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<td>Erica Loza</td>
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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

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

REMOTE VIA ZOOM

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022
1:30 P.M.

Reported by:
Elise Hicks
APPEARANCES

COMMISSIONERS
Silva Paz, Chair
Ryan E. Kelly, Vice Chair
Steve Castaneda
Rod Colwell
Roderic Dolega
Miranda Flores
James C. Hanks (Absent)
Arthur Lopez (Ritchie)
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
Mariela Loera
Nikola Lakic
Eric Reyes
Tom Sephton

WORKSHOP PRESENTERS

Carol Zabin, Director Green Economy Programs
Center for Labor Research and Education,
University of California Berkeley

Jim Turner, Chief Operating Officer of Controlled Thermal Resources (CTR)

Burt Short, BHE Renewables, CalEnergy Operating Corporation

Marc Cowan, California Workforce Development Board, High Road Construction Careers Program

Robert Meyer, Director of Economic Development at the Employment Training Panel

Priscilla Lopez, Director of the Imperial County Workforce And Economic Development Office

Efrain Silva, Dean of Economic and Workforce Development At Imperial Valley College

Danny Machain, Assistant Business Manager, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 569

Shrayas Jatkar, CA Workforce Development Board

Professor Chris Benner, PhD from University of California Santa Cruz

Hector Meza, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers #569

Sahara Huazano, Alianza Coachella Valley

Marco Lizarraga, La Cooperativa Campesina
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome and Roll Call</td>
<td>5, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce Development Workshop</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentations on Workforce Development and Jobs Associated with Geothermal Resources and Development, including Lithium Development</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q and A among Lithium Valley Commissioners</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Panel Discussion - Creating Access to Economic &amp; Job Opportunities</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q and A among Lithium Valley Commissioners</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued Discussion and Possible Action on Lithium Valley Commission Proposed Recommendations Related to Governor Newsom’s Proposed 2022-2023 Budget</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning for Upcoming Workshops</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuation of Environmental Impacts Workshop</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Impacts Workshop</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schedule for Future Workshops</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of January 27, 2022 and February 16, 2022 Meeting Action Minutes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informational Items</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and Legislative Updates</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithium Valley Commissioner Update</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Comments</td>
<td>147, 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Public Comments</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjourn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
P R O C E E D I N G S

1:30 P.M.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022

CHAIR PAZ: Good morning, everyone.

Welcome to the Lithium Valley Commission Meeting. We do have an extremely full agenda today. We're going to be hearing the topic of Workforce Development and with a full workshop that will address topics that have been of interest not only to the Commissioners, but also the community.

We do anticipate there's going to be robust discussion on that topic and we want to do our best to ensure that there is ample opportunity for comments and discussion. For this reason, we will be implementing the use of time limits today. This will apply, the presenters I know who are given an allotted time; we're going to ask you to please stick to those. But as well, implementing time limits on Commissioner and Public Comments. Each member of the public will have up to 2 minutes to make a comment on all items except for the workforce development workshop; for the workshop, all public commenters will have up to three minutes. Also, we will request that commissioners try to keep their comments brief and I will let you know when
you are at the two minute mark so that you can wrap up
your comment. Thank you in advance for your cooperation
and I hope we can get all the information we need in a
timely manner today.

This is just a reminder that we are providing
interpretation services in Spanish for attendees
participating in this Zoom meeting. The via
computers or tablets, unfortunately Zoom
interpretations does not work for Attendees who
are only joining by phone.

I will now introduce the representative
from the CEC so that they can give instructions
to the Spanish speaking audience on how to use
the service.

MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Thank you, Chair Paz.
(Speaks Spanish)
Chair Paz, back to you.
CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. To make sure that
all members of the public have access to the
meeting under the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act,
we do ask that all Lithium Valley Commissioners
remain on the English Channel for the entirety of
the meeting and preferably with the cameras on.
I'll also note that the slides include
Spanish interpretation and that language is
Elisabeth, back to you for some instruction.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you, Chair Paz. This meeting is being conducted entirely remotely via Zoom consistent with Governor Newsom's Executive Order N-21-22 to improve and enhance public access to state agency meetings during the Covid-19 pandemic.

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

Members of the public will be muted during the presentations, but there will be opportunities for public comment at times throughout the agenda. There is a Q&A window in the Zoom application, which you may use to type questions and comments, and staff will relay these comments.

The chat function should be used only for IT support or other technical issues. Please do
not use the chat functions to provide comment or questions on the contents of the meeting. Please remember to stay muted until you've been called on to speak. Meeting materials, including the notice and presentation slide decks are posted online and in the Lithium Valley Commission Docket. We will be posting an updated slide dock online and to the docket with the guest presentations translated into Spanish.

With that, back to you, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We are going to do Roll Call.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Castaneda.

COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Here.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Colwell.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yeah.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Dolega.

COMMISSIONER DOLEGA: Here.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Flores.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: Present.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Hanks.

COMMISSIONER HANKS: (No audible reply)

CHAIR PAZ: Vice Chair Ryan Kelley.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Here.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Lopez.
COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: (No audible reply)

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Here.

CHAIR PAZ: I'm here.

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Ruiz.

COMMISSIONER RUIZ: (No audible reply)

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Scott.

COMMISSIONER SCOTT: (No audible reply)

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Soto.

COMMISSIONER SOTO: (No audible reply)

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Weisgall.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Here.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We do have a quorum. Thank you.

The agenda is on your screen. I do want to remind us all that we chose to continue two items for consideration in today's meeting, so we will be starting with those. And because one of the items, the item to continue the discussion on possible selection on the Lithium Valley Commission, proposed recommendations related to Governor Newsom's budget with duplicative on an item in the agenda. We are going to consider all of this at the top of the meeting so that we're not having the same conversation later on in the
agenda. And we can take action today as appropriate and continue to keep this topic as an agenda item throughout this year's budget and legislative process. Thank you. Next, please.

As I noted before, we have two items that were continued from the January 16th meeting. Today we will complete our discussion, offer an opportunity for public comment and finalize our actions and vote on the items as shown on this slide. As a reminder, public comment will be limited to two minutes on these items. And I will also be guiding Commissioner comments to keep us on time. Next slide, please.

First, we need to complete our discussion and take action on the Proposed Recommendations Related to Governor Newsom's Proposed Budget. We finalized the last meeting with a motion and a second for that motion, Commissioner Castaneda initially offered the motion, however, I subsequently summarized that motion prior to the vote and we were not able to complete the vote on that motion.

So we're going to start with this item. We have a pending motion that would do two things, 1) it would request the Energy Commission
to support the Lithium Valley Commission in meeting with legislators and further exploring the options where we, the Lithium Valley Commission, agree on doing our discussion, and we had that discussion February 16th.

And the second part was for two members to have delegated authority to work with the CEC, meet with the legislators and represent the LVC, again, only on those items where we found agreement, with the two members being Vice Chair Ryan Kelley and myself.

So I'm going to again re-read and maybe clarify that motion and then I will ask Commissioner Castaneda if you still wants to support that motion.

In summary, the motion is for the Lithium Valley Commission to authorize two members, Chair Paz and Vice Chair Kelley, to meet with legislators and represent the Lithium Valley Commission to discuss recommendations for those items upon which the Lithium Valley Commission has agreed. And additionally, to request that the CEC provide technical assistance to Chair Paz, myself, and Vice Chair Kelley, and support in scheduling conversations and meetings with
legislators and their representatives to explore
the recommendations agreed to by the Lithium
Valley Commission.

Are there any questions on this motion?

COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Chair Paz?

CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: I will go ahead
and remake and reiterate that motion.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner
Castaneda. I believe it was Rod who had seconded
that motion. So, Rod?

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: I'll confirm that
motion, Chair Paz. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Maybe there's a
discussion, so is there any discussion from the
Commissioners? We'll do that before I open it to
public comment. Commissioner Weisgall. You're
on mute.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Here we go.

Yeah, this is fine. I think we also agreed that
individual Commissioners were perfectly free to
enter into discussions with Legislators on their
own. I just want to clarify that that's the
understanding of the motion.

CHAIR PAZ: Correct. You all have the
ability to meet independently, representing
yourself, your organization, that is correct.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Thank you.
CHAIR PAZ: Uh huh. Okay, so we will
open to public comment. Elisabeth?

MS. DE JONG: Yes, thank you. So if
you're joining us by Zoom on your computer,
please use the "raise hand" feature. And if
you've called in, please dial *9 to raise your
hand, and then *6 to unmute your phone line.
We'll go first to any hands raised in the Zoom
application and on the phone, and if there are
any comments written in the Q&A.

Chair Paz, I don't see any hands raised
or written comments at this time, so back to you.
CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So can we do a
roll call on this vote? Elisabeth, can you
support me with the roll call and the vote?
MS. DE JONG: Yes, I can. To the Lithium
Valley Commissioners, when I say your name,
please let us know your vote, yes or no.

MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Castaneda.
COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yes.
MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Colwell.
COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes.
MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Dulega.
COMMISSIONER DULEGA: Yes.
MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Flores.
COMMISSIONER FLORES: Yes.
MS. DE JONG: I believe that Commissioner Hanks is not present. Vice Chair Kelley.
VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Yes.
COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes.
MS. DE JONG: Chair Paz.
CHAIR PAZ: Yes.
COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes.
MS. DE JONG: I count eight yeses. Chair Paz, back to you.
CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Next item. This is the second item that was continued from the February 16th meeting. During the meeting I provided a brief summary of this item and Commissioner Olmedo provided some comments in support of this Commission taking action as
proposed.

However, again, there was no action taken and no motion was made. So today I want to introduce this item and continue the discussion before possibly taking an action.

This item is for the Commission to consider submitting a Comment Letter addressing the need for further consideration of the regions identified in the Community Economic Resilience Fund (CERF). To summarize where the process is. There have been two rounds of public comment from EDD, GO-Biz and OPR, I believe are the agencies responsible for CERF.

The first public comment was around the creation of the regions. During that time, there were local organizations, including Alianza, the organization that I represent, Comittee Civico, with Commissioner Olmedo and other local organizations who provided comment such as being that we needed a region that would bring the Salton Sea together. So we needed a Salton Sea region.

Unfortunately, that did not happen, but the current map for CERF has a portion of the Salton Sea with San Diego, and that's the
Imperial and San Diego Counties, that's the southern border. And then the other portion of the Salton Sea, the one that lies in the Coachella Valley, is with Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

I believe that having them separated just diminishes a lot of the opportunity that we can have to leverage this funding, not just for the conversations around Lithium and all the planning that is going to need to happen outside of this commission. But also, it fails to recognize that Imperial and the Coachella Valley, particularly, the Eastern Coachella Valley have more in common with each other than they do with either San Diego or Riverside. So that is the spirit of this letter, and I will open it for comments or questions right now.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Chair Paz, this is Rod here.

CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Is there a funding proposed here, or royalties? Is that what this is about? I'm trying to --

CHAIR PAZ: Oh, sorry. I should have started there, maybe a little bit of background.
CERF is the Community Economic Recovery Fund that was allocated in last year's budget, I believe it's around $600 million that is going to be distributed to regions across the state, so those regions have been defined already as 13 regions with the Salton Sea split between two regions in competition with one Metropolitan area.

But the purpose of the fund is for these regions to be able to do economic recovery planning that, you know, will bring together environmental considerations, recovery from the Pandemic, and sort of integrate a more holistic approach when we're talking about economic planning. Did that answer your question, Commissioner Colwell?

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes it did, thank you so much.

CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, Madam Chair. In support of the idea of putting a letter forward, because the Eastern Coachella Valley and I'm not sure if the letter just defines to that area, it certainly has a lot in common with Imperial and programs have historically been built around the border. And
not understanding the vast amount of space
between Imperial and the economy that has been
built here, and the economy that has been built
in Coachella, Eastern Coachella has much more in
common. We also face considerable challenge with
what should be the common sense isn't always the
common sense for programs that are designed in
the map, and not necessarily designed to be
customized within our communities. We share the
air basin here, Imperial–Coachella; we share
perhaps one of the largest, if not the largest
climate crisis that is facing us as a result of
drought, as a result of the need or climate
change altogether, which is the Salton Sea. We
share an agricultural industry and many other
industries that exist in this region. It's the
common sense I can't stress enough, that year
after year or program after program, you know, we
get brought in together with San Diego and don't
get me wrong, that's what we aspire to over the
weekend right? If people are fortunate to have a
good vehicle to get over the grade there and get
into the beach, pitch a tent or fortunate enough
to have a house along the coast, then certainly
that's what you know–great dining experience. We
also have great dining experience across the border here. We have a housing crisis in –

CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo, if you can wrap up and I hate to –

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Certainly.

CHAIR PAZ: -- do this, but I’m going to have to be doing this throughout.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: No, no, I respect that. I apologize. So, yeah, in conclusion is I think that we have an incredible opportunity here where the state, I believe, is listening to us. I believe that the Governor and it's leadership team are listening. If ever possible, I think it's right now. And I'm very optimistic that a region that's made up of Imperial and Coachella is possible. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And I did hear you ask in your comments about whether the Salton Sea Region has been designated. In the letter, I want to point out that there is some language, sort of put in some boundaries if possible, that it would cover Imperial County, much of Riverside County, so starting from Palm Springs Area, all of the Coachella Valley, and going perhaps all the way to Blythe, given that we do share the
agricultural economy and Blythe is off the very
distant -- so just bringing some equity into this
piece, as well. Commissioner/Vice Chair Ryan
Kelley.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Thank you, Chair Paz.
I have had the opportunity to discuss this with
Chair Paz and Mr. Olmedo, I support the action
and I call for the question.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Was that a
motion? Do we have additional questions?

COMMISSIONER FLORES: Yeah, I just wanted
to, you know, kind of splay off I’ll be
abstaining from this particular vote because of
being part of the administration, you know, I
don't have a full understanding of why this
particular region is -- I'm not saying that I
disagree with the letter, so I'm making that
really clear, but just wanting more information
before I move forward with a decision.

CHAIR PAZ: We will open it to public
comment and then I will come back and request a
second to the motion. Elisabeth, public comment
please.

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

First, we'll go through the hands raised
in the Zoom application, then phones, and then
any written in comments. The first hand raised
was Jose Flores. You should be able to unmute
yourself.

MR. FLORES: Good afternoon. Have you
worked in the fields in the '70s and '80s and
commute? From Imperial Valley in the summer is
to Coachella. I totally concur with the notion
that we are the same, similar communities. So
constantly going uphill, our two regions, being
represented by proxy, by the more affluent
influential communities is to our detriment, so I
totally agree with this letter and what it
states. Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. The next hand
raise looks like the Leadership Council, you
should be able to unmute yourself.

MS. LOERA: Hi. This is Mariela Loera
with Leadership Council. I just wanted to
reiterate the comments I made. Last week on this
which is very similar to what you all are discussing already, but the importance for this group not only to continue to encourage at the Salton Sea Region, you define not as two, but as one. And also to mention that CERF is also a good opportunity for this group to support the Lithium extraction effort to develop economic growth, while at the same time focus on repairing and sustaining environmental harms and injustices in the region. So it's just another tool for the group to use. Thanks.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. There is one written comment. Jesus Arguelles says: Are the proposed modified boundaries only for CERF?" And that looks like all of the comments for this period. Back to you, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So that last question, yes, this letter is only addressed to CERF. To the extent that other agencies will start looking at our region in a more integrated way, that's always welcome. But this letter is at this point directed for the CERF process.

Commissioner/Vice Chair Ryan Kelley.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Chair Paz, if you -- I'm sorry I didn't keep track of it, but if you
need a motion, I made the motion.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And I need a second.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: I'll second, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So we have a motion by Vice Chair Kelley and a second by Rod Colwell. Elisabeth, can you support me with the roll call, please?

MS. DE JONG: Yes, I can. As I call your name, Commissioners, if you could just please say yes or no for your vote.

MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Castaneda.

COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yes.

MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Colwell.

COMMISSIONER COLWELL: Yes.

MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Dulega.

COMMISSIONER DULEGA: I'll have to abstain.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Commissioner Flores.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: Abstaining.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Commissioner Hanks; I believe that Commissioner Hanks is not present. Vice Chair Kelley.
VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Yes.

MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Lopez, I believe is not present. Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yes.

MS. DE JONG: Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

MS. DE JONG: Commissioner Ruiz. Oh, I'm sorry, he's not present. Commissioner Scott, I believe is not present. Commissioner Soto is not present. And Commissioner Weisgall.

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Yes.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Let me do a quick count. I heard six yeses and two abstentions. Back to you, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Next slide, please.

So as we work to transition into the Workforce Development Workshop, Elisabeth will quickly be guiding us to some housekeeping, and then I will frame the workshop, put it in context before calling our presenters. So, Elisabeth.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. So we will be posting the presentation from today in English and Spanish online and to the Docket. If any guest participants have any presentation
materials they want to share on screen, please
also be sure to email the CEC a copy so we can
include those materials. Additionally, we
appreciate the depth and context of the
presentations and discussion today.

We ask that you please be mindful of the
time limits, ensuring that everyone has a chance
to present and have meaningful discussion after
the workshop. Back to you, Chair Paz and for
introduction of the guest speakers.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Let me set the
context a little bit. You have heard both from
the local community members as well as, from the
very beginning, conversations that this
Commission has, there is a high interest in
workforce development and the opportunities for
our communities to have access to high quality
jobs and other economic opportunities that could
be created in Lithium Valley.

So today's workshop is a deep dive into
the realm of workforce development so we can
better understand the employment opportunities in
the first place, as well as the needs and the
resources involved in developing the workforce.

We'll hear from people that have been
involved in workforce development in various ways, including researching key industries and occupations to understand the scope of employment opportunities, developing new education programs in the region with a focus on the permanent operations jobs, providing funding for industry to train incumbent, as well as mid-entry level workers, and much more.

Several people who will be presenting today will be framing the work and recommendations using the concept of High Road, which we received a presentation on a while back. And it's a term that's showing up more and more across economic and environmental policy.

I'll let our presenters go into detail about what the High Road means exactly. But suffice it to say that, at the highest level, the High Road is the metaphor for the kind of economy and society that we want to have for economic growth, income equality, and shared prosperity, and a healthy environment as seen and treated as necessary compliments, rather than a tragic tradeoff.

The High Road is also the Newsom Administration's primary approach to workforce
development in which attention is paid equally to workers and training, as well as jobs and employers. The High Road approach focuses on addressing not just jobs and training, but more specifically to the quality and accessibility of both. That's why the Governor's Budget Proposal for Climate Change in Lithium Valley mentions things like labor standards and community benefits.

To put it simply, the High Road aligns with our notions of an inclusive economic development and our vision for a sustainable, inclusive, and equitable Lithium Valley.

So with that, I will start introducing the first presenters who were asked to address a few questions, specifically what are the jobs associated with Lithium development. So Carol Zabin, who is the Director of Green Economy Programs, Center for Labor Research and Education at the University of California Berkeley, if you can get us started.

MS. ZABIN: Thank you very much, Chair Paz. And it's an honor to speak with you today. Can you hear me, everybody? Okay.

We were asked by Chair Paz to share some
of the recommendations on building the High Road
that we developed in the State jobs and Climate
Action Plans and how they pertain to the specific
types of job opportunities that were presented
here in Lithium Valley. Next slide.

So our goal today is really to outline a
menu of strategies that ensure access to High
Road jobs in Lithium Valley for local workers.

So, the Commission has been clear about this goal
and what we hope to contribute is how to make
this promise of good careers for local folks a
reality. Next slide.

So just to be a little more detailed on
what a High Road job is, it's about job quality,
family supporting wages, safe workplaces, career
pathways, and worker protections including the
right to join a union. And job access, of
course, is about hiring local workers and
training them to support their placement and
advancement.

So a High Road Employer is one that has a
business model that's based on quality and on the
skills of their workers so that they can in fact
support High Road jobs. And High Road policy
really supports these High Road Employers,
favoring them with government assistance and
setting minimum standards for job quality and
access. So, we are creating a competitive
environment that favors the High Road Employers
and closes off low road practices. Next slide.

So we know we're at the beginning of a
huge opportunity in Lithium Valley to expand raw
material production in geothermal energy. We're
kind of at Stage 1 of what might be landing even
more of the supply chain. And it's important to
set the stage at Stage 1, kind of set the table,
really set the standards for business development
and community benefits now, so that we can
influence what's on the table now, but also
development in the future. Next.

And how we do that is we have to start
with the policies aimed at growing Lithium
Valley, including government funding, support for
public infrastructure, procurement policies,
streamlined permitting, all the things that
government is doing to encourage development in
the region.

And it's on these policies where you want
to insert your standards and strategies to ensure
good jobs and access for local folks. It's not
about just training. You can't train your way into good jobs; what you have to do is create the demand for new, good, skilled jobs and then fill in any gaps around training needs. Next slide.

So, we're lucky here today with specifics from the business representatives and a couple of Developers that will talk much more specifically about the jobs their investments are generating.

But I'm bucketing them into three categories: construction, operations and maintenance, both of which are blue collar work, and white-collar jobs. It's important to do that because there are different strategies to ensure jobs at quality and access, and different training pathways for each bucket.

You know, construction jobs obviously at facilities and infrastructure are built: here the gold standard for training is certified apprenticeship. The blue-collar jobs are in operations and maintenance. Those are the bulk of permanent jobs, usually only requiring a high school degree and workplace-based training.

And the white-collar jobs where folks need college to get hired are a small percentage, obviously important, but a small percentage.
So let me go one-by-one. Construction: it's really a unique industry because there is a clear segment of the industry that is already High Road and is based on the use of State certified apprenticeship training, and really a set of laws that set wages and benefits in public sector construction.

And we can plug into this High Road by using project labor agreements to build out Lithium Valley's facilities and infrastructure.

Next slide.

So, what's a PLA? Other folks are going to talk about this in more detail, but it is a collective bargaining agreement that sets wages and benefits standards. It kicks in the use of state certified apprenticeship programs, and it organizes the work and ensures the labor piece. It generally helps projects finish on time and within budget.

Now the big federal infrastructure investments will require PLAs by President Biden's Executive Order, and I know of at least one new facility that already has a PLA, and what we're saying is any future projects should have PLAs too.
And you can negotiate them one-by-one, but a PLA policy for the region can help streamline negotiations and levels of playing fields for big construction projects. Next slide.

CHAIR PAZ: I just want to do a quick time check. We're halfway there. Thank you.

MS. ZABIN: Okay, I think I'm good. And I will let Mark and others talk about how these agreements work, but they also facilitate hiring of local workers when there are local hire agreements as part of the PLA, and the key here is kind of transparent tracking of who gets hired and often community groups have a role in monitoring this, and also problem solving when contractors feel like local hire goals aren't working for them.

Operations and Maintenance Jobs, this is the biggest bucket. Again, usually requiring no more than a high school degree, trained usually on the job, and there aren't the same ready laws and apprenticeship infrastructure already in place, as in the construction industry, but the same ideas hold.

And so here our recommendation is new
Lithium Valley Development should include job quality standards and inclusionary hiring agreements. Now, in some cases around the state, PLAs are paired with larger community benefits agreements that include these jobs, not just the construction jobs. Again, the goals are the same of job quality and job access, and employer commitments to invest in worker training, which happens automatically in apprenticeship, but here requires a specific commitment. And there is really adequate funding at the state level to support this. I know you heard about the HRTP Initiative, and you will hear about the Employment Training Panel funding that's available. Next slide.

Finally, the White-Collar jobs usually typically require some college credential. It's a small percentage. Next slide. And here, generally these are family supporting jobs with some career mobility. So the issue here is really to expand access to education, to college for local folks and then connect those folks to industry so that when they finish college they can stay home or come back home, rather than seek
employment elsewhere for their college degree.

We'll hear more about this, I think, from other speakers, but creating opportunities for internships in industry is really key, and there is really great examples, for example the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. A variety of entry points to connect students with industry here.

So the core principles for training and education want to pull out, they were sprinkled really in earlier slides. So start with the jobs, partner with employers, support apprenticeships where they exist, and look for ways to create labor management partnerships where they don't. And really fund comprehensive training that prepares workers for careers and really should avoid the mistakes we've made in creating new niche green job programs that really are only about one technology and are not connected to jobs.

So, the summary principles and recommendations: incorporate job quality and job access into policies to support Lithium development. It's not just about training. And when we do need to build the training
infrastructure, to really do it with industry.

And I want to just say, and again I think Dr. Chris Benner will go into this in more detail, but a way to pull all these principles together, and also add in the other promised community benefits of environmental remediation and community amenities, etc., and to promote authentic community voice is through a community benefits agreement. Again, these can be negotiated project-by-project, or there can be a framework of a policy to encourage and even require community benefits agreements as we institute policies to support development in Lithium Valley. And that's it. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And you did awesome with your time, thank you. Our next speaker is Jim Turner, the Chief Operating Officer of Controlled Thermal Resources.

MR. TURNER: Good morning, Chair Paz and Commissioners. Thank you for the opportunity. I'm the Chief Operating Officer for Controlled Thermal Resources and we are developing the first fully integrated geothermal Lithium facility here in the United States, combining Lithium extraction with renewable energy in an integrated
design. Next slide, please.

So how many new jobs? Well, we're going to create probably about 480 ongoing construction jobs under Labor Agreements for at least eight years, probably quite a bit longer than that as we fully develop the portion of the resource of the Salton Sea Geothermal resource that we have our arms around.

Looking at it in stages, the first stage is small, but it will create about over 200 direct project jobs. Stage 2, which is much larger than stage 1, will add about 940. And by the time we complete the full development of this part of our resource, we think we'll have about 1,400 total direct jobs. Some of them will be professional -- accountants, engineers, etc. The vast majority will be operators and maintenance personnel, actually operating and maintaining the plants that we build.

The average wages from our development, based on my experience in here for almost the last 30 years, will be more than double that of the current median wage in Imperial County. That's an important aspect for us because we're looking for people who want to make a career out
of this industry and stay with this throughout that career. Over 90 percent, easily, will be from Imperial County. I think the number will even be greater than that. The best employees that I've experienced, again in the years that I've been here in the geothermal industry, are the ones that are directly from Imperial County. There's a big tendency to stay, we pay well, and they've become part of the geothermal community, as well as residents here.

In addition to that, because of the indirect or ancillary jobs, according to the Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation, there's probably an equal number or more that's created as a result of the development such as ours. Next slide, please.

What kinds of jobs. Well, I mentioned Operators and Maintenance personnel. These are the people right on the front line in these plans that operate, supervise, maintain, and otherwise make sure that the products are going out the door.

We need Engineers. It's tough to find Engineers in Imperial County, we all know that, and when we do find a young man or a young lady
that goes off the college, gets an engineering
degree and comes back, we look real hard at
trying to hire that person into our geothermal
industry because chances are they will stay here
and work with us.

And to give you an idea, if you try to
attract somebody from New York City or Detroit,
or whatever, to move down to the Valley and stay
here for their career, it's usually pretty tough.

There are other types of jobs. In an
industry like Lithium or power, we end up with
Laboratory Technicians that are needed,
definitely Finance, Accountants, Warehouse
people, and usually a pretty good cadre of
Office Administration and Service personnel. To
get to that point, though, we've got to build
these plants. So the construction jobs, again,
are best if the employees come from Imperial
County. As we all know, it gets pretty toasty
here in the summertime and we don't like to stop
work constructing these plants. And the folks
that have spent a good portion of their lives
right here in Imperial Valley tend to be the best
construction job workers that we've seen in
building these plants.
Again, I mentioned ancillary jobs before, there is a tremendous number that's created, whether it's on hotels, or restaurants, some of the clothing stores in the mall, etc., to be able to provide their services to our workforce. Next slide, please.

CHAIR PAZ: Just to let you know we're at the half mark.

MR. TURNER: Great. So how do we get there? Jonathan Weisgall at Berkshire and I, we worked together back in the '90s on this, it's a very good model, but the best way is education. We like to go to high schools, talk about the type of work we do. Hopefully that entices people to either go to college and get a degree and come back or, if they don't go to college, join our workforce. A smaller percentage definitely will get a degree, like an engineering degree, or a finance or accounting degree. The trick there is to get them to come back to the Valley and, again, join the workforce.

There's all kind of levels of jobs, skill sets that we need in the geothermal industry, and the Lithium industry is basically a chemical plant.
We work with the Workforce Development Team here in Imperial County, have done that for years. Imperial Valley College, SDSU, trying to encourage as much education as we can. We participate as teachers on occasion, and when we bring in new people that are brand new to the industry, we'll put them through lots of classroom training, and then eventually on-the-job, in the field training. Next slide, please.

But I'd just mention this on-the-job training, but that's an important aspect of having a safe workforce, a healthy workforce, and one that knows how to conduct and operate these plants. That's extremely important. And our goal, in our company, and I think it's the same in all the geothermal companies out here that are going after Lithium, as well as just renewable power, these are good paying career-type jobs, they're lifelong opportunities to grow and prosper right here. Next slide, please.

In addition to that, we need places for our employees to live. You've all probably seen back in the 2000's we had a housing boom out here that was great. Then it tends to slow down, but we want our employees to be able to live in good
communities, have nice houses, etc. CTR is collaborating with Imperial County, local builders, state government, etc., with an initiative to build affordable and sustainable homes in our community for the people that live here as our employees. That's an important aspect and I think we all have to remember that's something that we must do if we're going to have a good healthy workforce. Next slide, please.

I think this might be our last one.

IVEDC, the Imperial Valley Economic Development Corporation, did some assessments for us in terms of what our development would bring to the community. There's a lot of local taxes and ancillary job earnings, as you can see in these numbers, that directly impact our community. This is money that by and large stays here, and is utilized here because of the number of jobs, not only that are direct employees, but all the ancillary or indirect jobs that are created as a result of this kind of a development.

And I believe that might be the last slide that I have. So thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Jim. And you also did great on time. Our next speaker is Burt
MR. SHORT: Well, good afternoon and thank you for this opportunity. I'm the HR Manager for BHE Renewables and CalEnergy, and I live in the Coachella Valley, have for six years, and I work in Imperial Valley at our facility just south of the Sony Bono Salton Sea Wildlife Refuge. Next slide, please.

So here is an overview of our facilities. As you can see, in the background is the Salton Sea, and for anyone who has driven down Highway 111 or 86, you see the steam coming up. That's not pollution, that's just condensation from the cooling towers. Next slide.

I'm mainly going to talk about the jobs that we have and the jobs that we plan to create. I work on the Operations and Maintenance side; I've been hiring for these jobs for six years. The first jobs I'll talk about are Operators. These are folks right out of high school, or a GED, we have some folks who didn't graduate high school who have that GED. But a Power Plant certification program that we're trying to develop with Imperial Valley College will be
excellent because they do need a basic knowledge
of Algebra and some basic science to understand
the systems they're working on.

So these are folks that go out, they
start and stop equipment, they turn valves, they
take readings, they respond to spills and
environmental concerns, and they have to have an
understanding of rotating equipment such as
turbines, compressors, pumps. Some of them get
those from working on large farms, or
manufacturing industries, but typically we train
them once they start here, and they also have to
be able to read what we call a P&ID, the Piping
and System blueprints. Next slide.

So after an Operator has been here for a
few years, they work their way up to an Associate
Control Operator where they start working inside
and outside, with the ultimate goal of becoming a
Control Operator. I like to think of the Control
Operator as the pilot. They're making the
megawatts, putting them on the grid. They have
to have a previous qualification as an Operator,
and they start and stop equipment remotely --
they're looking at a bunch of screens, and
they're monitoring those screens for trends,
excursions, alarms, so they can notify the people out in the field to take action so that the units don't trip off line, and folks don't have electricity.

And they do a lot of coordination with other departments, so when a pump goes down to be repaired or overhauled, they use lockout, tag out systems so that work can be done. Next slide.

One of the hardest jobs we have to recruit for, and anyone in industry knows, is the Instrument and Controls Technicians are the hardest to find. They're also the highest paid. These are folks with a two or four-year degree in instrumentation computer programming, plant controls, and electrical plant devices. They do everything from distributing control systems, which are the heart of our operating plants that are controlling all these temperatures, pressures, environmental monitoring devices, microminiature computer cards, and also the computer logic that goes into controlling all those different things. So, very high paying jobs and also very hard to recruit to this area. Next slide, please.

Electricians, we're not talking about
your typical household electrician who is running wires; these are people who work on what we call a programmable logic controller, which is the actual device, it has electricity hooked up to it and maybe also have some schematics or hydraulics attached to it, to remotely open and close valves. They also work on very large breakers, these could be 1,200 volts, 440 volts, things like that, very high voltage electricity. And they also do some repairs on the electrical parts of the pumps and rotors. And they have to have a knowledge of an electrical distribution system.

Next slide.

Maintenance Technicians. These are your typical mechanics who take valves apart, maybe replaces those and make adjustments to the valves for pumps, compressors, and other equipment on site. Typically, these people also come in with a high school education or GED, it's an entry-level maintenance technician. And over time they can work their way up to Senior Maintenance Technician. Some of them also have welding certifications, but it's not a requirement because not all of our mechanics do welding. And they also hire some mechanics who have machinery
experience. We have our own machine stop on site. Next slide.

Resource Technicians. Because we do drilling down into the earth to get to this brine that we use to make our electricity and hopefully will also use to extract Lithium, they are working on extra large piping and the systems out in the field. They are mechanically minded, and we also do on site training for those folks, as well. Next slide.

CHAIR PAZ: Just to note that we're a little bit at the half line.

MR. TURNER: Okay, great. We also have Lab Technicians and Chemists. As you heard earlier, these are basically chemical plants out here. Some of our folks come in with a certification of two years from one of the Community Colleges, and other people come in with Chemistry degrees. We've even hired Chemistry Teachers who come in and have been very successful. They sample all the various plant processes, how they operate that sampling) equipment which is very sensitive and they perform the analytical computations on the samples to make sure we're operating within our
environmental permits. Next slide, please.

We also have Environmental Specialists. These are people with typically environmental degrees in air, solid waste, or hazardous waste. They go around and monitor the various sampling equipment and they train our own site folks to respond to spills and compliance reporting. Next slide, please.

We also have various Engineers. And these folks come from all over the world, four years degree or master's degree in Hard Sciences and Electrical, Mechanical. We also have Geologists on site. We have Controls Engineers and Chemical Engineers. Next slide.

We also have several Safety Specialists, and these folks come in with a high school degree, or GED, and then are trained on site. Sometimes they have previous experience, which are OSHA and CAL OSHA requirements. They also do on site training and they train our various vendors and contractors to make sure they're following our own site policies. Next slide.

The next level, as folks work their way up from Control Operators, we have Operation Supervisors who are Resource Coordinators, they
are previous Control Operators or have Power Plant Operations experience. Maintenance Supervisors are typically Senior Maintenance Technicians who then decide they want to move into a Supervisor/Manager role. And then we have various Managers Operations, I'm the HR Manager in various departments. You can see those listed. Next slide.

Other Support jobs we have, we have almost 200 people down here right now and I think the next slide talks about the expansion of support jobs, procurement; we have to order those parts, we have our own storeroom, we have nondestructive engineers who test our piping thickness and things like that; Heavy Equipment Operators to move things around; and we have Project Analysts who handle our invoicing, timesheets, and other projects. Then we also have some folks with Commercial Drivers Licenses. Next slide, please.

And we're also working on a Lithium Extraction process with a potential for up to 200 new jobs associated for the full-scale Lithium extraction operations. And that may be the last slide. Next slide. Oh, there we go.
So our lowest level jobs start around $21.00 an hour and some folks, I&E Technicians I talked to you about make over $40.00 an hour. They're all full time jobs, we don't have part time employees, and these are the various benefits we have that go to the package, a company 401K match, full medical/dental/vision, short-term/long-term disability, life insurance, and then they have an incentive program that pays a bonus based on our company's operations for the year and safety record. We start employees off with 144 hours of paid time off, that doesn't include the sick leave mandated by the state, and we have paid holidays, and the majority of these jobs that I talked about do have the ability to earn overtime pay, and we also have profit sharing. And I think that was the last slide if you can check.

Thank you for your time.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you so much. Thank you, that concludes the first part of the question around jobs. Our next set of speakers were asked to address the topic of state investments and workforce development.

Our first speaker on this topic is Marc
Cowan with the California Workforce Development Board, High Road Construction Careers Program.

Marc.

MR. COWAN: Thank you, Chair Paz. And hello everyone. I'm Marc Cowan and I work on the High Road Construction Careers Program at the CWDV. I'm going to explain what that is and how it pertains to Imperial County.

So first of all, when you hear me say High Roads Construction Careers Initiative, you should think of Partnerships that exist all over the state, that are designed to connect marginalized communities with well paid apprenticeship opportunities in the Building and Construction trades.

And achieving that requires three things -- I was going to say two, but it requires three things. And though I'm over-simplifying a little, that's supportive services, pre-apprenticeship training and demand. I'm going to speak about the first two now before addressing demand at the end.

An HRCC Partnership, whether it's in Fresno, Sacramento, or wherever, it will consistent of a number of partners that include
community-based organizations, workforce boards, local employers, local unions, and building trade councils and more, you could have JHGC (phonetic) Coordinators, it can be a very broad partnership. And the reason why they're set up as a partnership, rather than a service provider solely by a single entity, is because that allows for the provision of a much wider range of supportive services and pre-apprenticeship training than would be provided otherwise. And I think a good way to wrap our heads around what that looks like when it's functioning correctly is to go through an example from the perspective of the participant. So, say we have a woman let's call her Nicole, a single mother working a job that pays minimum wage. She wants a better job, but it isn't clear where to find one, and she isn't aware of apprenticeships in the trades or what they involve. She may not have pictured herself in an occupation like that. And even if she did, unless she knows someone who already works in the industry, like a family member, it'll be a very complicated process for her to navigate getting into it. Getting into an apprenticeship isn't
easy. And although education is rarely a barrier, and it's something that doesn't require a Bachelor or an associate degree, that doesn't mean that there aren't any barriers. But in Nicole's County, there's an HRCC Partnership that exists to address those barriers, and though she may not be aware of the HRCC, the HRCC is aware of her insofar as she is the proper priority population that they're trying to serve. They want to serve women, they want to serve people of color, single mothers, and among other demographics.

So the first issue is connecting Nicole with the services and training provided by the partnership, and that involves outreach. She has to be found and that could be a referral from an AJTC, an American Jobs Center, it could be a referral from a Workforce Board, someone handing out a flyer if it's a CBO doing this kind of work. It could be a post on Instagram or targeted advertising on Instagram or Facebook. There's any number of ways.

That that outreach is typically done by a community-based organization that has a more sophisticated ability to communicate with the
priority populations that they're trying to reach, than if it was just some general entity.
But either way, Nicole is showing up to her pre-apprenticeship classes, but in order to keep showing up, she needs help with childcare. Well, within the HRCC partnership there is a partner, an organization that can help her out with that.

Another barrier that she might have is that she's not able to work as many hours in the restaurant that she was working in, and that can be addressed by one of the organizations involved in the HRCC partnership through the provision of a stipend.

If she needs help getting to or from class, there's a partner in the HRCC; in this case it could be the Workforce Board that can provide her with money for a bus ticket, it could be a nonprofit that works with her to discharge a traffic violation from her license, to get rid of a suspension so she can drive.

If she had had past trauma that prevents her from -- that she's having issues with, then there could be a nonprofit that provides trauma-informed care. So, in that way, each of the barriers that are preventing her from getting
into this job are addressed one-by-one.

And then you get to the pre-apprentice training itself, which is called a multi-craft core curriculum. When Nicole learns about what the additional crafts do, she gets her own certification, she learns construction math, and when she's finished, she has a plan for where she wants to go and what she wants to do, which brings us to the most important part, and it touches on what Abby was talking about, which is the demand. And the demand specifically for her period of premises.

What I just described there happens all over the state. But if you picture it as a pipeline, it's one that's flow, it's flow depend entirely on mechanisms that create demand for apprentices and pull people into the labor market, not just a general demand for straight apprenticeships, but more specifically a demand for new apprentices from local and marginalized communities spelled out in the terms and conditions of the labor agreements that have been negotiated by the building trades and the contractors and the construction managers that they're working with.
And these agreements have different names. Carol called them Project Labor Agreements. Sometimes they're called Community Workforce Agreements and they have those workforce standards in them. They can be called Community Benefits Agreements, Community Workforce and Training Agreements.

But their relevance to HRCC is the demand that they create for first period apprentices. That's why they matter to us. And there is no where in the state where you have an HRCC Partnership that exists without these agreements creating that demand.

And so, with that demand there's a slot available for Nicole, a pre-apprentice. And in that sense, the PLA serves as the last part of that pipeline into a life where she can earn a good living and provide for her family.

So, this is what we're investing in at the Workforce Board. We've dispersed so far, nearly $20 million out of two different funding sources and, yeah, it's a system that hinges entirely on demand. So, in Alameda County, the Port of Oakland, here in Sacramento where I am, you have a city-wide Project Labor Agreement.
Fresno has a city-wide Project Labor Agreement.

Central Valley has high speed rail, which is under a PLA with these provisions that I just talked about. And for Imperial County to support a pipeline like that, it needs something too. I probably passed the half-way, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Yes, this is the last three minutes to --

MR. COWAN: Wrap up. I'd like to use those three minutes to just touch on one last thing before I conclude, and that's the fact that not everyone on any given job site that comes out of this, you know, wearing a hard hat will be an apprentice.

Most will be journey level workers that have themselves gone through apprenticeship programs that can take up to five years to complete. And out of that, maybe one in five will be apprentices, depending on what happens. And of those apprentices, a smaller number will be first period apprentices, a lot more will be apprentices who are in their second or third year, you know, building up their on-the-job trainings so that they can journey up and become highly skilled and trained workers.
And so we need to express that while it may not be thousands of new jobs straight away, the new jobs that will be available at really high quality, and then with an investment into a local HRCC Partnership, the pipeline that I mentioned, we can ensure that not just now, but in future when more projects do come up related to Lithium, or commercial construction, or infrastructure development, we can ensure that we have a pipeline that connects local people to those high quality jobs. And the state has the resources to assist in the development in that pipeline. That's part of my job at the Workforce Board.

Yeah, that's all I have to say for now and if you have questions and would like a follow-up on anything I've mentioned, I'd be happy to chat. But until then, thanks for listening. Thank you, Chair Paz.


MR. MEYER: Hi. Good afternoon, everybody. I do believe there's a slide deck.

There we go. I'm the Director of Economic
Development with the Employment Training Panel so I present to you today. Thank you for the invitation to the Commission, Chair Paz. Next slide, please.

So ETP is a state agency within the Labor and Workforce Development Agency that has really provided a lot of funding for job skills training. Rather unique, we're entirely paid for performance. We actually write a contract with the Employers to deliver this training, and reimbursed the costs related to it.

Crucially for us, we're talking about $100 million on average, on a year-to-year basis. We are impacted currently by Covid and receive additional funds for job creation in underserved communities in two separate programs from the General Fund this year, as well as administering two additional small business focused grant programs for the spring year.

We anticipate additional funds in the coming year, but this is roughly our current ballpark available for Employers, and local Employer contractors to fund job skills training in California. Next slide, please.

These are our major areas of focus in our
program. We are strongly aligned with the
Division of Apprenticeship Standards and the
important work at the State Board. Thank you to
Shrayas (Jatkar) and to Marc (Cowan). But we
also find strong alignment with a lot of research
tentities, including Carol Zabin.

We serve priority industries and small
business, obviously looking for equity. We fund
approximately $25 million a year in
apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship, and journey
worker training with apprenticeship training
committees, and Employer-led apprenticeship
throughout the state, primarily in building
trades, but we are also working in non-
traditional apprenticeship.

We have been a long partner of the
California Energy Commission with Zero Emission
Vehicle Technology, and research programs
including building trades with the Obama era
funds, or our funding. And more recently, we've
also worked with manufacturing support in the
Department of Defense and through the Office of
Planning and Research, two grants Cascade and
Cadence, which connect this energy and power work
into the Department of Defense, Department of
Energy, really seen as vital industry sectors.

Obviously we can look at the global politics today and see that there is a national security interest relative to power and energy. So we're working with these resource providers and programs for two grants related to the supply chain, including manufacturing and the secondary industry sectors, outlined effectively, I think, by our Employer participants earlier.

We also have a program for Natural Disaster and Response. This is dealing with the economic impacts from natural disaster and it covers drought, earthquake and fire, primarily.

And most importantly, we've aligned with state and federal grants and other investments, including incentives most importantly through Go-Biz, and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency. This does include CERF. This also includes the DACA funds that have come through, as well as Covid-specific grants related to the small business, as well, more recently the Digital Literacy Program and small business engagement opportunities with the National Skills Coalition. So, all of these areas we're working to provide funding in this sector. Next slide.
Now, we have two main contract models that are going to be relevant to this discussion. Single Employer Contract, and this is any Employer training their own existing workers, also upskill opportunities in their current jobs, or new jobs including leadership roles, as well as those that they're hiring. So we can provide the funding to support the job skill training needs of those, and this includes aspects of mining, energies, manufacturing, construction, logistics, as well as the engineering and testing that might be needed.

This is an Employer really leveraging their own technology to design a training program that works most effectively for them. It meets our requirements, and then we can develop a contract around those needs.

The multiple contractor model also is something that we utilize, but we leverage the Employer experience to provide upskill training for new and existing workers, as well as to look for pipeline programs for pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship, and to place unemployed workers, or long-term dislocated.

In this case, we're targeting work with
the Economic Development Corporations, the
Chamber of Commerce, perhaps, at IV EDC we're
already working with, as well as doing
apprenticeship training committees for
apprenticeship training. The Unified School
Districts, Community Colleges, CSUs and their
Foundations, as well as the UC, provide us an
opportunity to work really around the educational
partnerships that are formed with the Employers.
So those are huge points of leverage for us.

And then, most importantly, the Workforce
Development Boards. Throughout the state we have
a good track record of working with these to
build Employer-based, Employer-focused programs
that will provide the job seekers the necessary
skills to work.

And in both of these cases, the funding
is reimbursing the training that is set up and
delivered and really established by the Employers
that are participating. Next slide, please.

So we train, as I said, new and existing
workers, full-time, job seekers, apprenticeship
workers, small business owners; they can be
trained in how to run their businesses. They can
be trained also as frontline workers. We
primarily train Employer customized job skills training. We don't fund legally mandated, we don't fund very generalized types of training. But if the Employer identifies the training necessary for its workforce, we can generally cover it in the course of our flexible delivery methods, and even a range of training providers. It's for the Employers to decide what the most effective training is for them, and then we'll build off of that.

We do have performance metrics required, I'll talk about those in a second, and all of our programs report, require that the Employer articulate what their investment is. This could be training that they're funding on their own, the wages paid for trainees while they are working. Next slide.

Basic requirements. An eight-hour minimum per participant. They should be tied to Unemployment Insurance and its existing full-time work status. If there's a unique case, we typically can reach them, but in most cases there should be a tie.

While there's a maximum 200 hours of training, most of our Employers reach a range of
between 40 and 75 hours, that's typically where
they come in for training. It's a lot of
training in an ETP contract, which can last up to
21 months.

The performance metrics are basically
that they work after training is completed.
That's 90 days on the job, or in the construction
sector we could use an alternate recordkeeping
structure of usually around six months, and we
evaluate the first 500 hours of work during that
period of time.

And it all points that the workers must
earn a contract-specific minimum wage that's tied
to the state average hourly wage, depending on
the industry sector and the region of the state.
In most cases we're talking about between $20 and
$23 per hour being earned by the worker once
training is completed. Next slide, please.

In terms of the reimbursement, the cost
of the actual training is actually that. The
Employer, I mean, we have high cost training
probably being provided, it's going to be
independent of our actual reimbursement. We use
a fixed fee rate and all we do to estimate the
amount of training being provided is just the
total number hours of training times this reimbursement rate.  

Most training is $23 an hour.  
Apprenticeship training, factoring additional investments, is reduced to $18 per training hour.  
And then we do fun classroom computer-based training, which is independent of an instructor, at a lower rate of $9 an hour. But that's per trainee, per training hour.  

So we can work with the Employer to structure what's most effective and then see what is eligible for reimbursement. In new hire models, costs can't be paid back to the trainee and reimbursement cannot duplicate or supplant existing funding available.  

So if we have grant or investment funding for training, we can't use our funds to duplicate that; we can work around that in terms of the different training topic areas, or work with a different population of training. They should be trained together, it's just that we have to be very careful about overlapping the resources that are made available. In all cases, we shouldn't double-dip in terms of the investment for the State. Next slide.
CHAIR PAZ: If you can use the last three minutes, and I think maybe you're getting there.

MR. MEYER: I'm nearly done. Thank you, though, for the warning. I normally am used to running way over. Sorry.

So in terms of connecting to us, we have a website with detailed information contract examples. We have a list of our multiple Employer contract partners, public training, opportunities list; if you want to reach out to our team, we could share this with you and also find the work that we're doing.

In terms of learning about the program, we have a bi-weekly interactive orientation. We just talked about the high concepts of contracting and what the work really is -- I apologize for the typos there -- the work call, 916, is not part of the link.

And then lastly, if you want to start the application itself, we're entirely online. We have a self-based application that you can put together as you go, and save your progress. And we can assist you with doing that, not only teaching you about the program, but partnering you with other programs that are doing what
you're doing; for example, if we want to work with the Unified School District in Imperial County to look at a way to build a pre-apprenticeship construction program, we have already several that we fund that we'd be glad to share not only their experience, but their expertise in terms of the financial model that they utilize to help you build one in Imperial County to sort of help start us out in getting into the pipeline.

We are actively working with several Employers in the construction and energy sectors, as well as manufacturers. We partner well with the Governor's Office for Business and Economic Development, and the CEC to support the manufacturing not only in jobs, but also in the energy sector as a whole.

We've built contracts in mining with MP Materials last June, as well as the infrastructure, infrastructure charging for vehicles, as well as the power and software, companies that are working in this sector. So we have a lot of experience on the ground with active contracts. So if there are Employers that are interested in doing this -- next slide -- be
happy to reach out.

This is our team, we only have one vacation photo when we were able to get together for strategic planning in Southern California, Elsa Wadzinski is our lead. She's already working with IVEDC and some of the contractor companies that we've engaged. I work with Elsa and together we really take a lead on providing education, outreach, exploration of funding models, so how do we work or leverage a grant and build success or funding opportunities.

I would just say, most importantly, we're not interested in being a one-time resource. We want to be utilized by a company now for their immediately job skills needs, but also begin to partner with them in a way to help them improve the quality of their training and to maximize the efficiency of their use of state and local resources in terms of economics and workforce development.

Thank you very much for your time. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. More detail on the program will be provided as part of this PowerPoint. I definitely would like to provide some of the contracts that
we're funding relative to this effort back to the Commission. Thank you for the time.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Our next group of speakers were asked to address the landscape for workforce development as related to Lithium development. So our speakers will address what education and training efforts exist now, the gap that this region is facing, and potential local, regional, state actions needed to advance workforce development in the Salton Sea Region.

So I want to welcome Priscilla Lopez, the Director of the Imperial County Workforce and Economic Development Office.

MS. LOPEZ: Yes. Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you, Chair Paz, for the invitation. I'm happy to join you guys today to talk a little bit about what the County has been doing as far as workforce development is concerned.

Again, my name is Priscilla Lopez and I'm the Director for the Imperial County Workforce and Economic Development Office.

So just to give you guys just a quick background of our agency, our focus is workforce development through targeted training, we assist
job seekers with career pathways. We guide them towards economic sustainability with whatever their needs may be, we address their gaps, their skills gaps, their soft skills, barriers to make sure they are employable and more marketable.

We also provide assistance to businesses with job recruitment, incumbent worker, customized training. Other resources and tools in general, just to help them achieve their business goals.

Imperial County, through -- we've been very focused, moving forward especially with Lithium Valley development and workforce development through the work group for furthering geothermal development for Lithium Valley that was created by County leadership and convened by Supervisor Ryan Kelley, our department was tasked with starting a conversation revolving around workforce development for minerals extraction industry so that the skill set needs could be addressed in trainings.

We brought together key stakeholders, people in academia, vocational training industry, local government, to listen to the concerns and find the gaps that we could identify, and put all
our resources on the table to see what we could do to create an industry recognized focused fast track training program that would be tailored for this industry and filled with transferable skills.

This program ultimately will focus on the skill set that is needed for an individual who graduates with the certification of this skill set, to have gainful employment within the Minerals Extraction Industry.

In our discussions and within the stakeholders, IVC took the ball and ran with it, and I will let Efrain discuss the process in detail, but within a few months a lot of the major focus in our meetings and discussions were - the design and the assistance of industry to make sure that we're training lab technicians and plant operators from the get go, so they have the skills that they need to get in the door, to be able to be there and ready on Day 1.

We've also brought forth Imperial County Office of Ed, which has been very important because they recognize the importance of collaborating in this effort so that we can introduce this industry, and ancillary career
opportunities that are coming down the pike, to
local youth at an early age. It's very important
that children visualize a future early on so that
they're able to set the goals and to think about
continuing their education in a more focused way.

In my opinion, the earlier that we can
introduce youth to soft skills and work ethic,
the better that we can handle it and look at it.

Additionally, as part of our
conversations with academia San Diego State
University. Also, they're engaged fully onboard
with efforts to expand some STEM degree program
opportunities for our local residents. And
that's key for our economic growth. With greater
educational employment opportunities to offer our
youth, we would be able to retain our local
talent and even import talent and retain talent.

Imperial County, it's a key location for
research opportunity. The opportunities that can
focus around environmental studies, ecology,
agriculture, sustainable energy, etc., we have a
living natural lab right here at the Salton Sea
and surrounding areas that can offer research
opportunities that have wide ranging
repercussions for clean sustainable energy
efforts worldwide.

So I think it's a great opportunity for us to look at, as a state, to see how we can advance that.

We also have discussions with the State High Roads Construction Career, so that's interesting that I see them on, explaining the program more because I think that if we make training available locally for those types of careers and trades like plumbing or carpentry, or whatever it is that we're looking at, these opportunities are going to come in, as ancillary opportunities with this industry.

Currently, we have something available through IBEW that helps participants with supportive services to get them through their program successfully. And that's the only apprenticeship program that you could say that we have. So if we can grow that ultimately, that would be great.

Ultimately what we really want is to create a career pathway for our residents, whether it's a child in junior high, or high school, who doesn't quite know what they want to dedicate their life to work, a dislocated worker
who needs to be trained in any career. We want to have training programs and researchers available that address the needs of the job seeker. And equally key, we want to make sure that industry has a developed, trained workforce that's ready to start on Day 1.

I do want to mention that the collaboration that we've had between industry and academia and local government has made a huge difference in making sure that we've got our resources together and that we're able to see what we can offer so that we can build these programs.

And the support that we've seen all around us has been really good, it's made a big difference in making sure that we've got all of this developed.

More than anything I think, if we can focus on one of the key elements is support for a full service, four year degree campus locally, it would be a huge catalyst for the advancement of workforce development in this area. That's something that you've heard us talk about quite a bit. And I would also say focus on maybe building a campus that will train in High Road
construction or trades, that would be valuable for our area. And our departments here to continue assisting with that development of the local workforce to provide business and job seeker services, that include recruitment events, training programs, job placement, on-the-job training that is a subsidized training for larger companies, or work experience also fully subsidized. Just to name a few programs. And these are available now, and it's not just for the lithium industry, it's wide ranging, so we can address these needs that are going to be coming down the pike with ancillary businesses or other industries that will be coming into the county once this is developed. So that's what our agency does and, you know, it's great to be able to see what's coming from its infancy. And I'd be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Priscilla. I was about to give you the three minute -- you did it.

Our next speaker is Efrain Silva, Dean of Economic and Workforce Development at Imperial Valley College.

MR. SILVA: Chair Paz, thank you so much and thank you, Priscilla, for all the work that
you all have done.

My name is Efrain Silva, the Dean of Economic and Workforce Development. I'm really pleased to have joined this conversation today, not just to present, but also to hear the other panel speakers and be able to identify further for me what we should be doing in terms of preparing for this new industry that is going to have the potential of hiring thousands of our own residents for good paying jobs. I'm very very excited to be with you guys today.

I'm going to share my screen. So as Priscilla indicated, we actually have been working with industry and coming up with identification of the gaps that we have, that we have the creation of new programs, and how do we customize these programs to specifically meet the needs of the Lithium industry.

We have started early because curriculum development and the approval process through the Chancellor's Office and through the delivery of education and through the graduation of student takes some time, two to three years in some cases.

The timing for us is perfect and to be
able to develop the courses, start the training program, and then have graduates that will be ready to go and work for the industry.

So I think I won't spend a lot of time on this because I think everybody knows that the Governor Newsom did identify Lithium as one of the key industries for Imperial Valley, and the availability of resources that we will need as an educational institution to be able to provide this new training.

What have we been doing? We've been working on this for the last several months, the work group that Ms. Lopez, Priscilla, identified, we have been part of that since Day 1. We've been working on meeting with the industries identifying the gaps.

And basically the bottom line as of today, we have identified two primary training programs that we need to develop to be ready for the hiring of our residents. And currently we're working on developing a new Lab Technician Program, we don't have this at Imperial Valley College right now, and also developing a Plant Operator Program.

As we recognize more needs, we're also in
a position to be able to develop these new
programs. I'm very interested; I'll be
contacting Mr. Short shortly and talk to him
about our Instrumentation Efficient Technician
Program. We have that already. We don't call it
the instrumentation definition, we call it
something else, but the essence of this is
already in existence, so maybe it may need some
tweaking to be able to customize and be able to
teach our students what industry expects them to
know.

So we have met with all of the industry
representatives, at least four times. We
concluded a crosswalk of all of the chemical
technician programs throughout the State of
California, and also the Plant Operator Programs,
and identified what other colleges are doing and
kind of, not to reinvent the wheel, but kind of
have a starting point.

We actually conducted a site visit, thank
you, Mr. Short, for welcoming us, and Cal Energy,
with our faculty and when we actually met with
the HR Department, we met with the technicians
and supervisors, and had a conversation about
what is needed and what we should be working on.
We also asked all of the three companies, the Lithium companies, to send out their job descriptions for the jobs that they're anticipating hiring, and we did an assessment of those skillsets identified in these job descriptions and identified what do we currently teach, and where are the gaps. You know, what things should we be adding to our courses and our catalog to be able to come up with the training programs that industry needs.

So again, right now, as we speak, we are in the process of developing a new Laboratory Technician Program and a Plant Operator Program.

To do this, I had to receive letters of support and letters of endorsement from the three companies listed on the screen, the three Lithium companies. And we have to do that as a Community College because these jobs are not here yet, right? They're coming. And so we have to substantiate to the State that the training programs that we're developing have a need locally. So even though the need is not here today, but it will come here in the future.

These letters of endorsement and projections of hiring needs within the areas of
Plant Operation and Lab Technician were crucial. Without those letters and being able to demonstrate that there's a need for these programs, we would not be able to proceed, so thank you for the three companies that provided us those letters of support, those letters of endorsement, and I have submitted those to our Regional Consultant and they have been approved. So that hurdle has been overcome and now we are actually beginning to look at the actual curriculum and be able to come up with a viable training program.

So we are, in terms of our Lab Technician Program, we are working with our Chemistry faculty. All of our Chemistry faculty have their Doctorates in Chemistry, so they're experts in the field. We're also working with our Water Treatment faculty, our Occupational Safety faculty, and other disciplines that we're merging into a single program and a single certificate that, again, will satisfy the needs of the industry.

You know, we're also wanting to hire from these companies individuals that will be consultants to us, what we call professional
experts, so these are people that actually work
in the industry and, as educators, we can develop
-- format training programs, but it's not into
the actual users to see what we're doing and tell
us, yes, you're on the right track; no, we don't
need this instead of that, teach this other
thing, or be able to expand the curriculum.

So having an in-house expert, an in-house
consultant that is from the industry is really
really important, so we are also preparing to do
bring these people on board to make sure that
what we're doing is what's going to work for the
programs.

Right now we're working on creating these
programs as a short-term certificate, so we don't
want students to have to be here for two years.
We're looking to do this at maximum one year
training program and ideally less than that. But
we also want to create pathways so that these
students that come in, they do a very short-term
certificate, but there's more than just that,
that if they have the desire and the time to
continue to work and continue coming and do their
Associate Degree, or their Bachelor's degree,
that there's a pathway designed for them to be
able to do this.

Writing the curriculum is easy; it looks like this is just pieces of paper. But actually the instructional equipment, the delivery of services to our students is something that we know already and we're going to be needing a significant amount of resources. So some of the instructional equipment that we're going to have to buy, particularly for a Lab Technician and our Plant Operator programs, can be very costly. So we'll be looking for resources to be able to accommodate those needs.

Faculty sometimes is extremely difficult to recruit, so that recruitment of faculty and the seed money necessary for programs to become institutionalized is really important. So we'll be looking for those resources that we are running already, we are working that curriculum. As a matter of fact, I just met with our Chemistry faculty yesterday to continue the development of the coursework and we are up and running.

So I want to say that IVC, Imperial Valley Colleges, they're well-positioned to being able to provide the technical training of the
labor force that was just identified by the
companies, and we're very happy to be here and to
be able to do this, and extremely thankful to all
of the industry representatives and to Priscilla,
Supervisor Kelley, particularly Jonathan who has
been incredible, interested in being a resource
to all of us. And I'm very proud of the work
that we're doing and I think, based on what I’ve
heard today, we are right on point. And that
makes me extremely happy.

It was short, but I think that's all I
have for right now.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, though, you were
perfect. Right on time, so thank you, Efrain.
Our next speaker is Danny Machain, Assistant
Business Manager for the International
Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 569.

Danny.

MR. MACHAIN: Basically I'm with the
Electricians Union, but I’m also president of the
Imperial County Building Construction Trades
Counsel.

We represent 20 different crafts that are
here in Imperial County. Great to hear all the
different training that's coming out. Next
slide, please.

You heard about the college training and all of that, which is great; let me tell you a little bit about what the apprenticeships are. I'll try to make it brief; my time has been a little bit cut.

Most of the apprenticeship programs that we have run between four to five years. Every craft trains under specific work that they do or they perform on the jobs. I will talk a bit more to give you an example of what the apprenticeship is and the Electrician's, which is my field. For us, it's a five-year program.

Basically, the requirements to get in is to have a GED or high school diploma, and what were looking for is that you have Algebra. I've seen one of the presentations on the Algebra, and trust me I understand why they require Algebra. Electrical requires a lot of math, math that you have to do and calculate and a lot of different calculations to do different stuff.

It's a five-year program every six months. You basically go to the next level, you pass a class, and you've got so many hours from the job training, you get a raise. And it goes
consistently like that for six months, or until
you get to the Journeyman level on the top.

CHAIR PAZ: Danny, tell us when you want
the slides to advance.

MR. MACHAIN: Yes. I don't have a lot in
the slides, though. Most of it is going to be
talking. So a lot of the craft that we have, some
of them do require some education, other ones
don't require as much, but it depends on what the
people are looking for, what they like to do, you
know, I always loved electricity, so I've always
been kind of tied to electricity for all my
education outside of the apprenticeship. Next
slide, please.

In the building trades, we have 2,350
members. We have 226 Apprentices, and that's for
all the different crafts. Next slide.

I'm going to show you a couple of
pictures so you can kind of get the overview of
what it is. Over here you see the insulators,
it's hard to tell, but it looks like piping, but
actually that's the cover, that's the insulation
of a pipe, and that's one of the geothermals here
in Imperial County. Next slide.

This is from our friends, the
Ironworkers. You're looking at the left picture of electrical port of entry and they're doing all the tying of rebar before they pour the concrete. On the right, you're looking at Highway 8, they did a stretch from the border of Yuma all the way close to the 111. It took several months, and they did all the rebar reinforcement there, too. Next slide.

This is from the Laborers. This is Drew Solar, you've seen a lot of the solar, they actually pal drive the columns down, so they support the solar panels and a lot of stuff in there. Sometimes we get in a little bit of discussion who operates that machinery, but within the trades we have agreements and we understand where our lines are and we get to move from there. Next slide.

This is the Operating Engineers. In the top picture, you see the Salton Sea Conservation. The guy on the left, the driver or the operator, the one on the right, he's the one that is surveying the land out there, trying to get to a certain depth or something on the land. They've got Surveyors that actually tell them so they can be precise with that.
The one on the bottom, you're looking at the Le Conte Energy Storage. The Operator will be on the crane right there, which assists the Electrician, on setting the batteries on the pulls in the container. Next slide.

Unfortunately, this from the insulator didn’t fit into the picture, but that pipe is down by the Pipefitters, that's their trade, they basically know how to do the welding really good on those pipes. And the picture on the right hand side, right at the Port of Entry, they're also doing some work at the Port of Entry right there. Next slide, please.

Now, for us, our Unions represent San Diego and Imperial County. We are 3,600 members. We have two locations, not only for our office, but also for training our apprentices. One here in Imperial County in the -- we can say the Master of School will be in San Diego, we have 550 Apprentices throughout. Seventy of those 570 are Imperial County Apprentices. We do rely a lot on the green energy jobs, but trust me we do everything, anything that has to do with electrical, that's the type of work that we do. A lot of our work here evolves around the green
energy jobs. We do a lot of community outreach for our pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship opportunity. We're always looking for those, you know.

Like Priscilla mentioned, we have partnership with them and I talked to you about some of her staff, and sometimes they refer some people to us when we can get them in either through the pre-apprenticeship or get them through the Apprenticeship Program. We've got free training and full-time health care with benefits, which is a plus for all of us. Next slide, please.

Drew Solar Project, you're looking at 100 megawatts of solar energy and six parcels totaling this 762.8 acres in El Centro, Imperial County. You can see the torque tubes, those are the crossbars that go across or sit on top of the pilings that the Laborers were driving in. Next slide, please.

Another picture of Le Conte Battery Storage, that's the small crews that we have right now. We actually ended up having lunch with them before this meeting, so we were running a little bit around. They're actually about 32
people right now on that side, Electricians.
Next slide, please.

This is the future. This is what we've
got coming up. We've got 2,000 megawatts of
battery storage coming, we've got vacuum solar
energy, 150 megawatts of solar for that, and 300
megawatts of battery storage. Vegas Solar, also
100 megawatts of solar and 100 megawatts of
battery storage. Next slide please.

PLAs, we heard a lot of talk about PLAs.
Basically what that is is a Prehire Agreement
that sets the standard between the Unions and the
Developer, where we agree, what is it that we're
going to do, what is our scope, the conditions of
the workplace. You have holidays, a lot of the
Unions have different holidays. Some of them
have more than others. On this PLA, we bring
them altogether, but the holidays are mentioned
there, so you don't have one or two cross working
while the rest of them are off because they
didn't get it under a collective bargaining
agreement. It brings labor peace, it brings
projects on time and on budget, and one of the
best things that come out of a PLA is the local
hire, the language that comes with them. When we
started doing a lot of the solar projects, we started with about -- you can say as low as 50 percent of local hire. That was about 12 years ago. The last project that we did we were actually about 90 percent of local hire. Meaning that we have created Journeymen level people that we didn't need to get them from outside of our jurisdiction. The Community Benefit Agreement. Those agreements, we see them a lot, siding with PLAs. Again, we're negotiating for the conditions from the workplace. At the same, in our Community Benefit Agreement, we can negotiate also on the environment and the community needs on that. So also, you can strengthen your local hire right there too, and there's a lot of opportunities for everybody's voices to get heard on those. How am I doing on time?

CHAIR PAZ: Yeah, you have the last three minutes to wrap up, please.

MR. MACHAIN: There you go. Next slide. This is Imperial County Building Trades, that's my information. Any questions, feel free to reach out. Any questions, there's my email, shoot me the email if you have any questions. I wish I could have spent more time on the
Apprenticeship, I can do an hour on the Apprenticeship, alone. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Danny.

This is an opportunity for the Lithium Valley Commission, now, to ask any questions of the panelists that we've heard from so far. Any questions?

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I have a question, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: So I know -- I can't remember the first one they were talking about building some infrastructure regarding training. Are they open throughout the Valley? Or is there sites that they're already looking at?

CHAIR PAZ: And this question, is it specific to one of the presenters?

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: They were talking about the, yeah, it was an earlier presenter. I forgot the name of it.

CHAIR PAZ: Was it on the construction Career?

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I believe it was the career.

MR. COWAN: It was me, okay. So, yeah,
you're asking if there's already an HRCC Partnership in the Valley?

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Correct. Is there?

MR. COWAN: No, no, not yet. At the moment, there's -- so the way that we divided the state and we divided it in 12 regions, and with some of the rural areas that don't have quite as much demand, like don't have quite as much of the Community Workforce Agreements and PLAs and so on that we mentioned earlier, those Counties came together with other Counties that have more of those agreements when they can; for example, here in Sacramento, Sierra County is part of the Region that encompasses Sacramento and much of the Northern Sacramento Valley. With Imperial at the moment, it's with San Diego. But because of the lack of demand in Imperial, which we've struggled to make inroads into there at the moment, and a lot of these projects, they've just come out of the development phase when that was severely hampered by Covid and a lot of joint apprenticeship training facilities not taking on the apprentices. And that's why this is such a great opportunity that we can finally get where we want to be with some kind of an HRCC
partnership in Imperial.

MS. LOPEZ: If I can just quickly chime in, Priscilla Lopez with Workforce Economic Development for the County of Imperial. We have been – so, Rafael and Shrayas have reached out to us from the High Roads Construction Career and the California Workforce Development Board to discuss the partnerships. So that’s one of the things that’s on the table and we are looking into, to move forward with. It’s in the works.

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Thank you, guys.

MS. LOPEZ: Welcome.

CHAIR PAZ: Any other questions from the Commissioners? I do not see any other hands, so I want to thank all of the speakers for presenting to us, preparing, adjusting your time, and you all did great with the timekeeping, so thank you for that.

How about if we just do like a two-minute get up, stretch, and then we'll start with the panel. But I think I saw Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Hello, Madam Chair. Is this a good time to ask some questions?

CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: First of all, I
want to thank all the presenters. Great information from everyone. I was happy to hear some of the buzz words from the trade models and frameworks that gave much greater equity in terms of how we see and how California models in innovating a new necessary industry that could help us both transition away from fossil fuel, and at the same time bring equity to the front line communities.

I wanted to ask a few questions for clarification here. CTR was asking, was mentioning about their housing project, and I was curious to know if CTR had also looked at sort of putting in or looking at it through the lens of equity, you know, I more and more come across local contractors that I would assume are working with Unions and so on, very supportive of that. But that may not necessarily be the name brand contractors, you know? So many of them too often become frustrated that they're not politically connected, they kind of sit on these licenses that they worked so hard for, but yet they're not getting the same opportunities of jobs. They kind of keep going to the same few, so I'm just wondering if there's an opportunity for CTR, or
if CTR has kind of factored that into its housing
and developments, specifically to housing
projects that it has and is doing some.

MR. TURNER: Mr. Olmedo, this is Jim
Turner from CTR. Excellent question. We're
interested in utilizing as many of the local
builders, in this case, for housing as we can.
But again, we feel that we get a much better
response with the local community, whether it's
building or supplying a service, than if we try
to bring somebody in from the outside.

We're early in this whole endeavor and
we've already been contacting some of the local
builders, talking to them about their
qualifications, etc., and hopefully pretty soon
we'll be actually physically doing some work out
in the community that people will be able to see.
So we're early in this development, but our
primary focus is local builders, local service
organizations for that. We think we'll end up
with a much better result if we follow that path.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: A question for CTR
on the economic study. I think it was economic,
or it was also workforce studies that have been
discussed, and I welcome anybody who wants to
talk about it, but the Federal Government and the State have established mandates for all its agencies, including workforce labor, to be inclusive of Environmental Justice. And so I have not heard the term -- I mean, I think I might have, you know, the closest that I've heard was I think Carol made references. I know that Danny did as well in their presentations. But in regards to economic analysis, workforce development analysis, and any other analysis that the industry in particular would be -- is it including the Environmental Justice. Danny, I think you're unmuted. Is it including Environmental Justice, as I imagine that those analyses are at some point going to be presented to government and at some point government has to make decisions one way or another, it being sought out for incentives and investments, and so on. So I'm wondering if the industry, in this case just because I heard CTR, and it's for anyone, if those elements are being built in because as you presented it, you had gone to a local entity and I wasn't sure that those metrics were included. I don't recall hearing about them, so I was wondering if they had sought out
the Environmental Justice element.

MR. TURNER: This is Jim Turner again. I can speak for CTR. Maybe either Mr. Short or Mr. Weisgall for BHE, although I was a part of BHE for a number of years. Whether we actually outwardly speak of it, I think we all certainly believe in the principles that Environmental Justice, as I understand it at least, stands for. We're very concerned that we do our part in the community, whether it's environmentally related or socially related, or whatever because we live here. We want the community to grow and prosper and we certainly want our employees to grow, prosper, go to higher level jobs, etc. We probably don't speak outwardly enough about it, but it's certainly in all of our planning discussions on how we're going to grow as a company. I won't speak for BHE other than, when I was there, we also were very concerned about the health of the community and especially as it pertained to our employees.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, there's economic values, there, I would think that they'd be factored in. You know, just a real quick reference point that when economic studies were
being done in terms of the impacts of moving solar into the path of least resistance, which was agricultural land, farmworkers were never factored in as part of the impacted, there was no transition, there were no economic values placed on -- or any value at all placed on farmworkers, so because of those experiences, we have a great opportunity here to make sure that we're not only bringing the values, but we're bringing the expertise to make sure that they inform those values. So I would encourage the industry to look at frameworks that would certainly be inclusive of those values and be -- thank you, Jim, for BHE, it wasn't very clear, there was a mention of condensation, but a signaling of evaporation, so I was just trying to get an understanding as to whether the characterization that was presented was of condensation or evaporation, given that it wasn't given any value of emissions, yet the Air Board has a list of emissions that contribute to those -- I'm not going to say it I fully read into condensation, but certainly to evaporation. But I would imagine that they were also found in condensation. The clarity on that --
CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Olmedo, these are great questions. I do want to keep us with our time. I think there is an opportunity here. CTR mentioned they're early in the process and to have a further conversation maybe with Commissioner Olmedo outside of this meeting so he can maybe help you understand -- how to value some of the economic justice principles that he's mentioning. I mean, I hear you, that you're already in the process, so I think it's a good opportunity to have those conversations in more detail than right now.

And for your other question to BHE, we're going to have a panel in March around the environmental impacts, so I think this is a great question for that, so if it's okay, maybe we can put that in the parking lot for the March meeting. But I think it's a great question that can be answered in more detail during the environmental workshop.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair, that concludes my questions and I was only referring to the slides that were put in front of us.

CHAIR PAZ: Correct.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: So certainly, I
agree that that can be brought back for the
environmental. I was only seeking clarification
on the condensation and evaporation on the
slides, put in front of us today.

CHAIR PAZ: Correct. And I do recognize
that that phrase that you echoed was used, so
BHE, we will be asking you at the next meeting,
but thank you so much.

Now, if there are no other questions, a
two-minute break. Don't go anywhere unless you
have to. Just stand up, stretch, and then we'll
go into the panel. But I know we've been sitting
for a while. Two minutes.

(Break at 3:42 p.m.)

(Reconvene at 3:46 p.m.)

CHAIR PAZ: I will now introduce the
panel. We have invited a group of experts. To
share on the topic of creating access to economic
and job opportunities I want to welcome Shrayas
Jatkar from the California Workforce Development.
And I will take this opportunity really to just
thank Shrayas for all of the support that he's
given me. He is one of the first people that I
talked to when we started planning this workshop,
so, Shrayas, thank you, thank you, thank you so
And also, I want to thank Commissioner Castaneda who started this effort with me and then Commissioner Weisgall, who helped me complete it. So thank you for all your support and I will now let Shrayas introduce himself and the panelists and take it from here.

MR. JATKAR: Excellent. Well, thank you so much. It's really an honor to be here and present this panel, to moderate this panel.

As mentioned, my name is Shrayas Jatkar. I work at the California Workforce Development Board. We're one of the seven departments within the State's Labor and Workforce Development Agency. I'm on the Policy branch here. I'm a Policy specialist that works on equity, climate and jobs. Equity, Climate, and Jobs is also our shorthand for how we define the principles of the High Road. And I've been following this Commission very closely for the last several months and I've been awaiting today's session on Workforce Development.

With that, let me just say a couple of words about this panel. I think you've heard from a number of presenters who have talked about
and provided specific recommendations, talked about tools like Community Benefits Agreements, so I think this panel will hopefully really continue that focus, really focusing on the how, as in how do we operationalize and advance economic equity? I think that's the big question this Commission has long been talking about, wanting to do things differently, wanting to make sure that community members are gainfully employed and enjoying the many economic benefits associated with developing a Lithium industry in the region. And so hopefully, again, this panel will provide you with some useful ideas for how we can turn those dreams into reality.

So the panel that we have today, we have four panelists. Each of them will make some opening remarks. I'll pose some questions, or probably we have enough time for just one question per panelist, and then we'll turn it back to the Commissioners for you to have any questions and discussion with our panel.

So, if actually we could go back to the slides so I can introduce folks real quickly. Do we have that slide of the panelists? Thank you. So as you see here, we have a diverse group of
folks from academia, community-based organizations, organized labor, as well as Social Services Workforce Services.

So first we have Dr. Chris Benner with U.C. Santa Cruz, Professor and Director of the Institute for Social Transformation, also the Chair and Director of the Everett Program for Technology and Social Change.

Hector Meza is a Business Agent with International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Local 569, which as you heard earlier represents members of the Electrical Workers Union in both Imperial and San Diego Counties. Hector grew up in Brawley and he's had a very interesting story to tell, so I look forward for you all to hear from him.

Sahara Huazano, Director of Programs with Alianza Coachella Valley, and I thought I would just give a quick word about Alianza that I saw on their website, but I think is very fitting for this panel. Alianza Coachella Valley, their work is centered on Leadership Development and "an understanding that healthy and economically prosperous communities exist only when our population is represented in all decisions
impacting our daily lives." So I really hope we take that to heart and understand that the process is also as important as the outcomes that we seek.

And lastly, Marco Cesar Lizarraga, Executive Director of La Cooperativa Campesina de California, it's an association of agencies implementing and administering Farmworker Service Programs, including employment and training services, and funny sidenote, well, first of all, Marco is from Calexico originally and a funny side note is that when we were chatting I think about a week ago, I invited him to this panel, and he mentioned that he's been doing this work longer than I've been alive, so I know he'll bring some of that hubris spirit and levity to this conversation.

So, with that, I think let's go down the order as listed here for folks to give their opening remarks, and then I'll come back on to start with some moderated discussion questions. So Chris, we'll give it to you first.

DR. BENNER: Thank you so much, Shrayas. I think we can get rid of the slide now so people can see everyone. And I'll try and be shorter
because I want to get to Marco’s deep expertise and knowledge of the region.

I just want to make a few opening remarks. As Shrayas said I'm a Professor at U.C. Santa Cruz. My expertise is broadly on inclusive economic development, and so really thinking about the connection between promoting High Road jobs and their connections to broader regional economies and labor markets. I've been doing work in the Salton Sea for some time, working closely with Alianza Coachella Valley and others, looking at the environmental issues in the region.

I want to start by reminding us that, you know, for many places in the world with abundant natural resources that need extraction, people talk about a resource curse. And there's a number of reasons for that. Part of it is that they're often capital intensive industries that don't employ a lot of people, they're often in poor regions or poor countries, and so they end up becoming enclave economies without a lot of local multipliers with supplies and materials and equipment and expertise connecting to them, and part because of the tremendous wealth that can be
extracted from that. It can often distort political priorities, you know, in some countries worse cases of actual corruption. But often it can distract the tensions from the importance of building a diverse economy with local connections. And then of course in many places there are the environmental problems. Commissioner Olmedo mentioned on Environmental Justice issues. Of course, that's a huge problem in many natural resource-based regions. And I think we're all very hopeful that Lithium, and particularly geothermal-based Lithium extraction can be different in this area. But to do that, it's going to require some very deliberate attention, not just to the High Road jobs in the extraction, but thinking about the broader connections to value-added industries and the connections with the other economies in the region. So as part of that, I want to make really three points to think about for the discussion.

One, which Shrayas pointed to of Alianza's work is the importance of real participation of community and labor constituents in the region. There's a growing body of
research, both internationally and the U.S. that shows that those places that are more equitable and have stronger social ties and connections within the region actually have better economic outcomes, and particularly in relationship to Lithium, of all the importance of looking at value-added jobs in materials refinement, battery manufacturing, other applications in electric vehicles, and others. That's going to take a lot of additional policies and infrastructure and support and training and investment to make sure that's realized in any way locally. So that's going to require connection with the broad political constituency in the region.

So that participation has to be much more than just a person informing and consulting, it's really got to be about building real collaboration. And part of that is recognizing that there are long-term processes of histories, of lack of opportunity that are coming in the region, and lack of trust. Commissioner Olmedo mentioned the solar industries that haven't produced the promises there. So real participation is the second one.

The second point, I'll say, is about
Community Benefits Agreements. Project Labor Agreements are important. And Community Benefits Agreements are an opportunity to connect to broader constituencies in the region, connections with other industry than what there can be in a Community Benefit Agreement, it's quite broad for things like wage floors, local hire agreements and targeted hiring for disadvantaged communities, also local procurement, local contracting, labor piece if workforces want to organize Labor Unions, Cross Training Education and Workforce Development, community services -- childcare, investment in public transportation, other things that help ensure accessibility to those jobs. Green Building Standards, maybe even creation of a Community Advisory Board to review issues and advise on policies in the region.

So thinking seriously about how to organize and put in place a Community Benefit Agreement, I think, is very important.

And the final comment I'll make is just the importance of linking workforce development with economic development, which of course requires the investment in innovation, infrastructure, the collective resources. And
then I would really encourage the consideration of some kind of severance tax as a way of generating resources from what's essentially common resources, collective resources from nature, from the planet. And that becomes a way of investing in the broader community, at least potentially.

And I would also suggest people consider the creation of a sovereign wealth fund, looking at the long term economic opportunities. Many countries in the world have sovereign wealth funds, Norway has the largest, it's more than $2 trillion. But 10 states in the United States have sovereign wealth funds, as well, that mostly come from severance taxes. The largest is Texas, and it largely funds educational enterprises, but Alaska, Wyoming, North Dakota, others have that as well, so it's something to look at. I realize I'm over my time, but hopefully that will give us some food for thought and discussion. Thank you.

MR. JATKAR: Thank you, Chris. Let's go ahead and move on to Marco.

MR. LIZARRAGA: Wow, what an introduction. I don't know where to start or what to say. Of course, you know, I have been
dated, but I did start working in Program Training now, way back in '70-'71 when I was still going to school. And in fact, my Master's thesis was on a regression analysis model to evaluate plumbing training programs, so I've been on this for quite a long time.

At any rate, there's a lot of things that I heard today that were very positive and very encouraging. We need to really think about and think through is a new way of collaborating and a collaboration approach needs to be developed. There's a lot of collaboration that's been mentioned that has been required and funding for employment training, but one of the things, for this, if you recall, Efrain Silva drove out a college metric, he's trying to do this training, but the resource is to pay for the kind of lab that they need to do the training is expensive and it's hard to get funds.

That's why I say that the collaboration is not enough. We have to integrate. Integration -- what do I mean by that? Well, the problem is companies have the best labs in the world, but you're not going to be able to afford it. So that training needs to be done there.
Sometimes, you know, it's not about thinking of new ways of doing things, but sometimes it's about -- there I go with my age -- going back to what we know works, so obviously, you know, bringing in all these elements that we mentioned, you know, non-profit, City Colleges and training institutions. The funding needs to be able to let the people be afford to be trained. And the training lab needs to be at the company, at their site. And one of the things that we used to do in the old days in the seventies, we would train somebody for six months to a year and, guess what? We used to give them a stipend and it was the minimum wage. Because how are you going to ask somebody who has got a wife and a kid to be able to trained if there's no sustainability in becoming trained, in advanced? So that's one of the things that I think has to be done.

So OBG, it's an important program that needs to be reimplemented. One of the things in Imperial Valley, like I said I was raised in Calexico and was born in Mexicali, economic development efforts that we went through and in Calexico and everywhere in the Valley, they're difficult because on the one hand, it's difficult
to attract people to this heat, okay? We have
joke in Mexicali that it was the sinner that went
to hell, and when he got to hell, he was from to
Mexicali, when he got to hell, he asked the
devil, "Hey, do you have a little blanket?" It's
difficult to attract people.

So when we had small enterprises that
came to our area in Imperial Valley, again, and
I'm sure Hector and everyone knows this, they
would bring a lot of foreign workers, foreign to
Imperial Valley, that's one of the things they
don't have now. One of the things that I've been
going around for the last five or six years
talking a lot about is we're living in the
technology revolution that is not understood.
And it reminds me very much of the Industrial
Revolution when it first began. You know, they
didn't know what laws we had, they didn't have
any adequate laws, they didn't even have any
minimum wages, they didn't have eight-hour works,
they didn't have a concept of overtime pay, none
of that stuff. So we're going through a similar
experience with technology and the
transformational impact that it's having on the
workforce. It's enormous. And we're beginning
to see that in the farmworker world. And we're
talking about, you know, farmworkers in Imperial
Valley and Riverside, we're talking about over
50,000 farmworkers.

And let me say something here, and I hope
I don't take too long. But there's an article
that I read in 2018 in the New York Times, and
this is a quote, "Maria Guadalupe, a recent
graduate of a company-sponsored technology
course, has gone from packing salad into boxes,
to setting up and monitoring robots that do her
old job." So my thought here is also that we are
not only finding the wealth of the Lithium that
it's trying to provide, but we have another human
capital wealth that needs to be absorbed and we
need to create, the programs, the methods, and
the models that are going to be not collaborated,
but integrated in order to be able to benefit the
community. That's my opening statement.

MR. JATKAR: Thank you. And Marco, I
didn't know that you've been around since the
Industrial Revolution, so we have a lot to learn
from you, apparently.

MR. LIZARRAGA: No, that one I had to
read about.
MR. JATKAR: Thank you. Next up, let's go with Hector of IBEW.

MR. MEZA: Hi. Good afternoon. My name is Hector Meza. I'm a journeyman wireman, also a state licensed electrician, and a business agent for IBEW, and the son of farmworkers. I'm a graduate from Imperial High School, Class of '02. I went -- okay -- so finding my way around here in the Valley, I had to look into different institutions to mold myself to learn a trade, to try to make something for my life.

In high school as a senior, I took IBROP in construction. I went to Job Corps to install tile Setting back in '03. I also went to CET here in the Valley to learn building maintenance. Now they call it Green Construction. I went to IVC, I got my Associates, then I transferred to Cal LA and got my Bachelor's. All that, I would not give away for anything. All that molded me to who I am. They do have great programs, but none of them -- they weren't for me to work here in the Valley.

I tried coming back and doing my trade, and just I could not find a good job. I then joined the IBEW Apprenticeship through the
Electrical Training Center here in Imperial.
That's a state approved apprenticeship program.
And after the second year, I was able to afford
my first brand new car out of the dealer.
On the my third year as an Apprentice, I
was finally able to become a homeowner in the
City of Brawley.
My whole apprenticeship took five years,
that's what the apprenticeship takes, five years.
Three out of those five years of the
apprenticeship, I drove back and forth to San
Diego in order to get the experience I needed to
become a well-rounded Electrician. It opened my
eyes to see how many people drive to San Diego
every morning. There's a lot of shuttles for
that that drive over there.
My experience that I got through the
Apprenticeship, I got to work on solar, I got to
work on battery storage systems, I got to work in
hospitals, schools, military bases and the San
Diego Skyline.
The Apprenticeship right now, they start
at $19.88 an hour. Every six months they get two
to three dollar raises as they study in school
and as they train on the work, that's from the
job site. Once they graduate, a Journeyman right now is making $49.70 an hour. We have excellent health insurance, dental, an excellent pension, and all those on top of our current wages. We don't pay anything, it's part of a package.

The Apprenticeship is totally free. We get to work and we get to train on the job sites, get paid. And with those wages, we aren't just wire pullers, we are state certified electricians, we work in every industry all the way to nuclear. So we know about motor control, reading screen, and trouble shooting. All trades here, all trades in construction have apprenticeships, and they aren't just skilled workers. We're technical blue-collar workers. Our five-year training, it's state approved, it is backed by college records. I actually got college credit for my apprenticeship.

And as a four-year college graduate, I can tell you, being in the apprenticeship is no walk in the park. Thank you.

MR. JATKAR: Thank you so much, Hector. And last, Sahara from Alianza Coachella Valley.

MS. HUAZANO: Yes, hi. My name is Sahara Huazano. I'm the Director of Programs for
Alianza. I'm happy to be here, happy to get to know the panelists and hear their input, as well.

When I was invited to be a panelist here, the words "equitable, sustainable and inclusive jobs" were mentioned. And those words need to be accompanied by "actions" and reflected to the realities of the people who live in the region. These words imply to look not just at the workforce, but everything that comes into developing an infrastructure to address the barriers for people to get to work.

I wanted to briefly just play it off that what is the term "equity?" That was one of the questions that I asked, is there a common definition of "equity" that is being used in this space? Because I think we all come from different backgrounds and expertise, but I just wanted to frame what I mean by equity as somebody participating in this panel.

So, the term "equity" is different from the word "equality," which means providing the same amount of something despite the existing needs for assets. Equity means recognizing that we don't all start from the same place, and must acknowledged and make that adjustments to the
imbalances.

    The process is ongoing, requiring us to identify and overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from biases or systemic structures.

    So overall what I'm trying to say is that as we are thinking about this workforce development and all the presentations that were presented before our panel, there were a lot of different opportunities. I was glad to hear that there were some elements and I think somebody mentioned childcare to different types of support so that people can go to work.

    So I think when we're talking about these opportunities, that it's not just a blank slate of like, "Oh, well, these are the opportunities, please come and join the workforce," just like that, just submit the application. I think there needs to be several steps that need to be taken in regards to is we want to address equity in an underserved community in order to be inclusive.

That's all.

MR. JATKAR: Thank you. So let me go through our panelists and pose a question or two to them, and then as I mentioned we'll stop and
turn it back to the Commissioners for any questions you have for this group.

So I'll just go down in the same order. Chris, you know, rather than a question, I just wonder if you wanted to say more about the Sovereign Wealth Fund concept and some examples or, better yet, maybe how that could be applied here. And actually, I'll throw you another one in case you want to answer this, or you have time to do both, which is I found it very interesting, your suggestion of an Advisory Council, a Community Advisory Council for Community Benefits Agreements, if I understood correctly. And so that kind of recommendation, too, I think is something that could really help take us to kind of the next step of work that actually needs to happen in the region.

DR. BENNER: Great. Thank you for that question. Maybe I'll start with the second one because I think it builds off of some of what Sahara was just saying. I'll reference a sort of framework that was developed by our colleagues at U.C. Riverside in the Center for Social Innovation, what they called a "Ready to Rise Framework." And it's useful just as a way of
thinking about this, and the first thing is readiness. You know, how ready is a community to be able to absorb and benefit from the kind of investment that is potentially here with Lithium. And part of that, I think, is the workforce and economic training, and the institutions that we've been talking about today, which I think is absolutely critical.

But part of that is also the strength of the community organizations because they're the ones who would know best the barriers to access and the specific conditions that need to be addressed. And I think supporting the kind of sort of cross-regional community advisory board, or connection, would be a tremendous way of helping to support and assess the readiness of the community to really benefit and to provide sort of input into community benefit agreements.

The rest of that "Ready to Rise" is resilience and then inclusion, sustainability, and equity, very much in the way that Sahara has talked about.

And getting back to Sovereign Wealth Fund, I mean, I think one of the things that's important is we have an opportunity here with
Lithium and the way that it is a pointer to a new economy, really trying to present a more sustainable economy, and one that can hopefully get us off of fossil fuels. But part of that is recognizing that we have to understand the full lifecycle of Lithium and think about sort of the long-term economic development strategies of that.

And one of the most well-known examples of a Sovereign Wealth Fund in the U.S. is the Alaska Permanent Fund, which was put in place by a Republican Governor and State Legislature in the early '70s when they discovered oil in the far north slope of Alaska, and recognized that that's a non-renewable resource and wanted to create a permanent fund that could provide a resource for the long-term economic sustainability of, in that case, the State.

But I think it is relevant to thinking about sort of the long-term economic viability of the Salton Sea Region. And many of the things that Marco was talking about, of agriculture, of course, is a very important industry in the region that is in great need of investment, improving wages, agriculture improvement, you
know, technology, that is going to lead to displacement.

And so, what are the kinds of jobs and connections that people displaced from new technological innovations in agriculture are going to be able to move to. And creating that Permanent Wealth Fund then creates a long-term asset and resource that is available for that kind of investment long-term.

So again, I would encourage people to look at that, and many of the Sovereign Wealth Funds in the U.S. have existed for a long period of time. The Texas one is from the 1800s, and there's often a tendency, though the immediate needs are so important and pressing, and that's very true, but if we're going to be thinking about building an inclusive economy in the Salton Sea Region, we also have to have the long-term perspective there, as well.

I will emphasize that, you know, a Sovereign Wealth Fund is not a substitute for Community Benefits Agreements, and the Project Labor Agreements, and the kind of Workforce Investment and Training, those are all very important in the meantime, but I would encourage
us to think about the Sovereign Wealth Fund, as well.

MR. JATKAR: Okay, thank you. And a really good point, I think, about sort of the time horizon and knowing that at some point Lithium will -- we'll extract all of it and at some point maybe battery chemistry will change, and Lithium may not be as favored as other technologies, so really preparing for the long term, I think, is absolutely critical.

I think what you were bringing up with the Ready to Rise Framework, I know Alianza has been involved in that work around inclusive economic development and so, Sahara, I might come to you and ask if you could share a little bit more about -- if you want to say anything more about the Ready to Rise Framework, or also sort of what's next, you know, good ideas and recommendations have been coming together, and if you're able to say a little bit more about sort of what now, with that kind of framework, or how it applies here.

MS. HUAZANO: Yes, definitely. I think if we put the High Road framework with the Rise and Ready framework, I think it can complement
each other in the way as I was listening, the High Road is very skilled work and quality focused, and it has a start in developing policy from top/bottom approach. The Rise and Ready framework provides a bottom/up approach, where you're looking at the resilience of what are the assets that exist in the community because we're talking about what is missing, but there's also already existing assets in the community, so how can we uplift those, which is the "R" in RISE for resilience, and the "S" which is sustainability, which I think it was mentioned by one of the Commissioners. What about public health, what about the environment? How sustainable are we talking about in developing our economies? And I think that based on the Acronym RISE which is resilience, inclusion, sustainability, equity and readiness. Based on my assessment resilience and sustainability is currently missing as we're looking at this framework of High Road in that they can be completely be work together to complement each other and address equity in this rising economy.

MR. JATKAR: Thank you. And actually, maybe I'll just ask real quick, I think
Elisabeth, if we wanted to share a link to the report where folks can find out or read more about Ready to RISE framework, I was about to say RISE to ready, but that makes no sense. Should be throw that in the chats or is that something that can be shared after the workshop today?

    MS. DE JONG: Yes, thank you for asking. I would recommend putting it in the Q&A, even though it's not a question, and we will follow-up by putting it as a link in the meeting action minutes so it will be on that document, as well.

    MR. JATKAR: Excellent. Yeah, I found it very useful and appreciate your point, too, about sort of the, you know, the alignment with the High Road framework and sort of areas that maybe are in need of some further refinement. So I'll throw that in.

    But as Sahara was mentioning, you know, existing assets and one of those is people, of course, so Marco, I remember, when we were chatting last week, you were talking about this myth that farmworkers can only be trained for farm work and can't get into sort of more technical jobs. And I wonder if you would like to expand on that a little bit more?
MR. LIZZARAGA: Yeah, it was really interesting to me that in Salinas, this huge agricultural company, that they themselves are training their workers into managing robots because what I see in the future is, no, the farmworker is not going to disappear, they're going to be greatly reduced in numbers, and they're going to be very techy and savvy, okay. So for instance, let me give you an example of one experience I had, and I'm going to be a little bit implicitly critical, but seven or eight years ago I put in a proposal to the state to fund us to train farmworkers in Solar Panel installation. Well, they said, that industry, it's not going to last, and blah blah, so you know, we're going to be training people for a dead end, okay? Then, of course, training farmworkers for that? And it was really interesting because, you know, Hector had experience with CET, which is one of our members, that's who we use in Imperial Valley to carry out our training, that CET in Coachella and the one in Imperial. So one time that I was in Calexico, we were talking about this training, there was a couple of people that asked me, "Wait a minute,
farmworkers are learning how to do that?" You know, there's this bias that somehow, you know, and I always tell people, well, listen, you're talking to a farmworker. I worked in the fields when I first came here when I was 12-years-old, that's what we came to do. We used to go pick grapes in Fowler and Fresno, and then I was in the fields all the way up to when I was a sophomore in high school. In fact, we used to get up at 2:00 in the morning on a bus to Coachella to pick grapes. So there's this bias that somehow every member, a national with 50,000 farmworkers, and guess what? They cannot afford to live in Imperial Valley. Guess where a lot of them live. Mexicali. And one of the things that have happened in Imperial Valley is the devastating economic impact of the Federal policies, starting with Nixon and his Operation Interception that killed the valley economically. The commerce that they had was killed. So there is a little bias about farmworkers having the capability to be trained.

I'll tell you one interesting story.

There was a time that I worked in Imperial Valley, you know, with a labor contractor also on
the other side of that path, okay, it was a labor
contractor company. And lo and behold, we
farmworkers were actually nurses and two of them
were doctors in Mexicali, so there's a lot of
human capital in that population that we need to
take advantage of and use. You know, we've got
to cut out that bias towards farmworkers.

MR. JAKTAR: Thank you. Hector, I want
to turn to you, then, if you could say a little
bit. You know, we've heard from Danny on this
point around solar and increasingly over time
more local folks finding employment on these
projects. And I wonder if you could say a big
about how that's possible, whether it's talking
about the Community Workforce Agreements, or
Project Labor Agreements, or other aspects, so I
think that's an interesting story that's worth
telling about the change over time and how that
sort of local share of the workforce really
increased.

MR. MEZA: Okay. So first, touching on
what Marco was saying, a lot of the electricians
going through either an apprenticeship or CWC
Programs, they have been farmworkers. So a lot
of electricians we have were farmworkers. So
they learn. Yeah, it's just knowledge, and
knowledge once it gets in you, you can't take
that out.

And regarding the solar, a lot of the
work, solar that has been done here in the
Valley, they have been PLAs, Project Labor
Agreements. Basically what that has done is it
has given us a place to work, projects to do. It
makes sure that the people working are being
trained correctly, and to do the project on time
and under budget. And PLAs help with that. And
it helps everybody who wants to be doing the work
here on solar. I don't know what else to say.

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: It sounds like what
you're describing is really like sort of the
Project Labor Agreement as a sort of policy
really helps to pull folks onto these job sites
and into these labor markets where training is --
this is a necessary complement for having pushed
people into those labor markets, but we need both
of those push and pull factors. That sounds like
that's one of the unique aspects of what a
Project Labor Agreement can do.

MR. MEZA: It also makes sure that people
are getting paid correctly and it makes sure that
people are getting paid right. Because there's some plants that weren't done without the PLAs and we didn't do those. And a lot of the people working there, they were getting minimum wage to be working on those plants. At least with the PLAs, there's levels through the apprenticeships and through the other programs that they can escalate themselves and make a better living.

CHAIR PAZ: Shrayas -- sorry to interrupt you, I know you're almost wrapping up, but I know Commissioner Kelley has had his hand up and --

MR. MEZA: All right.

CHAIR PAZ: So, Commissioner Kelley.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Thank you, Chair Paz. I'm going to attend a community meeting and I have to leave in a few minutes.

So I appreciate everyone from Sahara to Hector, and Hector, we've met recently, and I remember seeing Sahara at a community meeting in West Shores, so we've been crossing paths for awhile. Shayras, we've been on calls before, too.

Chris, I did want to tell you that Imperial County, yeah, we are ready. We're ready for every challenge, if we have to lay our
foundation stone in front of everywhere we step, we will. And this conversation is part of that. Marco, I hear you about the farmworker. I may not look like one, but I did cannery tomatoes for six years, I was on the harvester, and I eventually got promoted to the tractor, but it took awhile. And then at one point they demoted me from the tractor and put me back on the Harvester. So, yeah, I don't look the part, but I've felt the part.

And I hear these things about the Community Benefit Agreement and the Sovereign Wealth and the Permanent Fund, and those are good ideas. I want to know more about it and I'm willing to look into it.

I also note that there are huge social needs in Imperial Valley, health needs in Imperial Valley, and we've had, if you didn't know, from the solar development we created Community Benefit Programs for the Ag displacement and for community enhancement.

Those two programs have done significant things about being able to foster some new industry like organic fruit packing and bringing back a beef plant. So, there is a model, it's
already here, and we have Advisory Panels made up of the community. So I'm willing to have that conversation. But I wasn't sure if you guys were aware of that.

And then we have been having these conversations which, as you guys have heard, in our community with Environmental Justice Comite, some of the partner organizations, community-based organizations where we've been talking about Severance Tax since July and I'm happy to hear it spoken about here. When, Chris, you brought it up it was like, yeah! We'd like to do that. But my question though to you, Chris, is do you see that model as being a state model or a local model?

DR. BENNER: Commissioner Kelley, thank you so much for your comment and sharing some of your deep knowledge from the region, I really appreciate it.

The Sovereign Funds that I'm aware of in the Severance Tax models that I know of in the U.S. are state level models, not local models. And I know that that was one of the proposals that came from the County was potentially making that possible at the County. I think that's very
innovative. I think there's some potential for that. I think it's worth some exploration in thinking about as a way of trying to ensure that there is both local benefits maximized from Lithium, but also ensuring that the infrastructure, you know, the roads, the power, the schools, the education that are so important locally to help ensure the value-added industries are able to build on the Lithium extraction happen locally there, as well. So I think it's an intriguing idea we're thinking about. I'm not aware of models that have been done at a County level or Local level, but --

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: There are, Chris, we've looked at it. There are some that have the authority, but not in California. And that's why we're advocating for it. But thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner.

VICE CHAIR KELLEY: Thank you, Chair Paz.

DR. BENNER: Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Shrayas, back to you, and then before we can open it to questions for the rest of the Commission.

MR. JAKTAR: I think that might wrap it up there because I'm seeing that we're already at
4:30. But if you are okay with it, we can give
our panelists, you know, like 30 seconds to do a
closing statement, or just sort of last thoughts
they want to share. Or how do you feel about
that.

CHAIR PAZ: I think we can open it ---
thank you, Ryan -- to questions. But thank you,
all of the panelists for your time. So at this
point, any questions from the Commission for this
panel? Commissioner Olmedo.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: I just wanted to
thank all the presenters. It's definitely in the
spirit of tying it -- maximizing the benefits and
build a model. The elements are there.

I always mention that no community is a
table cutter, right? We have to be able to
customize, localize in making sure that we build
programs and community benefits that are
guaranteed, and making sure that they do so much
of what all of you said, making sure they are
responsive to the frontline communities, fence
line communities.

I think there's enough data, enough
science, enough policy that already says this is
where the impact is, this is the way that it
needs to be distributed based on a logical model. And I think you have brought that to these presentations today, so I want to thank you for that.

I think there's still some work of how we localize it, right. How do we make sure that the frontline impacted communities benefit from this? And Commissioner Kelley is correct, you know, we're having many conversations. I mean, it's important to note that we are a disadvantaged community. The data shows that the population here is considerably, and I would say alarmingly, disengaged.

And one of the challenges we have is that a lot of times the same people, same faces, locally making decisions, so these models could be great models to make sure that we achieve equity and I would say that your models and ideas that you brought today, that perhaps that work well, but they need to be customized and localized so that we can achieve the maximum benefit, so the win-win language could be the gold standard, you know, be the example for the rest of this country as the country sees and seeks out other similar types of ventures in
other areas, not limited to Lithium, but to other industries.

As far as all the language that was shared, I want to thank you for sharing it. Those were certainly the same language that we feel will deliver the wins for this area. And for California and this country, so thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you Commissioner Olmedo. And I want to build on what Commissioner Olmedo just said in terms of how we adapt it to our region because, you're right, that many of the models that exist, exist elsewhere where they have different challenges, different assets.

And for the question that I'm going to tee up, I want to reference Alianza Salton Sea initiatives that started sort of in the middle of the Pandemic -- if we can consider that's a middle, the timeline keeps moving -- but early on during the Pandemic because we were thinking about -- and I'm sort of switching a little bit of hats here for all of you -- but Alianza started thinking early on, how are we going to recover, and what are those models, and how do they apply to our region?

So, one of those things that we did,
Alianza did, was to reach out to researchers, right, there's data that we don't have, a lot of the data never captures our region. And then Alianza modified that process of the research data gathering to include community voice.

So, Sahara, if you can talk about how Alianza included community perspective, what has been done, and then maybe Chris, if you can talk about how that has shaped and started to inform a more regional approach when we're talking about what is needed to truly have a thriving economy in the context of the Salton Sea. So, Sahara?

MS. HUAZANA: Yes, definitely. So, part of the research classes, we have it in three different tracks. The first track wants to get all the information that is out there, like the framework, case studies, and that's what the partners within the research institutions did.

In partnering with the community, we wanted to ground truth that information by doing focus groups established more than ten years, working there in the community. We decided to have focus groups with people that we knew that they knew about the work and that they knew other people.

So, it was intergenerational.
I know the majority here are all adults, but it's also the high school students, all these programs that are being developed for them, where are they at? Where are their thoughts and ideas? So we brought in an intergenerational group into these focus groups and we had a discussion about what is a good job, what do they mean by benefits, what do we want to get out of this in these upcoming changes.

So we had an understanding about the economic and social concepts of what it needs to take in order to have a thriving economy, but the process that Silvia was just talking about is that, for building these frameworks, it's crucial to have the community participate from the beginning, not at the end.

So then I know that Chris Benner mentioned an advisory Board and I know Supervisor Ryan Kelley and Commissioner Olmedo mentioned that there's already groups established. So as the report is being put together, via the guidance by this Commission and I think it's very crucial to imbed it, a need to follow-up as next steps, and it really has the community participate in that process of informing the
different frameworks and anything that comes into what is next for the region.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Sahara. So essentially there was a research question, some findings that our research partners did, and before even publishing or putting everything in, it's like, well, let's check this with the community. Is this resonating? Is this local? So, Chris, you've been part of this from the beginning. How has that informed the findings in any way?

DR. BENNER: Well, it's been fundamental to the findings, and I'll just say, you know, over many years we've done research on indicators of inclusive economies that have been developed in many different contexts. And part of that is the real commitment to data-driven decision making, and really being clear about letting research-based and real understanding of what's going on in the regions help inform everyone's decision because it helps provide a basis for conversations, for discussing how we understand what the real opportunities were, and we brought some examples from other regions, other countries, around inclusion in conversation with
some of the community members that came in to
give us feedback.

And it fundamentally shaped some of the
recommendations we were making about specific
indicators. And part of that was being clear
about the distinction between equity, as
different from equality, but also equity being
different than the inclusion.

And part of that is being really clear
about, well, how do we measure participation?
What does it mean to be meaningfully involved in
decision making? And part of that is, how do you
measure a full understanding of the context? How
do you understand the impact of the decisions
that are open for collaboration? A lot of
decision making happens in places that many
community members are not invited to, or are not
part of, and so how do we make sure that decision
making is transparent.

It also helped highlight for us the
importance of health in the region, the health
challenges of the Salton Sea and really
prioritizing socioecological health, both of the
ecology of the region, and then community health
has been critical for understanding inclusion.
And that's a very specific thing, you know. Other regions have that, too, but a very high priority in the Salton Sea Region that we couldn't have predicted ahead of time without that input coming in. And then the access to the opportunity, part of that is thinking about commutes, transportation, public transit, what's available and all that, and then the infrastructure including the affordable housing as being really critical.

So all those things only emerged out of the sort of participatory process that Sahara and Silvia have described.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And again, I think it was relevant to what Commissioner Olmedo was asking, but it's also a model that could be used as the Lithium Valley Commission gets towards the drafting of the report and making sure that there are ways in which the community can ground truth sort of those findings. And it also may be helpful for some of the great work that's already happening in Imperial when they're developing these programs, they're like how do we engage people, or the
users. So, thank you for providing that model.

Commissioner Olmedo?

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Chris, again, thank you for the great knowledge you bring. The work that you've done, or the experience, there are Environmental Justice principles. I don't know if you've ever had a chance to read them. One question would be, how do you see those Environmental Justice principles playing out in the development of an industry such as the Lithium industry? And how would they be incorporated into a Community Benefits Agreement? How do you see that evolving?

The other question is, how familiar are you with -- this of Federal and State but let's say just focus on State now. So there are land use policies on Environmental Justice, there's planning policies on Environmental Justice, there's CalEnviroScreen that characterizes and identifies some of these areas where we have the greatest impact.

I remember having worked on AB 1318, which built a power plant, a fossil fuel power plant, eco plant in Desert Hot Springs; and I remember at the time that California Energy
Commission came out with an impacted area of about six miles. Those types of things also play out in these Community Benefits Agreements. And how do you bring all of this in to make sure that the equity and justice is built in, based on so much policy that is already making sure -- and I'm also thinking of like petroleum, you know, refineries, and how they've affected communities, and so like Wilmington or communities like in Kern, you know, that fence line having to bear the brunt of this. How do you, with all this information I just gave you, build a Community Benefits Agreement to make sure that these fence line communities aren't, you know, further disserved. And whenever you have an opportunity like this, and we saw it initially, I mean, there's interest from everyone. You know, bring the lab over here, bring this over there, you know, I mean, I don't know, I'm just curious. Imperial has never had so much attention. Any thoughts about what I just put in front of you?

DR. BENNER: What can I say? You put a lot out there. And thank you, Commissioner Olmedo. You know, one of the things I would say is that what goes into a Community Benefits
Agreement has to come from leaders of the community.

One of the Fundamental Environmental Justice principles is, you know, the voices of those at the front line have to be first and foremost in conversations about that. That would be the main thing, I would say.

And I am quite familiar with what the CalEnviroScreen and a lot of Environmental Justice work. I think one of the things to think about in the context of specifically the Lithium industry is that often when people talk about Environmental Justice, they're talking about mitigating or addressing specific negative environmental impacts, you know, polluting industries or others.

And I think we have to fully understand the environmental context of geothermal Lithium extraction, but it's certainly a lot cleaner than open pit mining that goes on in China, or some of the open pool, evaporation pool, Lithium extraction in Chile. And I think that's a positive thing.

I think there's a more comprehensive understanding of Environmental Justice that
should be brought into this conversation which is, you know, the environment is where we live, work and play, and what are the ways that the Lithium industry has an important member of the Salton Sea Community and many people have pointed to people in industry live in the region and work with and are soliciting from the region, as well. But what are the responsibilities of that for addressing the broader environmental health challenges of the legacy of pesticides and other pollutants that are in the dust, that are emerging from the Salton Sea and elsewhere. And what does that mean also for investing in community health? You know, the parks, the green space, the trees and other development to make the communities of Imperial Valley and Coachella Valley the kinds of communities that we all want to live in. And I think that's an important part I was thinking about Environmental Justice, as well. It's not just mitigating the negative impacts, but how do we invest in a healthy environment where we live, work and play.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair --

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.
COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Just a follow-up --

CHAIR PAZ: Luis, I really have to catch

you, very respectfully.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Madam Chair. I

just want to just make a point.

CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: What you brought up

about the Salton Sea, and I think it's great.

One of the risks of the local dynamics here is

that we do have a Trade Agreement with Mexico

that has contributed to the demise of the Salton

Sea, and we do have an agricultural industry that

has contributed too, and many industries to be,

in all fairness. So certainly I think, as we get

the expertise from speakers such as yourselves,

it's real important to understand also the

history to make sure that we're not taking away

from future opportunities and things that have

not received the proper care, but at the same

time addressing these legacy issues that have

been kicked down the road, right, like the Salton

Sea. So, thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I know

Commissioner Colwell also has to go to Nyland

(phonetic) for that community meeting that's
taking place. But thank you so much to the
panelists, great conversation, and if anyone has
any questions you can connect directly with them.
Thank you again, Shrayas, for all of your
support.

Arthur, did you -- did I cut you off?
Did you try to say something?

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: No, I'm good. Thank
you.

CHAIR PAZ: Okay, and I called you Arthur
-- Richie! Thanks. Public Comment.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you, Chair Paz. So
if you're joining us by Zoom on your computer,
please use the "raise hand" feature. If you've
called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand and
*6 to unmute your phone line. First we'll go
through the hands raised in the Zoom application,
then phone, and then any written comments. I see
a hand raised by Nikola Lakic. You should be
able to unmute.

MR. LAKIC: Hello. Can you hear me?

MS. DE JONG: Yes.

MR. LAKIC: Good afternoon, Chair Paz.

Good afternoon everyone. My name is Nikola
Lakic. I am a graduate
Engineer/Architect/Inventor, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words.

For the record, if you allow me, thirty seconds extra I would appreciate it. Three minutes time as is allowed for public comment is very limited time, but at least I will try to summarize several points. I took some notes here.

If you already didn't not to read, I respectfully urge you to read at least my two recent public comments. As you may know by now, I am an inventor of several breakthrough technologies in the energy industry, hydro power, solar, geothermal, drilling deeper by the their well work.

Also, as you may know, my proposal for the restoration of the Salton Sea which includes the extraction of Lithium is under review by the Panel of Independent Reviewers. If it's premature for me to speak about it, I'm waiting for the Panel's report. But I must say that I have seen the other original competing proposals, and I am confident that my proposal will be accepted.

It is inconceivable to me that anyone
with common sense would reject a proposal that
provides a clean environment and that would
generate revenue in billions of dollars yearly,
rather than accept a proposal that does not
prevent incoming environmental disaster in each
government, state, governments plural, state, and
federal, constant help in hundreds of millions of
dollars to fix never-ending problems.

There is much more in involved than just
extracting Lithium from geothermal brine and/or
just importing seawater. As you already know,
I'm opposing the current calls of action, the
to geothermal brine, and related projects that
supposedly will prevent the formation of toxic
dust storm. The projects that are initiated by
leaders at the IID, Salton Sea Authority,
California National Resources, officially
accepted in 2016. I'm sorry to say, but those
are nonsensical projects that leads to the
destruction of the Salton Sea.

Because of limited time, now, I will save
my comment in writing explaining in details why
it leads to the destruction of the Salton Sea,
and why current projects are nonsensical.

It is mindboggling that I have opposition
instead of being thankful that I have solved a
very difficult problem. And instead of being
united in asking the Government, State and
Federal, for funding, I had to argue with local
leadership. It is unbelievable. I'm doing my
best to introduce my proposal to stakeholders and
to protect my work through patent law. But there
is a limit to how much I can do alone.

I respectfully urge State officials,
relevant State agencies, to get involved. First,
the current course of action, which is
ridiculous, must be stopped because going forward--

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Mr. Lakic. We are
up with time.

MR. LAKIC: Okay, I will send to you in
writing. But thank you very much for the time.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Next is Jose Flores. You
should be able to unmute yourself.

MR. FLORES: Again, a very informative
meeting. I want to show my appreciation for the
gravitas afforded by the Commissioners who are
always present and participate during the meeting
and show a great deference to this endeavor. I
wish I could say that about our other
Commissioners that kind of are here and there,
but I think this is very important to me and my
community, so I wish in the future that they are
also present because it's not only an important
matter, not only for our community here, but also
for our state and nation.

On the discussion of research with local
communities having a voice, again, I totally
agree with that; it's very important, but I feel
it must be strategic and efficient. The
information or the effort put forth cannot be a
mile wide and an inch deep, or a mile deep and an
inch wide; it must be balanced. To where
frontline communities are giving the proper
venue, the platform, a voice, their opinions,
concerns, comments, and any possible questions.
Once again, thank you for your support.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. We have some
comments that were written in. One from an
anonymous Attendee saying: "How many geothermal
power plants are operating or are planned for in
Coachella or Riverside County?"

Another comment written in, Jesus
Arguelles, "The public health and mental health
aspects of the workforce were not addressed.
Perhaps this is something to include as an item
in the agenda, as well as workforce development
entities focusing on the local Tribes' employment
needs."

And the Leadership Council wrote: "The
first set of information shared by BHE and CTR in
regards to how many jobs will be created and what
these jobs are is the type of information that
the community has been asking about. It is
really important for this group or agencies in
the group who have this information to share it
with the public in an accessible way. A great
element of a way to do this is the letter to the
public CTR recently wrote. I would suggest a
similar action is done to share this information.
Given the questions I have heard from the
community, I would suggest that this
informational material include the information
shared in today's presentations, plus give
details on how many on each of the jobs will be
available (how many operator positions, how many
safety specialist positions, etc.) and what, if
any are the risks of these jobs? For example, if
employees will be exposed to any toxic materials,
then this person would also include information on any effort you are doing to ensure these jobs will be made available to local residents."

And I did want to note two more comments that had come in --

COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: A real quick interruption from Jonathan. We'd be delighted, and Chair Paz, please post Burt Short's slide deck. We'd appreciate that. That would be great, meeting one of these concerns. Thanks very much.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. And, yes, we will be posting the presentation in English and Spanish after the meeting once they're translated.

Okay, another comment that was written in, "If PLAs are for large projects, what is the criteria for defining which projects require PLAs? Is there a minimum size for a project to require a PLA? And Carol Zabin did write in a response to that: "President Biden's EO has a $35 million threshold. California's is lower, I believe."

And just to point out that, as Shrayas
mentioned, there was a link that was reference
earlier in the meeting, and that is also in the
Q&A.

I do see one more hand raised and that is
Eric Reyes. You should be able to unmute.

MR. REYES: Hello again. I just want to
thank the Commission for an excellent meeting,
lots of good dialogue, lots that I could look
into and come back with. But I want to first
reiterate some of what our colleague from
Imperial Valley, Marco Lizarraga said also about
people being able to adjust farmworkers and
anyone else, underserved communities.

First, we need to take away their
barriers and then show them their own abilities
to succeed. I also work for Los Amigos de
Comunidad, and I also work at the Community Basin
in Imperial Valley, and I also work for the
statewide organization, Farmworker Institute of
Education on Leadership Development (FIELD). And
at FIELD, we have implemented many programs in
rural California for farmworkers that came out of
the Caesar Chavez movement, now independent of
that, where we carry the same principle that
ordinary people are able to do extraordinary
things. And we have showed them the way. They take the initiative; they make themselves successful. They just need that initial support to make them believe that it's possible.

And through FIELD we have CTE Programs in Fire Science, Early Education, Conservation Corps, and many other programs that we're continuing to grow out of the need and necessity in rural areas that have been underserved and neglected by the powers that be and investment. And this is not proper investment, we want to make sure we have jobs at the end of the training, not just training for the sake of training and organizations receiving those funds.

So I just want to reiterate that from Mr. Lizarraga, then I'm going to jump into the next part that, as you're talking about investments, it seems to me it’s still driven from the top down. And we as a community are demanding that we be the drivers and the owners of that investment portfolio, as a partner with everyone else involved.

There is already one way to empower and that's through ownership. And I've been on many many many -- too many to count -- and just for
the last two or three years, Advisory Committees
where good intentions are made, yet it's not
followed through with true meaningful investment.
So I'm not that kind on Advisory Councils and
Advisory Boards, I'm more on board administering,
ownership, making a partnership with industry and
government.

And we thank the County for its initial
plan on their stakeholder group. We feel that is
still not encompassing all of the stakeholders
and tell you that we are working on the Community
Development Plans, Economic Plan that we're
hoping to have funded as well. There's plenty in
the Governor's Budget for that, even if he missed
this deadline, there are other plans that we can
go, add it on to bills and so on.

So I thank you very much. I think you
guys are doing tremendous work. We'll continue
to be part of it and engage to the very second.
I'm trying to finish my 12 seconds, as well.
Thank you all. I think I heard a lot from
industry, as well. You want to be players and I
appreciate that. I think that's fantastic.
Thank you, for everyone.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. That is all of
the comments at this time. Back to you, Chair Paz. Sorry, Chair Paz, you're on mute.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And thank you for the people who are always providing us comments. And I've just come to the realization that, well, not today, but through the process as I hear public comment, that our job as the Commission that's uplifting all these findings and engaging and hearing what you all have to say in so many ways, but there's really going to be a lot more work that's needed, even after we publish this report.

So those conversations about investments, about Community Benefit Agreements, I believe we need to find the space for those conversations to happen and to happen in the way that the community has been requesting it to happen, but I just wanted to make sure because I keep hearing it in our public comments that you are being heard, that's just the reality of what this Commission is sort tasked to do, but the work that is going to have to continue in order for us to be successful in so many of the recommendations that are coming forward. So thank you again for giving us consistent public
comment. Next slide.

So we're now in the part of the agenda where we're going to plan for upcoming workshops. What you see are the workshops that still need to be discussed and scheduled.

Right now, we're going to focus on the continuation of the Environmental Impacts Workshop, as we discussed in our last meeting.

And to provide a little bit of context, I had requested that the Commission continue the conversation about environmental impact with a focus specific to the projects currently in development and proposed in the region, and to include a conversation on public health. Again, items that we have continually heard from and questions from some of our commissioners, as well as the public.

So as the subgroup that is in charge of this workshop topic, Commissioner Flores and Commissioner Olmedo, I just want to first call on you to hear your thoughts and what you've heard and what you think at this point could be a way to address some of these remaining questions about what's really happening on the ground.

And so we'll just start. First from
whoever is ready, Commissioner Flores or Commissioner Olmedo. And then we'll get input from the rest of the Commissioners.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: Sure. You know, I've been thinking about this and reflecting upon our past Environmental Impacts Workshop that we had.

I think really getting more specific information on the actual projects that have been currently permitted, you know, energy focused projects, environmental frameworks they're currently working under, you know, if that is something that still works, or, if it's not we can put them in the frameworks that we need to start establishing to make sure that there are minimal environmental impacts to the region. It's something that I would really like to see.

Two, in our previous Environmental Impact Workshop, we kind of touched upon the Salton Sea, but I think we're really kind of digging in more in depth on the Social Justice issues, the environmental issues are all a part of that, especially in my role in working with the Natural Resources Agency, we have projects out there; we're in charge of the restoration and
responsibility for work that's going on out there.

And I think that we know definitely all of us have a big interest in the intersection between the geothermal and Lithium and just kind of what opportunities that we have, to take a look at all of that.

And I know the community has kind of expressed concern over impacts to air, you know just general health impacts that I think are rightly so. I think being able to kind of talk about that, those health impacts, as well, as part of this Environmental Impact would be wise.

That is what I’d like to see.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Olmedo. If anybody would like to add to what Commissioner Flores mentioned.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: If not, I have more.

CHAIR PAZ: Well, you can tell us more and we'll see if he comes.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: Sure. I think, Chair, you and I have discussed that, really, getting clarity on the use of the water and its impacts to water resources in the community within those projects. I know I've asked just
kind of on my personal time different entities, and I haven't ever really gotten a really clear answer on that. And perhaps when we really start reaching out to those local entities, as well. And I know Luis last time, Commissioner Olmedo had last time brought in health experts, but maybe taking another stance on that.

CHAIR PAZ: Uh huh. Thank you. Yes. And as you're mentioning some of those local agencies, I just want to highlight some of them that I think could be helpful. The County who oversee the planning could give us a very clear idea of how they're considering like -- or implementing the CEQA requirements, what is it that they're looking at when they're permitting projects, what are the impacts that they're looking for. I think that Imperial County Planning would be maybe a help for us.

The other one in regard to the water, maybe bringing in the Imperial Irrigation District, as I know that all of these projects interact with Imperial Irrigation District at some point.

And then for the air, I know that the Imperial -- and I'm forgetting that the Imperial
has an Air Quality District, as well. So maybe bringing them on board.

And I think I still have a question about who the potential public health, who could speak to that more directly, but maybe we can check in with Commission Ryan Kelley to see maybe if their Department of Public Health or for some guidance on that, Thank you for all those ideas.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: Oh yeah, I totally agree. We have lots of questions on CEQA.

CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Commissioner Olmedo, are you back? Well, at this point, I will open it to other Commissioners to see if there's any addition to the things you've heard introduced by Commissioner Flores. Is there anything else that you think still needs to be addressed, or any agency that could be helpful in answering some of the topics that Commissioner Flores identified.

Okay, so I will take the silence as Commissioner Flores, you have a go and I'm happy to partner with you as support, the next workshop, as well.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: Fantastic. I will take all the support I can get. Great.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So next, so I'm
proposing that for the sake of time, we're going to be deferring several items that are coming up in the agenda. They're not any action items that we have, but I will defer the discussion on the Economic Impacts Workshop and the overall schedule to our next meeting.

And now we will open the floor to public comment, and specifically on the topic of the planning of the workshops, and reminders that we are limiting to two minutes per comment. Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. So if you're joining by Zoom on your computer, please use the "raise hand" feature. If you've called in, please dial *9 to raise your hand and *6 to unmute your phone line. First we'll go through hands raised in the Zoom application, and then on the phone.

I will just start by reading a couple chat mentions here that I think circle over really from the Workforce Development Workshop where Hector Meza did say, just a little note: "CBA is a contract between the Developers, the community and the local government. The three have to balance the wants, which means the three
can come back with a CBA that works fairly for all. But the beauty of them is the importance of having local communities being a part of it."

And there's a comment on there from Eric Reyes: "There's well developed and equitable CBAs that can be extremely useful and an equitable distribution of resources."

I don't see any other hands raised at this time, so back to you, Chair Paz.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Next slide. I'm going to defer the approval of the action meeting to the next meeting, as well. Where else? I'm on Administrative Items. So next slide, please.

We will be also deferring our Media Legislative Updates to the next meeting. And I will now want to Lithium Valley Commissioner Updates and with a reminder, if we can keep our updates to three minutes, and I know that some people had to go to that Community meeting in Nylan (Phonetic), but I will start with Commissioner Castaneda.

COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I have received, as I think all the Commissioners did, a copy of this -- I don't know if it's a draft, I think it's been
approved by the Imperial County Board of
Supervisors, the Lithium Valley Economic
Opportunity Investment Plan. I know that
Commissioner Kelley probably was going to talk
about this. Is this going to be scheduled for
the next meeting?

CHAIR PAZ: Correct. Thank you for
bringing that up. It was distributed so that we
have plenty of time to review it, to read it, so
please everyone read it ahead of time and then it
will be on the agenda for the next meeting, I
believe for the next meeting, for a deeper
discussion on it. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Well, and thank
you very much because, as you know, I've been
beating the drum on long range planning with all
of this, which is inclusive of all these things,
so I have not had a chance.

I skimmed through it and I'm looking
forward to having a robust discussion on this
because I think that this is really the crux of
everything that we're going to be talking about
and hopefully deciding on. Thank you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner
Colwell had to go to the Community Meeting.
Commissioner Dolega also had to go to another meeting. Commissioner Flores.

COMMISSIONER FLORES: No updates.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Is Commissioner Hanks here? I don’t think he left.

MS. DE JONG: No.

CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Commissioner Lopez.

COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: No comment at this time.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Commissioner Olmedo. Commissioner Ruiz is not here.

Commissioner Scott, I believe is not here.

Commissioner Soto is not here. Commissioner Weisgall, I don't know if he also had to jump off to another meeting, he might have. I don't see him.

Okay, so I will conclude with my updates I want to bring to your attention, but there are two CEC Fact Sheets that were completed and distributed to the Commissioners. I also want to note that the Energy Commission has completed a Draft Initial Response to the Leadership Council which they will be finalizing in the next few days and will be shared with Commissioners and docketed to the Lithium Valley Commission Docket.
as they're being provided to Leadership Council's representative.

One more item is that the Energy Commission and some State representatives did visit Coachella and Imperial. I had the opportunity to give them a tour, you know, really seeing the Salton Sea. And I hope that tour is also informing, just helping our State agencies really experience some of the things that are coming up here in the commission and putting it in context.

So I want to thank everyone who came out. I know they will continue to be coming to visit our region as this is developing. So that is it for my comment. We will now go to public comment.

MS. DE JONG: All right, thank you. If you're joining us by Zoom on your computer, please use the "raise hand" feature; if you have called in, please deal *9 to raise your hand, and *6 to unmute your phone line. First, we'll go to any hands raised in the Zoom Application, and then phone lines, and then written comments.

I see a hand raised, Nikola Lakic, you should be able to unmute.
MR. LAKIC: Can you hear me?

MS. DE JONG: Yes.

MR. LAKIC: Thank you. I'm just curious, I don't need to bother, but would I be able to finish another several of points that I wasn't able to say previous comment or?

CHAIR PAZ: You have one minute and 50 seconds.

MR. LAKIC: Well point 15 was the first the current coarse of action which is ridiculous, sorry to say that. It must be stopped because going forward without a feasible plan, must have blueprint, is losing precious time and money. If we continue with ten-year plans that means losing another six to seven years and billions in revenue unnecessarily. I'm hoping that my status will change after the report on the Panel of Independent Reviewers. I'm willing to help. But without the dialogue. Without communications and having the state continue funding, a nonsensical project that is impossible. I would like to emphasize again that I am not contractor, I am the author of several breakthrough methodologies that will employ many contractors and change the world, starting with the Salton Sea Region. The
highest officials in California government have been intentionally misled since 2013 about the existence of the proposal, my proposal, that can not just prevent the destruction of the Salton Sea, but rather restore it and make nearby communities very prosperous. I respectfully urge state officials to halt current coarse of action based on new important information.

And last one, the project for the extraction of Lithium are not in conflict with my proposal. In fact, those projects are with minor adjustments such as implementing a dyke, levy, around the desired land in harmony, in cooperation, with my proposal. But first, people need to be aware of the existence --

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Mr. Lakic. Time is up.

MS. DE JONG: The next hand raise is Tom Sephton. You should be able to unmute.

MR. SEPHTON: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity to listen to this workshop that you've put on, I've learned quite a bit from it. I would request as a member of the Imperial Valley community and resident that you incorporate into a future workshop or discussion
what the water needs will be for the Lithium
development and what you get up to 300,000 metric
tons per year of production, how much of this
water will be required for the processing of that
Lithium, and does the IID resource, is it
sufficient to cover that? Or will additional
water resources be needed in order to process
that much Lithium as we go forward?

That is one of the potential significant
impacts, both economic and in a sense
environmental on the community, so it would be
helpful to have some numbers on what the level of
need will be and what the level of impact may or
may not be. Thank you.

MS. DE JONG: Thank you. Chair Paz,
there are no other hands raised at this time.
Back to you.

CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And we will now
do a General Public Comment.

MS. DE JONG: All right, those
instructions, if you're joining us by Zoom on
your computer please use the "raise hand"
feature, if you've called in, please dial *9 to
raise your hand and *6 to unmute your phone line.
We'll go to the hands raised on Zoom, then the
phone lines, and any written comments. Chair 
Paz, I'm not seeing any additional comments at 
this time. Back to you.

CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Well, I will conclude 
by thanking everybody. We were successful in not 
going too long after our time, so thank you again 
for your support in this.

Our next meeting is March 24, 2022. Note 
that it is not the last Thursday due to the Cesar 
Chavez holiday. Our meeting is now adjourned.

Thank you everyone.

(Meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.)
CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were reported by me, a certified electronic court reporter and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 14th day of March, 2022.

ELISE HICKS, IAPRT

CERT**2176
CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I do hereby certify that the testimony in the foregoing hearing was taken at the time and place therein stated; that the testimony of said witnesses were transcribed by me, a certified transcriber and a disinterested person, and was under my supervision thereafter transcribed into typewriting.

And I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for either or any of the parties to said hearing nor in any way interested in the outcome of the cause named in said caption.

I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript, to the best of my ability, from the electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

March 14, 2022

MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT**367