work to see if
15 we can get some resources to see that through.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
17 Olmedo.

18 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair, I do
19 want to go through these bullet points I had
20 mentioned earlier that were put in front of me,
21 if there's a few minutes, I hope you'll entertain
22 that list.

23 CHAIR PAZ: Let me first see if we are
24 done reacting or commenting on Jonathan's list,
25 and then we'll start another list. Commissioner

1 Colwell.

2 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Thank you, Chair
3 Paz. I think Jonathan's nailed it. I mean, in
4 specific detail, as usual. I'd just like to
5 reiterate the mitigation discussion and add that
6 to the list.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Correct.

8 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Jonathan and I and
9 the others can detail that out at the next
10 meeting. The next meeting we're going to have,
11 as you know, the workforce which, again, we spent
12 some time on today, but the workforce in very
13 specific details next time around. But we'll add
14 that out and then we're very very clear on our
15 asks, right? Thank you.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
17 Weisgall noted around mitigation and expedited
18 permitting, which was the idea that you brought
19 forth earlier. Commissioner Ruiz.

20 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yeah. I like the
21 items that Commissioner Weisgall and the
22 mitigation. I haven't seen all the items that
23 Commissioner Colwell presented.

24 I would love to take the time when
25 possible to go over them one by one, diving in a

1 little deeper to understand exactly what the
2 implications of them are.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Thank you. So
4 Commissioner Weisgall, if there's anything in
5 writing that you want to provide us, you can send
6 them to Elisabeth and then she can share. That
7 way we can get a better idea on your requests.

8 My one reaction to both the ideas listed
9 and the budget regarding expedited permitting,
10 and some of these sorts of incentives to
11 stabilize the industry, and I think it's good,
12 right, that the industry knows what to expect and
13 it's more clear and there's support for that.

14 But on the other hand, I also want to
15 make sure that we are incorporating into some of
16 these requests, especially when we are using
17 public dollars, the prospective of what are then
18 the benefits to the community. So let's balance
19 the benefits to the industry with what is it that
20 the community wants, what assurances, what
21 benefit, what is needed in return because, again,
22 we're requesting the use of public resources, so
23 it only makes sense that there is a direct
24 benefit to multiple stakeholders, both from the
25 EJ community, from the Environmental community,

1 from just the general community as a whole.

2 So that would be -- again, we're not
3 going to get to all the details right now, but
4 something that I would like for us to balance
5 these requests with, that there's also going to
6 be a direct benefit to the community as the state
7 decides to allocate public dollars towards
8 supporting the industry.

9 So, I will move on to Commissioner
10 Olmedo, who has another list of proposals.

11 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yeah, I'm just
12 going to read it as is and there seems
13 complimentary, some of these may or may not
14 apply.

15 Allocation of funds to advance local
16 recruitment via local advertising and job fairs.
17 Prioritization of local workforce attributed to
18 both existing geothermal facilities and any new
19 geothermal facilities.

20 Paid training for newly hired workforce.
21 Living wage for new and existing hires.
22 Infrastructure: county roads near geothermal
23 facilities are unkept or consist of dirt roads.
24 Allocation of funds to construct new roads and
25 maintain current county roads. A rainy day fund

1 -- emergency infrastructure needed on the north
2 end of Imperial County, fence line communities to
3 geothermal facilities lack emergency services.
4 Fire trucks, ambulances need adequate and well-
5 kept roads to safety travel for emergency
6 responses. EJ Trust Fund, EJ being Environmental
7 Justice. Monies needed to fund projects and
8 offset any environmental damage caused by
9 geothermal facilities. Projects include
10 construction of green spaces in Salton Sea,
11 region Imperial County, new bike lanes, walkable
12 neighborhoods, funding of electric school and
13 public buses. Campaign to emphasize the use of
14 electric vehicles, reductions of VMTs, Vehicle
15 Mileage Travel, or multi-modal transportation.
16 That's the list.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner
18 Olmedo. Any reactions, comments?

19 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Well, I sort of
20 know a little bit about budgeting. There's a lot
21 of specifics in there, but I don't know, how
22 would we -- I mean, up in Sacramento, they're not
23 going to price all those things out, so doesn't
24 it have to kind of flow through the county or
25 something like that, to basically understand what

1 the value is of all of those? Because they're
2 all very worthwhile and I think incredibly
3 important improvements, and that's why I'm kind
4 of -- I'm not really interested in supporting a
5 piecemeal approach to community justice or, you
6 know, mitigation or -- I think it really needs to
7 be very very overarching with a lot of time spent
8 on specific elements that can value all of these
9 items and understand their relative importance,
10 and have a community involvement component to
11 that. And unfortunately, that can't really be
12 done in a 30-minute meeting. I mean, this is
13 very important.

14 So, I do a lot of planning, I don't know
15 that we can do this piecemeal because I just
16 don't know that the work up in Sacramento is
17 going to get done to actually quantify what all
18 that would take. And I don't know, Commissioner
19 Olmedo, are those projects and those initiatives,
20 are they in some other document somewhere that
21 has been kind of analyzed and looked at what the
22 values are and what the costs would be and to put
23 that in more of a specific ask of the State
24 Budget Process?

25 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Commissioner

1 Castaneda, I first want to agree with you, I
2 think the small work that needs to be done, I
3 think I'm understanding your concern about the
4 piecemeal, and this is just an indication of how
5 important it is to engage the community. The
6 community knows best what the challenges have
7 been, what the concerns are. At this point, I
8 mean, I asked the Commission, I asked the CEC,
9 the Energy Commission, the Energy Commissioners,
10 the legislator, the Governor's Office and the
11 community themselves.

12 I think we need to have a space -- and
13 this goes back to the other ask about having the
14 resources in place, and perhaps this would be
15 sort of a breakdown of being able to have the
16 resources necessary for the community to put its
17 plan together, right?

18 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Right and I will
19 support you on that. There is actually no
20 question. But I think that, you know, I just
21 want to make sure we don't miss anything and that
22 we don't put it in such a form or in a fashion
23 that it really doesn't get looked at seriously
24 because it doesn't have a dollar amount to it,
25 and it isn't broken down. So maybe we forward it

1 and we have a discussion with whomever is at the
2 CEC, or at the Budget Office, or whatever, and we
3 figure out how we get -- or the Assemblymember's
4 Office -- and we figure out how to get it in a
5 situation where we've attached the value to it,
6 so it can actually go into a line item in the
7 Budget process.

8 So, again, I think that's a tremendous
9 start and I'll support it, and let's just see how
10 we get it done.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Yeah. And I want -- what's
12 coming to mind when I hear the list that
13 Commissioner Olmedo is reading, two things: 1)
14 the importance of investments in this region to
15 be able to support any type of industry. I think
16 part of the reason why the Eastern Coachella
17 Valley and Imperial County, Imperial Valley, are
18 still mostly rural, agricultural, is because we
19 don't have the infrastructure to be able to
20 sustain new industry. We don't have the
21 infrastructure to sustain new housing. That's
22 one of the most expensive costs to housing, the
23 infrastructure. So maybe there's something
24 around infrastructure that can be looked at, you
25 know, a more direct holistic approach. So that's

1 one thought.

2 The other thought is there is another
3 item in the agenda related to the CERF planning
4 dollars and I think the way that the CERF has
5 been created, the intent of the CERF is for these
6 community plans to be built by a diverse
7 stakeholder group, right, that would include EJ,
8 that would include labor, that would include
9 industry, that would include community.

10 So, we'll get more into that discussion
11 and maybe recommendations to ensure that the
12 intent of the CERF really benefits our
13 communities and the plan that Luis Olmedo has put
14 forward through the list that he read because I
15 think that's not the only way, but definitely a
16 start, and the more tangible stuff that I see is
17 within that CERF process. So, we'll get to that
18 in the next item on the agenda.

19 Commissioner Colwell and then I'm going
20 to ask for a motion for some actions.

21 Commissioner Colwell.

22 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Okay, thank you,
23 Chair Paz. I'd like to just change the gears a
24 little bit to Steve's point and Luis's point. I
25 mean, both -- and we understand infrastructure,

1 housing, training, jobs, everything that's
2 required. But without a revenue to start with,
3 we've got nothing and at the end of the day, you
4 know, we are where we are because the market may
5 be a transition, the new white gold and the whole
6 bit. So that really should be part of it. We
7 touched on it at the last meeting, but where's
8 the revenue going to come from? Because I'm sure
9 the Governor's Office with the purse strings up
10 there aren't going to throw money at something
11 right now without a proven way or how they're
12 going to get repaid. I mean, it's just a
13 fundamental business, something that really needs
14 to be balanced into this conversation. It
15 shouldn't be all just take. We get it, we all
16 get it, we're all in the thick of it here and
17 would like to add that in as important so we get
18 some balance back into the conversation. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Correct. Thank you for that
21 reminder. So it's this parallel track both of
22 them, very important, one getting to market and
23 successful so there's a revenue source and not
24 forgetting that there's, you know, these things
25 need to be given the same thought and attention

1 and hopefully moving on parallel tracks.

2 So great conversation. I need a motion.
3 And I will -- there as a motion earlier. I will
4 sort of tell you as best as I can the type of
5 motion that I need, and then you take it from
6 there.

7 So, I need a motion that would request
8 the CEC staff to support us in identifying sort
9 of next steps, what's the best vehicle or options
10 for some of these conversations? Because we
11 started with some very clear policy items, but
12 then we went into some gray areas where we might
13 need to explore more direction.

14 So, I would need a motion to request the
15 CEC to support us in continuing to develop these
16 ideas, concepts, and the intent that has been
17 shared here today and to designate Vice Chair
18 Ryan Kelley and myself to carry on those
19 conversations, representing the Lithium Valley
20 Commission on these items that we've so far
21 gotten some consensus around.

22 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: I'll second the
23 original motion, Sylvia.

24 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. So, Steve Castaneda,
25 does your motion still stand after the

1 discussion? Well, we'll come back before we
2 solidify that. I think we can do public comments
3 and then we'll come back and confirm the motion
4 and do the roll call.

5 So, Elisabeth, can you open the item to
6 public comment?

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

12 And the reminder that, if you are writing
13 in your comments, please be sure to send them
14 only via the Q&A and not in the chat windows to
15 ensure that they are addressed and recorded.
16 Comments or questions from the chat window will
17 not be read during the public comment.

18 Participants are limited to three limits
19 to comment total, so that includes the written
20 and/or verbal comments. I'm going to the raised
21 hand. Jose Flores, you should be able to unmute
22 yourself.

23 MR. FLORES: Good morning. Thank you,
24 Chair Paz, a very enlightened conversation on the
25 Lithium Valley Commission and the going on's in

1 our Region of the Salton Sea.

2 My concern is obviously it's great to see
3 the momentum and everything is coming along very
4 quickly, but that in a way is also my concern.

5 In regard to the name of efficiency at times,
6 public engagement is truncated due to deadlines.

7 And again, I'm not naïve, I know in the real
8 world there have to be deadlines, but for many
9 decades in our county, in the name of deadlines
10 they've been able to kind of get away with
11 certain things of not engaging directly and
12 having a dialogue with our community, of our
13 entire county or valley.

14 Although it may be convenient at times to
15 go fast, we see the finish line. I believe truly
16 we can go further as a community with equitable
17 community engagement.

18 Again, as a lifelong resident of Imperial
19 Valley, I've been able to see certain communities
20 in our county that are more affluent, benefit
21 with certain projects, while other communities
22 rarely see these positive gains, but they're
23 affected by many environmental issues. So again,
24 just the status quo of at times not being able to
25 slow down when it's needed to engage the

1 community, and things go on as usual. In the
2 outskirts of the bigger cities in Imperial County
3 they're kind of left by the wayside, conduct a
4 self-fulfilling Prophecy, and I truly believe
5 rising tides lift our boats, but for many decades
6 not all boats have risen the way that they should
7 be with certain projects. So that's just my
8 concerns. Hopefully you're able still this time
9 to truly engage the community and everyone
10 benefits, especially communities that have been
11 neglected in the future (*sic*). Great
12 conversation, hopefully it continues. Thank you
13 very much, Madam Chair.

14 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next raised
15 hand is Eric Reyes. You should be able to unmute
16 yourself.

17 MR. REYES: Yeah, hello. Great
18 conversation, as Mr. Flores just stated. Just a
19 couple of comments and a couple of questions. I
20 put some questions also in the Q&A, so I won't
21 repeat those.

22 I'm thinking that what we're lacking here
23 is a true model that affects our community
24 engagement, but there are models out there and
25 one of the comments put in by Rafael Aguilera was

1 the High Road Workforce Development Model, and
2 that is inclusive at all points of community
3 engagement, community groups that bring out the
4 minority voice, and they're part of the process.
5 And they're part of moving the community forward
6 on these initiatives. Therefore, they're
7 basically in charge of ensuring that there's an
8 equitable process because that's what we work
9 for, right? As equity partners.

10 And we ensure that industry and
11 institutions are doing their share to be
12 inclusive and be equitable in our community. So,
13 I think that's what you need to create is a model
14 and I'm hoping that's something that's moving
15 forward.

16 And someone said, "You're putting the
17 cart before the horse." I think I've heard that
18 many times, but I think with a committee that is
19 as economically challenged and correlates with
20 educationally challenged by the lack of
21 institutions, I think we have to open up our
22 minds to the elite universities also wanting to
23 learn that technology. I did put that in the
24 Q&A.

25 There's no reason why we have to limit

1 ourselves to certain universities only because
2 they're convenient and they're close, but I think
3 there's universities that are world class, we
4 have world global investors, right? Berkshire
5 Hathaway and CTR, these are world class
6 investors. We should have world class
7 universities that are interested in the mining,
8 extraction and this technology that has never
9 been done at this massive scale. I'm sure they
10 want to learn and become partners. It's
11 something that we need to have as an option.

12 And obviously, as a community advocate,
13 we feel that there's growth industry and EJ
14 mitigation and enhancements. I think we need to
15 include not just mitigation, but enhancement that
16 can create green jobs, that's where it's all
17 going. There's outreach that we can do, teach
18 the public about electric cars and every single
19 other product that uses Lithium batteries, which
20 is massive, and that people don't know, and it's
21 only going to increase.

22 So, I want all those to be included as
23 you move forward. And thank you for the
24 conversation. And I do believe we do need
25 another public outreach, we had one in November,

1 and it was excellent. And I read CTR's comments
2 regarding trying to answer them, and it seems to
3 me they also want more of this type of public
4 engagement. Thank you.

5 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next raised
6 hand is Victor Beas. You should be able to
7 unmute yourself.

8 MR. BEAS: Hi, good morning, everyone.
9 I'm Victor Beas. I'm an Imperial Valley
10 resident. And I just would like to also mention
11 that this committee has 16, 17 seats, or -- and
12 I've seen only in those -- every meeting, they're
13 only like five or six persons participating. So,
14 I would like to see more of the rest of the
15 committee to participate. I mean, there are some
16 different levels of expertise, and I haven't
17 heard the opinion of the tribal representatives
18 here. And well, IID should be participating more
19 and I actually -- the Commissioner just, you
20 know, I don't know if he's busy or he's trying to
21 keep a low profile, I don't know. But I haven't
22 seen some of the very important members of this
23 committee participating more. I mean, pretty
24 much the industry, I mean, Mr. Colwell, Mr.
25 Weisgall, Commissioner Castaneda, of course

1 Commissioner -- Chair Paz, and Mr. Olmedo, and I
2 think there should be more participation of the
3 Commission because the more voices on this, it's
4 going to be better to get a different
5 perspective, different opinions, and it's going
6 to be better for everyone. Of course, the
7 community, everyone is mentioning that, so I'm
8 not going to get in that. But, yeah, I would
9 like to see more participation of the rest of the
10 Commissioners in these discussions. And that's
11 pretty much it. Thank you.

12 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next raised
13 hand is Tom Sephton. You should be able to
14 unmute yourself.

15 MR. SEPHTON: Thank you, Chairman Paz and
16 members of the Commission. Just a quick
17 suggestion. The Governor has identified Lithium
18 and Lithium Valley as part of a push toward
19 making a difference with climate change. The
20 state does see a benefit in that and would also
21 have a direct benefit in its tax base.

22 My suggestion is to go to the Governor
23 and the Legislature with your subcommittee, or
24 whoever you want to appoint, and strongly push
25 the state to put in a grant program to support

1 some of the necessary infrastructure improvements
2 needed to help this work in the Imperial Valley,
3 things like roads, rail connection, water
4 delivery infrastructure. These could be helped
5 upfront by the state before the plants are built
6 and the wells are drilled, and the Lithium
7 production is underway. And the state does get a
8 benefit from doing so, so I would suggest taking
9 that to the state. And also, suggestions like
10 high quality land services which currently you
11 have to go far away for. That could be state
12 funded and installed in the Imperial Valley.
13 Thanks.

14 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Now I'm going
15 to the comments that were written and submitted
16 by the Q&A window.

17 The first set of questions, it's from
18 Consuelo Alejandra Marquez. It says: "Joined a
19 bit late, but what is the budget going towards?
20 How is it going to be used to support your
21 community? I thought this Commission wasn't a
22 deciding body on whether or not Lithium
23 extraction was going to occur. What is the money
24 from the budget going towards? How is it going
25 to help the community? Will there be

1 prioritization of the ECV and Imperial Valley
2 workers? New work brings new worker migrations
3 within the country. So that's my question."

4 And a couple more. "When you talk about
5 policy, what does that refer to? Community-
6 driven policy? Policy that will help drive the
7 project forward. Or policy that'll give
8 protection to the true community and the lands?"

9 And the final question from Consuelo.
10 "In terms of training and workforce, is this
11 workforce truly sustainable if it's extraction
12 industry-focused, i.e., if the Salton Sea is left
13 dry and resources are no longer extracted, are we
14 back at square one?"

15 Another question submitted by a Q&A from
16 Hector Meza, IBEW569: "We also have labor unions
17 in IV from Electricians, Pipefitters, Steel
18 Workers, and on and on. All Apprentices receive
19 FREE TRAINING for 4-5 years of education, hands on
20 training and good paying wages for all."

21 And comments written into the Q&A by Eric
22 Reyes: "The workforce development and higher
23 education investment is essential to success and
24 must be vetted to meet the industry needs and,
25 just as important, the worker skills 'Eder to b'

1 competitive in other regions and industries, as
2 well as within our communities around the Lithium
3 development. The community needs to be aware of
4 the opportunities and offered equal access to
5 those opportunities." And also, Eric Reyes said:
6 "Also, I ask why are we limiting ourselves to
7 certain universities when we have global
8 investors? The technology is on everyone's radar
9 as to the effectiveness in the massive scale being
10 proposed and other world class universities will
11 want to study and learn and be a partner. MIT,
12 Colorado University of Mines, etc. are all options
13 to consider."

14 All right, another comment submitted to
15 the Q&A by Kay Wolff: "The health dangers to the
16 immediate community, as well as all of Southern
17 California, cannot wait for the Lithium industry
18 to generate taxes and fees in the distant future.
19 The state should require funds UP FRONT to
20 immediately address the restoration of the Salton
21 Sea with a goal to begin mitigation of health
22 dangers. WE CANNOT WAIT ANY LONGER."

23 And from Luis Lopez in the Q&A: "Allocation of
24 funds to advance local recruitment via local
25 advertising and job fairs, prioritization of local

1 workforce attributed to both existing geothermal
2 facilities and any new geothermal facilities.
3 Paid training for newly hired workforce. Living
4 wage for new and existing hires. Infrastructure
5 (county roads) near geothermal facilities are
6 unkept or consist of dirt roads. Allocation of
7 funds to construct new roads and maintain current
8 county roads or Rainy-Day Fund. Emergency
9 Infrastructure needed for North End of Imperial
10 County fence line communities to geothermal
11 facilities lack emergency services. Fire trucks,
12 ambulances need adequate and well-kept roads to
13 safely travel for emergency responses. EJ Trust
14 Fund monies needed to fund projects and offset any
15 environmental damage caused by geothermal
16 facilities. Projects include construction of
17 green spaces in Salton Sea region and Imperial
18 County, new bike lanes, walkable neighborhoods,
19 funding of electric school & public buses."

20 And there's just a little more: "Is there
21 a local workforce recommendation coming from this
22 commission? In agreements with labor unions,
23 there is usually a local hire provision where
24 local workers who are eligible for jobs based on
25 their work skills be offered the job first, so

1 they fill locally as many jobs they are capable
2 of, and at times there are percentage guarantees
3 of workers locally in developments. Is this
4 commission making a recommendation?

5 And finally, an anonymous Attendee
6 submitted: "This comment is from Mariela Loya
7 with Leadership Counsel. First, in terms of a
8 bill proposal specific to community workforce and
9 community benefits, it is crucial that, as you
10 start drafting a plan for community engagement you
11 ensure that these conversations are also had with
12 community. If you are already thinking about the
13 possibility of this, community not only needs to
14 be informed, but needs to be included in the
15 context of these agreements given that they would
16 be the ones to hopefully benefit from these.
17 Second, whatever information or draft bill
18 proposal language you all have, please share in
19 the public docket for the public to review.
20 Third, in terms of the next item on CERF, when it
21 is important to have interregional coordination
22 and analysis to address shared impacts experienced
23 across regions, geographical landscape,
24 geographical similarities, and intersecting
25 regional economies. And 2) strategic investments

1 and transitions must repair environmental harm
2 injustice and exclusive."

3 Ah, sorry, there's one more comment here.
4 Luis Lopez says: "Community needs to be at the
5 forefront of conversations and decision making."

6 I do not see any other comments submitted
7 at this time for public comment. So back to you,
8 Chair Paz. Sorry, Chair Paz, it does look like
9 you're on mute.

10 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I know that some
11 members of the Commission have a hard stop, so
12 right now I will quickly summarize the motion that
13 was before us and confirm that Steve Castaneda had
14 made a motion to request the CEC to support us in
15 exploring these ideas further and the options, I
16 mean, meetings with Legislators, as well as
17 delegating Vice Chair Ryan Kelley and myself to
18 work with the CEC in these meetings with the
19 Legislators to bring forth what we've heard from
20 you all. So, there's a motion and there was a
21 second by Rod Colwell.

22 So, Elisabeth, can you do a roll call
23 vote, please?

24 MS. DE JONG: Yes, I can. And sorry to do
25 this Chair Paz, but if we could just maybe restate

1 the votes just to be clear, especially with a new
2 request going to the CEC. Thank you.

3 CHAIR PAZ: The motion is to request the
4 CEC to support us in meeting with the Legislators
5 and further exploring the options where we saw
6 consensus of that request from the CEC and two
7 members of this Commission who would be delegated
8 that authority to work with the CEC and meet with
9 the Legislators in representing the Lithium Valley
10 Commission on the items where we found consensus,
11 would be Vice Chair Ryan Kelley and myself.

12 So, we have a motion by Steve Castaneda
13 and a second by Rod Colwell.

14 MS. DE JONG: All right. Thank you. So I
15 can move to do roll call vote?

16 When I call your names, please let me know
17 your vote, yes, no, or abstain.

18 MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Castaneda?

19 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yes.

20 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Commissioner
21 Colwell?

22 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes.

23 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. I believe
24 Commissioner Dolega is not present. Commissioner
25 Flores. It looks like Commissioner Flores is not

1 present. Okay, Commissioner Hanks? I don't hear
2 a vote. Vice Chair Kelley? I don't hear a vote
3 from Vice Chair Kelley. Commissioner Lopez?

4 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Yes.

5 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Commissioner
6 Olmedo?

7 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes.

8 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Chair Paz?

9 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

10 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Commissioner
11 Ruiz?

12 COMMISSIONER RUIZ: Yes.

13 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. I don't believe
14 Commissioner Scott is available. I don't believe
15 Commissioner Soto is available. And I believe
16 Commissioner Weisgall has stepped away. I just
17 want to check if he's available for this vote.
18 Okay, Chair Paz, I just want to take a second
19 right here. I don't believe that we have a quorum
20 at this point in the meeting, so if the CEC legal
21 team could chime in?

22 MS. DYER: This is Deborah.

23 MS. DE JONG: I did count six votes, so
24 that's the total from my count.

25 MS. DYER: That is also where I counted

1 and so we do not have a quorum, which means that
2 we cannot take that vote.

3 CHAIR PAZ: So, we can take this up at the
4 next meeting. I mean, we're meeting, what, in a
5 week?

6 MS. DYER: Correct.

7 MS. DE JONG: It is scheduled February
8 24th.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. So maybe during that
10 meeting we'll just go through the vote, we
11 probably do have the discussion and it was a
12 really good discussion, so we'll move it for then
13 and that would apply for the next item on the
14 agenda, which is the letter for CERF. I think
15 we're probably going to just have to wait on that
16 one, too, and just put it in the top of the agenda
17 for next meeting.

18 MS. DYER: Chair Paz, this is Deborah.
19 You can still discuss that second item on the CERF
20 letter, you just couldn't take a vote unless there
21 is a quorum present.

22 CHAIR PAZ: Yes. I'm just concerned that
23 if we don't have a quorum and we have a discussion
24 with less than a quorum, you know, just how that
25 vote is going to look. I think I'd rather have a

1 discussion when there's more members, that way we
2 can be transparent and, you know, just get
3 everyone who can vote on it. Thank you for that
4 suggestion.

5 So given that we no longer have quorum, we
6 will move the vote to next meeting, and we will
7 also discuss the CERF letter at the next meeting
8 and consider a vote then.

9 MS. LEE: Chair Paz, I just want to make
10 the note that CEC Team is working internally. We
11 did not agendize these items for consideration on
12 the 24th, but we're working internally to identify
13 what our options are for your action.

14 CHAIR PAZ: Perfect. Thank you.

15 MS. DE JONG: You do have a hand raised
16 from Commissioner Olmedo.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo.

18 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes, Madam Chair, I
19 know that we might be able to take a deep dive and
20 discuss or have action. Is there an opportunity
21 maybe to facilitate a conversation about it, even
22 though we won't potentially take action today? Do
23 we have the time, first of all? And if we do,
24 would you entertain discussion on it? And be sure
25 it's specific.

1 CHAIR PAZ: Yeah, I mean, I don't know
2 where the rest of the Commissioners are. It is an
3 important topic and I thought that if we started a
4 conversation now, we would almost have to rehash
5 the conversation before we get the rest of the
6 Commission to vote on it. So I can give a summary
7 and then maybe make a request so that we can be
8 prepared if we can add it to the next meeting.

9 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair, just
10 because -- I feel like decisions have been made,
11 decisions continually being made --

12 CHAIR PAZ: Correct.

13 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: -- I think it is
14 time we try this, have a conversation that, if my
15 understanding of it is correct, like planning and
16 GoBiz at the Governor's Office, would at least be
17 able to hear where the Commission is at, or
18 individual Commissioners would be at.

19 CHAIR PAZ: That is a good point. So let
20 me give you the summary and then we can have as
21 much of a discussion as you all feel and if you
22 have time, but we won't be able to vote.

23 So again, the brief summary is that there
24 is a Community Economic Recovery Fund that is
25 being administered I believe under three agencies,

1 GoBiz, EDD, and the Governor's Office of Funding
2 and Research. And there is about \$500 million
3 that were allocated in last year's budget with the
4 intent of creating inclusive, equitable community
5 economic recovery plans from two different
6 regions.

7 So, the intent is very well welcomed, that
8 I've heard nothing but, you know, just positive
9 things about the need for these investments and
10 the needs for economic recovery plans for our
11 region.

12 The challenges that I've heard, and to
13 know, but the public comments have already passed,
14 so we would be submitting a letter after the fact.
15 But we've heard from communities on the ground,
16 and they have already submitted in their public
17 comment is the challenges with having the Salton
18 Sea Region split between two regions, so part of
19 the sea would fall in what is called the Inland
20 Empire Region, so that's Riverside and San
21 Bernardino County, at large, and then the southern
22 end of the sea, which is Imperial County, would
23 fall with the southern border region which
24 includes San Diego and Imperial County.

25 There are challenges as have been

1 referenced in some of the public comment with
2 regard to a region of the Salton Sea that has so
3 much in common with like the industries that we
4 share, the workforce that we share, and the
5 challenges that we share both in terms of
6 infrastructure, many of the things that came up in
7 our conversation, right? These are shared items
8 between specifically Eastern Coachella Valley,
9 Imperial Valley, and if we split the region the
10 way that we're split right now, it just becomes so
11 much more difficult to come up with a cohesive
12 plan that's really centering our community's needs
13 and our voice.

14 We would then have to negotiate and find a
15 way for -- well, Imperial would have to do that in
16 the context of San Diego; Eastern Coachella Valley
17 would have to do that in the context of Riverside,
18 Imperial, and then potentially we could end up
19 with two plans, one in Coachella and one in
20 Imperial that don't even talk to each other,
21 right?

22 So those are the risks and, again, they
23 have been voiced in one way or another during
24 public comment by organizations on the ground.

25 The letter that is in front of you,

1 hopefully, that you've received and was also
2 posted to the docket, is a draft that is asking
3 the three agencies to reconsider, and that they
4 keep the Salton Sea Region together.

5 So that's a summary of this item. It
6 would be great if everyone, since we cannot vote,
7 for everyone who is still here, and communicate to
8 the others, to take this letter, look at it, this
9 only talks about the region itself, but then
10 there's guidelines that could strengthen the
11 equity piece and making sure. And those are not
12 part of this letter, it's just about the region.
13 Commissioner Olmedo.

14 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yeah, Madam Chair. I
15 have nothing more to add. I think everything you
16 just stated is just sort of a shared experience,
17 shared concern. Historically -- again, I think
18 that speaks to comments I made earlier on the
19 previous conversation that, you know, I think well
20 intended characterizations of our community keep
21 pulling us into these larger regions that are
22 irrelevant to our community. You know, we have so
23 many factors that are more aligned with Imperial
24 and Eastern Coachella Valley, and I trust your
25 advice, Chair Paz. I've mostly experienced

1 Eastern Coachella Valley, it's very similar to
2 Imperial Valley. But that's why I referenced it
3 in those terms, but if so many programs continue
4 to miss the mark, you know, whether it's the
5 Census, whether it's redistricting, and I'm just
6 very pleased with the most recent, finally we've
7 been heard, about the experience of Salton Sea,
8 our air shed, you know, our economy, it's tied to
9 agriculture. There's just so many things that
10 anyone who is paying attention would realize this
11 is the region, right? I mean, the only other way
12 that our region would be moving in different
13 directions is what we have historically suspected,
14 and that is that we are very attractive,
15 vulnerable, disadvantaged characteristics that
16 might help, you know, more fluent or communities
17 that can benefit from our socioeconomics, but not
18 necessarily benefit us back. So, I look forward
19 to this being brought back for action, but I hope
20 that the proper agencies making these decisions
21 are listening to the conversation. Thank you.

22 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Deborah, I see
23 your hand up.

24 MS. DYER: Yes, Chair Paz. For purposes
25 of process, I would recommend that you announce

1 that this meeting is being continued to February
2 24th at the next LVC meeting and that will carry
3 this agenda item to that next meeting. And we
4 will work on the appropriate Bagley-Keene notices
5 that need to be posted.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Do we need a vote
7 to continue -- oh, well, we don't have a quorum,
8 so no. Thank you.

9 Okay, so unless there is any further
10 discussion from the Commissioners, we will
11 continue this meeting into the meeting on the
12 24th.

13 COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Have a good day.

14 CHAIR Paz: Thank you. I believe we need
15 to open for public comment before we adjourn,
16 Elisabeth?

17 MS. DE JONG: Yes, thank you. Okay, so if
18 you're joining us by Zoom on your computer, please
19 use the raised hand feature. If you have called
20 in, please dial *9 to raise your hand, and *6 to
21 unmute your phone line.

22 I will go first to the hands raised in
23 the Zoom application and then any phone callers,
24 and any written comments. I do have a phone
25 caller with the last three numbers 637. You

1 should be able to unmute.

2 MR. ANDERSON: Hi, yes. My name is Brad
3 Anderson and I live in the Coachella Valley. I
4 just wanted to just make a comment that I
5 appreciate the efforts taking place by this
6 Commission and I came in really late today, so
7 I'm just going to hang on for your next meeting
8 and I'll be participating in that one. Thank you
9 very much.

10 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And just a
11 reminder that a recording and transcript of these
12 meetings are posted online after the meeting.

13 We do have another hand raise from Eric
14 Reyes. You should be able to unmute yourself.

15 MR. REYES: Yeah, just continuing the
16 conversation, one thing I have asked before and
17 locally also and with industry is a comprehensive
18 economic studies, analysis of all the
19 incendiaries of businesses also, so we can target
20 investment and small business development around
21 that without really having the know how of
22 everything that's going to be involved and what
23 supplies are going to be needed. We can really
24 make an investment into that small business
25 development. I think that would be great if we

1 could have something like that put into the
2 Governor's budget, which they can do very easily,
3 but it would really be helpful for us on the
4 ground as to what our asks will be and where we
5 can help the community access an opportunity.
6 Thank you.

7 MS. DE JONG: Thank you. I see a hand
8 raised from Eric Reyes.

9 CHAIR PAZ: I think that was him.

10 MS. DE JONG: Yeah, okay. Sorry. It did
11 pop up again, but all right. Thank you. I do
12 not -- oh, let me see, I did get a written in
13 comment by Q&A from Victor Beas. "No quorum to
14 vote. As I said previously, we need to see even
15 more engagement in the rest of the Commission."

16 All right, I don't see any other hands
17 raised or written comments at this time. So back
18 to you, Chair Paz.

19 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, everyone. We
20 don't have a General Public Comment, do we?

21 MS. DE JONG: I believe that we just held
22 the public comment.

23 CHAIR PAZ: So, we are ready to adjourn.
24 This meeting is being continued to the meeting on
25 the 24th (of February) and I will see you all

1 there. Thank you for the discussion.

2 (The meeting adjourned at 11:18 a.m.)

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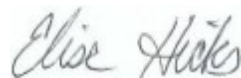
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I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were reported by me, a certified electronic court reporter and a disinterested person, and was under 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 14th day of March, 2022.



ELISE HICKS, IAPRT

CERT**2176

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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.



March 14, 2022

MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT**367