

**DOCKETED**

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CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION  
LITHIUM VALLEY COMMISSION

In the matter of, )  
 )  
Lithium Valley ) Docket No. 20-LITHIUM-01  
Commission Meeting )  

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IN PERSON AND REMOTE VIA ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING

**Physical Locations:**

Westmorland Union Elementary School  
200 South C Street  
Westmorland, CA 92281

Torres Martinez Tameka Gym  
66725 Martinez Rd.  
Thermal, CA 92274

THURSDAY, JULY 21, 2022

9:00 A.M.

Reported By:  
Martha Nelson

## APPEARANCES

Lithium Valley Commissioners

Silvia Paz  
 Luis Olmedo  
 Jonathan Weisgall  
 Steve Castaneda  
 Miranda Flores  
 Arthur Lopez (Richie)  
 Alice Reynolds  
 Manfred Scott  
 Tom Soto

CEC Staff

Erica Loza  
 Silvia Palma Rojas  
 Deana Carrillo  
 Giana Villegas

Tribal Session

Thomas Tortez Jr., Chair of the Torres Martinez Desert  
 Cahuilla Indians  
 Jesus Arguelles, Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians  
 Gloria McGee, Quechan (Kwatsáan) Tribe of the Fort Yuma  
 Indian Reservation  
 Preston Arrow-weed, Quechan (Kwatsáan) Tribe of the Fort  
 Yuma Indian Reservation  
 Lorey Cachora, Quechan (Kwatsáan) Tribe of the Fort Yuma  
 Indian Reservation  
 Faron Owl, Quechan (Kwatsáan) Tribe of the Fort Yuma  
 Indian Reservation  
 Robert Wallace, Barona Band of Mission Indians  
 Alan Hatcher, Quechan (Kwatsáan) Tribe of the Fort Yuma  
 Indian Reservation  
 Carmen Lucas, Kwaaymii Laguna Band of Mission Indians  
 Courtney Coyle  
 Jordan Joaquin, President of Quechan (Kwatsáan) Tribe of  
 the Fort Yuma Indian Reservation

Tribal Session Public Comment

Pasan Erenhousen  
 Homer Lesi  
 Stephanie Martin  
 Lorraine Salas  
 Tom Sephton  
 Nikola Lakic

## APPEARANCES (continued)

Community Session Public Comment (Contd.)Tribal Session Public Comment (cont'd)

James Gibson  
Paula Marvin

Community Session

Community Engagement / Information Sharing  
Elizabeth Jaime

Community Benefit and Investment

Monique Ureña  
Angel De Dios  
Cecilia Armenta

Workforce Development

Richard Cordero  
Simon Canales  
Carlos Gonzalez

Water Use

Adriana Torres

Environmental Impacts and Public Health

Cecilia Armenta

Community Session Public CommentCommunity Engagement and Information Sharing

Cecilia Armenta  
Adriana Torres  
Sandra Ramirez  
Mario Bautista

Community Benefit and Investment

Luis Flores  
Sergio Valenzuela  
Brenda Ortiz  
Daniela Flores

Workforce Development

Monique Ureña  
Angel De Dios  
Richard Cordero  
Cristina Marquez

## APPEARANCES (continued)

Community Session Public Comment (Contd.)Workforce Development (cont'd)

Hector Meza  
 Simon Canales  
 Sandra Armenta  
 Jimmy Elrod

Community Session Public Comment (Contd.)Water Use

Sandra Ramirez  
 Mario Bautista  
 Agustin Martinez  
 Angel De Dios  
 Eric Reyes  
 John Hernandez  
 Stephanie Martin

Environmental Impacts and Public Health

Adriana Torres  
 Angel De Dios  
 Monique Ureña  
 Luis Flores  
 John Hernandez

General Public Comments during the Second Session

Councilmember Karina Quintanilla  
 Oletha  
 Erica Reyes  
 Jose Flores, Imperial Valley  
 Mariela Loera  
 Nilda Ruiz  
 Robert Wallace, Barona Band of Mission Indians  
 Mario Bautista  
 Eduardo Flores  
 Stephanie Martin

Public Comment on Draft Report

Courtney Coil, Attorney with Carmen Lucas  
 Robert Wallace, Barona Band of Mission Indians  
 Mariela Loera, Leadership Counsel  
 Cecilia Armenta

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## APPEARANCES (continued)

Community Session Public Comment (Contd.)Public Comment on Draft Report (Contd.)

Nilda Ruiz

Gloria McGee, Quechan (Kwatsáan) Tribe of the Fort Yuma  
Indian Reservation

Stephanie Martin

Written Comments in Q&A

Anonymous Attendee

Stephanie Martin

Ray Teran

James Gibson

Nikola Lakic

Tom Sephton

Paula Marvin

Brenda Ortiz she/her

Daniela Flores (she/her/ella)

Jimmy Elrod

Jasmyn Phillips

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

1  
2 July 21, 2022

9:10 A.M.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Welcome to our commission meeting  
4 on the extraction of lithium. Today we are meeting both  
5 in person and through Zoom. With the adoption of  
6 Assembly Bill 189, which was signed by the Governor on  
7 June 30th, the commissioners and members of the public  
8 can attend and participate in meetings remotely. We  
9 have two in person locations today. And I want to thank  
10 the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indian Tribe for  
11 hosting a site at the Tameka Gym here in Thermal. And,  
12 I also want to thank the school district for providing  
13 our other physical location at the Westmorland Union  
14 Elementary School.

15 We are providing interpretation services in  
16 Spanish for attendees at the physical locations and  
17 those participating through Zoom on computers or  
18 tablets. The Zoom interpretation function does not work  
19 for attendees who are only joining by phone. A  
20 representative from the CEC will now speak in Spanish to  
21 inform our Spanish-speaking audience how to use the  
22 service.

23 MS. LOZA: Buenos dias. Me llamo Erica Loza.  
24 Daré instrucciones a aquellos de ustedes que quieran  
25 escuchar la reunión en español. Hay un intérprete

1 disponible a través de la plataforma Zoom. Para unirse  
2 al canal en español, haga clic en el ícono de globo  
3 pequeño en la parte inferior de su aplicación Zoom.  
4 Seleccione el canal donde dice S-p-a-n-i-s-h. Luego  
5 haga clic en la frase siguiente donde dice "Mute  
6 Original Audio" para silenciar el audio original.

7 Si tiene preguntas o si gusta hacer algún  
8 comentario, por favor de oprimir el icono de la mano  
9 alzada y abierta o envíenos un mensaje en español a  
10 través de la función de preguntas y respuestas para  
11 ayudarlo.

12 Back to you, Chair Paz.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. To ensure that all  
14 members of the public have access to the meeting under  
15 the Bagley-Keene Open Meeting Act, we ask that all  
16 Lithium Valley Commissioners connected via  
17 teleconference select and remain on the English Channel  
18 for the entirety of the meeting, preferably with cameras  
19 on.

20 I Acknowledge that this will be a long meeting  
21 today. When we review the agenda for the day, you will  
22 see that there are scheduled breaks throughout the  
23 agenda. I kindly ask my fellow commissioners to remain  
24 in attendance as much as you are able, and use the  
25 breaks for other business.

1           CEC staff can you please review the general  
2 instructions?

3           MS. LOZA: This is a hybrid meeting, being  
4 conducted with physical locations via teleconference.  
5 This meeting is being recorded as well as transcribed by  
6 a court reporter. The transcript will be posted to the  
7 docket. The recording of the meeting will be available  
8 on the Lithium Valley Commission webpage. The Spanish  
9 interpretation will not be recorded or transcribed.

10           Members of the public connected via  
11 teleconference will be muted during the presentations,  
12 but there will be opportunities for public comment at  
13 times throughout the meeting. For public commenters, we  
14 will ask you to state and spell your name and state your  
15 affiliation, if any, when speaking. However, state law  
16 permits you to remain anonymous if you choose, so  
17 providing your name and affiliation is voluntary.

18           There is a Q&A window in the Zoom application  
19 which you can use to type questions and comments, and  
20 staff will relay these comments as appropriate. For any  
21 comments made in Spanish, the interpreter will render  
22 those comments into the English for the non-Spanish-  
23 speaking participants, and to ensure those comments are  
24 included on the record and transcript.

25           The presentation materials from the meeting

1 and workshops today will be made available through the  
2 docket in English and Spanish after the meeting. Please  
3 note that the Spanish version may post a few days after  
4 the English version.

5 Next slide, please.

6 Public comments can be submitted at any time  
7 through the e-commenting system accessed through the  
8 Lithium Valley Commission webpage. For more information  
9 on the Lithium Valley Commission, you can access the  
10 website as shown here. You can also review all  
11 materials submitted to the docket at the link provided  
12 below. The website address can be found on the webpage  
13 as well.

14 Back to you Chair Paz

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, let's move to the  
16 roll call. Since we are now meeting under the updated  
17 remote meeting provisions of AB 189, as I just  
18 mentioned, Commissioners may participate in person or  
19 remotely. While this bill gives us a lot of  
20 flexibility, it is creating new circumstances for us,  
21 and I just want to let everyone know that we're still  
22 committed to do as many in person meetings as possible  
23 and try our best to have commissioners in those in  
24 person locations.

25 Unfortunately, there were unforeseen

1 circumstances this morning that either prevented some  
2 Commissioners, who were scheduled to be in Westmorland,  
3 to be there, or they might be late. So, I just want to  
4 let everyone know that it is still our intent to ensure  
5 that, you know, we are accessible to the public.

6 And so, I will ask the CEC now to call the  
7 roll of Commissioners. And remote participants do not  
8 need to state your location as you did in prior  
9 meetings.

10 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Castaneda?

11 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Present.

12 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Colwell?

13 Commissioner Dolega?

14 COMMISSIONER DOLEGA: Present.

15 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Flores?

16 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Present.

17 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Hanks?

18 Commissioner — Vice Chair Kelley?

19 Commissioner Lopez?

20 Commissioner Olmedo?

21 Chair Paz?

22 CHAIR PAZ: Present.

23 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Reynolds?

24 COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: Present.

25 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Ruiz?

1 Commissioner Scott?

2 COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Present.

3 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Soto?

4 COMMISSIONER SOTO: Here.

5 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Weisgall?

6 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Present. And a quick  
7 word, apologies, I was one of those people affected. I  
8 was going to drive down from Palm Springs, but I've  
9 spiked a fever. And unfortunately, I did not bring my  
10 webcam with me, so I can't be, I can't be on the  
11 picture. But I will be present for the entire meeting.

12 MS. LOZA: Thank you. We have eight people  
13 present. Back to you, Chair Paz.

14 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We do have a quorum.  
15 So, as with all of our meetings, if a Commissioner needs  
16 to step away for a few minutes or leave the meeting,  
17 please inform the group as this can affect whether we  
18 have a quorum for specific items. If a Commissioner  
19 arrives during the meeting, we will also note that for  
20 the record.

21 Next slide, please.

22 The agenda for today's meeting is shown on  
23 this slide. The revised agenda was posted yesterday to  
24 indicate the change in order of items. Please note  
25 Planning for Upcoming Lithium Valley Commission Meetings

1 and Activities including a Discussion of Potential  
2 Process to Develop the Report to the Legislature was  
3 moved to this afternoon following the community  
4 perspectives session.

5 Today's meeting is a little different from our  
6 prior meetings. Today we are meeting all day with two  
7 sessions. In the morning we will hear tribal  
8 perspectives on issues related to the work of the  
9 Lithium Commission, and in the afternoon we will hear  
10 from community members on their perspectives.

11 In addition, to provide more time for this  
12 discussion, we won't be addressing item number five, and  
13 the media and legislative items under item number six.  
14 Also, we have a lunch break scheduled for today between  
15 12:30 and 1:30, as well as a short break during the  
16 afternoon session.

17 Next slide, please.

18 Let's begin the tribal session. I would like  
19 to introduce Chairman TorteZ of the Torrez Martinez  
20 tribe to kick off the tribal session.

21 CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you, Chair Paz. And,  
22 thank you, California Energy, the Lithium Commission,  
23 for having the meeting in Torrez Martinez. We're  
24 honored to have you here. We're honored to have all the  
25 tribal relatives here today also in this tribal session.

1 And, I would like to begin our tribal session with a  
2 honoring our creator with a prayer.

3 Creator, Father, Amnah(phonetic). As we begin  
4 to take steps in the direction of your purpose, we ask,  
5 Creator, that you give us wisdom. Creator, we ask this  
6 in faith that as you promise us that you will give us  
7 wisdom in every small and large decision as we step into  
8 your purpose, Creator.

9 Creator, we thank you that we don't have to  
10 rely on our own understanding, and we know that your  
11 wisdom will guide us to your exact purpose. Creator, we  
12 thank you that we can come to you and ask anything. So,  
13 we ask this day for your guidance and we thank you for  
14 the blessings and the power that you have bestowed upon  
15 us through your spirit.

16 Allowah, ayachuma (phonetic).

17 Alright, thank you. So, with that, as we  
18 discussed last week with the tribal, the tribal forum  
19 that we had, we had the ability to identify and discuss  
20 topics that were important and concerns to the tribes.  
21 You know, those four important topics were  
22 environmental, cultural, economic development, and the  
23 workforce. And we discussed, you know, among other  
24 things, you know, the tribal perspective and the  
25 inclusion. And this all began with, you know, my letter

1 to the Lithium Valley Commission several months ago.  
2 And I appreciate the timely response of the Commission  
3 which responded within the next week, and has been — you  
4 know, we've had an amicable relationship since then.  
5 And, I appreciate, you know, their ability to include  
6 the tribes and get our perspectives now.

7           So, with that, I just want to remind the  
8 tribe, all the tribes here and tribal members and every  
9 tribe that's out there, that as was stated before, that  
10 written comments are the strongest tool that we have.  
11 And, you know, in addition to oral comments here.  
12 Written comments that can be submitted through the  
13 Energy Commission. That way it is documented on record  
14 what we have to say.

15           With that, I'm going to open it up to the  
16 tribes that have come here today for exposure to their  
17 perspective. And, I would like to first open it up to  
18 Quechan. Tribe Quechan is the primary tribe that has  
19 the ancestral territory there. Do we have Quechan here?

20           Okay. Would you like to say a few words?

21           (Pause)

22           MS. MCGEE: I was hoping that we'd have more  
23 time because some of our members aren't quite here yet.

24           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Okay.

25           MS. MCGEE: But, anyway.

1           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ:  Alright.  We can go on, so I  
2 can just open it to any tribe that has a comment.  If  
3 not, we have a view as far as Torrez Martinez.  We have  
4 our Economic Development Director, Jesus Arguelles, who  
5 will talk on a few points.

6           MR. ARGUELLES:  Honorable members of the  
7 Commission, honorable members of our Nations, Torrez  
8 Martinez, Mr. Chairman, thank you.  Honorable members  
9 Arthur Lopez, thank you.

10           In serving as an economic development  
11 director, it's really a very complex job.  Especially in  
12 light of all the opportunities that are emerging.  Not  
13 only in to the lithium related space, but also in the  
14 context of sustainable community development.  I was  
15 blessed with the opportunity to attend the previous  
16 panel.  And I, frankly, learned a lot.

17           It created a framework to pivot in my  
18 thinking.  Not only as an economist, not only as an  
19 advocate, not only as a former investment banker, not  
20 only as a former civic planner.  But rather, as a vessel  
21 to create and build a sustainable diversified economy  
22 that is inclusive, equitable, and fair.  With these  
23 comments I would like to frame some observations that I  
24 made.  And again, they're not purely economics, they're  
25 not purely cultural or historical, I think it's a blend.

1           The first observation that I made is the CTR,  
2 BH Renewables, and EnergySource, I call it for short the  
3 trio. T-r-i-o, trio, three. Their enterprise and  
4 project development process and business models are not  
5 well aligned with a vision, the values, and aspirations  
6 of the local tribal nations.

7           In fact, the three have been not very  
8 proactive, nor as strategic as they should have been in  
9 seeking counsel and direction. Not just input and  
10 engagement. As of today, the trio continues to focus  
11 and weigh in more on the technological and financial  
12 considerations as well as workforce development,  
13 inclusive of tailored training programs and educational  
14 curriculum, to assure — and I underline assure —  
15 availability of qualified minds and labor for their  
16 operations.

17           Also, the message from the trio, the trio's  
18 leadership to be precise, is that they view practicing  
19 long term environmental sustainability, along with  
20 mitigating public health impacts, as well as promoting  
21 an equitable and inclusive industry sector  
22 diversification, along with fostering supporting  
23 sovereign entrepreneurship and accelerating the scaling  
24 of an inclusive and diversified entrepreneurial  
25 financial ecosystem as an urgent imperative. They need

1 to be credited for that.

2           The reality, however, is that their websites,  
3 marketing materials, and decision making concerning  
4 environmental sustainability and/or corporate social  
5 responsibility are not aligned. You know, that they  
6 have parity with an existential, and vital values of a  
7 thriving Native American lifestyle, and community  
8 resilience.

9           Frankly, the impact of lithium recovery must  
10 be addressed more aggressively on how this actively will  
11 affect the cultural, economic, technological, health,  
12 and wellness, governance status and the fabric of  
13 surrounding communities. The latter are not  
14 incorporated nor mentioned by any of the firms  
15 environmental or social impact policies or its strategic  
16 initiatives. That's observation number one.

17           Observation number two. The absence of a  
18 timely and ample consultation. Limited access to  
19 objective and credible evidenced based data sources, and  
20 trusted information, along with the leadership of  
21 corporates lacking cultural sensitivity and  
22 demonstrating understanding and respect for our Native  
23 American culture have been and continue to be the blind  
24 spot of their respective endeavors. Either by choice,  
25 indifference, or the lack of acceptance.

1           These are some of the same actions that are  
2 taking, or that have been taking by eight leading global  
3 lithium extraction recovery operations. When they carry  
4 out community engagement and negotiations. Regrettably,  
5 these community benefit agreements have been unfair in  
6 the amount of the invested in their community for  
7 development programs. They've been one sided and  
8 focused on measuring short-term community impacts  
9 instead of using a long-term approach and strategies and  
10 metrics to mitigate, lessen impacts. And it's  
11 specifically, within the lithium space. I have a note.  
12 The use of environmental friendly technology, which  
13 needs to be proven, and it's in its infancy in the  
14 stages to application. That does not eliminate the need  
15 for that blind spot to continue.

16           Observation number three. Selective tribal  
17 leadership believes and feel in light of the  
18 aforementioned, that the ship has sailed, in the sense  
19 that, one, strengthening the lithium urban supply chain  
20 is key element to maintaining the natural security and  
21 competitiveness of the critical metal space.

22           Number two. The three players, or the trio,  
23 are accelerating the testing, or scaling, of pilot  
24 lithium recovery technologies as well as the  
25 design/build of the thermal plants. This is in addition

1 to applying for drilling and expansion approvals and  
2 permits, while aggressively seeking billions of  
3 financing and tax credits from public and private  
4 sources.

5           The latter are to be used for building several  
6 thermo-generation plants, along with starting the  
7 development and improvement, will require physical  
8 infrastructure to create. This is the key, the critical  
9 mass, and ultimately a lithium-based ecosystem that is  
10 profitable.

11           I am not sure what are the acceptable options  
12 that are available to the collective, to the  
13 stakeholders, that are present. Nor would I place  
14 myself to presume to know their needs and wants.  
15 However, my sense is that there's always an option. My  
16 sovereign nations have engaged in a litigation inclusive  
17 of class action suits for parties violating the required  
18 consultation with tribes. However, it has a cost. But  
19 at the end, this will delay or stop the emergence of a  
20 lithium-based hub. And I underline the word hub as  
21 opposed to valley.

22           So, what are the options? Or what is the  
23 option to litigation? What is the option to allegations  
24 and accusations? What is the option? Listening to  
25 emotional pleas to not destroy the environment. We have

1 to go back to the basics.

2           Anyone that knows a little bit of economics,  
3 knows of Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*. That is the  
4 blueprint for capitalism. Regrettably, most economists  
5 and investment bankers, people that drive our economics  
6 system and financial system, have never read the other  
7 books by Mr. Adam Smith. Specifically, *The Theory of*  
8 *Moral Sentiment*. And *The Theory of Moral Sentiment*, in  
9 brief, yes human have an invisible hand, it's all about  
10 me. The invisible hand. Making decisions for you.  
11 However, he says you cannot exercise absolutely an  
12 invisible hand without the moral imperative of improving  
13 society.

14           So, my thinking was, and it still is, that  
15 somebody else read, had the architects of capitalism  
16 read the other book? Frankly, I don't believe we would  
17 be in the same place. But we have to make environmental  
18 tradeoffs for quality of life and jobs.

19           So, what is the other option? It is for all  
20 the tribes to prepare to come together in a unified  
21 fashion. Dysfunctional as it may appear, to create  
22 their own green-print, instead of a blue-print, let's  
23 call it a green-print. A two to five year strategic and  
24 sustainable regional economic development green-print,  
25 incorporating the collective, or tribal development

1 needs as well as those surrounding impacted communities.

2 Another element of that option — that  
3 management of this new entity, which I'll refer it as,  
4 "a collective," could be led by forming a coalition or  
5 leadership commission of the tribes and other key  
6 members and stakeholders from the valley. The way  
7 planning works, each county, each city does their own  
8 planning. They do their general plans. They expedite  
9 permits. But there is no regional economic development  
10 strategy in place that incorporates both the Eastern  
11 Coachella Valley as well as the North Imperial County,  
12 which is the most important area that's going to be  
13 receiving the impact, whatever that is. Whether it be  
14 positive, or negative.

15 Where will the funding come from? That's  
16 easy. CTR, let's call it the trio again, and leverage  
17 those funds, those private sector funds. Leverage them  
18 with state and federal government funds. From private  
19 equity, from sovereign wealth funds, from family  
20 offices, from angels, there's so much money out there to  
21 do exactly what we need to do. Based on what I heard  
22 last time on the round table, and the Imperial County  
23 investment proposal — which, by the way, there was no  
24 input. There was a couple of meetings that took place,  
25 20, 30 people. They had input. And again, nothing's

1 wrong with that. The only problem is, the only  
2 challenge — it was not inclusive.

3           So, when you talk about \$500,000 for expanding  
4 capacity within Imperial County to process limits,  
5 that's great. For planning grants, \$5 million, that's  
6 great. For building infrastructure from the Biden's  
7 program, that's great. But where are our needs being  
8 incorporated into a strategy?

9           So, I'm proposing on behalf of all of you, the  
10 tribes, a \$4.5 to \$6.8 billion dollars to finance  
11 sustainable community infrastructure and community  
12 development impact fund. We have to think big and act  
13 big and incrementally execute a small project that lead  
14 to a major change.

15           We cannot operate at the margin any longer.  
16 We've been there. In fact, I would say that we're so  
17 good at marginalizing each other, that that's our core  
18 competency. We're great at surviving. But there are  
19 rare examples of where we are actually thriving. We  
20 need more examples of that. So with a green-print, with  
21 that kind of a budget close to \$7 billion, I believe  
22 that will set us in momentum, a momentum and a path to  
23 real paradigmatic shift.

24           The focus of sample projects and ventures will  
25 be to increase to water, build renewable ventures,

1 improve digital connectivity, construct a network of  
2 leading edge respiratory and diabetes management  
3 clinics, establish a business accelerator of the  
4 industries of tomorrow, modernizing our roads, and  
5 adding community recreational facilities so that our  
6 kids do not stay at home playing games on their  
7 computer.

8           As a concluding comment, this is not a  
9 draconian or a quantum change or solution. It's a  
10 framework. It's an initiative that I believe requires  
11 courage, social and community investment. It requires a  
12 larger vision that lithium is no longer a local  
13 resource, but rather an asset that needs to be preserved  
14 to some extent, but also that is of national importance  
15 to us so that we can all share in the benefit.

16           As a concluding comment, many of us have been  
17 there. Whether it be gold, whether it be water, whether  
18 it be sun, but we have never created our own table. I  
19 think it is time to create our own table and be, also,  
20 at somebody else's table. Thank you.

21           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Very good. Thank you,  
22 Jesus. Alright then, again, we're in the tribal session  
23 of the Lithium Valley Commission meeting. And, I would  
24 like to invite any other tribal leaders, if you have any  
25 comments?

1 MS. MCGEE: Alright, I'll go ahead and present  
2 this. But this is just a draft, it's not our final  
3 letter yet, so we're understanding that we can submit  
4 our letter next week, but we'll at least get our  
5 comments in for today.

6 Meeting with several, with the water tech,  
7 with the environmental department, council, various  
8 tribal members the other day, we came up with these  
9 points. The unknowns are a concern for us. We feel  
10 there's no data or research to adequately address these  
11 concerns.

12 Number one, what is the effect of removing  
13 lithium from its natural state? What once — what  
14 happens once it's not part of a mixture returned to the  
15 earth? If it's decided not to return any remaining  
16 mixture to the earth, what happens to the void that is  
17 created?

18 Number two, how will this void affect tectonic  
19 movement? Will this be a result of more earthquakes?  
20 This is a concern due to the close proximity of two  
21 fault lines. If an earthquake were to occur, how would  
22 it affect the release of hydrochloric acid into the  
23 atmosphere?

24 What will be the impact to the Salton Sea and  
25 its current restoration projects? That's number three,

1 sorry. Four, there's not mention or negative or adverse  
2 effects as a result of the extraction. We find that  
3 unrealistic. Five, the area is vital to the Pacific  
4 Flyway for wildlife.

5 Six, health concerns. We already deal with  
6 Valley Fever, asthmatic issues, COPD, and other  
7 respiratory illnesses. How will this exasperate these  
8 problems? Seven, concern about the power given to  
9 Imperial County to administer this problem, or this  
10 project, I'm sorry. Eight, the lack of native  
11 consultation at the get go of this project.

12 And we will work on this letter, because we  
13 couldn't get together quick enough since the other day  
14 to get all of the points put into the letter. So, we'll  
15 be meeting again and probably submit this next week.  
16 Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Very good. And for the  
18 recording, could you say your name and your tribe?

19 MS. MCGEE: I'm Gloria McGee, member of the  
20 Quechan Culture Committee.

21 CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Very good, thank you.

22 Alright, very good.

23 MR. ARROW-WEED: (INDISCERNIBLE) Our great  
24 grandfather came from Imperial Valley, that's where he  
25 came from. I know their stories, I know their beliefs,

1 I know their beliefs of their religion, and there's many  
2 things I know about that area. But, I've met other  
3 people who don't really know anything about it. But we  
4 live there, all the way up there to when it was — the  
5 water went all the way up to Palm Springs.

6 We lived in the age of that. And came down  
7 when it receded. Some went another direction, but  
8 there's a different story that I know. Of how they came  
9 down from the north, this way and all over. I know the  
10 song that tells word for word, I know what I'm saying.

11 I'm not saying phonetics, everybody sings  
12 phonetically. I don't. So, for exactly what I'm  
13 saying.

14 Now, and I agree with Gloria, what you said,  
15 but in October you're going to do something about the —  
16 meet about this. But, the stage of development have  
17 raised concerned about public health too. Public  
18 health. Besides impacts, earthquakes, it's true. That  
19 we've had some bad earthquakes here before. And we've  
20 gotta think of that.

21 Of course everybody want's the money though.  
22 And water use, they say they've got a way of recycling  
23 the water. But they don't even know if it works. They  
24 haven't even tried it. They've been to other countries  
25 where they continue to destroy their areas, but when I

1 asked the question they said, "That's because they  
2 didn't know what they were doing, they were — they  
3 messed it up on their own. But, we are prepared now."

4           So, when you say you're prepared now, so can  
5 you guarantee that nothing like that will happen? No,  
6 there's no guarantee. And what are you telling me then?  
7 If there's no guarantee that you've found the right way  
8 to do, you haven't found the right way to do. All you  
9 think about right now is money, and the community's  
10 going to get their money and so forth.

11           But the State of California, I don't respect  
12 what they're doing, because in the past, they passed a  
13 law to exterminate the Native Californians. They've  
14 done that too. And I think it's very embarrassing for  
15 the State of California to have done that in the past.  
16 They have done this, the genocide of the Native  
17 Californians. They've done this, it's a well-known fact  
18 in the history that what they have done before.

19           I think we should bring that up too. What  
20 you've done before, you're doing it again. In this  
21 case, you're destroying the environment and even people  
22 who are around us, who are not even Native American,  
23 Native Californians, but they too will suffer the same,  
24 whatever happens.

25           That's all they're looking at, is money,

1 again. They've got to stop looking at money. Think of  
2 saving the environment, saving this land.

3 For anything that dies here, it's important to  
4 us. When you think one little lizard dies, what  
5 difference does it make? That one little lizard also  
6 was in our creation story. It was very important to us.  
7 So, one little lizard is just as important as the red-  
8 tailed hawk that's out here somewhere. He is very  
9 important to us too. There are other creatures that are  
10 important that we believe in.

11 So, does that mean that they don't respect or  
12 honor our beliefs, our tribal beliefs? Because we have  
13 to believe the damn bible? We have to go by their  
14 bible? No. We have our own beliefs, our own ways. Our  
15 own ways, try to save, try to conserve, try to do  
16 something about the environment to keep going. It was  
17 given to us so that it will keep going, not to destroy  
18 it. But that's what's happening.

19 It could happen, because there is no  
20 guarantee. They don't — everything is an experiment.  
21 Everything is something they really don't know, but they  
22 cannot guarantee or they never say, "You know, it will  
23 never happen." It could happen. There's always that  
24 possibility. We're not looking at that.

25 It sounds good when they talk, but the minute

1 they sit down, they talk about the money. I hear that —  
2 I heard that last meeting I was here. The millions and  
3 millions of dollars that everybody's going to get. Now  
4 that's what's really doing it. But then, money could  
5 destroy us to, because it has.

6           You guys, see, in our beliefs, the Quechan  
7 beliefs, they money is gold, and gold was the  
8 rattlesnake's blood. And it brings death. And that the  
9 whole world is dying because of that gold, that snake's  
10 blood, the money. Again. We've got to think of ways to  
11 survive.

12           Now, for instance, true that in our tribe,  
13 what we believe is that this earth — what everyone calls  
14 mother earth, well we call it M'Tai (phonetic) meaning  
15 mother. M'Tai-ah (phonetic) means mother earth. But  
16 the mother had given us everything that we needed.  
17 Everybody around here has got everything that mother  
18 gave us. Gave us the water, the air, the land,  
19 everything to plant, to eat, and to live. We have all  
20 that's given to us. We've lived with that.

21           So, but now, we're going to extract her guts  
22 out of there to make money out of it, so we can have  
23 more money. You know, all we're doing is destroying,  
24 again. And it's dangerous.

25           And I think that, when I look back to that,

1 when we talked to elders a long time ago. They really  
2 respected this land and took care of it, and every  
3 little thing that's important to us. Every living  
4 thing.

5           It is told, too, that there was a little  
6 creature, a bug so small that when you tried to tell the  
7 world what they're doing was wrong, but there's a  
8 tragedy could come. But he went to crying and crying,  
9 but nobody listened to him. They didn't listen to him,  
10 so what did they do? They got the little bug. They  
11 tied him up and tied him hanging on a tree and he cried  
12 and cried up there until it fell like rain. Because  
13 nobody listened to him, what he was saying.

14           I think we should all get together and say,  
15 "Let's save Imperial Valley," as a unit, all together.  
16 Not one little bug who tried. But I think these are  
17 some of the things we should be talking about. But not  
18 about the great things we can get out of it.

19           This was our area. You know, anybody can live  
20 here, we never say nothing. But, we have occupied a  
21 certain area for some years, and then the government  
22 said it was ours, so it became a reservation. But it,  
23 we just lived there.

24           People used to live everywhere, and nobody  
25 said nothing. But then it became the law, it became the

1 state, and this, and people who lived said, "This is my  
2 land now." No, you're just living here, we're all  
3 living here. But the laws made it so we own the  
4 reservation, we own certain land and so forth.

5 But now, we fight each other for that.  
6 Before, we could live. And everybody lived wanted more  
7 than the other, but that was not the way of the Native  
8 American before. The Native American way was to share,  
9 to share with each other. But that is gone now.

10 So, we're actually following a different way  
11 of life, we're following the white man's way. That's  
12 what we're following. We've forgotten the tribal ways.  
13 We've forgotten how we used to live. We've forgotten  
14 how to respect each other. We don't even respect the  
15 world, we don't respect our mother. We want to stand by  
16 and watch some extract her guts out of there. To me,  
17 that's wrong.

18 We should think more, to think more of trying  
19 to save that. And, technically, I, I'm sure that they  
20 can come up with some technical term to wipe away what  
21 I'm saying. But I'm talking about the basic things that  
22 human beings should live by. And we're not. We're not.  
23 We're going by a different way.

24 So, think it over some more, you know? And, I  
25 — as time goes, I'll think of more things to say. But

1 maybe somebody can say something of what I just said,  
2 too. Okay.

3 CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you, sir, for those  
4 words of wisdom from a tribal elder, thank you.

5 Any other comments from any other tribes?  
6 That we can document? Alright. Can you say your name  
7 and tribe?

8 (Pause)

9 MR. CACHORA: Good morning, I'm Lorey Cachora,  
10 Quechan Tribe. The reason I'm here is that I've heard  
11 this project so much. I'm out there doing other things,  
12 but I knew the time now would come when I would be  
13 sitting here. Sure enough, I was asked by the Cultural  
14 Committee, Quechan Cultural Committee, to see what our  
15 alternatives are towards this project.

16 And everything — it's like Mr. Jefferson said.  
17 It's so basic. But what did our leaders and the  
18 Committee do to prevent this? They did their best, what  
19 they could. This is what led us up to where we're at  
20 today. And my part goes back further than that. I was  
21 inspired by elders of long ago about the upcoming, they  
22 call it the future of events, which we would be  
23 encountering.

24 And it's like if they knew that there's going  
25 to be a time that's going to completely alter the ways

1 of Native Americans. And, sure I don't think anyone can  
2 predict that. But there are some, again, technical  
3 things that they talked about in those days that not  
4 only inspired me, but they encouraged me in the future  
5 to do what I can.

6           So, with that, I've been in different  
7 countries. Europe, Asia, all over including Australia.  
8 And I've studied their habits, their ways. And it's  
9 even inspired me more. When I came back home, there was  
10 quiet. Nothing, there was no movement. Until these  
11 projects started to come about in the '70's. And that's  
12 when Mr. Jefferson here, to my right, myself, came  
13 together to see what little we can do with small  
14 projects that were coming in at that time.

15           We had no one to reinforce us. The two of us  
16 ended up trying to protect a mountain called "Pilo-Nob"  
17 (phonetic), west of Yuma, which is a Kumeyaay, Quechan  
18 Ancestral Lands. And that was about to be invaded by  
19 the Bureau of Reclamation at the time. A small project.  
20 Which led us, through communication, to Washington D.C.,  
21 that's how we got the support to stop this project.

22           So, that was something for me thinking about  
23 what our ancestors had said. But since then, it took me  
24 all over the states helping inform a advocacy for tribes  
25 of different nations, all the way up to Oneida country.

1 My wife and I frequently traveled to Wisconsin to stop a  
2 project out there, which we were successful.

3 So, this is why I'm here this morning, because  
4 it's a way for me to do something. Not only for the  
5 tribes, but now dealing with modern technology as it  
6 advances, there has to be something in between which our  
7 people have called it balance.

8 So, this morning, I've done in a short time  
9 the research about the project. And apparently, it is  
10 what I'm hearing. It's a revolution between countries  
11 that started in the mid '90's about the lithium  
12 extraction. But in all, what happened during between  
13 then, today? It's still the same. The environment that  
14 you've heard is at stake, simply because the industry  
15 overlooked parts of the destruction.

16 It's always has been, from what I witnessed  
17 from the beginning. Because it's a race now between the  
18 United States, China, Europe, and South America. It's  
19 all about a contest. Having major power. Fighting for  
20 supremacy over minerals. In order to achieve economic  
21 and technical dominance, and this is going to continue  
22 for decades to come.

23 So, at the last meeting with my tribe, I did  
24 advise them that it's time to advise them to get up and  
25 to move one step higher than what we are today. And

1 that includes all of us here as a tribal nation. I feel  
2 that we have been asleep all along while this was  
3 creeping up on us.

4 Now, with 11 lithium stations that are  
5 expected to be in place, the drilling tests first  
6 started in 1982 to '88 as a pilot project. At that  
7 time, my thought was, "Was there a market to this?" And  
8 I did question the company at the time. They said there  
9 was no demands, but there was probably going to be  
10 diverted for energy, power, electricity. And this  
11 geothermal project is only experimental at the time.  
12 There was no projections, marketing in place. For their  
13 part it wasn't too much of interest to look in to.

14 But, at that time, I've always thought of  
15 another thing that I've heard from my ancestors. And  
16 today, we deal with those, but they're only words.  
17 Pros, and cons. Right and wrong. It just goes on.  
18 Negative and positive.

19 So, this project actually started then, and at  
20 the same time our thoughts were about that. Where was  
21 that balance? Because, in our world, the balance is  
22 very important. I've just talked about  
23 negative/positive. We, as humans, should understand  
24 what those two words mean. To us, Quechan way, it's  
25 very important meaning. Because you could throw

1 negative things in my face, I would take them, and use  
2 them in a positive way or something else.

3 I was always told there's a reason why someone  
4 yelled at you. Was it something that I did wrong?  
5 Probably so. They're telling you in a way that to  
6 correct your ways, your actions, whatever it is. So,  
7 when you do that, use that negative, turn it in to  
8 positive, then yes. You're balancing your world, your  
9 own world, to grow from here to the end, wherever that  
10 might be.

11 All of that negative and positive is right in  
12 front of you. You don't see it. I always use the car  
13 battery. In your vehicle, you take one terminal off,  
14 that car is going to die. It's because there is no  
15 negative going in to the positive. You have to have  
16 negative and positive in order to do something. Whether  
17 it's mechanical, whether it's human. Electricity that  
18 we have here today. We're enjoying the microphone,  
19 we're enjoying the power points. But you go out there  
20 and you take one lead off of that wire, the negative,  
21 that's going to go off. Or you take the positive,  
22 that's going to shut off, shut down. You have to have  
23 both in place.

24 There's a reason why our creator, as I've  
25 heard earlier, came to do this. Our creator created

1 everything on this earth. That's why we have magnetic  
2 north, magnetic south, to keep that world on its axis.

3           Going up further, to the universe. Why do you  
4 think all of the astronomical, the world above us, it's  
5 all in place, moving in one direction? Where are we  
6 going? We don't know. But everything is in motion, and  
7 yet, everything don't collide. That's nature's way,  
8 that's the way the creator brought that universe into  
9 place.

10           And thereafter, he said there be a world. So,  
11 so be it, there is the world. So, everything from the  
12 universe down to our very little bodies here on this  
13 earth, we're all tied in, all the way up to the  
14 universe, because of these two things, magnetic north,  
15 positive.

16           So, when you think about everything, when we  
17 talk about balance, that it's a way to keep order.  
18 Which, we don't heed anymore. The nature, we've gone on  
19 so far that we've disrupted the ways to how the world is  
20 supposed to work.

21           We're all a part of that. I'm a part of that.  
22 Ever since that vehicle was created in 1900's, we kept  
23 driving, driving, driving up to a point to where we  
24 caused pollution. Manufacturers were the best suited  
25 for all, for economical reasons, everything, we've all

1 benefitted from that. Technology, from our pockets we  
2 can't do without cell phones. I see that. There's good  
3 in everything. But, that's, we thought was a positive  
4 way, we forgot the negative part, which affected the  
5 entire continent, state, all the way up to our  
6 environment.

7           Because we failed to balance our part. As  
8 native ways, I always felt that we failed to intervene  
9 at that point to balance these things that we enjoy,  
10 industrial. As they said, it's the snake's blood. But  
11 then, I enjoy that snake's blood, because I'm retired, I  
12 collect money every month. That's part of it. I live  
13 it.

14           But one thing I never forgot was that balance  
15 that I can't shift away from negative and positive,  
16 because that's what my ancestors had asked me to do.  
17 And to do that, I have to sit in front of an audience  
18 like today, to present some of these things so that we  
19 would all come together to do something for what is  
20 their calling. For mother earth. I call it the nature.  
21 Because, that's the only capsule that we have travelling  
22 through the universe. Where we're going? I don't know.  
23 But we're certainly not taking care of that small  
24 capsule, which is the world.

25           We take everything for granted. We are

1 leaving nothing in return to protect that environment.  
2 In many ways, that's what our ancestors were saying.  
3 Don't become greedy, and we have. We've failed to pay  
4 attention to the environment. It is the earth that's  
5 sick right now. We're feeling that. The clouds that  
6 used to come through here, if you recall, speak to my  
7 age, we had rain that came through Imperial Valley,  
8 through Arizona. It rained for seven days straight.

9           There is an equinox in my area that I  
10 frequently visit. And that told me that there was going  
11 to be a shift in the earth, the way the alignments were  
12 compared to the universe. I kept watch of that. Sure  
13 enough, there is this — what we're calling the climate  
14 problems, the effects that we're getting.

15           But this has happened before in our time,  
16 before our time, that there was a great shift in the  
17 environment. And there was a drought. And if you think  
18 about South America, I can't remember whether it was  
19 Incas, or one tribe that was wiped out because of this  
20 same effect that they've had in those days. But there  
21 was extreme, that they literally wiped themselves out.

22           Is this why we're acting the way we do today,  
23 that we are shooting each other? I've noticed that the  
24 growing up, my time for violence was different compared  
25 to how it is today. It's random. Everywhere.

1 Something is affecting the minds of all of us as  
2 citizens on this earth. So, we go through this.

3           So, we have upset a lot of things. And now,  
4 we're crying over water shortage. We're crying over  
5 what nature has caused. The elements, now we have  
6 frequent fires. That's because we began to — we didn't  
7 heed to the warnings of long ago, and our nature did its  
8 own cleanup in her environment. The forest, every so  
9 often will catch fire to balance that forest. We failed  
10 to do that. We tried our best to preserve what we can.  
11 And so that we could use the woods and materials,  
12 whatever comes out of that — that the vegetation grew so  
13 thick, now we can't control fires.

14           It goes on with all the damages. As I've said  
15 last week and this meeting here, why Salton Sea is the  
16 way it is today. So, I really feel that we let our  
17 ancestors of long ago down when they wanted us to stay  
18 alert on our foot, and keep the world at its balance.  
19 That's who we should be as Native Americans, to see that  
20 we do exist in many ways. Through our leaders, elected  
21 officials, such as people like us, myself, having a  
22 responsibility to continue to educate people of our  
23 nature in this nation.

24           You know, we're talking about energy. Going  
25 back to the electricity, why it's here, the magnetic

1 north. Now we're talking about digging into the center  
2 of the earth, practically, although it might be  
3 subsurface as I call it. It's only beneath the Salton  
4 Sea that we're going to be extracting lithium. But  
5 there's going to be a time when the science is going to  
6 think further, which I think they already have plans to  
7 go to the center of the earth. Just like the movies  
8 that we see.

9           Whether you know it or not, the core of that  
10 earth, the fire in the center of that earth, has  
11 control. The water that we drink, the water that we  
12 call aquifer, the lakes, everything whether you know it  
13 or not, those water contributes to the base core of that  
14 earth's fire to control that fire. Without that  
15 dripping into that, that core of the earth is going to  
16 get extremely hot, that that can turn into nitrogen, it  
17 will explode. They'll take the earth, they say, and  
18 wipe us off. There's a reason for that core to be where  
19 it's at. It's created by nature; we can't control that.  
20 But it's meant for us to be here to do what we can.  
21 That's why I call it the space capsule that we're in.

22           When a nuclear reactors came in several years  
23 ago, I made a visit to that, because I was in the  
24 capacity at that time in science. And I saw how that  
25 worked. The inner core of that nuclear energy, acted

1 the same thing as the core of our earth. We have to  
2 have water to cool it so that it doesn't get out of  
3 control.

4           So, it kind of makes me think what we should  
5 we doing and we're not doing. Why? That's always been  
6 my question. To think — I think that's why I became  
7 active. Not only in American science, but Native  
8 science as well. I worked on both ways, and I know the  
9 balance. I know what can be done.

10           So, in short, but I could go on in this, but  
11 we're talking about lithium. There's different types of  
12 lithium. I ran across them in my field of work. In  
13 fact, I have two at home which looks like pure quartz.  
14 The other one is crystal, and the other one is lithium.  
15 They look identical, but then they come in greyish  
16 color, it goes on.

17           But my question to this, is why Salton Sea?  
18 There's a super volcanic active in Wyoming that has the  
19 same resource. It's bigger. It has the same capacity.  
20 The minerals are the same. But the only reason they  
21 don't want to do that, is because that is a national  
22 park.

23           The other thing that they — I was there too.  
24 I was called there five years ago when they thought that  
25 there was something with the cones rising at so many

1 inches a day. I was there. I met the scientist about —  
2 in part of archeology. But I saw what took place there.  
3 At the time I asked that, "What do you plan to do in the  
4 future?" And that's how I know that they're not about  
5 to do anything with that, there it's well protected.  
6 Well protected by ranchers over there. At the same  
7 time, the native tribes over there are trying to do  
8 something with that, but they're getting pushed away  
9 also by the ranchers. So, there's a feud going on which  
10 looks to me like the modern cowboys and Indian battle is  
11 going on over there.

12           So, that's why they selected Salton Sea as the  
13 project. But, my thought to this, I'm thinking that  
14 yes, that the demand for lithium really outpaced the  
15 tribes. It came fast. It's another type of gold, it's  
16 another type of mining operation. Although it's not on  
17 mining core, but it's water. But we were outsourced  
18 again by government.

19           So, it's the lithium extraction. We can have  
20 positive effects on this. I've told this to my tribal  
21 leaders, committees the other day. That if they're set  
22 on doing this project, then why not balance that with  
23 another industrial type desalting plant on the opposite  
24 of Salton Sea to clean that water? Utilize that Clean  
25 Water Act, put it in place, we need to be serious about

1 this. Making that is not a game that we're talking  
2 about. But turn it into a serious project to go forward  
3 in the future, if they intend to do that, that's I'm  
4 sure that's a way to balance nature where nature will  
5 appreciate.

6           The reason I'm saying this is that we let that  
7 water go too long, and we let it down. We failed to  
8 deal with the Mexico on the Clean Water Act. But they  
9 can't handle that, so we dammed that place up. And  
10 talking with the Cultural Committee Chairman, Mr. Scott  
11 here, we have ways that can be done. We've got a canal  
12 that's there. We can shoot that in to at a small rate,  
13 it doesn't have to be a large amount, but over time to  
14 the extraction exchange to its chemical reaction, to  
15 clean up water. We clean up that water.

16           We need to do that. If they want to continue  
17 with this lithium extraction, then we need to do that  
18 and have it in place as well so that they both equal.  
19 Then we need to — we will have something to be proud of  
20 at that point. That's how it should be all along, but  
21 we — that's never happened with government. It's always  
22 has been one side. Tribes have been neglected all along  
23 for so long. Not only in our tribes, every tribe that  
24 you hear.

25           So, this thing needs to be thought of

1 seriously. That from this point on, this is what we  
2 will need to continue to address these type of issues.  
3 From now on, as side by side on everything. This is  
4 something that I have said a long time ago. Where were  
5 we? In another instance, of the mining issues, we've  
6 had problems with that. At that time, I clearly recall  
7 that we had an encounter with the mining company that we  
8 fought for 10 years. Those officials, the governments  
9 that came sat literally across. It was that we had to  
10 bring them in. They didn't know what consultation  
11 meant.

12           They thought it was to the letters. They  
13 thought it was through phone call. Government to  
14 government meetings. They didn't know that. So. they  
15 gave us letters. We refused. We didn't act until we  
16 brought up that, their law. We said this is what you  
17 need to do.

18           We got them on that, because they didn't  
19 understand what they were doing in the very beginning,  
20 that government to government means that they sit across  
21 from you, you negotiate until the end. It doesn't mean  
22 to walk away saying it's lunch hour, lunch time. It's  
23 five o'clock, my time is up. We continued to have that  
24 conversation until we got our point across. It took ten  
25 years. So, I know this can be done.

1           It sounds like an enormous task, but if they  
2 came up with the lithium, I meant extraction, project,  
3 that was a long thought-out plan. Well, we can  
4 certainly do the same. Looking around the area, we have  
5 a lot of intelligent people, intelligent minds to do  
6 this. Why not go forward and do something like this to  
7 satisfy ourselves and also promote our ways of Native  
8 American, and show the Americans that what Native  
9 American is about, is preserving the ecosystem. We have  
10 a practice. We have ways to do that. They have never  
11 heard from us for so long that I think now, I seriously  
12 think we should stand up and continue to voice our  
13 concerns, our intelligence, to equalize and balance our  
14 ways between America and Native Americans.

15           So, these are my thoughts here today, that I'm  
16 not about to sit back and watch this go one sided, which  
17 is negative. We need to include the positive ways. So,  
18 as one of my associates that I'm dealing with now,  
19 Professors and their ways, says that it's only a dream.  
20 Let that dream come be a reality. And I believe we can  
21 do that. I believe you have the intelligence to step  
22 forward on this and show that it is, it's possible.

23           I've heard the sayings if it's difficult it  
24 takes a little longer, if it's possible, well I think  
25 it's the other way around. But, anyway, think about

1 this. But, like I said, I'm not about to give up on  
2 this until I see the reality sitting there and doing the  
3 job cleaning Salton Sea. I think it's about time.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you. Thank you, sir,  
6 for sharing your experience and your words of knowledge.  
7 Again, from another tribal elder. Your tribe. As a  
8 reminder, we're still in the tribal section. After this  
9 session is the community session. This session, the  
10 tribal session, is to hear the tribal perspectives on  
11 the issues of the work of the Lithium Valley Commission.  
12 So, before we go into the community session, are there  
13 any other tribal leaders or tribal members and tribal  
14 people that would like to speak?

15 Alright. Please say your name and the  
16 relation?

17 MR. OWL: My name is Faron Owl, consummate to  
18 the Quechan Nation. I'm honored to be here today to  
19 share our culture and our concerns. And before, and I'm  
20 going to go through maybe a little bit of history about  
21 the Salton Sea, just in case, so people know. Salton  
22 Sea, before it was named Salton Sea, the current name,  
23 it was Lake Cahuilla. But before that, the natives of  
24 this region called it Au'wish-kotai (phonetic), which  
25 would meant the big water. And if we can go back, like

1 Mr. Arrow-Weed just mentioned, who is also our  
2 traditional singer and, you could say, the person that  
3 knows a lot of our creation stories and our culture.

4           Like, he emphasized there, our language and  
5 our songs demonstrated that we have been here for more  
6 than a thousand years. And there's an indication all  
7 over this region here. Today, our ancestors are here to  
8 help us, to encourage us. And, the history portion of  
9 it — if you look at California, the native tribes before  
10 the Europeans came over, there was over 300,000 natives  
11 in this country here, or this land of California.

12           Native people, we lived in small villages  
13 throughout the area. The contact with new settlers  
14 brought a series of interruptions, disruptions to the  
15 native way of life. The gold rush of 1848 brought more  
16 devastation, violence, disease, loss overwhelmed all the  
17 tribes. By 1870, which is 22 years later, there was an  
18 estimated 30,000 native people that remained in the  
19 state of California.

20           Most were on reservations without access to  
21 their homelands. The native people, even in from this  
22 area here, we lived by the lake, if you want to call it,  
23 or sea. We enjoyed the fresh water. We camped, we set  
24 up homes, we conducted ceremonies here. And more  
25 importantly, a lot of our ancestors are buried here, or

1 cremated here in this region. On this land.

2 Our culture and religion place us as world  
3 stewards, not as owners of the land, in which we see  
4 now, every piece of land is for sale somewhere. But our  
5 job as native people was to preserve it for the future.

6 Hundreds of thousands of white settlers  
7 arrived in California during the gold rush to seek a  
8 better future. And brought a different view of the  
9 land. Today, we are concerned about the new white gold  
10 rush, the white powdery element known as lithium.

11 We know it to be part of our future. However,  
12 toxic wastes, the gas emissions, the pollution, are  
13 being put aside for the lithium demand. The state and  
14 the US Government are swapping one technology for  
15 another, and they are not addressing the underlying  
16 concerns of land, air, and water.

17 Histories have shown that our tribes have lost  
18 identity, land, cultural resources, which all contribute  
19 to cultural genocide. This is a cycle that's  
20 continuing, that continues today. This lithium project  
21 will affect us all. From our children who are not yet  
22 born, to our elders.

23 Going to repeat a little bit about the  
24 concerns that we have, that were stated by the Cultural  
25 Committee and the Tribal Council. This mining, which is

1 an innovative, new process, we need to understand it  
2 more. We need to understand more about the landscape  
3 and environmental issues. The seismic zone, what's  
4 going to happen? What studies have been distributed to  
5 the tribes, to the local tribes?

6 Geothermal and lithium carbonization, to be  
7 able to explain that. To be able to tell us what  
8 procedures, emergency procedures are set aside for any  
9 accidents that happen. The environmental report,  
10 economic development report, water issues, health  
11 concerns, our cultural resources, the environment source  
12 plans of construction, animal, plants — what's the  
13 impact to it?

14 The native people are protectors, or keepers  
15 of Mother Earth, like it's been stated by our elders.  
16 And it's our responsibility to lead for clean and safe  
17 air, water, and land, as well as the protection of our  
18 people. The native tribes need to act in solidarity  
19 against the invasion of the indigenous people's  
20 sovereign land.

21 It's painful to watch the lithium plan being  
22 shoved at the local tribes. And as we all state, we are  
23 all last to the discussion table. We need our tribes to  
24 band together as one voice. We need to urge our native  
25 peoples and our tribal reps to meet and discuss on this

1 project.

2           And then finally, the Quechan tribe is not in  
3 support of this project until we find out more  
4 information. Thank you.

5           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you for sharing your  
6 comments.

7           MR. ARROW-WEED: Faron said something. Can  
8 you hear me? Faron said something that — I've talked  
9 about this to the — to him, and to the Hualapi  
10 (PHONETIC) Apache when we met with them, about Oak  
11 Flats. But at that time when we talked about spirits, I  
12 said the Quechan, I think many tribes, they're not  
13 talking about spirits. The Quechan says self-fire.

14           The Quechan says self-fire, in Quechan, mut-  
15 tu-how (phonetic). That means self-fire, mut-tu-how  
16 (phonetic). And it doesn't mean fire as a flame, it  
17 means energy. The energy that's in the air around us  
18 makes his heartbeat, his heart beat, that's what moves  
19 his heart. Every one of our hearts have that energy  
20 that makes it beat. It's an energy. Everyone in this  
21 building, their hearts are beating. Without that  
22 energy, that heart would not beat, and you would not be  
23 alive.

24           And that energy is around us. And that is the  
25 creator. That, it's ours, it's koo-lmach, ko-ko-mach

1 (phonetic). I don't know what yours is, but that's the  
2 energy.

3 I've heard a movie say the force. Star Wars,  
4 they say the force. But in the Quechan world, it's  
5 energy. The self-fire, mut-tu-how (phonetic), self-  
6 fire.

7 So, that energy is what makes us survive where  
8 we live, we're alive. Without — when that ener— when  
9 your body or our bodies die the energy leaves, but  
10 energy never dies. That's a fact. It's a thing that's  
11 a theory from Einstein himself.

12 So, energy never dies. So, when your self-  
13 fire, mut-tu-how (phonetic), your self-fire leaves,  
14 leaves your body, it's still going to go somewhere, but  
15 you're, the rest of you is — in our case, we cremate.

16 So, that's what it's about, self-fire, the  
17 energy, spirit. So, you can see that the energy, the  
18 energy gr— in all of us. If all our energies get  
19 together it's one big force of energy. One big energy  
20 that can say, "No." This is our belief. I'm sure  
21 everybody in this room should probably hope they agree  
22 with what I'm saying. But, we all come from that  
23 energy. If all that energy gets together and say, "No,"  
24 that's it. It's our belief. When you go against that  
25 belief, that's sacrilege.

1           So, that's what I'm hoping here, is that all  
2 of our energy get together and say, "No, no." Because  
3 it's what we believe. Everything around us was given to  
4 us by that energy force somewhere, given to us for us to  
5 live.

6           I was kind of amused when I heard about the  
7 snake's blood, that we use snake's blood. We have to.  
8 That was — our way of survival was gone. And we got  
9 stuck with using some of our snake's blood. But then,  
10 of course, we're not greedy, we don't want a lot. But I  
11 don't. I get a very small retirement and a small  
12 veterans check, and that's what I live by, cause that  
13 what I earned, I guess. But, I mean, that's what — how  
14 we're forced to live. Without that, but it's snake's  
15 blood — to live in the world today, I couldn't live, I'd  
16 starve to death, I wouldn't have no place to live, I  
17 wouldn't have no electricity, and I wouldn't — there's a  
18 lot of things that we would lose if I didn't have that  
19 snake's blood.

20           But I don't — I could go and rob and get more  
21 money, I can go steal and go get it — but they rob and  
22 steal in a, in a way that they can get away with it.  
23 They can do it. They've got laws, they've got the mon—  
24 they got a lot of snake's blood, and they can use that

1 to get what they want. So there, again, it's used that  
2 way. I don't think we should use it that way.

3 I think moderation, you know. If you eat too  
4 much, you're going to blow up. Simple as that. You get  
5 too much money, what can you do with it, you know? I'm  
6 happy with the way I live, what I have. I've earned  
7 what I could. I always think, "Maybe I should have  
8 gotten more," but I don't think about that.

9 But it's energy. Let's get back to ener—the  
10 spirit, of our people. The feared spirit of everybody  
11 in this room. But it's the spirit that's the self-fire,  
12 it's the energy within our bodies that make us go  
13 around, talk, whatever. We're alive. And you know it  
14 is true, that energy can come up.

15 I used to hear, when I was — is that, that  
16 sp—that saying, heat, our being, it's heat. And there  
17 was, people were saying, "O-pelic-mitz (phonetic)," heat  
18 it up. They weren't saying heat it up, they were saying  
19 energize it. That's what they were saying. You  
20 energize it by joining in. You energize it by dancing  
21 with it, you energize by singing along with it. It's  
22 the energy we create to be whatever we are. The people  
23 here, the people there, it's who we are. And we create  
24 that energy. We can create that energy, again, from  
25 this room, to say no.

1           And this is the true thing that's given to us.  
2 I've seen it happen. And I am a singer too. I sang,  
3 and I've seen people get up and dance, because I've  
4 given the energy — and the energy, when they're all  
5 dancing, they all brought in that energy. I saw it, and  
6 I can feel it. The energy is coming. And that's what  
7 we have to do.

8           And, but, it's like, I always talk about doing  
9 things together. Even the ducks have energy when they  
10 all fly together. They fly together, and they have an  
11 energy going south. They create their own energy and go  
12 south. One falls, the other one takes its place. They  
13 fly south. They create their energy to go, they create  
14 their energy to go back.

15           We can create our own energy into a better  
16 world, to protect this land. Because they're going to  
17 try to destroy that energy that we have that's within  
18 us. We all have to think of that, you know. I think  
19 that if those guys can do that, creatures out there have  
20 an energy, they all live together, they must be doing  
21 great, but they're surviving, but a lot of them have  
22 been killed. They're dying because of what's happened  
23 to the land out there. But they're out there.

24           I spoke at a — one time I spoke at a place,  
25 and all the human beings had great stories to tell and

1 say, "Well, I haven't been able to talk about much  
2 because you're all saying it, so I'm going to talk for  
3 every animal in the desert." So, I spoke for them,  
4 because they can't speak English, they can't be heard,  
5 so I speak for them.

6           And that's what we should be doing. We should  
7 be speaking for the people out there, the little animals  
8 out there, every living thing out there. We should talk  
9 for them too. Because right now, we're talking about  
10 ourselves. They are important, they're living things  
11 too. We should talk about them.

12           They too have an energy, in their little  
13 hearts, that makes their heartbeat. That energy comes  
14 and makes their heartbeat. But if that heart stops,  
15 man, that beat stops, then you're gone. It's a bad  
16 thing to say, but that's the truth. It leaves. It  
17 leaves. So I'm not really afraid to die. I've taken  
18 many risks in my life.

19           But, you know, as I heard, talking about  
20 Faron, what he said. I never knew that the little  
21 things that I said to him would have such an impact on  
22 me when I thought about it, that I would discuss this to  
23 everyone here. I was teaching the youngsters. I never  
24 thought that one day, I would be talking about that to  
25 the group here, that I'm honored to be here. I'm

1 honored to be here, that I would be talking.

2 I am the president of the Ah-Mut Pipa  
3 Foundation. We produced three documentary films.  
4 They've done different things like when they're —  
5 actually I'm into the arts, a lot. I've justified my  
6 mission statement to do what I do now, it's to save the  
7 Quechan. To save the art, to save the tribal, intertri—  
8 the tribal beliefs. But I believe that the tribal  
9 belief's the best way to go.

10 But I believe that there's a lot of things  
11 that I go back to. Every time I think about it, I have  
12 to back to my tribal ways to find myself, because I  
13 can't do it in English. I can't do it the white man's  
14 way. I have to go back to the tribal, I have to think  
15 of the tribal ways of long ago. The philosophy, to  
16 catch, to find myself, to speak. And that's what I'm  
17 doing now.

18 I'm not going to talk to you like I swallowed  
19 a dictionary. I've forgotten how to speak like that. I  
20 went to college, I came out — I came out talking like I  
21 just swallowed a dictionary, nobody understood me. So,  
22 I reverted back to my broken English, broke— or I spoke  
23 Quechan. A lot of people would say that I don't speak  
24 proper Quechan either, but they understand me. And I  
25 speak the way I speak. What, I learned what I heard,

1 and that's I try to speak.

2           Songs are the history of our people. We did  
3 not write a constitution, we didn't write the laws, but  
4 they're in the songs that tell us how we were, what we  
5 believed in, what we followed. They're in there. And  
6 that's what I try to follow all the time.

7           I think we should all go back and find out,  
8 what, what does this song mean anyway? And what does it  
9 mean? Because these are old. That was before. The  
10 Europeans were still going around in skins and G-  
11 strings, and big clubs beating up the women. But, no  
12 offense to the women, and I, I respect women. I do.  
13 It's why I'm married.

14           But, I think we should start thinking these  
15 things are ancient, they go way back, but that should be  
16 a lesson to us. You know? That should be a lesson to  
17 us. We've got to save this world, we've got to save  
18 this area. You know? Quit thinking about how  
19 comfortable we're going to be, how much money we're  
20 going to get.

21           I don't have a lot of money, but I can still  
22 live on it — I can still live on it. And, I even was in  
23 the AARP. And those guys are asking me for more money,  
24 a donation. You know what I said, if AARP knew the  
25 money that I get, I'd be homeless. Or homel— I'd be

1 home—

2           We're lucky we have a reservation. We're  
3 lucky we have that. We gotta keep that, 'cause that's  
4 also a part of that land out there. And part of every  
5 living creature out there.

6           I respect everything that's alive, because I  
7 can see the energy in it. The energy around here.  
8 Thank you for reminding me, Faron. I have kind of  
9 forgotten about that. I forget a lot of things, think  
10 I'm getting old or something.

11           (Laughter)

12           I think my joking — because, you know what?  
13 Native Americans also have, our people, we have humor.  
14 It's humor, we've always had humor. We can get serious  
15 too, but we have humor when we talk. I think kind of  
16 relieves a lot of our anxiety, our anger, or whatever it  
17 is that comes over. We do have that. Even our folklore  
18 and mythology, our own folklore stories — we use the  
19 coyote for everything that happens, the analogy,  
20 metaphors, for what human beings are like.

21           We use that too, and it kind of reminds me of  
22 when they said there were, that coyote and that journey,  
23 when he stopped at his people and the next morning  
24 they're going to work, he said, "You can stay here, and  
25 you can eat. There's three jars. And you can eat out

1 of this, you can eat out of this, but don't eat in this  
2 jar. Leave it alone. That's death." They left. What  
3 happened? He went right to the death, he opened that.  
4 When they warned him not to do it. And that's what  
5 we're saying, don't do it because it's going to create  
6 problems, more problems than we have.

7           The global warming and the storms, they all —  
8 the thing rising, the ocean rising, and all the viruses,  
9 because the north pole is melting and all the en— all  
10 the viruses are coming out of there and hitting us, and  
11 everywhere it's like that. But man created all of that.

12           There's a reason. There's a reason why they  
13 have lithium underground. Maybe it balances the nature.  
14 Would — you know, maybe it doesn't balance it. There's  
15 a reason why it's there. Because, the white man sure  
16 didn't put it there and later on pick it up. He didn't  
17 put it there. It was put there for a reason, you've got  
18 to remember that. I've said enough.

19           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you. Truth spoken,  
20 from our tribal elder. Thank you, (INDISCERNIBLE).

21           Alright. Please say your name and tribal  
22 affiliate.

23           MR. WALLACE: Hey you guys. Good to be here.  
24 My name is Bobby Wallace, I'm from the Barona Band of  
25 Mission Indians. A Kumeyaay, a Yuman person, which most

1 of us here are Yumans. Except for the Ceños. How you  
2 guys doing today? And good to see you guys. Good to  
3 hear you elders speak. One of my elder friends over  
4 there, Carmen, I love her a lot.

5           You know, I want to thank My-Ha Kokomutt  
6 (Phonetic). or whatever your god is. for us being alive  
7 here today. You know, to talk about these things, it is  
8 people. It is indigenous people, the first people that  
9 were here. That's what we are, that's who we are. You  
10 know, our bones are in these bones out here. Some of my  
11 relatives, some of your relatives, shoot. They all used  
12 to hang out, fiesta tougher, fish together, spear fish  
13 together, go catch 'em in the traps up there in the  
14 rocks. You know, and Pres didn't — next time I think  
15 about these darn colonialists, I'm going to have that  
16 image in my mind. This was a good one.

17           But anyways, you know, there are climate  
18 issues out there. But us people, we know that there was  
19 issues in the weather changes, you know, over sporadic  
20 periods of time. We know the water was risen, we know  
21 we have villages way out in the ocean. We know it gets  
22 hot, we know it gets cold. It just changes sometimes.  
23 But we do know there's something funky going on,  
24 something not right with the climate.

25           You know, you figure since, what was it, 1859

1 — it's only 163 years ago. When they found the oil  
2 (AUDIO CUT OUT) from 163 years, to make what we have  
3 today. You know?

4           We've had all these crazy things, like  
5 manifest destiny, which I heard from this man right  
6 here. And I like bringing up that analogy too, because  
7 it was a free, "Let's go west and kill everything,  
8 including these brown people," to get the gold and get  
9 the land, and get whatever they wanted. And turned our  
10 people into believing we were something else. And some  
11 of the residual effects is going on today.

12           You know, I want to say hi to you, all you  
13 people, tribal leaders on Zoom too. I'm glad you guys  
14 are here. But we're here in the now. We are totally  
15 here in the now. We are faced with the lithium  
16 extraction. So, you know, it's not deep pit mining,  
17 they're going to what, put a little hole in the ground?  
18 But what's the difference, you're down 10,000 feet or  
19 more. You know, who knows?

20           And I'm reiterating some of this too. You  
21 know, I — and I have to as a person, to get it off my  
22 chest too. Because I don't feel good about it one, not  
23 one bit. You know, I've stood beside some other people  
24 who are getting that ram-rodged down their throats. Or,  
25 you know, they're screwing up their sacred site where

1 their people were massacred. You know? They don't  
2 care. You know, they don't care.

3           You know, I know I came in late, but I heard a  
4 \$6.8 billion deal, and is that the sell? Is that the  
5 sell for everybody around? The sell for the community?  
6 I mean, is there a price that we're all worth? You  
7 know, is it a buck? Or is it \$7 billion? You know,  
8 myself, you know, I don't think there's a sell to me.  
9 You know, I do things on my own, and I pay for my way.  
10 And I help those without a voice that are getting pushed  
11 around by people like these out here.

12           You know, lithium is a non-reusable energy  
13 source. Can you imagine 2035 when there's all these  
14 batteries laying around, what are they going to do with  
15 these batteries? You can drive by people's houses and  
16 see these regular batteries sitting out there, leaching  
17 around. But those, you know, you can turn in and they  
18 can recycle and everything. But the lithium battery,  
19 you know, 200-pound battery and the 500,000 gallons of  
20 water it takes to make one ton, that just doesn't seem  
21 like a right thing at all. Especially in the drought  
22 we're in today.

23           We move along to the respect of somebody's  
24 wanting to do the lithium somewhere. And, you know,  
25 that's their thoughts. And everybody's allowed to have

1 their thoughts and the way that they feel. And that's  
2 the way it should be, we all have a voice, we all have a  
3 voice as people.

4 But, when it comes to the detriment of  
5 everybody — and that's — and I'm speaking for all the  
6 white people out here too. I'm speaking for those that  
7 are utterly sick right now. You know, from breathing in  
8 this stuff in the air. And I'm speaking for those  
9 people too. You know, to bring in some pilot program  
10 without efficient knowledge. It's beyond me. I don't  
11 get it.

12 You know, they're cutting, pasting stuff.  
13 This is a pilot program, you guys. You know, we have a  
14 voice here as tribal people, as native, indigenous  
15 people that was here first, before anybody, to say hey,  
16 you know maybe this 'aint such a good idea. Why don't  
17 you give us more time so we can talk about it with one  
18 another?

19 But there wasn't even proper notifications.  
20 And that's not the responsibility of our people to go  
21 and say, "Hey man, come." And, you know, no. It's the  
22 responsibility of the contractor. It's the  
23 responsibility of their people with the money.

24 These people with the money, aren't they the  
25 same people who backed big oil? It's just another

1 racket. You know, it's a legal racket. It's the same  
2 guys that aren't doing their due diligence towards our  
3 people, and that's so damn disrespectful, I don't like  
4 it one bit.

5           It's not upon us to do that. It's upon them  
6 to send certified letters, for them to come and try to  
7 go these tribal governments, because what we are is  
8 sovereign nations. We are a government. We are a  
9 nation within side a nation. And for them not to show  
10 us any kind of respect towards that, it's not right.  
11 You know, all of here have a nation. We all have people  
12 we have to answer to too.

13           And I represent myself as a tribal member from  
14 the Barona Band. I don't represent my council, I don't  
15 represent other councils, I represent myself as a man of  
16 the Kumeyaay nation. As a Yuman person, trying to stick  
17 up for what's right. And what's agreeable with  
18 everybody, I think.

19           You know, I heard Faron say the position is  
20 "No." And maybe we should all have, like, a position of  
21 "No" as people, because there's just not enough evidence  
22 that when they go and tear up Au-wish Kotai (Phonetic),  
23 that the people aren't going to get sicker. You know,  
24 there's all sorts of unknowns.

25           Everybody has to bow down to the all-mighty

1 big machine. No, we don't. We don't have to bow down.  
2 You know, we can say, "No," as a people. And maybe it's  
3 going to take that for all of us people from here in the  
4 Southwest, to just say, "Hey no, we don't think it's a  
5 good idea. And I'm maybe (INDISCERNIBLE) my hear us for  
6 once. You know what I mean?

7           You know, look at line number three, you know?  
8 It's leaking already. I've seen the pictures. You  
9 know, and that was supposed to be like the great steel  
10 and all the great welds, and it's going to be so great  
11 and all this and that. And that is leaking out there.  
12 It's leaking.

13           You know, our people were — you know,  
14 sometimes it takes our people time to think about  
15 things, to really get a good assessment within our own  
16 minds, and to group together as tribal people do. And  
17 for myself, you know, I wish there was extra time put  
18 aside, because I don't see what the rush is. They're  
19 not out there losing \$10 million a day. They're not  
20 working out there, right? No. Then why, why can't  
21 there be more time for a real tribal consultation where  
22 all the people from these lands can talk? And they all  
23 can get together and if somebody chooses to say hey, I  
24 don't care, that's their choice.

25           But you have to give them a choice. You know,

1 everybody deserves a choice. We are people too. Our  
2 councils are people too. They're doing the best things  
3 that they can, but they can't make rational decisions if  
4 they don't know about what's really going on.

5           So, I appreciate everybody that's here.  
6 Appreciate everybody on Zoom. You know, I hope  
7 everybody can make a rational decision in their own mind  
8 of how they feel about this. Personally, myself, I  
9 would say give us more time. You know? You know, and,  
10 what — this is what it's all about too. Bringing a  
11 younger person to witness something like this, to see  
12 the faces and see how this, see how this ball rolls.

13           You know, this man, has sat beside me at the  
14 wall. This man has sat beside me at the longest walk.  
15 And these are great things that our people do, because  
16 we can stand up and we can do things together. But we  
17 can't stand up and do things together when one side's,  
18 like, those guys aren't giving the information to  
19 everybody. It's just wrong. That's just straight up  
20 wrong. It's lying, in a sense. It's a half truth.  
21 It's conniving, or whatever you want to call it. It's  
22 waslitch (phonetic), that's what it is.

23           So, thank you for your time.

24           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you for your advocacy.

25 And we have — can you say your name and tribal

1 affiliate?

2 MR. HATCHER: Alan Hatcher, I'm an enrolled  
3 member of the Cocopah Indian Tribe, but I do not speak  
4 for the tribal government and/or any other tribal  
5 government.

6 I'm here representing probably the cultural  
7 and biological associations to the land within the  
8 Imperial County physical boundaries. I want to speak  
9 first on just respect for our elders, our language,  
10 cultural resources that we have within the boundaries of  
11 this county. The lack of consultation, the lack of AB  
12 52. The demonstration project that was given a variance  
13 as a pilot project.

14 So, I want to remain in the moment. I want to  
15 yield some time to the attorney that's present, she's  
16 one of the top in California, so she can address some of  
17 these issues on the California Environmental Quality  
18 Act.

19 There's three sovereign domains in the  
20 republic, the United States. There are federal tri—  
21 there are federal, state, and tribal. So, in the  
22 sovereign domain state, we get to the county level. And  
23 so, this demonstration project was put on private land,  
24 and given the lead agency the authority, being the  
25 County of Imperial.

1           Unknown to us, prior to maybe a day ago, or  
2 two days ago, we didn't know that the variance had been  
3 given, a CEQA variance had been given. A variance is  
4 just an avoi— they don't have to do it. So, the New  
5 Source Energy project it's going to go under, it's going  
6 to go on without — with a presumption I guess? I don't,  
7 I'm not really sure. I think Ms. Coyle would probably  
8 have a better language for it.

9           But, we were not given any notification, any  
10 consultation, anything under AB 52. We don't know if  
11 they did a record search, if they — categorical. They  
12 were given a categorical variance on AB 52.

13           So, that's a major concern. Within this  
14 county, I've worked personally on several projects out  
15 here that have some very sensitive cultural resources to  
16 the Quechan, to the Yuman language family, to the  
17 Cahuilla Bands. And so, I don't want to spend too much  
18 time on this, but it's a major concern that we are not,  
19 as a sovereign domain tribe that we're not given any  
20 kind of attention from the County of Imperial as a lead  
21 agency.

22           So, going forward, it's very unacceptable. We  
23 need to have that contact. I'm not here for an opinion.  
24 I go with the people that I observe and report to. But  
25 I'd really like to just listen to what I heard Uncle

1 Preston say. And several people around our area.

2           There's migratory patterns that go through  
3 this, right here, this land. The Lake Cahuilla was less  
4 than 500 years ago. We have material culture out there,  
5 all the way from Ocotillo to San Jacinto, out towards  
6 Mojave, back down to Yuma. This was a large freshwater  
7 lake. By diverting the Colorado, they interrupted  
8 ecological systems. We used to have the monsoon season  
9 with that freshwater lake.

10           So, a lot of changes have come about.  
11 California's very interested in the desert tortoise, the  
12 work project from Blythe. For the need for what we're  
13 talking about, conversation inter-tribally is essential  
14 to our understanding and the motion forward in an  
15 informed position. We always seem to end up at the  
16 table where, where we ended up on a site up in Blythe  
17 where it was a cleared circle. And so, the Cahuilla  
18 band had a theory. And the Cahuilla people thought it  
19 might have been a home. And the Quechan people, we have  
20 another theory, or what we believe is that this  
21 particular site was.

22           And so, together in dialogue, we can do this  
23 and find a relationship there. And I think that's the  
24 point of this — the point I want to make in this  
25 meeting, is that a consortium build, or a group working

1 methodology is essential for getting the attention of  
2 this county. This county's — apparently 50 watts or  
3 below, or 50 megawatts or below will go to the County of  
4 Imperial as the lead agency. Anything above that will  
5 go to the California Energy Commission.

6           And I want to say, Katrina's been a very work  
7 — a very functional working representative as a Tribal  
8 Liaison. There's something on her title that says  
9 energy equity. And so, where in the 4.6 billion do we  
10 exist? We have monitors out there, we have — we have  
11 needs, socio-economic needs. In the infrastructure of  
12 our tribes, in the education of our children, in the  
13 healthcare of our elders, in the preservation of  
14 something that was long before this time. This time is  
15 called Georgerian or Georgarian timeline. It's from  
16 King George. We were 7,000 years prior to a timeline.

17           So, we need to have that respect. We speak a  
18 different language; our world view is different. The  
19 objectification and the quantification of the discipline  
20 archaeology falls short of looking at our viewsheds, our  
21 traditional cultural landscapes, the places we  
22 harvested, the places that we occupied as a shared  
23 landscape.

24           And so, we're out there. We're out there on  
25 the ground. I've been doing this for a while. But the

1 need for inter-tribal communication is essential, I  
2 believe. And I say that with all due respect. And the  
3 guidance from our elders and our professionals.

4           We need to be consulted. Under AB 52,  
5 notifications given, we have 30 days to respond to that.  
6 A simple record search from the county is not as  
7 sufficient, because we are a sovereign domain, tribal.  
8 We don't give our confidential information to anyone,  
9 because sooner or later, we get published. And then,  
10 all of the sudden we were here, we were there. An  
11 authoritative text then guides or dictates our destiny  
12 anthropologically within the education system here in  
13 America.

14           So, beginning that process, I believe, would  
15 help a lot. Having our leaders in a consortium fashion,  
16 being able to confront, to relationship build, whatever  
17 it takes with the County of Imperial. And there has to  
18 be an oversight. There has to be some methodology, some  
19 solution to — it's not a wrong, but it's definitely  
20 something that was, with rapidity, kind of not given  
21 information, proper notice to us.

22           And I understand in this project, because the  
23 variance was given for the pilot project. But the  
24 impacts, the worst-case scenarios. There's a lot of  
25 things that we don't know. And this is one of the most

1 seismic areas in California. You know? The northern  
2 plate and the pacific plate meet right here.

3 So, 10,000 feet down, like Bobby says, what  
4 happens to this pipe, or this encasement? You know, we  
5 hit water here about 800 feet. The drinking water, it's  
6 a little lower. But 10,000 feet's an awful long way.  
7 And so, seismologically, what happens if this pipe  
8 bursts? Where does the water go? And what does it  
9 contaminate? You know?

10 So anyway, I just wanted to offer that. Thank  
11 you for all being here and allowing me to share that.  
12 And, hoping Ms. Coyle and the other tribal participants  
13 today.

14 CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Yes, thank you for those  
15 words. And yes, we are coming to you our time, and we  
16 would like to allocate time to the tribal elder, Ms.  
17 Carmen.

18 MS. LUCAS: Am I on now? That's what you call  
19 energy, right? Number one, I would like to say thank  
20 you. Thank you all for being here. I definitely want  
21 to tank Torrez Martinez, for holding this. I have a  
22 little history to share with you. I am the great  
23 granddaughter of Suzana Coliche (Phonetic) of Laguna  
24 Mountains Nation, Valley Desert. I am the granddaughter  
25 of Suzana, or Maria Alto from Laguna Mountains. I am

1 the daughter of Tom Lucas, also of Laguna Mountains.

2 I bring that up because Tom Lucas worked for  
3 the Indian 3C program in the '30s. He spent a great  
4 deal of time here at Torrez Martinez, and he loved the  
5 dates. He always went to Valorie Janes and bring home  
6 the dates. That was long before the second world war.  
7 So that tells you how old I am.

8 But more importantly, I just wanted to again  
9 thank you. Thank you for all the folks. Bobby, I'm  
10 delighted that as a Kumeyaay I have a fellow person  
11 here. I refer to myself as Kwaaymii. I think one of  
12 the biggest disasters that have happened to the  
13 California Indians up and down this state, is we have  
14 allowed everybody to call us anything and everything,  
15 where we all knew each other as our small band names.

16 My dad insisted that he be called Kwaaymii.  
17 Kwaaymii is the spirit bird that lives in our spring.  
18 And the rest of the Indians wanted to be called  
19 Kumeyaay. There's a legal history behind that for  
20 watershed, and the archeologists that did all the  
21 research on that convinced some of the older folks that  
22 the legal system in Washington would understand things  
23 better if we were under the same name. For me,  
24 personally, I like Heathen the best. I just think  
25 that's who I am. So, that's the way I stand.

1           So, anyway, I wanted to come here and talk to  
2 you today because it is my understanding that the earth  
3 belongs to the creator. The earth belongs to the  
4 creator. I will tell you that I will be 87 years old  
5 next month. I'm very proud of that. Lori told me I  
6 didn't look that old. So, that's a compliment. But I  
7 keep moving because that's one thing my old folks told  
8 me. You keep moving.

9           So, I was born both in Laguna Reservation.  
10 Lived there, lived in Pacific Beach back and forth all  
11 my growing up years. Graduated from La Jolla High  
12 School, joined the Marine Corps. Spent 20 years in the  
13 United States Marine Corps. Fortunate enough to travel  
14 half-way around the world.

15           So, I like to bring that up, because I want  
16 you to know in the days that I was in, that we had to  
17 live in these long squad-bays with people from all over  
18 the walks of life. So, I'm not ignorant to the human  
19 nature. I'm not ignorant to teamwork. I'm not ignorant  
20 to leadership. I'm not ignorant to selfishness and  
21 greed.

22           So, I like to try and look at both sides of  
23 every issue. I'm not at all happy about this lithium  
24 thing. My bottom line, I'm not in favor of it. But I  
25 will tell you this. After I retired from the Marine

1 Corps, I moved back to my ancestral land, 1976. I have  
2 been the caretaker there for the last 45 some-odd years.

3 In that process, I have become intimately  
4 aware of that environment. I have become aware that we  
5 are all related as Indians of California. I don't care  
6 what you call us, we're related. We all have the same  
7 story, and yet we have unique stories besides what runs  
8 through our veins. I think we need to respect that and  
9 understand that. I think a lot of the differences is  
10 just simply the environment in which we live.

11 I live in a mountain environment, 5,500 feet.  
12 Bobby lives in the lower section there. He doesn't get  
13 the snow and the rain like I do, so it's very different,  
14 so he has a little different views than I do, but we can  
15 have an honest conversation and share that information  
16 and learn from each other and have a deep respect and  
17 love for each other. Because we're the same people.

18 So, I say that because the next thing I did  
19 was not through my own choice, it just ended up that  
20 way. I became a Native American Monitor, I worked for  
21 Dennis Calleguas (PHONETIC) and associates for about 10  
22 years. I was his chief flunky. I got to wash all the  
23 artifacts from a site they called Remington Site, which  
24 is on the border of San Diego and Tijuana.

25 They got dates from that site that go back to

1 9,000 years. I used to interrupt their work. I'd sit  
2 out in the alley and wash artifacts. These were  
3 beautiful pieces of sculpture as far as I was concerned.  
4 And I'd make everybody look at them, ask, "Why are you  
5 hiding these? Why do you lock them up in boxes, hide  
6 them away? If this was my office, I'd break out that  
7 wall and make a whole glass shelf and make everybody  
8 look at that." Because for me, those artifacts are  
9 testimony to understanding physics. And the same thing  
10 with one of the oldest gifts from the earth, is our  
11 clay.

12           Now many of you have watched your old people  
13 work with clay. It's not unusual to pick up a piece and  
14 put it in their mouth and eat it. It holds potassium  
15 magnesium and god-awful lithium.

16           So, one of the things that happened as I was  
17 monitoring, I worked with Ocotillo Wells State Parks for  
18 over 10 years. I really enjoyed driving down here,  
19 because it brings back a lot of memories of things that  
20 are still on the ground out there in spite of the off-  
21 road activity. There's still things that are in  
22 pristine state condition.

23           We were doing a 22,000-acre pedestrian survey.  
24 I kept asking the archaeologist, "Why are you staying on  
25 that?" He says, "Well, that's the 40-foot shoreline."

1 I began to understand, this is not the Salton Sea, this  
2 is the ancient Lake Cahuilla. It is huge. I would love  
3 to see it filled up again, I just really would. I feel  
4 sorry for anybody that would suffer from that, but  
5 believe me, I would love it.

6 I recall being at another meeting where the  
7 Chairman from Pechanga was advising people that Robert  
8 Levi, from Torrez Martinez, he taught him how to do bird  
9 songs. Told him, we never had words for things that we  
10 didn't have, but there is a word for mammoth. And he  
11 said what that word is. I apologize for not knowing it,  
12 but there is that word.

13 And we're not that far from the badlands here  
14 in our own desert, where those bones sit in the, the  
15 paleontology lab at Anza Borrego. So, there's that  
16 testimony. We've been here since time immemorial.  
17 Since time began. And what is the time beginning?  
18 What— where is that?

19 But, I wanted to talk about that, because  
20 years ago, I got a phone call from an archaeological  
21 outfit called LSA. They asked me about Obsidian Butte.  
22 So, I told them what I knew about Obsidian Butte, and  
23 they wrote up the National Register on it and said there  
24 was no cultural resources there.

25 I never heard anything more and then one day I

1 got a phone call from a gentleman by the name of Tom  
2 Gates who had been hired by the California Energy  
3 Commission to write up the National Register for  
4 Obsidian Butte, because the National Energy Commission  
5 for California didn't believe that there was no cultural  
6 resources there.

7           So, I told Tom I learned one thing. Site  
8 visits are essential. I will talk to you if you come  
9 and make a site visit. So, that December, he and his  
10 wife took a vacation and came down from Sacramento to  
11 San Diego, and he and I met out at Obsidian Butte, and  
12 we had a long conversation. He contacted other Indians  
13 and tried to put all that together, and he wrote a  
14 beautiful report and he sent me a copy of it, and he  
15 said, "This is a copy of the report that I filed with  
16 the California Energy Commission on January the 6th,  
17 2010." I can't tell you how many times I asked Tom  
18 where does that document stand? Has it been processed?  
19 He could never give me an answer.

20           And I hear that it still has not been  
21 processed. This again, is genocide in a different  
22 color. It is still here, believe it or not. And this  
23 is part of the procedure to erase our history and deny  
24 us a seat at the table. My one concern, I was asking  
25 Courtney, is this being recorded? Because we're talking

1 to ourselves, and it's like talking to the choir, or  
2 singing to the choir I think is the phrase.

3 I want people who are involved in this, and  
4 more importantly, the people of this desert community to  
5 understand. We have always been here; we have a right  
6 to sit at the table. We have a right to participate.  
7 And that's all I'm doing as one little Indian. And  
8 that's all I've ever done. I never speak for anybody  
9 else. But I think it's important that we all come to  
10 the table, that we all get to the record, that we put  
11 our culture to the record, and that the erasure of our  
12 culture stop.

13 It absolutely needs to stop. So, I want to  
14 encourage the process of putting this Obsidian Butte to  
15 record to continue. I'm concerned about the mud holes  
16 out there. I went out to Hell's Kitchen with a  
17 developer, and I'm sorry I don't remember the name.  
18 It's been a few years ago. After we looked at the  
19 Hell's Kitchen area, they took us to one of the mud  
20 holes. And I know in Ocotillo Wells, that the off-road  
21 activity, they have mudholes out there as well.

22 But I listened to that, and I had recently had  
23 an echogram of my own heart. And I was listening to  
24 that, and I videotaped it and sent it to one of the bird  
25 singers and I asked, "Do we have a song that goes with

1 that heartbeat?" Because for me, that's the heartbeat  
2 of the earth. And, I have since read in a book from the  
3 Cahuilla, Mountain Cahuilla, where they were referring  
4 to all the, you know, Siva (Phonetic), who says then,  
5 that the heart beat is the fire within. The steam is  
6 the breath of the earth. That was written a number of  
7 years ago, so I'm not telling you something I just made  
8 up, I'm telling you stuff that's been documented.

9           So, we need to bring that old stories  
10 together. I'm 87, I don't feel like an elder. I didn't  
11 share that period of time, and I can only tell people  
12 what I know as one little Indian. But I wanted to share  
13 those thoughts with you.

14           We're talking about not wanting that project,  
15 but we really also need to talk about our past so that  
16 we know where to go in our future. We need to make sure  
17 that our past is documented. I know there was a time  
18 when our people didn't want that. But, if it's not in  
19 the record, not in the record early on, then it's really  
20 difficult to get anybody to pay attention to that.

21           So, I guess that's why I'm here today. And  
22 what I wanted to say, I tried to make some notes for  
23 you, but I'm not good at that. I just wanted to share  
24 those thoughts with you, and again, to say thank you.  
25 I'm happy to be here. If any of you have any questions,

1 I'm happy to answer them.

2 I will tell you this, one more fact. As we  
3 were following the landscape from Ocotillo Wells, we  
4 stayed on the 40-foot shoreline. But it was interesting  
5 as we came down, you could see how our people were  
6 following the recession of the water from ancient Lake  
7 Cahuilla. As we crossed Highway 86, the closer we got  
8 to the water, the larger the pot shards were, the more  
9 human remains we were finding.

10 And that's one of the problems that I'm always  
11 concerned with. Archaeologists tell you, "We're doing  
12 an intensive pedestrian survey." Well, intensive survey  
13 to them is 15 meters apart, or 15 feet apart. When  
14 we're dealing with human remains, particularly the more  
15 recent ones, they're mostly cremated remains. You won't  
16 see them unless you're right on them. So, they're not  
17 really doing an intensive pedestrian survey. That's why  
18 we've been pushing so hard for so many years to have  
19 Native Americans that are well qualified to accompany  
20 those archaeologists.

21 Those archaeologists do not own our history.  
22 We own it, and we have to insist that if they're out  
23 there doing a survey, we need to be with them and they  
24 need to write a record that reflects our history, not  
25 theirs. So, I think I've pretty well covered the things

1 that I wanted to cover. Any thing you'd like? I have  
2 Courtney Coyle here by the way, she's been my right arm  
3 for the last 20 years and my attorney. So, if you don't  
4 mind I'll ask her if there's anything she wants me to  
5 add.

6 Yeah, thank you. I do want to talk about the  
7 atmosphere. Oh, god, it's horrible down here. I can  
8 remember if I was sitting here, I'd look past Bobby, and  
9 I could see the Chocolate Mountains out there. I can  
10 remember coming down Banner Grade from Julian, I could  
11 see — oh gosh, what's that mountain where the Air Force,  
12 or, the Navy, Navy base is out there, the Superstition  
13 Mountains.

14 Years ago, we could stand up on Laguna.  
15 Remember, that's 5,500 feet, it's 5,000 foot drop right  
16 down to the desert. I could see all the way out to the  
17 Chocolate Mountains. On rare occasion, in the Fall  
18 especially, I could see all the way out to Pilot Knoll.

19 So, you saw these sacred mountains, you knew  
20 where the landscape was. You knew how our people  
21 travelled back and forth. I can't see those anymore.  
22 We don't know what's happening down here.

23 But I will tell you this. Year ago, from  
24 Laguna at nighttime, you saw a few lights down this way.  
25 Not anymore. You're ruining the viewshed at nighttime.

1 There are houses from Calexico all the way up to  
2 Coachella Valley. And I can see that from the  
3 mountains, and it's having an impact in the night sky.

4 So, we're talking about an intangible. An  
5 intangible ingredient that humankind is impacting this  
6 environment. So, I would just like you to think about  
7 this. Sometimes when you live in an environment, you  
8 don't recognize those changes. But I will tell you from  
9 what I'm seeing recently, it's a dramatic change. I  
10 don't know what's going on down here, but gosh it, it is  
11 horrible.

12 So, anything else Courtney, did you want to  
13 talk? No. Okay. Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Alright. Thank you, Ms.  
15 Carmen Lucas, for your invaluable perspective and  
16 history and education. And we're honored by your  
17 perspective and your testimony. Thank you. And then,  
18 we have time for a few more, and one of them is the  
19 attorney. Ms. Coyle?

20 MS. COYLE: Thank you. Yes, I'm Courtney  
21 Coyle. Thank you to Torrez Martinez for hosting. I  
22 appreciate the viewpoints expressed by your staff today,  
23 especially the part about blind spots. We all have  
24 them, and I'm going to talk a little bit about what I  
25 think some blind spots are to date in this process.

1           Second, I also appreciate what the other  
2 tribal testimony about the unknowns. And, that's  
3 exactly why we have something like CEQA and NEPA. And  
4 the National Historic Preservation Act is for us to be  
5 able to have a process that's open and inclusive and  
6 good faith for us to look at effects and potential ways  
7 to mitigate those.

8           I think you've heard a lot about when you see  
9 the effect of the current geothermal facilities on the  
10 landscape of the Salton Sea and realize the wholesale  
11 lack of consultation to date with affiliated tribes,  
12 it's really hard not to be angry. I was virtual for the  
13 last session, the information session, and I was getting  
14 really angry in the virtual session. And I certainly  
15 heard that anger myself.

16           Today, I'm going to try and park that anger.  
17 It doesn't mean that it isn't there, but I'm going to  
18 try and instead focus on what can be done to lift the  
19 topic of tribal-cultural resources so that it will be  
20 finally factored into the processes related to the  
21 siting of geothermal and lithium extraction projects in  
22 Imperial County.

23           My perspective is coming from several decades  
24 of working with many of the affiliated tribes here  
25 today. We've had a lot of victories over many years and

1 have learned a lot from each other. And from supporting  
2 Carmen Lucas, Kwaaymii Laguna Band over the last decade,  
3 12 years, as she has tried to gain acknowledgement of  
4 the tribal cultural value of the Obsidian Butte area, as  
5 you heard her testify to.

6 I kind of wish that the agenda hadn't been  
7 changed. Since I'm new to this process, I was really  
8 looking forward to that agenda item that was going to  
9 talk about the potential process to develop the report  
10 that you all need to submit to the legislature. So, not  
11 having that background, I'm going to try and make a  
12 couple requests that your blue-ribbon commission include  
13 in its report. Some findings and recommendations  
14 related to potential environmental impacts to the state  
15 resulting from the extraction, processing, and  
16 production of lithium and lithium dependent products,  
17 that's one of the items that's supposed to be in that  
18 report.

19 The first, is that — and I know everybody  
20 isn't going to love what I'm going to say, especially  
21 Imperial County. But, you know, everybody's entitled to  
22 their perspectives, and I think it's time, high time  
23 that the tribal perspective was really brought in to  
24 this process. That the CEC maintain or expand its  
25 jurisdiction on environmental documentation and review.

1           Why is that? It was clear at the information  
2 session that the county has been unable or unwilling to  
3 engage tribes in its planning and environmental  
4 processes related to geothermal, and now lithium  
5 development, including its Lithium Valley Economic  
6 Opportunity Investment Plan, which left tribes out. You  
7 heard the tribal leaders talk about that at the last  
8 meeting.

9           This big red flag of overlooking tribal  
10 cultural resources to date has also resulted in  
11 unmitigated effects. Not new ones coming up, but ones  
12 that we're already experiencing, that you've heard some  
13 of the elders today testify towards. Noise, visual  
14 intrusion, and other effects on important cultural  
15 features, like Obsidian Butte, were in plain view during  
16 our site visit earlier this month with a CEC member,  
17 select Commission members, and staff.

18           And they appear in violation of the California  
19 Environmental Quality Act, the National Environmental  
20 Policy Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act.  
21 I get no pleasure in saying that at all. It's heartache  
22 for me.

23           When I started as an attorney, going off  
24 script, I was at University of San Diego School of Law.  
25 That had a really great clinic, including an

1 environmental law clinic. My first client was Edie  
2 Harman , a desert activist trying to work on the  
3 Imperial County General plan update.

4           And, that was my first interfacing with the  
5 county and their complete inability to work with tribes.  
6 And I know laws have changed, policies have changed  
7 since then, at least at the state level, but I'm not  
8 sure that they've really trickled down into practice  
9 within the county. And the state, the CEC, and the  
10 Blue-Ribbon Commission needs to understand that because  
11 tribal consultation, cultural resources, probably aren't  
12 your usual area of expertise. But you do have experts  
13 here.

14           There's also been a complete failure to  
15 consider cumulative effects to tribal cultural  
16 resources, including the cultural landscape. County  
17 documents need serious process change and oversight to  
18 cure these legal deficiencies. As you heard today, good  
19 faith consultation does not mean sending one letter or  
20 leaving a voicemail. Oop, nobody responded.

21           Do you know how understaffed even the  
22 wealthiest tribes in the state are? I do because I have  
23 the privilege of working with some of them. And then  
24 you go to tribes with less resources, which is usually  
25 most tribes, and they are so overwhelmed. You think

1 your offices are busy, let me tell you. These guys are  
2 humming. So, when there's something important like  
3 this, especially you need to make that effort to get out  
4 there and do face to face. And please, no more  
5 variances or exemptions from environmental review  
6 without consultation.

7           Alright, number two. That the CEC maintain or  
8 expand its tribal engagement and consultation efforts.  
9 It was also very clear at the July 15th session that the  
10 county lacks staff proficient in tribal engagement and  
11 consultation. Nor did the county's presentation  
12 indicate any future investment in this area. You heard  
13 a lot about everything else they want to have on their  
14 wish list, but I didn't see anything related to tribes,  
15 engagement, or cultural resources.

16           So, I predict no matter how much money they  
17 get it's not going to get any better if they're in  
18 charge. While it may not be fully robust, the CEC staff  
19 has made efforts over the years to engage tribes and  
20 appears to have the capacity to create a more open,  
21 transparent, and inclusive process.

22           This is bolstered by the Governor's executive  
23 orders, and apology to California's tribes for past  
24 depredations by the state. The state needs to make a  
25 serious effort to not contribute to modern day

1 depredations by failing to include tribal communities in  
2 planning and mitigating efforts informed by meaningful  
3 consultation.

4           And while Carmen is not here in her capacity  
5 today, she is a member of the state Truth and Healing  
6 Council that the Governor set up to deal with these  
7 issues. They themselves have a report that they need to  
8 submit to the Governor, in 2025 I believe. So, they're  
9 going through a very robust consultation process with  
10 communities state-wide. So, it, you know, it can be  
11 done, you just need to put some investment in to it.

12           The third thing would be that the CEC honor  
13 the findings and recommendations from that 2010  
14 ethnographic report that it commissioned, that you heard  
15 Ms. Lucas talk about. That report, Ethnographic  
16 Assessment of the Importance of Obsidian Butte to the  
17 Native American Community, by Dr. Tom Gates, was  
18 informed by testimony from a number of tribal people,  
19 some who are no longer with us. Nick Elliott (Phonetic),  
20 and others who are. Bernice Pipa, Carmen Lucas, Paul  
21 Quero (Phonetic), and others contributed to this. And  
22 that report found that Obsidian Butte is eligible for  
23 the National Register of Historic Places under all four  
24 criteria.

25           But nothing happened. The paperwork is there,

1 informed by knowledgeable tribal people, but nothing  
2 happened. And a bunch of geothermal came in. Wasn't  
3 that the tribes weren't participating, they certainly  
4 did. But what happened? We still don't have a good  
5 explanation of why that report wasn't front and center  
6 in project review. It's still a valid report.

7           Those findings need to be carried forward into  
8 action, and the Obsidian Butte area be determined to be  
9 a tribal cultural resource by lead agencies. There is  
10 no justification for why this has not happened to date.  
11 The Imperial County has very few resources listed on  
12 historic registers, despite having many documented and  
13 still undocumented eligible resources. It's long  
14 overdue for respect. Respect to be given to these  
15 tribal cultural resources, and for that respect to be  
16 translated into the environmental process, like state  
17 and federal law requires.

18           Without this, there is no equity. And it can  
19 be said that only performative efforts of engagement are  
20 happening. I don't think that's what people really  
21 wanted to be investing their time into, performative  
22 efforts.

23           The fourth and final recommendation we have is  
24 that the CEC find and dedicate resources so that the  
25 features of what we're calling the Southeast Lake

1 Cahuilla Active Volcanic Cultural District, can be  
2 recognized, respected, and protected. These features,  
3 including Obsidian Butte, speak directly to the area  
4 bounded by the Salton Sea Shallow Thermal Anomaly  
5 boundary.

6           The CEC should see that funding is made  
7 available for affiliated tribes and qualified  
8 consultants to further identify, document, evaluate, and  
9 place this district on the appropriate historic  
10 registers. There is local precedent for this. It's not  
11 like this hasn't been done before. The Southwest Lake  
12 Cahuilla Recessional Shoreline Archaeological District  
13 was placed on the National Register at the request of  
14 the United States Navy. That's just on the other side,  
15 just down the street, as Carmen says.

16           Tribes and other states have also been  
17 successful recently in the protection of sacred volcanic  
18 areas in partnership with others, such as for the  
19 traditional cultural property around Mt. Taylor in  
20 Arizona. There's been some recent positive news media  
21 on that.

22           These steps and others provided through  
23 consultation with affiliated Tribes, I've taken some  
24 notes, I have maybe half a dozen really important things  
25 that need to be thought about that I've learned today,

1 would help repair some of the damage of lost engagement  
2 opportunities that is so evident in the development of  
3 the geothermal industry in Imperial County. The state  
4 needs to be careful not to exacerbate this damage in its  
5 effort to expand this industry around extracting  
6 lithium.

7           Finally, these steps must be taken before new  
8 development is considered, to bring the process into  
9 legal compliance and to honestly assess effects and  
10 mitigation, including siting, design, avoidance, and  
11 indirect effects on the Tribes' sacred places.

12           Should the Commission choose not to adopt any  
13 of these recommendations, they should none the less be  
14 part of the official record that goes to the  
15 legislature. Such as in an appendix, or minority report  
16 section in the larger report. I will provide a copy of  
17 my prepared statement to your staff, and also remain  
18 available for questions. I really appreciate your  
19 attention. And to those on Zoom, I apologize if I've  
20 got my back end side, there's no good way to do this  
21 besides going over there.

22           But anyway, I really do appreciate your  
23 attention. Thank you so much.

24           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you, Courtney Coyle  
25 for those recommendations. And I believe that

1 concludes, or it's — we have —

2 MR. JOAQUIN: Chairman, could I —

3 CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: — time for one more.

4 MR. JOAQUIN: Okay.

5 CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Do we have time for one  
6 more? Okay.

7 MR. JOAQUIN: Thank you. My name is Jordan  
8 Joaquin, President of the Quechan Indian Tribe, and I  
9 thank the Torrez Martinez for hosting this, again. And  
10 I thank you for allowing the tribal members, the tribal  
11 elders who have spoken today and other tribal members  
12 from other tribes. And I think it's very important, and  
13 I'll be brief. I know we're running over.

14 You heard tribal consultation. True. Tribal  
15 consultation, not a checklist, not a phone call, not an  
16 email. It's always been that way. And for those who  
17 don't understand Indian Country tribes, this is our  
18 frustration. The project is coming near us, and you  
19 hear the great, great things, like I — they've mentioned  
20 them last week.

21 But the unknown. Just tell us what the  
22 unknown is, if you know it. We hear about all these  
23 great jobs, funding. But they always tell us that.  
24 Then after a year or two, some of the jobs go away.  
25 Some of the roads they promised aren't fully developed.

1 These are the concerns and the frustrations of the  
2 tribes you hear today.

3           Where is the balance? When we're not  
4 consulted, when we as tribes here aren't consulted, how  
5 do you know there's going to be a balance? Why are  
6 tribes upset, frustrated? It's because of years of the  
7 trust responsibility of this government, how they've  
8 treated tribes.

9           The desecration of tribal people that was  
10 mentioned by, in the state of California earlier, is so  
11 true. We still remember. So, the frustration we hear  
12 is, "Great things tribes, wink, wink."

13           And at the end of the day, two years, five  
14 years from now, where are all these promises? Because  
15 when you tell the tribes, "We promise you," tribes  
16 remember of the broken promises. Once again, I echo the  
17 comments from my two elders, Mr. Pachora, Mr. Arrow-  
18 Weed, Tribal Council was present, our water technician,  
19 our EPO director, our cultural committee, we learn — we  
20 only learn from each other, we learn from other tribes  
21 as well. We need to be at the table. We need to be not  
22 an afterthought when decisions are made.

23           And once again, Torrez Martinez, we thank you  
24 for hosting us today, and I thank you for allowing us  
25 our comments. Thank you.

1           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you, thank you very  
2 much. And that's the end of the tribal, the tribal  
3 session. I believe it is, let me look it up, the  
4 tribal, yeah, session for discussion. And I will hand  
5 it back over to the Energy Commission for the Commission  
6 deliberation, I believe is next.

7           And just reiterate, you know, what we've all  
8 been saying here. And I know you've spoken and, as  
9 tribal elders about how we've been here, you know. And  
10 in Cahuilla, when we say we've been here in our  
11 language, we say Ep-ay, Ep-ah ch-em-quall (Phonetic),  
12 which means we've been here. And when we say we're  
13 still here in Cahuilla, we say Ep-ah mal ch-em-quall.  
14 Ep-ah mal ch-em-quall means we are still here  
15 (Phonetic). And when we say we will always be here in  
16 Cahuilla, we say Pen-doy-ah-yan-o-mish. (Phonetic).  
17 Pen-doy-ah-yan-o-mish means always. Pen-doy-ah-yan-o-  
18 mish ch-em-quall oh-en-um (Phonetic), means that we will  
19 always be here. So, we resonate what you all have been  
20 saying here as tribes.

21           And with that, I hand it back to the  
22 California Energy Commission, Lithium Valley Commission,  
23 for the continuance of this meeting. Thank you.

24           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Chairman TorteZ. And I  
25 just want to take a moment to introduce myself to all of

1 you. I'm just come and sit here, and thank you for  
2 being a great host. So, my name is Silvia Paz, and I am  
3 not with the Energy Commission, I'm with the Lithium  
4 Commission. And the Lithium Commission was put together  
5 only for a short period of time to write a report that's  
6 going to be submitted to the legislature, and our  
7 deadline is in October.

8           So, after — at some point this Commission will  
9 no longer exist. But I will still be here as your  
10 neighbor. I live here in Thermal. So, all of the  
11 issues that you have shared, I appreciate them. I  
12 personally aspire to some of the values that were shared  
13 with us. Not just for myself, but also for my children.  
14 So, again, just an honor to listen to all of the  
15 questions and concerns and the perspectives that have  
16 been shared.

17           I will — we are now starting Commissioner  
18 discussion. So, I will ask if there are any  
19 Commissioners here in Thermal, so I know we have  
20 Commissioner Manfred Scott, and Commissioner Richie  
21 Lopez present here along with me in Thermal. So, do we  
22 have any comments from either of you?

23           COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: No comments at this time.

24           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you

25           COMMISSIONER SCOTT: This is Manfred Scott.

1 The comment I had would be that the CEQA process, it  
2 don't seem to be adequately put together. And it seems  
3 like they have in there some of the test pilots is for  
4 categorical exclusion, meaning that they don't have to  
5 comply with, you know, notifying the tribe. And I think  
6 the CEQA needs to contact the tribes so we can get a  
7 better understanding as to the CEQA process and what's  
8 all involved the document.

9 Now there — it is a large document that we got  
10 from the planning department along with CEQA, and that's  
11 1,600 and some odd pages, and that's a lot of pages, and  
12 that's from back to back. For the Committee and some of  
13 the tribal members and then of course the course the  
14 council, trying to go over that document is very  
15 frustrating, because it is a large document. And I  
16 tried to print it out, and it almost used like three  
17 reams, almost four reams of paper. And I did bring  
18 that, just to kind of just show you what I — and it  
19 didn't print out all of it, but just, just a second.

20 And there's that — this is the document. And  
21 to go over this document, the Chamber's group that did  
22 the archaeological survey didn't seem like they did an  
23 adequate survey, leaving some of the tribes out and of  
24 course, you know, mentioned some of the tribes, and I  
25 don't think they had contacted tribes to actually get

1 the right ethnographic resources to be able to be able  
2 to put into the document.

3 So, trying to go over this document, looking  
4 at a lot of this document, I mean that's a lot to read.  
5 And of course, they talk about the seismic, the  
6 methodology, they talk about the water, they talk about  
7 the environmental, they talk about a lot of things in  
8 here. Which is, Imperial County did contact the tribe  
9 back in 2020.

10 But again, we had the COVID. And the COVID,  
11 during that time, we couldn't be able to access our  
12 mail, because of the shutdown that we had because of the  
13 COVID. And so, a lot of those mails kind of either got  
14 lost, or either they're put away some place. And so, we  
15 didn't have privilege to those mails. So, some of those  
16 mails were already sent out during that time, we didn't  
17 have access to them so we didn't respond to a lot of  
18 these letters that were coming out from Imperial County.

19 So, until the later part of 2021, by that time  
20 to try to do a catch up, it was really hard to try to  
21 catch up on a lot of the consultation letters. So,  
22 again, you know going back, I think the CEQA process, I  
23 think they need to contact the tribes and kind of work  
24 with the tribes in order to have that document be  
25 presented at some later time. So again, thank you.

1           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you, thank you  
2 Commissioner Scott. But, for the record, can you give  
3 us a title of that document?

4           COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Oh, yes. I believe that  
5 the CEQA — it said EnergySource CEQA Process is  
6 complete, document's approved, here is the link. And  
7 then you can go into the link. You know, and then you  
8 can — this is the link here. So, I can —

9           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you.

10          COMMISSIONER SCOTT: — get you that  
11 information.

12          CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you, Commissioner.

13          CHAIR PAZ: Thank you for that clarification.  
14 And I do apologize, I was just informed that we have to  
15 do public comment first, and then Commissioner input.  
16 So, I will start with any public comment, maybe in  
17 Westmorland, and then I will return to Commissioner  
18 input. So, is there anyone wishing to speak from  
19 Westmorland?

20          MS. LOZA: We don't have public comment at  
21 Westmorland.

22          CHAIR PAZ: Okay, thank you. Do we have any  
23 public comment here in the audience in Thermal?

24                 Feel free to walk to the podium, state your  
25 name for the record. Thank you.

1 MS. ERENHOUSEN: Hello, my name is Pashen  
2 Erehousen, I come from the Quechan Indian Tribe. I'm  
3 here to give my opinion on this Lithium Valley project.  
4 I come from the Quechan Indian Tribe. Right now, it's  
5 very hard to face my tribal leadership right now.  
6 There's a lot of issues going on with our tribe, and  
7 probably more tribes too. Going through social services  
8 is very hard right now to get rent, to get electricity,  
9 to ask for my child back. These are the real things  
10 that are happening right now.

11 This goes into traumatization that's happening  
12 right now on tribal land. We are affected in Imperial  
13 County. If there was an offer for 4.5 to 4.8 billion,  
14 this money needs to go for the traumatization or  
15 emotional damage or dysfunction or what's going to  
16 happen in the tribal nations right now. We have a lot  
17 to look at. We have domestic violence going on. We  
18 have emotional issues that lead into pills. We have all  
19 of this going on. Why are we looking at our water?

20 Right now, I'm looking at my tribe with no  
21 transparency at all. With that no transparency, and  
22 with the Quechan Indian Tribe right now, we have a water  
23 project going on, about \$10 million. There was no  
24 transparency to tell our tribal people right now. And  
25 then we've got to hear from Imperial County. I had to

1 find out through, over the mountains through Kumeyaay,  
2 that these meetings were happening, but I did not hear  
3 it from my tribe.

4           These are the real things that are happening.  
5 I'm not going to be oppressed. These are my opinions.  
6 I'm not going to listen to the Cultural Committee when  
7 here we all, we can't even say hi to one another. We're  
8 talking about positive and negative, I haven't heard  
9 anything nice from my people yet. We're the outcast.  
10 But now, my water is gone. Our hair is coming out. The  
11 depression is at its highest in our tribes. Not only  
12 our tribe, but other tribes affected too.

13           With the sulfuric acid, that bothers me.  
14 Again, I'm going to have to restate, this affects my  
15 food, this affects our crops. This affects a lot of  
16 these, this affects our genocide, our massacre, our  
17 massacre to our own people. Not only to the Native  
18 Americans, it's mitigating just human life again as we  
19 speak.

20           Just driving here, I just want you guys to  
21 understand, when you're driving through the Torrez  
22 Martinez, have you not seen how the tribal people are  
23 living right now? Right when you enter, right through  
24 here? This is how the tribal lands are. We need more  
25 effective communication with the real people. This is

1 not the real people, this is just the sugar coating.

2 Talk to the real people. Engage in them.

3 Utilize that money with Imperial County, and start doing

4 their jobs to take care of the people. Be more

5 humanitarian. I am against this money. I am against

6 selling. Who are we, as people, to start negotiating

7 this piece of mineral, or new platinum that we're

8 looking at?

9 I look in the futuristic, I already know that

10 the robots are here. I know that, I know what this

11 project is going into. I mean, right now we're speaking

12 in everything bots, online, everything. We're depleting

13 us as, you know, less and less. Yes, we are getting

14 frustrated with that heat. That heat in the megawatts.

15 I can't take the heat, and I just got here in 2014 from

16 Chicago. The heat is excruciating here. It's bothering

17 people mentally. It's driving the people into domestic

18 violence. We are burying our people more and more. I

19 can't — have you guys even went to the tribal funerals

20 to see how many people are passing away?

21 And again, I'm going to have to agree with

22 this elder over here. This elder over here had spoken

23 kindly about the human remains. We are runners for and

24 advocates for MMIW, Murdered and Missing Women and

25 Relatives. A lot of that has taken place here.

1           We are right next to the border, it even  
2 affects Mexico. I don't care if we're going to sit here  
3 and lie to each other and say, "It only affects Imperial  
4 County." It affects everything. Including Mexico, our  
5 neighbors.

6           Diversely, it affects everything. When I  
7 drive down the street, I'm seeing dead fox, I'm seeing  
8 dead of the little bit that we have. I'm looking at our  
9 medicine. Our medicine is being mitigated. There's  
10 nothing left for our children. I'm not seeing any of  
11 that. The negation needs to be with, for our children.  
12 We haven't even cleaned up the murdered children here  
13 yet. And we're going to jump all this, and then try to  
14 get up to the water?

15           What happened to our water? When I take a  
16 shower, we have to go walk for our water. And that is  
17 the truth. There's more people behind me that have to  
18 get their water, or have to drink the terrible water, or  
19 take showers. What's going to happen to that when my  
20 tribe now has a \$10 million water project that we don't  
21 need right now?

22           Thank you.

23           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Is there anyone else  
24 here in Thermal wishing to speak?

25           Okay. I do not see any. Is there anyone on

1 Zoom? And I will turn it over to CEC staff to see if  
2 there's anyone on Zoom wishing to provide public  
3 comment.

4 MS. LOZA: As a reminder, if you're joining us  
5 on Zoom by the computer, please use the raised hand  
6 feature. If you've called in, please dial star-nine to  
7 raise your hand, and star-six to unmute your phone line.

8 Just as a reminder, please limit your comment  
9 to two minutes.

10 Okay, the first hand raised is Homer Lesi.  
11 You should be able to unmute yourself.

12 Hi, Homer Lesi, you should be able to unmute  
13 yourself.

14 MR. LESI: Can you hear me?

15 MS. LOZA: Yes.

16 MR. LESI: I am a very much concern and  
17 appreciate, and I would like to make a comment. I am a  
18 PhD in environmental science, two degrees, San Diego  
19 State. I've been fighting for my environmental and  
20 microwave radiation in San Diego. And I am a veteran  
21 medical doctor in Vietnam. And now, I live in Salton  
22 City. And, 20 year, I love it. And I would like to  
23 make a recommendation to you.

24 And I am investigate privately, not funded and  
25 anybody else but myself, have do some research. And I

1 learned the bay save the Salton Sea at that mine, and I  
2 put a lot of thought on that. And I appreciate the  
3 Indian involved here, because I think my recommendation  
4 that the Indian is, you have the right for water, fresh  
5 water from the underground. And I think you can utilize  
6 that and with building a salt extraction and supplement  
7 that fresh water to dissolve to the Salton Sea, and that  
8 will be done. Because if we put water from the ocean  
9 then we add up salt to salt. It doesn't make sense.  
10 And at the mean time, we have river bed with Indian  
11 ownership, and the government ownership, we can  
12 capitalize that. Okay?

13 I am very much concerned because I live within  
14 here a little bit. And I say, I will help if anybody or  
15 Indian group can participate with me, I will make it  
16 free, consult free to get we can learn together for the  
17 community. Because I live here, I've been inherited  
18 some bad health with related to it. But I will fight to  
19 it. And I would think the time is right because the  
20 degradement of some firm from the lithium, we must  
21 request that. And I think Indian tribes have the right  
22 to inherit some fraction of it, and utilize that  
23 (INDISCERNIBLE).

24 And, unfortunately, I only have two minutes  
25 and I don't know what I can talk some more. Because I

1 very important for environmental and our community here.  
2 We need to set up the priority and the technology, what  
3 I have. And I been trying to put government together  
4 with environmental agency. So, at this time I am very  
5 serious because the funding is available. I have been  
6 going to the county advisory and tell them to accumulate  
7 some investment, recoup and oversee investor, we can do  
8 with this to make Salton Sea at my (INDISCERNIBLE). Is  
9 Las Vegas, which I see.

10 That you see, I mean Las Vegas, is without the  
11 sea, but they can make the good. And we have the sea,  
12 we have investment, we got the people interested, and  
13 right now, that is the secondary in priority after the  
14 health priority for the government, for the community  
15 here. I would appreciate and very much. I stop here,  
16 and thank you very much.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

18 MS. LOZA: The next person is Stephen Martin,  
19 and you should be able to unmute yourself. Next in line  
20 is Lorraine Salas.

21 MS. MARTIN: Hello, hi. I believe — am I  
22 speaking right now? This is Stephanie Martin, actually.

23 MS. LOZA: Yes, I can here you.

24 MS. MARTIN: Hi, thank you very much. I  
25 believe — am I speaking out of turn?

1           Or is it my turn, is it.

2           MS. LOZA: No, you can speak now, thanks.

3           MS. MARTIN: Oh, thank you so much. And thank  
4 you so much to the Torrez Martinez tribe for hosting  
5 this as well as the, for the Lithium Valley Commission  
6 for hearing us all as community members of the region  
7 here.

8           My name is Stephanie Martin, pronoun she/her.  
9 I am the director for Quantum Consultations, a  
10 consulting agency here in the Coachella Valley,  
11 actually, Desert Hot Springs. I did spend about four  
12 years in the City of Coachella, and so I'm very familiar  
13 with the area of the different archaeological features,  
14 the beauty, the culture, the various species that  
15 inhabited the area seasonally. And it's just a  
16 beautiful area that's just best experienced living out  
17 here.

18           I do not want to see the geothermal brine  
19 ruining the guts, like the tribal elder respectful  
20 member said about it. I agree with this wholeheartedly.  
21 That's exactly what I feel, what I hear when I do take a  
22 trip down there, listen to the mud pots, listen to the  
23 earth, look at the mineral waters that do come in and  
24 heal, the — everyone around here.

25           So anyways, I just, I've researched this area

1 as a local, and I have actually proposed a restoration  
2 effort proposal to clean the water, like an elder, also  
3 respected tribal member, had suggested and what. That  
4 is what it is about, it's called Save the Coachella  
5 Valley Basin.

6 Now, there's two issues here that are kind of  
7 getting conflated, I believe. And it is the geothermal  
8 projects, and it is the — and that's one issue. And  
9 then, it's the state projects, the SSMP, the Salton Sea  
10 Management Program and the CNRA state plans to — the  
11 State of California. The Army Corps of Engineers, now  
12 they're trying — they're having plans, short term, 10-  
13 year plan to restore the sea, the habitat, and the air  
14 quality. And then the long-term plan is also being  
15 discussed, and trying to be all worked out at the state  
16 level, local levels.

17 And we just, I am just almost begging to get a  
18 work together to — including the understanding where  
19 Imperial County stands. Where the tribes are. Like,  
20 is, they're saying, they need a spot on the table, they  
21 need a primary spot at the table at the first start of  
22 the talks, not the end, not as an afterthought. Where  
23 the lithium people Valley Commission stands.

24 And not to keep on kind of confusing it with  
25 the water import proposals to restore the sea. These

1 are two different things here. I don't understand why  
2 we're talking about the Salton Sea at all when we're  
3 talking lithium, when we consider that they're going  
4 under the sea and around the sea and all in our region,  
5 our precious, beautiful biodiverse region, and sucking  
6 the guts out of mother earth. Okay? That's not good  
7 for our nature, that's not good for our generations, and  
8 that's not good for us as a human species. We do not  
9 want to. We need to learn from history.

10 I went out there on the Torrez Martinez area  
11 with an archaeological thing. And the monitor there,  
12 the Torrez Martinez monitor is the one who taught me,  
13 who opened my eyes to a different viewpoint. I'm  
14 looking out of European, as a European American, okay?  
15 I am looking at this timeline all wrong, 1600's,  
16 castles, horses, no. No.

17 We need to learn about what was going on  
18 1600's here. And the only people who have that  
19 knowledge are the people who have been here, like they  
20 said, since time immemorial. This is so important,  
21 y'all, and I really would hope that you address directly  
22 the four recommendations that the attorney has laid out  
23 and really, really give it a real response here to the  
24 public. We're needing it. We've been — all ears and  
25 eyes are on y'all.

1 Thank you so much.

2 MS. LOZA: Okay. Next person will be Lorraine  
3 Salas, and then following that will be Tom Sephton.  
4 Just a reminder, to please limit your comment to two  
5 minutes. So, Lorraine, you should be able to unmute  
6 yourself.

7 MS. SALAS: Can everyone hear me?

8 MS. LOZA: Yes.

9 MS. SALAS: Hi, everyone. I've been a  
10 resident for about 36 years in the Coachella Valley,  
11 more specifically the Eastern Coachella Valley. I'm  
12 kind of late to the meeting, I was able to hear I think  
13 the attorney, Courtney Coyle, speak, and before that I  
14 didn't get that person's name. But, just listening to  
15 the vast history of the Coachella Valley, more  
16 specifically occupied Cahuilla land.

17 It's really disappointing to hear that the  
18 state has failed, and they have continued to fail for a  
19 very long time, the tribal communities in the Eastern  
20 Coachella Valley of Southern California. I became more  
21 involved, too, because, as a teacher in the East  
22 Coachella Valley, I have students with arsenic in their  
23 water. And it comes to find out when it's continued  
24 going to meetings concerning arsenic in the water, that  
25 the tribe has been experiencing arsenic in their water

1 for more than a decade. That's according to one person  
2 I spoke to.

3           And, so, I guess, you know, moving forward,  
4 the question is — what is the water district going to do  
5 to help? And secondly, just why does the state just  
6 keep failing? You know, I just hope, you know I, moving  
7 forward to that, I definitely do gain a lot from these  
8 meetings. Information that I hope to pass on to my  
9 students. I think all students in the district should  
10 be learning this history. And I hope the land  
11 acknowledgement happened at the very beginning of this  
12 meeting, and moving forward that we continue to  
13 acknowledge who this land belongs to.

14           So, thank you.

15           MS. LOZA: Next person is Tom Sephton, you  
16 should be able to unmute yourself.

17           MR. SEPHTON: Thank you, appreciate the  
18 opportunity. And, as Chairman Tortez was saying about  
19 Native American people of the area, we've always been  
20 here, we're here, and we always will be here. And it's  
21 so true. And you should. And I hope you do stand up  
22 and defend your rights to this land. I'm an Imperial  
23 County resident, and I am borrowing the opportunity to  
24 put my feet on the land that has been your peoples land  
25 for thousands of years. And thank you, for the

1 opportunity to live on your land and be a part of it.

2 I, speaking to the attorney's comments. She  
3 was making the point about desert — about the Obsidian  
4 Butte. And that is a Native American Heritage Site  
5 there. It's called Obsidian Butte, because it's got a  
6 huge amount of obsidian. And ancient peoples came there  
7 to get the materials to make the tools that enabled them  
8 to function.

9 And that site is being torn up. Not by  
10 geothermal development, but because it's an IID quarry.  
11 And that hill is being torn apart to get rock and gravel  
12 for construction by IID that owns the land. And so, do  
13 protect that land and all of your critical sites.

14 And with respect to whether lithium  
15 development happens and how it happens, please learn as  
16 much about it as you can. And stand up to make sure  
17 that it happens in a safe way, in a way that respects  
18 the environment, respects your water sources, respects  
19 your land.

20 It can be done in a way that respects the land  
21 and the water and the air. And do stand up and make  
22 sure that all of your cultural and environmental  
23 resources are protected. It can be done, and I hope you  
24 will.

25 Thank you, tribal members.

1 MS. LOZA: The next person is Nikola Lakic,  
2 you should be able to unmute yourself.

3 MR. LAKIC: Hello, can you hear me?

4 MS. LOZA: Yes.

5 MR. LAKIC: Thank you very much for this  
6 opportunity, very, very thoughtful conversation. Very  
7 nice, very nice. I'm not sure, is this Chair Silvia  
8 Paz, or is Thomas Tortez? But, I would like to just to  
9 let you, well — hello to everyone.

10 I would like to let you know that there is  
11 solution for the current course of action that is not  
12 good. And, you shouldn't be suffering. And not just  
13 tribes, but all nearby communities. There is two  
14 projects. Extraction of lithium right now, which depend  
15 on the short-term lake, smaller lake. And there is  
16 another project, the restoration of the Salton Sea,  
17 which is based on import of sea water.

18 Those two things cannot co-exist logically.  
19 There is no logic in keeping smaller lake, and doing  
20 dust suppression projects, and the same time talking  
21 about importing sea water. Why? Because some people  
22 made mistakes, and they are against the import of sea  
23 water for a long time. And now, they are embarrassed to  
24 admit that they've been wrong. And so, they're pushing  
25 farther with kind of making some compromise. It does

1 not work that way.

2 I just want to let you know that I have  
3 proposal that will make Salton Sea competition with  
4 Newport Beach, Huntington Beach, and we can equalize  
5 salinity of the Salton Sea with salinity of the ocean in  
6 four or five years. But, I put my information over  
7 there, you can contact me, I would be glad to speak with  
8 anyone of you. I am graduate engineer, architect, my  
9 expertise is solving problems with energy and  
10 environment. Unfortunately, I have been ignored by  
11 Salton Sea Authority and TetraTech and all that crowd  
12 that are pushing for destruction of the lake.

13 Stand up and be aware of the situation. There  
14 is better solution, I would be glad if I am invited to  
15 make presentation for you to let you know that there is  
16 solution. I spoke few times with Thomas Tortez, he  
17 might give you my information. He like it, at that  
18 time, but sometimes, I don't know, people voting in the  
19 wrong direction. And there is pressure, it's organize,  
20 people who are just doing wrong things.

21 And that needs to stop. There is a lot of  
22 manipulations, kind of, healthier smaller lake. There  
23 is no healthier smaller lake. Smaller lake with be  
24 smaller, saltier, smellier, and more polluted, period,  
25 if you continue this way. But, we need radical change,

1 and I'm doing my best to help on that. And, whether  
2 this set up of leadership or this generation, if you'll  
3 do it, oh well. Whether this generation set up of  
4 leadership now, or future generation. Sooner or later  
5 will be. Because, my proposal can make about between  
6 half hundred million dollars revenue. Between half hun—  
7 five — half billion and billion revenue just from  
8 energy, not to mention tourism. How people can ignore  
9 it, it's beyond me.

10 But, there is opposition and they don't like  
11 it and they'd rather ask for 20, 30 millions, 200  
12 millions from government and doing wrong things. But  
13 thank you very much for this opportunity. If somebody  
14 want me to make presentation for them, it's common  
15 sense, it's pure logic. It's a physics, the law of  
16 physics, and there is no, nothing imaginary or  
17 speculative. It's, yeah, there needs some engineering  
18 background to understand, but even high school kid can  
19 understand very well.

20 There is my information there, I posted and  
21 question and if somebody want to ask me to explain that  
22 little bit more, I would be glad to. And I need your  
23 support. You need me. And, let's do it together.  
24 Thank you very much.

25 MS. LOZA: Okay, we have a few comments

1 through the question and answer box. The first one's  
2 from Anonymous. It says, "Who is speaking? Can  
3 speakers please introduce the name and affiliation?"

4 The second comment is from Stephanie Martin,  
5 and it says, "Thank you."

6 The third one is anonymous, and it says, "Can  
7 you turn on close captions, please? Thank you."

8 The next comment is from Stephanie Martin, and  
9 it says, "I wholeheartedly agree, clean it."

10 The next comment is from Ray Teran. It says,  
11 "Is there a call-in number?"

12 The next comment is from Anonymous. It says,  
13 "Could someone please type the speaker's names and  
14 affiliation in the chat? The transcript is not  
15 accurately picking up the names and nations."

16 The next comment is from James Gibson. It  
17 says, "Make the request for speakers to state their name  
18 and affiliation again before the second session. It  
19 would be helpful for following up with questions and  
20 interviews."

21 The next comment is from Anonymous. It says,  
22 "Asking again if it's possible to provide written names  
23 and affiliations of the speakers?"

24 The next comment is from Anonymous. It says,  
25 "I appreciate the request for speakers to state their

1 name and affiliation, as well as the option not to. My  
2 request is to have someone type them into the chat,  
3 because the captioning and transcript are not able to  
4 accurately spell the names and nations. It is not  
5 accessible.”

6           The next comment is from Stephanie Martin. It  
7 says, “I agree that that is an awful offer. Any amount  
8 of money to give up rights to the land, water, air,  
9 region, and earth permanently is way too risky.”

10           The next comment is from Stephanie Martin, and  
11 it says, “I agree here. No.”

12           The next comment is from Stephanie Martin. It  
13 says, “Prioritize restoring the land and water in this  
14 region, not extracting and destroying it further,  
15 muddying the waters.”

16           The next comment is from Stephanie Martin. It  
17 says, “That is just not right, major concern. I agree.”

18           The next comment is from Stephanie Martin. It  
19 says, “Amazing.”

20           The next comment is from Nicola Lakic. It  
21 says, “My name is Nicola Lakic. I am the author of the  
22 proposal for the restoration of the Salton Sea that  
23 would be very beneficial to all nearby communities,  
24 especially tribes. It would be useful for you to know  
25 about it. If current course of action continues, it

1 would be very detrimental for everyone. For more  
2 information, contact me at nlakic — so that's N-L-A-K-I-  
3 C @geothermalworldwide.com. The phone number is (760)  
4 347-1609."

5           The next comment is from anonymous. It says,  
6 "Is it possible to send a list of all speakers and the  
7 tribes they are from who have talked so far? Thank  
8 you."

9           The next comment is from Stephanie Martin, and  
10 it says, "Thank you elder Carmen Lucas, Kwaaymii of  
11 Laguna Mountains, for sharing this knowledge. I deeply  
12 agree. This area is closely connected to the earth, and  
13 the waters are healing. It would be devastating to  
14 destroy. The ancient Cahuilla lake is huge. We need to  
15 understand this important area. I love seeing the  
16 ancient shoreline and fish traps. They feel so  
17 important to us, the human record."

18           The next comment is from Anonymous. It says,  
19 "Why is the chat disabled?"

20           The next comment is from Stephanie Martin. It  
21 says, "100 percent, it is time to be addressed.  
22 However, thank you attorney Coyle."

23           The next comment is from anonymous. It says,  
24 "Did I hear correctly? The Fish Traps Archaeological  
25 Area at 66 and Jackson is not overseen by the Torrez

1 Martinez Cahuilla tribe?"

2           The next comment is from Tom Sephton. It  
3 says, "Good points about Obsidian Butte. It is an IID  
4 quarry, that is why it is being torn up."

5           The next comment is from Paula Marven. It  
6 says, "Why isn't the tribe being included?"

7           The next comment is from Anonymous. It says,  
8 "I would like to submit a public comment. What about  
9 from Zoom?"

10           The next comment is from Nikola. It says, "I  
11 have no option to unmute."

12           The next comment is from Anonymous. It says,  
13 "Can you let us know the public comment lineup, who is  
14 next to speak?"

15           And those — ooh, I see two more. The last  
16 comment is from Stephanie Martin. It says, "Stephanie  
17 Martin, Director of Quantum Consultations, author of  
18 Save the Coachella Valley Basin project proposal  
19 submitted to the CNRA and UCSC. The email is  
20 [quantumconsultations@gmail.com](mailto:quantumconsultations@gmail.com) to contact me for further  
21 information. Thanks again for this meeting."

22           Okay, those are the last question— comments.

23 Back to you, Chair Paz.

24           (Pause)

25 Back to you, Chair Paz, at Thermal.

1 CHAIR PAZ: Can you hear me?

2 MS. LOZA: Yes.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. So, we're resuming  
4 Commissioner comments, and I want to go back now to  
5 Westmorland and see if Commissioner Olmedo has any  
6 comments related to the tribal session?

7 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Yeah, hello. This is  
8 Luis Olmedo here, at the Westmorland site. And I just  
9 wanted to acknowledge, you know, that I hear the tribal  
10 concerns. And, you know, the elders and the long  
11 history and just wanted to say that I do stand in  
12 solidarity. Both as an organizational leader myself,  
13 working on environmental justice as well as a  
14 Commissioner. Want to make sure that the tribes and all  
15 community gets a fair opportunity to participate in the  
16 future potential development. Because there's still a  
17 lot of unknowns.

18 I am aware that geothermal still has many  
19 challenges. And it does produce waste streams and  
20 emissions. And I frequently say this. You know, we  
21 didn't stop at zero, at cleaner tail pipes on vehicle  
22 emissions. We said, as a state, and now even as a  
23 country, to zero out emissions and transition to cleaner  
24 fuels. And it wouldn't make sense to transition to a  
25 new fuel source that's going to cause harm. It defeats

1 the purpose.

2           So, as a Commissioner of the Lithium Valley  
3 Commission tasked with the role of representing  
4 disadvantaged communities, I want to tell the tribes  
5 that I do hear you. And, that I'm really pleased to  
6 have heard that the Energy Commission did spend  
7 additional time in having conversations ahead of this  
8 meeting. And it shows. You know, the tribes showed up.  
9 And I don't know all the tribal members, but I always  
10 welcome conversations. I mean, I'm here just to help  
11 support and assist in making sure that your concerns  
12 make it into the final report.

13           And I just want to reinforce that, reach out  
14 to me if there's anything else that we need to do, or  
15 that I need to do as a Commissioner. That's what I'm  
16 here for. That's my purpose here, is to make sure that  
17 your voices and your concerns reach this report.

18           And I want to thank you for tolerating the  
19 history. And I heard, you know, many terms, you  
20 know are very appropriate, you know. And in some ways,  
21 you know, colonial model. You know I took a lot of  
22 notes. But I think we know, you know, in the state I'm  
23 really pleased that, you know, the Gavin Newsom,  
24 Governor Gavin Newsom's administration had taken a, you  
25 know, made a commitment to healing the harms of the

1 past. But we will never make it better in our lifetime.

2 And, yeah.

3 I just wanted, just because I've known him for  
4 a while, you know, that Preston Arrow-Weed, he's an  
5 elder of the Quechan, just want to thank him for his  
6 wise words and everyone else who also followed in the  
7 same, sharing that expertise. I just wanted to let you  
8 know that I hear you, and I understand, and the way you  
9 explain things, we have to look beyond the science. You  
10 know, we have to look beyond the numbers. This is real  
11 experience. This is what has happened in the past, and  
12 avoiding making the same mistakes into the future. And,  
13 you know, maybe that might mean that maybe this isn't  
14 the most ideal situation to happen. And maybe it is.

15 But one thing's for sure, is there's a lot of  
16 questions to be answered. And I think that what I take  
17 away from this, is we don't have enough information.  
18 And this is serious enough that I think that the state,  
19 the federal government, the authorities and the  
20 environmental review process that this goes through —  
21 want to make sure that proprietary exemptions or some of  
22 the, you know, pilot variance exemptions — these things  
23 are not going to be favorable to creating something that  
24 may be better or may be sustainable.

25 We need to be able to build the trust and

1 confidence now. So, there's a lot that I'm thinking  
2 about, and I just encourage the tribal members to  
3 continue to be engaged. And I ask that you engage me as  
4 a Commissioner, and I want to be there, and I want to  
5 learn more.

6 But I want to let you know that in the way  
7 that you've explained things, both from, you know, the  
8 historical, the scientific, but even the story telling.  
9 Being someone who has worked on environmental justice  
10 for 20 plus years, I know exactly what you're saying.  
11 It doesn't have to be followed by some scientific  
12 formula, or some geological you know calculation. And I  
13 understand what you're saying, and I hear you and I'm  
14 very concerned about the potential harms of the past and  
15 the potential harms of the future.

16 And one of the things we need to do is be able  
17 to avoid that. And one way to do that is by continuing  
18 to engage you and take your history and your  
19 recommendations very seriously. Thank you.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Olmedo.  
21 We're going to turn to Commissioners on Zoom, and I do  
22 see Commissioner Castaneda has a hand raised.

23 You might — you're on mute, Commissioner  
24 Castaneda.

25 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Sorry about that.

1 After all this time, you'd think I'd check that out.  
2 But anyway, I just wanted to thank you also for  
3 recognizing me. But, I wanted also to thank you, the CE  
4 staff — CEC staff for creating this workshop here. This  
5 is something that I've gained a lot of understanding of  
6 things that — a lot of questions that are still out  
7 there with folks. And, you know, maybe we should've  
8 done this a year ago, and had continuing involving, you  
9 know, engagement.

10 But one thing, and I think Commissioner Olmedo  
11 said it, it is our job to establish the trust in this  
12 process. And it is our job to establish the trust in  
13 the information that is developed, either in support or  
14 in opposition to this effort. You know, there was, the  
15 gentleman, I can't recall his name, that showed the  
16 several thousand pages of documentation that studies and  
17 other kinds of environmental documentation, and how  
18 daunting that is to sort of deal with.

19 And it, you know, it's — I understand. But  
20 unfortunately, you can't really analyze things without  
21 generating that much paperwork. But I think that what  
22 we need to do, and what I think we need to do a better  
23 job at, is informing, enriching that communication line,  
24 and then also I think by virtue of that, enhancing that  
25 trust. And I think that as we do that, the information

1 that sort of filters through the CEC and this Commission  
2 will be, I think, a little bit more genuinely accepted.

3 Because we've got a long way to go in terms of  
4 building that trust and that confidence. So, I'm  
5 prepared for the job. I'm looking forward to more of  
6 these kinds of interactions and providing the kind of  
7 information to all of our communities that will be sort  
8 of exposed to, you know, whatever goes on, you know, in  
9 the geothermal and lithium recovery systems. So, I just  
10 want to thank you very much. Thanks.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Castaneda.  
12 Are there any other Commissioners who are joining us via  
13 Zoom who would like to make a comment or have  
14 discussion?

15 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Silvia, Jonathan here.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Yes. Go ahead, Commissioner  
17 Weisgall.

18 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Thanks. Jonathan  
19 Weisgall. I'm — first of all, I have to apologize  
20 again. I was planning to be there in person and drive  
21 down. I came down with a fever, and I do not have a  
22 webcam, so you can't see me. I wish I were there in  
23 person. Because I learned a huge amount this morning  
24 about tribal history, customs and lore, about the  
25 importance of cultural values. And really the heartfelt

1 views of so many speakers, which will be reflected in  
2 our report to the legislature.

3           It's hard to single out any one of the  
4 speakers. But if I had to, I guess it would be Carmen  
5 Lucas. I can only hope that, if I live to be 87, that  
6 my mind can function as well as hers does.

7           Speaking for BHE renewables, one of what Jesus  
8 referred to at the very beginning of the meeting as part  
9 of the trio of the developers, it's clear we have more  
10 work to do to meet one on one with the tribal nations —  
11 well beyond just my role as a Commissioner on the  
12 Lithium Valley Commission. And we commit to do that. I  
13 did a lot of listening this morning, as did all of us,  
14 and we will continue to listen to your concerns.

15           We cannot change the history of the US  
16 Government's deplorable record towards Native Americans.  
17 And we can't single-handedly rectify the economic and  
18 environmental conditions throughout Imperial Valley.  
19 But, if BHE renewables can earn your respect, and as  
20 Steve just said your trust, regarding our plans, at  
21 least, for lithium recovery and what we believe will be  
22 its minimal environmental impact on the land, on the  
23 water, on the air. We hope, at least, to offer good  
24 paying jobs that might provide more upward mobility for  
25 all residents of Imperial County, including Native

1 Americans.

2           Our environmental activities are carefully and  
3 fully regulated, both by agencies in Imperial County and  
4 in Sacramento by the state. We have been here for 40  
5 years. Our 200 plus employees live in this area. We  
6 have paid \$85.9 million in property taxes to Imperial  
7 County over the last 15 years. And, we hope to be here  
8 in another 40 years.

9           And in that regard, we just hope we can  
10 improve Imperial County in the small ways that we can.  
11 Not just good high paying jobs, but also better roads,  
12 better schools, better broadband, and a better  
13 community. But again, thank you for all of your  
14 comments this morning. Probably the most interesting  
15 and valuable to me of the, I think, 19 or 20 meetings we  
16 have had of the Lithium Valley Commission.

17           Thank you, Chair Paz.

18           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Jonathan. Is there  
19 anyone else joining us via Zoom who is wanting to speak?

20           COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: I'll make a brief  
21 comment, but I believe that Commissioner Flores had her  
22 hand up. So, I don't want to jump the queue.

23           COMMISSIONER FLORES: Oh, I did. But I was  
24 just going to echo, I think, what other Commissioners  
25 have already somewhat expressed in that I think this has

1 been the most rewarding meeting of all the ones that  
2 we've had. I've learned so much. And I was happy to  
3 hear that CEC's doing a better job. I know that the  
4 administration has tried so hard, especially here at the  
5 California Natural Resources Agency, it's definitely a  
6 goal of ours to increase communication with tribes.

7           And so, I'm glad that — you know, we're not  
8 perfect, but definitely getting better. And just  
9 absolutely appreciated everyone who spoke, took the time  
10 to come to the Commission meeting and give us your  
11 input, and I have definitely taken it to heart, you  
12 know, really thinking about everything that was said  
13 today. Thanks so much. Thank you, Commissioner  
14 Reynolds.

15           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Commissioner Flores.  
16 Commissioner Reynolds?

17           COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: Thank you, Chair Paz.  
18 I just wanted to make a brief comment. I don't want to  
19 repeat what the other Commissioners have said, but I did  
20 want to note that I share some of the sentiments and  
21 reactions that I heard expressed, especially by  
22 Commissioner Olmedo, Commissioner Castaneda. And I  
23 wanted to thank the speakers today and acknowledge all  
24 of their comments. The — what we heard today was very  
25 powerful, emotional, moving, and informative.

1           And as Chair Paz noted, we're not a decision-  
2 making body, but we're certainly here to listen, to take  
3 in information, hope to include all of this — the  
4 comments that we heard today in our report and make sure  
5 that we are helping to communicate what we heard today  
6 and what we'll continue to hear as the dialogue goes on  
7 as we work on our report that we'll be presenting to the  
8 legislature.

9           So, I just wanted to give a really sincere  
10 thanks to all the speakers today. I very much  
11 appreciate the time that you took to come and speak with  
12 us, and look forward to continued dialogue. Thank you.

13           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Well, I want to thank  
14 all the Commissioners and all the speakers who made this  
15 happen, especially Commissioner Manfred Scott and  
16 Commissioner Richie for working tirelessly to make this  
17 tribal session happen. So, much appreciation. And  
18 Katrina, for supporting that effort. So, I will hand it  
19 over to Chairman TorteZ right before we break for lunch,  
20 in case you have any closing comments.

21           CHAIRMAN TORTEZ: Thank you, Chair Paz, and  
22 the Commissioners, and all the tribal leaders that spoke  
23 again today. Like it was said there by the  
24 Commissioner, a powerful testimony into the tribal  
25 perspective for this, not only this project, but all,

1 you know, things that happen within this territory of  
2 the indigenous people. That, like we said, have been  
3 here since the beginning of time. Again, thank you all  
4 for coming and this concludes the tribal session. I  
5 know the Lithium Valley Commission is going to continue,  
6 but I think we're breaking for lunch now. And we're  
7 going to break for an hour, and I would just like to  
8 close by thanking everyone for coming to this.

9           So, we'll be back at 1:30 to convene the  
10 Lithium Valley Commission meeting. Again, thank you  
11 all. Sal-uah a-chu-ma (PHONETIC), as we say in  
12 Cahuilla. Very good.

13           (Whereupon the meeting was off the record at  
14 12:38 P.M.)

15           (Return from break at 1:40 P.M.)

16           CHAIR PAZ: Good afternoon. Since we are  
17 returning from lunch break, if we can please do a roll  
18 call again to establish quorum.

19           MS. LOZA: Commissioner Castaneda?

20           Commissioner Colwell?

21           Commissioner Dolega?

22           MS. LOZA: Commissioner Flores?

23           COMMISSIONER FLORES: Present.

24           MS. LOZA: Commissioner Hanks?

25           Commiss— Vice Chair Kelley

1 Commissioner Lopez?

2 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Here, present.

3 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Olmedo?

4 Chair Paz?

5 CHAIR PAZ: Present.

6 MS. LOZA: Chair Reynolds? Or, Commissioner  
7 Reynolds? Sorry.

8 COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: Here.

9 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Ruiz?

10 Commissioner Scott?

11 COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Present.

12 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Soto?

13 Commissioner Weisgall?

14 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Present.

15 MS. LOZA: I have five Commissioners present.

16 So, I have — the ones that are missing is Commissioner  
17 Castaneda, Commissioner Colwell, Commissioner Dolega,  
18 Commissioner Flo— sorry, Commissioner Hanks, Vice Chair  
19 Kelly, Commissioner Lopez.

20 CHAIR PAZ: He's here.

21 MS. LOZA: Okay. I have six present. Then,  
22 Commissioner Olmedo?

23 Commissioner Ruiz?

24 Commissioner Soto?

25 Yup, we have six present.

1           CHAIR PAZ: I'm seeing that Commissioner  
2 Castaneda is on.

3           We still do not have a quorum at this time.  
4 So, we will not be able to consider any motions or take  
5 a vote unless we have quorum. We will continue with our  
6 agenda discussions and workshop as planned.

7           Please remember that if a Commissioner needs  
8 to step away for a few minutes, or leave the meeting —  
9 inform the group. Or, if a Commissioner arrives during  
10 the meeting, we will also note that for the record.  
11 Thank you, next slide?

12           Okay. So, this is back to the agenda. As we  
13 noted this morning, a revised agenda was posted  
14 yesterday to indicate the change in order of items.  
15 With the planning for upcoming Lithium Valley Commission  
16 meetings and activities including a discussion of  
17 potential process to development the report to the  
18 legislature occurring after the community perspectives  
19 session.

20           This afternoon, we will be hearing community  
21 perspectives and issues related to the work of the  
22 Lithium Commission. I want to thank representatives of  
23 the local community-based organizations that helped to  
24 shape the session and worked with the CEC staff on the  
25 planning and preparation. I also want to thank the

1 invited guests from the community who are going to share  
2 their perspectives with us.

3           The session will be conducted to gather  
4 feedback on five topic areas identified by the community  
5 organizations, and we developed questions to help guide  
6 the discussion in each topic area. So, we I just want  
7 to note a little bit of a different maybe in what was  
8 communicated in the planning with our panelists. So, we  
9 are going to be — I'm not going to be reading questions  
10 one by one. I will just be noting what topic we're  
11 discussing at the moment, and those of you who prepared  
12 to speak on that topic will be invited to speak on that  
13 topic.

14           And then, we will also — we might have members  
15 of the community who are joining us either at this site  
16 or the site in Westmorland who might want to add to that  
17 topic. We will also take that opportunity before  
18 switching topics just to keep a more fluid conversation  
19 and not so pressed, like it's not a Q&A question and  
20 answer. And, we will do public comment on all of the  
21 topics at the end, and then we will have Commissioner  
22 discussion.

23           So, with that said, let me find my space. We  
24 will move into the discussion. The — these are the five  
25 topic areas we will discuss today with our invited

1 community members and through public comments. And I  
2 don't know if there's a slide there, slide 15?

3           These topic areas were developed through a  
4 discussion with representatives from the local community  
5 organizations. Let me read the topics, because you  
6 probably can't see them on the agenda.

7           Let's see. I don't know if I have them.

8 Okay.

9           So, the topics are — we're going to hear on  
10 community engagement and information sharing, community  
11 benefits, workforce development, water, and  
12 environmental impacts and public health. And again, you  
13 can see some overlap. These were some of the same  
14 topics that were identified in the morning session as  
15 topics of interest for tribal communities.

16           Let's see. So, I will be acting as  
17 facilitator for the discussion with assistance from the  
18 CEC staff. I want to ask for your patience during this  
19 session. It can be challenging to coordinate the  
20 conversation across two locations. We do have community  
21 speakers present in Westmorland and through Zoom. So,  
22 we're working to properly provide interpretation  
23 services for all of our participants in the different  
24 locations as well.

25           Our goal here is to lift up community voices

1 and provide an opportunity for residents to share their  
2 thoughts, and we are all doing our best to create that  
3 space. Let's see. That — we can move on, then, to the  
4 next slide.

5 No, slide 16 please.

6 We might be out of order, since I switched  
7 things a little bit. So. Okay.

8 Community engagement. So that's the first  
9 topic, I want to introduce our guest for this topic,  
10 Elizabeth Jaime, she's a resident from North Shore. Is  
11 Elizabeth? She was going to join via Zoom, I think.  
12 And then we have Carolina McNight (PHONETIC), from North  
13 Shore. We also have Blanca Morales and Ilda Mendoza.  
14 And again, these are community members who were  
15 interested in speaking to this topic, but other  
16 community members will be able to also expand on those  
17 perspectives. So, with that said, we will start with  
18 Elizabeth.

19 Okay. So, we will — Elizabeth is having  
20 technical issues. When those are resolved, we will go  
21 back to her. Do we have Carolina?

22 (Pause)

23 Carolina?

24 Was she joining virtually as well?

25 (Pause)

1 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Carolina is not online.

2 CHAIR PAZ: Do we have Blanca, Blanca Morales?

3 Carolina is sick?

4 Okay. Blanca Morales? Maybe she's in the

5 Westmorland location?

6 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: No, she's not here.

7 CHAIR PAZ: No?

8 Blanca's not available either?

9 (Pause)

10 Okay.

11 Okay, while we solve some of the technical

12 problems that are happening, I will read out the

13 questions that were just for guidance and invite our

14 other community members, if you have any thoughts or

15 comments on those topics or perspectives. So, the

16 questions were — and you don't have to answer all of

17 them, you can just speak to your own experience.

18 What are some best examples you can share for

19 how local agencies or businesses communicate effectively

20 with community residents?

21 Is there information you still need to

22 understand what is planned and occurring and what is the

23 best way for you to receive that information?

24 Do you want to provide additional information

25 for the Lithium Commission to consider as they develop

1 their report? And if yes, how would you feel most  
2 comfortable providing that input?

3 In the future, as lithium extraction projects  
4 are built and operating, what information do you want  
5 and need and what type of community engagement would you  
6 like to see?

7 So, at this point, I can invite any of our  
8 guests here to speak on the topic of community  
9 engagement.

10 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Chair Paz, Elizabeth is on.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

12 (Pause)

13 Si se tienen un comentario, pueden introducir  
14 su nombre, y darnos su comentario.

15 MS. ARMENTA: Okay. Buenas tardes. Mi nombre  
16 es Cecilia Armenta y represento a la comunidad de Salton  
17 City. Vivo ahí por 27 años en el cual, pues he mirado  
18 decaer mucho a mi ciudad. La información para dar a la  
19 comunidad.

20 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Si puede comenzar de  
21 nuevo para comenzar a interpretar, por favor.

22 MS. ARMENTA: Gracias.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: She's going to start  
24 over.

25 MS. ARMENTA: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) Good

1 afternoon. My name is Cecilia Armenta. And I come from  
2 the community of Salton City, where I've been here 27  
3 years living. And I've also seen that instead of  
4 growing, we're going downhill. I have been involved in  
5 all these meetings for some time. I know about the  
6 extraction of lithium and environment, programs that  
7 benefit my community and in the way that I have become  
8 involved is through flyers, invitations from local  
9 agencies in which I also participate, and for being a  
10 member of the Salton City community.

11 One of the questions that I'd also like to  
12 answer is, that I do believe that there should be more  
13 information in words that are more understandable and  
14 clear for the community. What does the extraction of  
15 lithium mean in our communities? And what do I mean by  
16 this? To explain to the citizens what will happen with  
17 this extraction.

18 We all ask ourselves, "What will happen to my  
19 health?" And what is it, "What is that chemical that is  
20 going to be extracted from the ground?" There are a lot  
21 of fears with this extraction of lithium. And now I ask  
22 the people who are the owners of this project: have you  
23 taken upon yourselves the task to go through our  
24 communities, whether it be Salton City, North Shore,  
25 Calipatria, Niland, Bombay Beach, and surrounding

1 cities.

2 INTERPRETER: Puede decir las ciudades de  
3 nuevo por favor

4 Salton City, North Shore, Calipatria, Niland,  
5 Bombay Beach, Westmorland, etc.

6 to know what it is that we think about this  
7 project, keeping in mind that you may have websites to  
8 keep us informed? But think that there are a lot of  
9 people in the communities that don't know how to use a  
10 computer to be able to get into the Zoom platform. The  
11 technology does fail.

12 And, one of my suggestions is the creation of  
13 a committee of representatives for lithium. Some of the  
14 representatives of the community, local associations ,  
15 so that one by one, we can go to the communities to  
16 speak with the families who are afraid because of that  
17 lithium extraction. Because they have a lot of doubts,  
18 questions, and they want answers. But if you don't take  
19 it upon yourselves to speak to us and tell us the  
20 reason, the motive, what will occur, what won't occur,  
21 what will happen to me, then we're going to remain in  
22 the same situation.

23 That would be the best experience on your  
24 behalf, the people owners of the extraction of lithium.  
25 Because you would put yourselves in our shoes: the fear,

1 the horror we experience on a daily basis, not to  
2 mention these days when there have been so many  
3 earthquakes. Think about us a little more, because in  
4 our communities, there are people who work hard out in  
5 the field that they deserve to be informed one-on-one.  
6 So that they can understand what is happening. They are  
7 people who if they don't work, they do not eat.

8           And perhaps you may think, "Well, what does it  
9 even matter? Why should we care?" Of course, because  
10 it's on us whether you're able to extract that lithium.  
11 I assure you that if you listen to your people, your  
12 community, the fear they experience or we experience. I  
13 include myself. If you would communicate with your  
14 people, your community, you would know the concerns and  
15 you would listen to their opinions on this topic.

16           Look for forms and for communication  
17 strategies to keep them well-informed, so that they  
18 don't believe everything others say out of fear. With  
19 good information for the people for the community, from  
20 this would come positive things and improvements for our  
21 community.

22           How many people are there surrounding Salton  
23 Sea? We are not 10 or 20 people, we are thousands of  
24 people who should be informed correctly and not just by  
25 what other people say or things like that. Those of us

1 who fight for this mission, for this project so that it  
2 gets done or doesn't get done, so that the community  
3 gets informed well. We can transfer the message, but  
4 once people are misinformed about what's going on, they  
5 no longer listen to those of us who really are saying  
6 the truth and who want something positive for our  
7 community.

8           That's why I say to the owners or to the  
9 people who represent this extraction of lithium that I  
10 await for them in my community of Salton Sea, my  
11 community of Salton City encloses four cities: Desert  
12 Shore, Salton City Beach, Vista del Mar, and Salton  
13 City. And a small area of trailers that I also consider  
14 as part of our community which is Silver Sun. You are  
15 invited to visit my community to find out and ask the  
16 communities what they think what they feel, or what they  
17 think about that extraction of lithium.

18           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

19           MS. TORRES: Hi everyone, my name is Adriana  
20 and I'm a resident from North Shore. I just wanted to —  
21 I — people have already said this, but I just wanted to  
22 say it again. But I think that community should be  
23 number one when planning these type of things.

24           When going into a community and extracting  
25 something from land, I think the people living in that

1 land and the people who have lived in that land should  
2 be the ones in the decision making process of whether  
3 they're ok with the extraction or not. And I think just  
4 even that, like, a meeting like this took so long for  
5 something like this to happen. And I think that it's  
6 already been said before, like, something like this  
7 should have happened a year ago, or two years ago when,  
8 like, a lithium thing was even being proposed to see if  
9 it was — if it should be good or not. And, yeah.

10 MS. RAMIREZ: Buenas tardes, mi nombre es  
11 Sandra Ramirez. La manera que yo he visto que las  
12 organizaciones locales se han dado a la tarea de  
13 informarnos a nosotros sobre qué es el lithium ha sido  
14 de una manera que se ha estado trabajando haciendo.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Sandra?

16 MS. RAMIREZ: Perdon.

17 CHAIR PAZ: We're probably going to have to  
18 translate, so if you can wait a little bit.

19 Va a necesitar comenzar otra vez. Entonces,  
20 ahorita que estén listos.

21 TRANSLATOR: Si puede comenzar de nuevo.

22 MS. RAMIREZ: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) Good  
23 afternoon, my name is Sandra Ramirez. I am a mother and  
24 I live in the city of Coachella. But I lived five years  
25 in Mecca, it's a little bit closer to Laguna. What I

1 can say about the organizations, the way that they've  
2 been reaching out to us, the residents, I think it's a  
3 way that it's effective and efficient.

4 But because lithium is a new subject to all, I  
5 think that we need more efforts. We are all thinking,  
6 "What is lithium? How do you eat it?" And so, we need  
7 information from the very, very bottom. That's why  
8 aside from us being a community for which lithium wasn't  
9 a topic or for which lithium is not a very common word,  
10 that is the reason why we need more information.

11 And I think that we all need to have patience,  
12 because maybe this is a way we have to work differently.  
13 And I agree with Cecy, that we have to go door-to-door  
14 explaining to people what lithium is. And with that, I  
15 think that it would be an easier way for everybody to be  
16 able to keep moving forward with this extraction.

17 Because we are all scared. What will happen  
18 when you start to dig down in the floor? That was one  
19 of my questions; how the tectonic plates would be  
20 affected and whether there would be more earthquakes.?

21 California, again, in May, was declared as  
22 being in a drought. Are you going to use the water that  
23 goes into the homes to be able to carry out the lithium  
24 extraction? And it might sound like an ignorant  
25 question, but that's one of the questions that we have

1 as a community. The water that is diverted from the  
2 Colorado River to meet our needs on this side, will it  
3 be used for the extraction of lithium? And when you  
4 start digging into the ground, will other types of  
5 minerals that we don't know about emerge or come out?  
6 Perhaps some know the answer because they are scientist,  
7 but I'm stating as a resident what our questions are.

8           So, I'm giving examples of questions, that  
9 maybe for people who this is their job, and who are  
10 scientist by profession for them those questions are not  
11 as important. But for us who have our families and are  
12 not going to move, it is important to get  
13 clarifications. So, the work that the organizations are  
14 doing is fine. From this side of the valley of  
15 Coachella. I suppose Imperial Valley might have other  
16 organizations and I hope so, that they are taking on the  
17 task to inform the community.

18           And a suggestion I have would be like, I don't  
19 know how it could be done, bombard the community with  
20 information on this topic. A lot of people take the bus.  
21 Information can be placed there by the bus stops. The  
22 lithium...I mean something condensed but with all the  
23 information we need. The technology is fine, but there  
24 are a lot of people who still don't even have a cell  
25 phone. So, we need to think about those people that

1 also deserve to be informed.

2           And maybe thinking about the young people,  
3 those who are the future of this country, of this  
4 community and that we're all here thinking about a  
5 better future for them. We have to think about how to  
6 design workshops for them, and perhaps as young people  
7 they can inform us, their parents. Some of the  
8 consequences of the pandemic have been the onset of a  
9 lot of triggers of mental health disorders. And fear of  
10 uncertainty from not knowing what awaits us with this  
11 extraction of lithium. It can be another source of  
12 stress. Thank you.

13           MR. BAUTISTA: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) Good  
14 afternoon. My name is Mario Bautista, and I'm from the  
15 community of North Shore.

16           As a community, the ladies said almost  
17 everything, but as a community, we have similar concepts  
18 and...

19           (Technical difficulty)

20           My name is Mario Bautista, and I belong to the  
21 community of North Shore. As a community, we think that  
22 if the government is going to grant these companies  
23 permission or a license to be able to extract lithium,  
24 according to them, without any risk, without any harm,  
25 why don't they use it or take advantage of it to make

1 something for the communities. For example, if they're  
2 going to make batteries, for example for cars that  
3 supposedly in the future there won't be any more gas-  
4 powered vehicles or any of that, they will be electric.

5           Since there are a lot of engineers and a lot  
6 of that, why not try to research how we can get energy  
7 instead of introducing companies who definitely charge  
8 us for more with time for things. We're thinking that  
9 you can take advantage and be able to benefit the  
10 communities. Because regardless of everything, they're  
11 going to introduce machinery, and that probably they say  
12 that nothing can escape, but that's illogical. Because  
13 once you put the machinery inside, obviously the lithium  
14 that comes out will get mixed into the water. And we  
15 don't know what gases or what could come out, what could  
16 affect the community.

17           And not only that, it could go to the water  
18 that goes to our houses. And as a matter of fact, we  
19 don't even have that good of water now to be able to  
20 drink it straight from the faucet. We have to buy the  
21 water or devices to purify it. And I think that's really  
22 all by now, but yes, we do want that if they're going to  
23 give us an accurate report, we don't want them to tell  
24 us, "We guarantee that you will be at least 80, 50, 70  
25 percent protected." We want it to be 100 percent sure

1 that no chemicals will emerge through the water to our  
2 homes or through the air to negatively affect the  
3 community.

4           Because all the time when something happens,  
5 that's when you start to say "sorry." But an apology  
6 won't correct the damage. And I think that's it all for  
7 right now. I think my colleagues have said the most  
8 important things, but we are going to continue fighting  
9 so that if things get done, it should be done 100  
10 percent the correct way and if not, don't do it is  
11 better not to be done.

12           Thank you very much thank you for the  
13 invitation, thank you for inviting this country's  
14 community, for providing us with the space to work  
15 together with them, because they are the owners of this  
16 country. Thank you very much. You're very kind.

17           CHAIR PAZ: And, I'm going to take the liberty  
18 of re-translating that portion, because I don't think  
19 the sentiment was captured.

20           But what he's saying, is that he wants to  
21 thank the original owners of this land for welcoming us  
22 here and having us space and sharing this space.

23           Thank you. So, I will now go back to some of  
24 the speakers who were having technical difficulties. I  
25 think Elizabeth is joining us via Zoom?

1 Elizabeth? Welcome, Elizabeth. I know there  
2 were some questions that were given to you. You can  
3 speak to any one of those, and you just it's your turn  
4 to give us your perspective on community engagement.

5 MS. JAIME: Okay. Voy hablar Español. Voy a  
6 poner mi cámara porque está habiendo otras cosas.

7 CHAIR PAZ: She will be speaking in Spanish,  
8 and she's just setting up her camera.

9 (Pause)

10 MS. JAIME: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) Yes,  
11 I'm having a bit of issues with the internet for my  
12 camera. I'm going to place it for a while..

13 CHAIR PAZ: And, if you cannot get it to work,  
14 Elizabeth, we can still hear you. Feel free to share  
15 your comments with us.

16 MS. JAIME: Okay. Bueno. (TRANSLATED FROM  
17 SPANISH) Thank you for this opportunity to attend this  
18 panel. My name is Elizabeth Jaime. I am a resident of  
19 the community of North Shore. What else can I say to my  
20 partners? My partners have done a great representation.  
21 Since they have exposed everything that we are going  
22 through here in this city close to the lake. We have  
23 had organizations and outreach to the community. But I  
24 also think that we need a lot more.

25 A lot more efforts on behalf of all the team

1 of those in charge of the extraction of lithium, local  
2 organizations, community leaders, and state and federal.  
3 Since this involves everyone, and that they may also  
4 take into account that the majority of people who live  
5 around Salton Sea or around the lake, I'm sorry — we are  
6 field workers, essential as we were during the pandemic  
7 and that we get the same type of respect since we are  
8 being essential once again with the lithium extraction.

9           So, in question of being informed, in regards  
10 to all the plans and above all, the consequences or what  
11 can be affected regarding public health, also the impact  
12 to the environment which is very important. As you  
13 know, or we know, those who live close to the Coachella  
14 Valley, those are extreme climates. And there are many  
15 questions in regards to how it will affect us even more.  
16 We want to know everything. The entire impact that it  
17 will have in the environment once the extraction of  
18 lithium takes place.

19           As you know, we have a very high rate of  
20 people with asthma. Children with nose bleeds without a  
21 response of what is going on. How much it is affecting,  
22 the contamination of the lake? If we take these issues,  
23 what will happen? What greater effects will it have?  
24 With the extraction, what chemicals, I don't know what  
25 gases, it could affect even more so our health of the

1 residents, especially the children who are the ones that  
2 have been more affected by this illness. That is one of  
3 the main worries of the residents.

4           So, we would like there to be a wide  
5 investigation where they research the projected time  
6 lapse of the project, so we can see all the scenarios  
7 that could happen. And these are questions and worries  
8 of parents, I include myself, because my son suffers  
9 from asthma. So, I ask myself, what would happen  
10 if...what amount of lithium is extracted? Like I said,  
11 again, how this is going to affect my child even more.

12           Obviously, we know and we are aware that it is  
13 a great opportunity for the country — the extraction of  
14 lithium and what it would generate. And we really don't  
15 want that you simply use our community.

16           TRANSLATOR: Her audio cut off.

17           MS. JAIME: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) Do not  
18 use our community without seeing how they're going to be  
19 affected. That you include us as a team so that we can  
20 see the opportunity on both sides. Since we are parents  
21 and we have children. Our children are the future and  
22 what are we going to leave them? What kind of  
23 environment, health, infrastructures? What are we going  
24 to leave them?

25           So, I think that should be the focus. We're

1 asking that you please make this your focus that you  
2 also try to understand our community. The worries, the  
3 necessities, that's what we are asking for. And we hope  
4 that this project takes place of thoroughly  
5 investigating everything that will be done because in  
6 that way, we will inform our communities with clear  
7 responses of what will happen. And as I mentioned, my  
8 partners did a great job in stating exactly how we feel  
9 as a community. So, then that's it. Thank you very  
10 much.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I just want to verify  
12 whether Blanca or Hilda are either joining us via Zoom  
13 or in Westmorland? I don't want to skip them if they  
14 are here.

15 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Chair Paz, they are not in  
16 Westmoreland either.

17 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you so much. I will  
18 introduce a new topic, and we want to keep the  
19 conversation fluid and included here from those of you  
20 who are present in Westmorland. So, I will introduce a  
21 new topic, and then, if there's other people who want to  
22 comment after our speakers have spoken on the topic of  
23 community benefit, they are more than welcome. So,  
24 again, at this time, I'm going to be introducing Monique  
25 Ureña, Angel de Dios, and Cecilia Armenta to start us off

1 the conversation on community benefits.

2           Some of the questions that were presented are  
3 as follows:

4           The Lithium Valley Commission understands that  
5 the residents in the region want to see investment in  
6 communities from the new activities. What are your top  
7 priorities for new investments and improvements?

8           How should community residents be involved in  
9 the decision-making process to decide which new  
10 community projects are selected and completed?

11           Are there any good examples now that you can  
12 share?

13           So, you're welcome to speak to any of these  
14 topics. And, I will start with Monique. I believe she  
15 is in Imperial.

16           MS. URENA: Hello? My name is Monique Ureña,  
17 I am working with Imperial Valley Equity and Justice  
18 Coalition. And to give a little bit of context to the  
19 work I've been doing and Angel has been doing as well,  
20 is we launched a community needs assessment survey to,  
21 you know, understand the priorities and needs that our  
22 community members in Imperial and, like, north, North  
23 End residents would like to see.

24           And some of the themes that we saw the most is  
25 affordable housing and, like, the housing crisis. Most

1 residents want to see this money being put to use for  
2 these kinds of services to help the unhoused populations  
3 and communities here in Imperial. As well as different  
4 recreation services for youth, wanting to see you— like,  
5 entertainment, recreation for youth to, you know, keep  
6 them busy and off of these, like, problems that we  
7 usually see in our communities.

8           And as for how we see people being involved in  
9 these processes, is, you know, creating local  
10 commissions in which, you know, community members can be  
11 a part of decision making and hold their local  
12 communities accountable for how this money is used, and  
13 making sure that their priorities are met.

14           Thank you.

15           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

16           MR. DIOS: Hello. My name is Angel de Dios.  
17 Like Monique, I'm also with IV Equity and Justice  
18 Coalition. And we launched a survey, and to kind of  
19 elaborate more on what Monique was saying, is the top  
20 priorities we saw— we categorized what the respondents  
21 said into themes and solutions. This is like, sort of  
22 what they were, you know, overlapping ideas that folks  
23 have, and we have over 100 responses. So, this is  
24 tangible data that we have. And some of the top  
25 priorities, like Monique said, was affordable housing,

1 but more so investment into the North End. This  
2 includes Niland, Calipatria, Bombay Beach, Salton City,  
3 it includes all the North End in the Imperial Valley.

4 We do, and I do — would like to quote one of  
5 the respondents who said that, "Public transportation  
6 infrastructure and roads for the valley and maybe a  
7 trolley system from Calexico to El Centro, Imperial,  
8 Brawley and Calipatria using the existing railroads."  
9 And then they went on to say, "Definitely regional  
10 connectivity with Salton Sea and Niland areas to help  
11 them get better services."

12 These are more so kind of what the community  
13 was saying on. These are preliminary finding of course.  
14 However, we do want to share that most of the community  
15 sees a dem— a need, actually, in the North End. And one  
16 of the things that they also kind of hope to be able to  
17 get from this commu— this investment is investment into  
18 the job corps, especially with key STEM job corps.  
19 That's what hopes you get. As well, they want the local  
20 businesses and organizations to be involved with this to  
21 ensure that there is accountability with these benefits  
22 as well, and oversight.

23 And a final point real quick, before we move  
24 on to someone else. A common theme that we saw was  
25 oversight. The only reason we didn't put it as

1 oversight as a theme, is because of we saw this theme in  
2 every single thing that we wrote down. In  
3 communications, basic and skepticism, opportunities,  
4 environmental justice, all folks want is oversight.

5           And in terms of community benefits investment,  
6 they want oversight as to what jobs are they going to be  
7 getting. What resources are schools going to be  
8 getting. You know, what medical services are we willing  
9 to invest, especially with the tax on lithium. Where,  
10 for that, I think we have eno— that is for our community  
11 benefits portion, and more so a good example of how we  
12 could kind of use a lot of, you know, what folks are  
13 saying.

14           As for, if they want improving in medical  
15 structures, transportation services, there is Moreno  
16 Valley, who has worked with — their school district has  
17 worked to provide basic necessities. And I'm willing to  
18 forward kind of their information later on. And also  
19 just kind of preliminary findings. But, from when they  
20 kind of assessed needs such as dental care and so forth.  
21 So, just throwing out there for the last question for  
22 examples, that I was going to show you part of the  
23 survey. But, the rest was. So, thank you so much, and  
24 I'll pass it on to whoever's next.

25           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And, Cecilia?

1 MS. ARMENTA: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) Thank  
2 you. So, as we say, here comes the good part. I  
3 remember in the month of June in the present year an  
4 informative column from the Imperial County was  
5 published where they talked about the BSC 125,  
6 investments and infrastructures in the local communities  
7 of the Imperial County. Being guaranteed by said  
8 development of the extraction of lithium saying that the  
9 local residents would see local infrastructures, public  
10 security, environment, etcetera.

11 But, the most interesting part of this report  
12 was that they mentioned some cities, thanking them for  
13 their support on the said project. Now, I think about  
14 my community in Salton City and surrounding cities.  
15 These cities do not appear in this list of these said  
16 plans and infrastructures and new changes. What should  
17 we do to be taken into account in these projects?

18 I maintain myself informed and I participate  
19 in the links of the lithium extraction, panels like  
20 today's. And with sadness, I see that my city of Salton  
21 City is not being taken into account for said  
22 infrastructure improvements or the local needs of Salton  
23 City and other cities.

24 We belong to the Imperial County in which has  
25 a representative in the county, Mr. Ryan Kelley. And I

1 would like him to defend us and represent us with  
2 responsibility. And that they would take us into  
3 account during these changes.

4           Since our community is known as an abandoned  
5 town, ghost town, those who conform with what they have,  
6 and I think as the representative of my community in  
7 Salton City, we also want to see the changes that other  
8 cities have or that will have. I can think of a lot of  
9 improvements for my community. Use said investment for  
10 the extraction of lithium for our cities.

11           That our city can count on decent  
12 infrastructure so that it can stop being an ugly town, a  
13 ghost town, or a town that just conforms. I will share  
14 some information. In the year 2000, there were 978  
15 inhabitants in Salton CitySea. In 2010, we had an  
16 increase to 3,763 people. In the last count, 2020, we  
17 were 5,433 people. And there have been more people in  
18 these last two years. As you can see, there are more  
19 families that live in this city who need more resources  
20 for infrastructures, medical clinics, decent parks, good  
21 roads, public lighting.

22           CHAIR PAZ: Good roads.

23           MS. ARMENTA: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) And  
24 then, I can spend all day just telling you what our city  
25 needs. Because I live in Salton City, but actually I

1 represent all the other communities, Desert Shores,  
2 Salton Sea Beach, Vista del Mar, and Salton City.  
3 Please we ask that you be part of these improvements as  
4 they said it in a documentary. That I also saw. It  
5 says... the title, which I loved, was "Hope," of the  
6 extraction of lithium, it revives the hope in the Salton  
7 Sea.

8           So then, I feel the emotions are overcoming  
9 me. I'm very sorry. Hope, then give me the hope that I  
10 will be heard and not ignored. Included and not  
11 excluded. In your decisions to make improvements in the  
12 entire city, of Salton City, and its surrounding.

13           We want to be part of this story. Of  
14 improvements with the hope that I may not see it. But  
15 my children, grandchildren, and future generations of my  
16 community and the other cities will see it. That they  
17 may see it finished.

18           I want to be useful and not discriminated. I  
19 know that discrimination is a strong word, but that's  
20 how I felt. When I saw so many promises, promising a  
21 better future for my community, and it continues being a  
22 ghost town. What do our communities await in the  
23 future? If we live in fear of what will happen  
24 tomorrow. Will I meet or get to know my grandchildren?

25           You just spoke about projects for my

1 community. I hope in God that I will be able to see  
2 them. Because I am not the only one that has dreams or  
3 hopes of a better city, of a better park for the  
4 children existing, and for the future ones.

5           If the owners of the extraction of lithium —  
6 if they're going to have a better home, a better plate  
7 of food. Many of us sometimes don't have that plate of  
8 food, even though we live in the United States.  
9 Honestly, I don't know who I should direct myself to by  
10 name. But I'm telling you. Put your hand upon your  
11 heart, think of all of us that live around Salton Sea.  
12 Maybe those who will be extracting this lithium do not  
13 live here, but we do.

14           And we are afraid. We have questions to which  
15 we want an answer. But a true answer, not a lie. I am  
16 tired of those. That I am promised but they don't  
17 comply. Now, it could be that my hopes are greater  
18 because of all the things that I have seen, and that is  
19 the reason to why I am here. So, you can hear me, and  
20 not ignore me. Hear the voice of a mother, a wife, a  
21 daughter that has seen healthy people deteriorate day by  
22 day because it is stressful that people suffer from  
23 anxiety, from not knowing what awaits us tomorrow.  
24 Thank you for hearing me.

25           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Cecilia. Just a

1 reminder, we are hearing community perspectives during  
2 this session on various topics that were identified by  
3 the local organizations the CEC partnered with. And  
4 there may be some community residents who are not  
5 officially part of the panel who may have something to  
6 add. So, I will turn to Westmorland and see if there  
7 are any other community residents who want to add their  
8 perspective to this conversation.

9           And I'm — I see a hand raised. I — if  
10 somebody can direct them on how to give their comment,  
11 please?

12           MR. FLORES: Hi, so my name is Luis Flores  
13 from Calexico. I just am — I've been hearing sort of  
14 the feedback that's been given, and I just had some  
15 things I want— I was thinking about. I think as  
16 important as sort of earmarking and sort of having a  
17 sense of what kind of the priorities are, is state sort  
18 of mandated mechanisms for community engagement  
19 throughout the process of community benefits. Right?  
20 Of the life of a community benefit.

21           Communities are not static, communities  
22 themselves change, their needs change, their views  
23 change. So, any politician, local or otherwise, or even  
24 any community that tells you they can speak for a  
25 community without doing the work of surveying, of having

1 groups, having conversations — are probably not sort of  
2 doing the work they should be doing.

3           So, I think — I'm sort of thinking about the  
4 recent history of local spending priorities released.  
5 The preliminary list of priorities in the — for tax  
6 resources, but also the recent experience of ARPA, the  
7 American Rescue Plan Act priorities in Imperial County.  
8 And to me, it's clear that local county officials can't  
9 be trusted to sort of do the work of generating  
10 community grounded priorities for spending. Even money  
11 that's earmarked for particular needs.

12           CHAIR PAZ: One second, sorry.

13           MR. FLORES: Yeah.

14           CHAIR PAZ: It's hard to, for the translators  
15 to hear you. Maybe if you try, if you feel comfortable  
16 removing the mask.

17           MR. FLORES: I'm sorry.

18           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

19           MR. FLORES: Yes, of course.

20           CHAIR PAZ: Apologies for the interruption.

21           MR. FLORES: No, I'm sorry, I'm speaking  
22 quickly too.

23           Yeah, so I think I'll just reiterate. I think  
24 as important as earmarking needs, at this point is for  
25 state level requirements for sustained community

1 participation in the, in the sort of, in the plan for  
2 spending these plans throughout the entire sort of, like  
3 built paged into.

4           And I think that there needs to be  
5 accountability from the state, because I don't think  
6 local officials can always be trusted to sort of do that  
7 kind of work. In large part because a lot of folks in  
8 this community aren't able to vote. Either because  
9 voting is not accessible, or because they are not  
10 allowed to. So, we can't rely on local elected  
11 officials to be gatekeepers for this. That there needs  
12 to be state level mechanisms in place. Thank you.

13           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Is there anyone else  
14 in Westmorland, any community residents there who want  
15 to add to the conversation?

16           MR. DIOS: This is Angel de Dios again. Just  
17 really quick, to also elaborate on Luis Flores' point.  
18 In our survey, there was — there is a skepticism of all  
19 forms of government. This is both local, county wide,  
20 and state wide. Folks are also not very trusting of  
21 both, kind of their elected officials. And fear for  
22 corruption, specifically, you know, there has been  
23 cities in our entire research that called out cities,  
24 and they were scared as to how the tax is going to be  
25 used, and also how community members are going to be

1 implemented. So, just wanted to also kind of use to  
2 back up the point that there is skepticism in the  
3 valley, and the only way to also build that is, as some  
4 of the reci— some of the key respondents said, is to  
5 build trust and to communicate directly with the  
6 community by involving them in all projects and also  
7 making them accessible to all members of the community.  
8 Thank you.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you for that.

10 MR. VALENZUELA: Hello, Sergio Valenzuela.  
11 I'm a Westmorland resident, been here my whole life.  
12 And, I just wanted to make a comment about the  
13 reinvestment into the community. Considering that the  
14 lithium that's being extracted is from our valley, it'd  
15 be very interesting to see how the final products that  
16 are being created with the lithium here would be  
17 reinvested into the community in forms of, like,  
18 electric vehicles or anything like that.

19 And considering that the valley is already  
20 suffering with a lot of air pollution, and — it would be  
21 interesting to see what kind of development could be  
22 created with the batteries such as the portable — or  
23 sorry, the electric vehicle charging stations. And  
24 maybe some kind of rebates, or reimbursement for  
25 community members that want to purchase electric

1 vehicles that could actually have some kind of effect of  
2 eliminating pollution, even from here to the lines in  
3 Mexicali as vehicles are waiting to cross back. If  
4 there's more electric vehicles being put into the  
5 community from the lithium that's created here, that  
6 could also maybe produce a reduction in the air  
7 pollution here in the valley. So that's just something  
8 to consider. Thank you.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Is there anyone else  
10 in Westmorland?

11 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: No more comments here.

12 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, I will introduce  
13 another topic, and again invite people to speak. The  
14 next topic is around workforce development. I will let  
15 you know some of the questions that were put out there  
16 as starters, but always welcome any other perspective,  
17 even if it's not captured in the questions.

18 The project developers have told us that they  
19 want and need to build a local workforce for these  
20 projects. What things do you think are needed most to  
21 prepare local residents to fill new jobs?

22 What are the biggest barriers people in your  
23 community face when trying to get new, high-quality  
24 jobs?

25 Looking ahead, to be sure that the workforce

1 stays in the local communities and that over time there  
2 is a commitment to continue a solid relationship between  
3 schools and vocational training programs and the lithium  
4 extraction facilities, how can the local people and  
5 agencies involved set goals together and monitor the  
6 accomplishments over time?

7           And, for this panel, we have Richard Cordero  
8 from Westmorland, Simon Canalez from Brawley Union High  
9 School District, and Carlos Gonzales from Imperial  
10 County. We can start with Richard?

11           MR. GONZALES: Hi. Well first of all, thank  
12 you for hosting this community session. I think these  
13 are very important. So, I'll kind of break it down,  
14 trying to answer the first question, second, and third.

15           So, for the first question, I think narrowing  
16 it down, what things do you think are needed most to  
17 prepare local residents to fill new jobs? So, coming  
18 from the educational standpoint, I think one of the  
19 first questions that we ask is, "What specifically are  
20 the jobs that are needed?" And I think from being able  
21 to determine what those jobs are, then we can align our  
22 current CTE, or CE pathways at the local college

23           And let me tell you kind of explain why that  
24 is important. So, when we work with our different  
25 schools, for example, we have a lot of sectors that we

1 already have in place. So, it's important to know what  
2 specific jobs it is that are going to be needed for the  
3 lithium project. Are they, for example, jobs in  
4 finance? We do have sectors in our CTE that relate to  
5 business and finance.

6 Are they, for example, jobs that are going to  
7 be needed for energy, environment, and utilities? Which  
8 is another sector that does exist. It's not in place,  
9 however, if it's needed, it is something that we have to  
10 discuss and work on together to put in place.

11 Another sector that exists, for example, is  
12 engineering and architecture, information communication,  
13 manufacturing and product development. So, these are in  
14 place, but what we need to narrow down — because in each  
15 one of these sectors there's different pathways that  
16 exist. What exactly, and I think that's the key  
17 question. What exact positions are going to be needed  
18 from the lithium project to ensure that it is  
19 successful?

20 You know, when we look at curriculum and  
21 alignment, that's also very important to us as well.  
22 But one of the key responsibility, I think, commitments  
23 that we need is going to be the industry leaders in this  
24 case. And I know there are various. You know, you pick  
25 up the newspaper, and you see GM, you see all these

1 different companies. Which is great. So, we consider  
2 them industry leaders, but they really need to take a  
3 position at the table. They need to be able to  
4 articulate with us in regards to what are the needs in  
5 order for us to be able to work collaboratively towards  
6 those needs.

7           So, I think active participants is what I'm  
8 going to kind of leave it as. With all these  
9 stakeholders that are in place, we really need active  
10 participation. Whenever we call and ask, "What is it  
11 that you need?" We need that response, and we need them  
12 to be at the table.

13           Second question, "What are the biggest  
14 barriers people in your community face when trying to  
15 get new, high-quality jobs?" I think the biggest  
16 obstacle that we face is not being equipped with the  
17 skills to meet the labor market needs. And I think  
18 that's why it's critically important to know what  
19 exactly it is those positions that are going to be  
20 needed in order for us to collaboratively work together  
21 and work on those skills.

22           And that's why I talk about alignment. We  
23 need to align what we currently have in place to what  
24 the work force is going to need. And that only comes  
25 through communication, and being able to articulate that

1 need.

2           You know, there's currently career awareness  
3 that we continue to work on county-wide. You know,  
4 providing opportunities for students, talking about  
5 possible career opportunities, exploring their passions.  
6 And so, we can work very well with making sure that our  
7 students have the information that they need, our staff  
8 has the information that they need. But it comes back  
9 to that one key question: What is or are the positions  
10 that are going to be needed in order for us to be able  
11 to work together as a team, you know, to work towards  
12 those goals?

13           Third question, "Looking ahead, to be sure  
14 that the workforce stays in the local communities and  
15 that over time there is a commitment to continue a solid  
16 relationship between schools and vocational training  
17 programs and the lithium extraction facilities, how can  
18 the local people and agencies involved set goals  
19 together to monitor the accomplishments over time?"

20           And I think that comes with continuous  
21 involvement. It has to do with the community, it has to  
22 do with the educational leaders, and it has to do with  
23 the industry partnership as well. And I think what the  
24 key is, is going to come down to is building those  
25 relationships. Who are the key players that we need to

1 work with?

2           But the key, the key stakeholders is also very  
3 important for us to be a part of. You know, we are  
4 working on having a strong workforce consortium. We do  
5 have all the districts in the Imperial County that have  
6 a very strong consortium in regards to workforce, to  
7 creating pathways, to inform our students, to inform our  
8 staff, educate in regards to the career technical  
9 education pathways that exist. But it's very important,  
10 again, bringing it back home, that we do have that  
11 articulation with the industry leaders at this point.

12           And, there's many. Right? There's the  
13 extraction. There are the car manufacturer, there are  
14 the battery manufacturer investors. So, we know there  
15 are out there quite a few. It would be nice in regards  
16 to the educational community to know exactly who they  
17 are, and make sure that we have them work  
18 collaboratively with us as we go through this whole  
19 process.

20           You know, I do want to thank you for again  
21 having this committee meeting. I'll leave you with this  
22 quote that I like. It says the following, "How we  
23 invest today will determine how we will live tomorrow."  
24 We all care about our community very much, every single  
25 one of us that is here. We want what's best for our

1 community.

2           And I know you do as well, but keep that in  
3 mind, that the decisions that we make today will  
4 definitely impact our community for the future. And so,  
5 I'll just leave you with that. And again, thank you for  
6 your time and hearing us out. Really appreciate it.  
7 Thank you.

8           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. The next—

9           MR. CORDERO: Thank you, Carlos. This is  
10 Richard Cordero from Westmorland. In piggybacking on  
11 what Mr. Gonzales mentioned regarding a partnership and  
12 the investment, it's not just asking and tel— having the  
13 business community inform us of what are some of the  
14 jobs. But partnering with us, partnering with the  
15 education community to strengthen the curriculum, and  
16 the ability to train the — our future workforce so it  
17 could become sustainably here locally.

18           Our goal is to have our students, our  
19 community fill these jobs as best possible. We want the  
20 investment not just to be going into the school, but as  
21 a — forming a circle and having them help us create  
22 better workforce that then could fill those high paying  
23 jobs. And then having our own students not have to go  
24 outside of the county, but be able to have a standard of  
25 living here that would be beneficial not just for them,

1 but for the entire community.

2           So, in doing so, we would hope that the  
3 business community is able to not just partner but  
4 invest, and help us align our curriculum, our  
5 instruction, and strengthen it so that our students  
6 could stay here in the county and be productive citizens  
7 with high paying jobs. So, I would hope that as these  
8 discussions move on, that it's not just an investment in  
9 some of think — greater topics that have come up  
10 throughout the morning and this afternoon, but also  
11 never forget the curriculum and the instruction that  
12 needs to take place in order to fill those high paying  
13 jobs.

14           And I think we're, in the education community  
15 I can speak for myself, but I think I can speak for  
16 everybody here. We're more than willing to modify and  
17 adjust to make sure that we create those pathways that  
18 lead directly into those high paying jobs by backwards  
19 mapping from the end product, which is the employee and  
20 their qualifications to be competitive, and work our way  
21 back. Working through the community college, the high  
22 school districts, and even the junior highs. Because in  
23 the ju— in my vision, is in the junior high, seventh and  
24 eighth grade, we get them curious about maybe science,  
25 hands on technology, maybe make a couple of visits or

1 visits to the lithium companies or some of the  
2 geothermals, talk to them about how it works.

3           Then from that curiosity when they move on to  
4 the high school, for us we feed into Brawley High, they  
5 may want to take more advanced science courses, or maybe  
6 be interested in maybe pathways that could be developed  
7 at the high school that lead them into a more direct  
8 certification or certificate that may get them ready to  
9 be employed. Right out of high school, or maybe they  
10 would like to continue maybe to Imperial Valley College,  
11 or maybe San Diego State Imperial Valley Campus, that  
12 would then get them better prepared, depending on the  
13 degrees that they're interested in.

14           So, we hope that this is an ongoing, this is  
15 an ongoing communication and partnership. And that's  
16 what we look forward to from the education community.  
17 Thank you.

18           MR. CANALEZ: Thank you. My name's Simon  
19 Canalez, I'm the Superintendent of Brawley Union High  
20 School District. I also am the chair of the Imperial  
21 Valley K-12 Strong Workforce Consortium. I also preside  
22 on Imperial County Adult Education Consortium. Two  
23 consortiums that you can use as a Commission, right? To  
24 become a partner to let us help you with our students  
25 and our pathways, and develop programs that align to

1 middle school, high school, the community college, and  
2 San Diego State.

3           On those consortiums sit representative  
4 members from San Diego State, Imperial Valley Community  
5 College, Imperial Valley Regional Occupation Program —  
6 IVROP, all of the high school districts. So, when we're  
7 talking about what's best for our students, for  
8 potential future careers, the Imperial County Strong  
9 Workforce is the body which needs to be engaged.

10           And so, I appreciate the opportunity to have  
11 the three of us sit on this panel today, and we afford  
12 an opportunity from someone, from the Commission, to be  
13 participatory in our meetings. We meet regularly  
14 throughout the year, and we're discussing what's in the  
15 best needs and interests of our students across the  
16 entire Imperial Valley.

17           So, it's not just something that's local and  
18 near and dear to one community, it's something that we  
19 focus on to enhance the opportunities for all the  
20 students across the communities of Imperial Valley, to  
21 include our adult education students as well.

22           That being said, I've attended a number of  
23 these meetings and forums, and we've been able to take  
24 back and have discussions at the consortium level to  
25 talk in conjunction with IVC and their plans to start to

1 develop some pathways for the North End which we can  
2 backwards map. IVC is already set to launch in the fall  
3 of 2023, three different certificate programs that will  
4 lead to jobs aligned to the lithium extraction  
5 production field.

6           And so, what we're doing up in the North End,  
7 is that we'll backwards map and start programs within  
8 the high school district that we work in and up in  
9 Calipat, we're partnering with Calipat, IVC, Brawley,  
10 and Westmorland to then start getting that information  
11 out to the younger grades, and then start building a  
12 pathway where students, as they exit high school, have  
13 the skill sets necessary to go into the introductory  
14 workforce in the lithium extraction production. And  
15 then also, do dual enrollment processes, be able to move  
16 over to IVC, obtain the certifications, and then move  
17 forward with those higher paying jobs at the back end.

18           So, we're looking forward to this, we're all  
19 in, we're building out our STEM program. I know IVC's  
20 looking to build out their STEM program and so is San  
21 Diego State. So, all of us working in coordination and  
22 conjunction together. We can build this workforce. Let  
23 us help you by helping us to get the information, be  
24 participatory in our meeting, and we'll build the  
25 pathways and we'll align the students — both at the high

1 school and in the adult world, from the adult ed  
2 consortium, to be able to be there to be part of the  
3 workforce. Thank you.

4 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Thank you for those  
5 perspectives. I will invite now, again, some of our  
6 guests, community guests that are in Westmorland. If  
7 there's anything else that needs to be added to this  
8 perspective?

9 MS. URENA: Hello, Monique Ureña again. I'm  
10 coming with this perspective as a recent graduate from  
11 high school. I think one of the best approaches to  
12 engage students into wanting careers in lithium would be  
13 to, you know, market it as a stable job source. Right  
14 now, one of the biggest concerns from high school  
15 students and recent graduates is, will I be able to get  
16 a stable career, and will this lead to a stable life  
17 afterwards?

18 So, I think that's the main point of marketing  
19 to get these, these students interested in these jobs.  
20 As well as, like you guys mentioned, have CTE courses  
21 that will ensure that these students will be able to,  
22 you know, have a successful, successful pathway to, you  
23 know, get these jobs.

24 And as for some community concerns that I  
25 would like to share, is some community members would

1 like to know, you know, numbers, how much are these —  
2 how —what percentage of the workforce are these  
3 companies trying to commit to local workers? So, thank  
4 you.

5 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

6 MR. DIOS: And, hi this is Angel, I've — to  
7 kind of add on (INDISCERNIBLE). Also, our kind of  
8 survey also supports what our educators are here saying.  
9 The community does want these STEM programs, they do  
10 want the expansion. And like (INDISCERNIBLE) said,  
11 there is — they want to know the numbers, kind of like  
12 the details.

13 And also, as well, many community members are  
14 aware that you don't just start at the high school  
15 entering into high level, that you actually start since  
16 pre-K. That was one thing that we say, is that there is  
17 a, kind of, support for pre-K, you know, kinder, K-12,  
18 kind of desire for funding for those programs or just  
19 kind of to make sure that these, you know, younger folks  
20 have a strong base. And you know by the time they get  
21 to high school they don't have gaps, or they don't have  
22 sort of things that are — won't prepare them for these  
23 CTE courses, or CTE pathways.

24 And especially considering the numbers, of how

1 the Imperial Valley kind of performs at a state level  
2 and national level, these support systems are very well  
3 much needed in, you know, the 1-6, junior high,  
4 elementaries. And especially with COVID, there has —  
5 there is this gap, you know, many folks in our community  
6 have. So, we kind of want to say, like, our survey also  
7 kind of, our data also supports what the educators are  
8 saying.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

10 MR. CORDERO: Yes, this is Richard Cordero  
11 again. Just to piggyback on the comments, I think it's,  
12 for the Commission, I know they're tasked to create a  
13 report to give to the state legislators. One of the  
14 things that I find very important, and it reminded me  
15 right now — when we talk about employees or the  
16 workforce that is created, and we — from our perspective  
17 we heard a couple of times mentioned, backwards mapping.

18 So, we're able to meet a goal. Right? Well  
19 here's what they want, how to we get there? And we  
20 backwards map with some benchmarks in between and make  
21 sure we're accomplishing that goal. I think one of the  
22 important things that we also need to take into  
23 consideration, and maybe put as a goal — and I don't  
24 know what the number is, but to have a percentage of

1 employees that are coming, that are — I don't know, it's  
2 not mining, however the extraction process works, that  
3 there's a percent of local, that are being filled  
4 locally.

5           What that number is? I don't know. But I  
6 think if we had a goal, then we could, from the  
7 education perspective, say if we — are we meeting that  
8 goal? Are we producing the students that are capable of  
9 filling those slots? And if they're not, and if we're  
10 not, and we're not meeting that goal because our  
11 students are not being competitive then what can we do  
12 to improve? So that our students as they come out  
13 either of our high school, or out of IVC, or San Diego  
14 State Imperial Valley College, that they are  
15 competitive.

16           So, I think it's also important to look at  
17 what factors, and what that number may be. Because  
18 ultimately what we want, is success. And as Mr. Canalez  
19 mentioned, help us help you. And I think those — by  
20 putting some benchmarks in place, those are some of the  
21 specifics that sometimes are left out when the decisions  
22 are being made of projects this size. Because we look  
23 at the project and it just seems so overwhelming, and  
24 sometimes people are just happy to bring in the money.  
25 And sometimes people are just upset because of the

1 environmental impacts.

2           So, I think there needs to be benchmarks and  
3 goals set for all people or concerns, and see if we are  
4 meeting those benchmarks. For our perspective, it's  
5 local employment. Are we providing the workforce? So,  
6 that's something that I think in the report should be  
7 looked at or considered, because I think as the — as I  
8 said, the young people here are mentioning, and they're  
9 starting their career, and we want to make sure that we  
10 provide the education and the opportunities for them to  
11 meet their goals, whatever that may be. So, I hope that  
12 the Commission takes that into consideration as well.  
13 Thank you.

14           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So again, we are going  
15 to be opening public comment at the end of all of our  
16 topics, but we do have some of our guests who are also  
17 on Zoom, and I haven't been very good at calling on  
18 them. But, I'm going to see if Council Member Karina  
19 Quintanilla who had her hand raised a while back, if  
20 she's still on Zoom? And I can invite you to speak.

21           (Pause)

22           MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Chair Paz, we have a speaker  
23 here in Westmorland, they want to speak. Please let us  
24 know when he can talk.

25           CHAIR PAZ: Sure. We'll go back. Let me just

1 see if —

2 MS. QUINTANILLA: I am, I am here.

3 CHAIR PAZ: Okay.

4 MS. QUINTANILLA: I'm trying to see if — can  
5 you hear me now?

6 CHAIR PAZ: Yes, we can hear you.

7 MS. QUINTANILLA: Wonderful. Thank you so  
8 much for the opportunity to speak. I am coming to you  
9 not only as a 40 yearly resident of the Coachella  
10 Valley, a mother, and asthmatic, and also an elected  
11 official. So first off, I would like to thank and  
12 acknowledge the first nations people because they were  
13 here first, and we must look at what we have done with  
14 the Salton Sea, which we need to protect as a resource.

15 I agree with absolutely everything that has  
16 been brought before the group. And as an educator, I  
17 completely agree. As a lover of the environment, I  
18 would like to know what is the worst possible scenario  
19 that the lithium extraction will provide? And what is  
20 your plan to address it?

21 I think that as local officials, there has not  
22 been enough information that has sent to us. Email  
23 blasts are not very effective. Things in writing are.

24 Just as the residents, when you say, "Oh, well  
25 we put notices out there," it's almost gaslighting to

1 say, "We sent that information out," in a community that  
2 does not have regular access to broadband.

3 I agree that the community forums need to be  
4 held more frequently and be accessible for people that  
5 work all day long in the fields. There needs to be  
6 evening sessions, because we must understand that as our  
7 public health is impacted, we — the workforce is  
8 impacted. So, for cities that don't see the benefit, we  
9 need to let them know. If we don't have healthy people  
10 to work, we will not have agriculture. If we don't have  
11 healthy people to work, then our economic development  
12 also in the Coachella Valley and Imperial Valley is  
13 affected.

14 So, we are all interconnected, and I am  
15 calling with support from the city of Palm Desert,  
16 because I grew up in Thousand Palms, an unincorporated  
17 city or town, and I know how it's like when the counties  
18 do not prioritize cities that have their own council to  
19 speak up. So, I don't want to take up more of your  
20 time, because I lost the bullet points. I'm on my way  
21 to the road. But, I wanted to make those comments.

22 Y en español, soy Karina Quintanilla  
23 (CONTINUES IN SPANISH).

24 CHAIR PAZ: Council Member Quintanilla?

25 MS. QUINTANILLA: Yes?

1 CHAIR PAZ: It was already translated.

2 MS. QUINTANILLA: Okay, perfect.

3 CHAIR PAZ: So, thank you for that though.

4 Yes.

5 MS. QUINTANILLA: And, I, that was my effort  
6 to connect directly. And my greatest apo— deepest  
7 gratitude for everyone that is present, and the  
8 sacrifice they are making away from their families. And  
9 also, if there's any opportunity for everyone to view UC  
10 Riverside's Salton Sea Symposium, there was excellent  
11 information including a part about how the microbes are  
12 airborne.

13 And they go into our lungs and become viral  
14 infections when they want to. And then our doctors and  
15 physicians are not able to detect them until they become  
16 live. If they haven't seen them, then we just get  
17 generic antibiotics which then has a greater affect in  
18 the community. So all of these issues need to be taken  
19 into effect. The communities where lithium has been  
20 extracted, I would like to know their impacts in  
21 different parts of the world. Because communities that  
22 are seen to the margin are sometimes seen as disposable,  
23 where these people are hardworking individuals that are  
24 keeping our region afloat.

25 So, I think that is it for now. I have been

1 watching this issue and it's very near and dear to my  
2 heart as an asthmatic and only imagining what the  
3 communities are experiencing there. So, my best wishes  
4 to everyone there, healthiest wishes, and I will still  
5 be in touch. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We also had another  
7 community member on Zoom. I don't know if I'm going to  
8 be able to pronounce the name — Oletha (PHONETIC)?

9 OLETHA (PHONETIC): Hello?

10 CHAIR PAZ: Hello, welcome.

11 OLETHA (PHONETIC): Hi. I'm really glad that  
12 I was able to join this Zoom conversation. I had  
13 planned on being there in person, however wasn't able to  
14 get out due to other priorities. But, I do consider  
15 this a priority in our region. Of course the impact,  
16 the tribal impact is something that brought me to this  
17 meeting and to see the impact within. And the basic,  
18 like, understanding of the issue, really, as well as  
19 tribal impact. This is new to me.

20 So, I am just listening in and hearing  
21 comments, and I'm not sure if I had raised my hand or  
22 something, but I don't know why my name was called, so —

23 CHAIR PAZ: Yeah, your hand was raised. But  
24 thank you.

25 OLETHA (PHONETIC): Oh, okay. I'm very sorry.

1 That was probably something that I didn't know I did.  
2 But appreciate everyone who spoke and eloquently  
3 presented the issues at hand. And just look forward to  
4 sitting back and listening. Thank you very much.

5 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, I will take this  
6 other last speaker that we saw on Zoom, and then I will  
7 go back to Westmorland, because I know there are more  
8 comments there. Isabel Solis?

9 MR. REYES: Yeah, this is Eric Reyes, just  
10 calling with Isabel Solis, Los Amigos del la Comunidad.  
11 Brawley resident for 58 years, left getting her degree  
12 at Seattle University, and saw a whole different side of  
13 the nation. There's environmentally more in tune with  
14 the living, how to live a quality of life that we don't  
15 have here in Imperial County.

16 And that's a lot of the reasons why we, we  
17 have these hearings and we implore people to be  
18 involved. What we have seen is a degrading of an  
19 already degraded environmental basin shared with  
20 Coachella, or Coachella Valley. That this lithium  
21 development may be one, a boom and maybe a bust. Either  
22 way, there will be impacts and we want to make sure  
23 those aren't impacted.

24 So, we would like to see, from Los Amigos de  
25 la Comunidad and other community member, we'd like to

1 see infrastructure improvements into a modern  
2 transportation instead of the third world, almost third  
3 world, we have in the North End where that development  
4 will be, that will be able to handle the lithium  
5 development needs and not strangle the existing fence  
6 line communities as they struggle as an underserved  
7 community.

8           We'd also like to see a huge investment in the  
9 human and environment health systems to not just  
10 mitigate, but enhance those underserved systems that  
11 have impacted the quality of life for generations. And  
12 then obviously in the Workforce Investment Board, we  
13 have a hugely undereducated lack of job training for  
14 entry level jobs. So, before we talk about (AUDIO CUT  
15 OUT) there's hundreds and millions (AUDIO CUT OUT) are  
16 there, we need to bring our local residents up to speed  
17 on quality of job opportunities that have evaded them  
18 for generations. (AUDIO CUT OUT) So they have just  
19 manual labor, farm labor work, (AUDIO CUT OUT), locally  
20 in the industries that are coming, but if (AUDIO CUT  
21 OUT) be competitive with those (AUDIO CUT OUT) as well.

22           STEM is hugely important, but we must also be  
23 sure with an investment (AUDIO CUT OUT) for (AUDIO CUT  
24 OUT) children (AUDIO CUT OUT) lack of education  
25 available. And then within there, there are subgroups

1 as well, ex-felons, and so on who are not given the same  
2 opportunity as others for prior convictions and prior  
3 issues that they have that we must bring them,  
4 incorporate them as well to be equitable. And we hope  
5 there's a huge investment in green job economics that  
6 create jobs in ensuring (AUDIO CUT OUT) environmental  
7 health community, and millions — and I mean hundreds of  
8 (AUDIO CUT OUT) and business incubates for local  
9 residents to create and own businesses for generational  
10 and family wealth building.

11 So, I thank you for the opportunity to speak.  
12 Thank you very much.

13 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, I was just  
14 notified, there's a few other of our community members  
15 wishing to speak on Zoom. So, I will call on them.  
16 Maria Nava, from Calipatria?

17 And then after Maria Nava, Brenda Ortiz, and  
18 then Cristina Marquez.

19 (Pause)

20 MS. LOZA: Hi Brenda, you should be able to  
21 unmute yourself.

22 MS. ORTIZ: Can you hear me?

23 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

24 MS. ORTIZ: Okay, perfect. Yeah, so I  
25 actually had my hand raised for the community benefits

1 portion. And, I don't know if maybe, like —

2 CHAIR PAZ: You can speak on that too. Thank  
3 you.

4 MS. ORTIZ: Yeah, so I just wanted to comment  
5 on like the recent decision made to allocate the 20  
6 percent of the tax revenue to Salton Sea. And I just  
7 wanted to like urge that at least 50 percent of that is  
8 used towards like project that like serve the  
9 communities see fit, such as North Shore. And one of  
10 the biggest projects being like the updating of the  
11 energy infrastructure, because that infrastructure,  
12 like, with just a gust of wind, it like already causes a  
13 three-day power outage at least.

14 So, it was just like a little ironic, right?  
15 That, you know, the community you're extracting from  
16 that provides energy for the nation, for the rest of the  
17 world, cannot withstand — their infrastructure cannot  
18 withstand a little gust of wind. So, that's one of the  
19 projects I wanted to highlight.

20 And, and just like in the more general sense  
21 and community benefits, I want the Commission to be  
22 generous. Because this is going to bring a lot of  
23 money, right? And I want you guys to be generous with  
24 the benefits. So, don't hold back.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

1           That was Brenda Ortiz. Did we lose Maria  
2 Nava?

3           MS. LOZA: Yes, she's not online anymore.

4           CHAIR PAZ: Okay. So, Cristina Marquez, and  
5 then Hector.

6           MS. LOZA: Okay, Cristina, you should be able  
7 to unmute yourself.

8           MS. MARQUEZ: Thank you. Good afternoon.  
9 Thank you, Chair Paz, for calling on me. Cristina  
10 Marquez, I am part of IVW Local 569. We represent  
11 Imperial County and San Diego County. We have over 300  
12 electricians in Imperial County, and we have an  
13 apprenticeship in Imperial County with over 50  
14 apprentices there.

15           And we hope to grow it because of these great  
16 opportunities that are coming. We understand that STEM  
17 is very important, and the IVC and SDSU of Imperial  
18 County are very important. But that, that's part of it.  
19 So, we can't forget about the apprenticeships as well.  
20 There's some people out there that don't want to go to  
21 college. They don't have the money, they need to make  
22 money right now. So. with apprenticeships, there is  
23 that opportunity to earn while you learn. So, they're  
24 getting paid training and they're also learning and  
25 getting certified by the State of California as an

1 electrician.

2           But we're not the only apprenticeship that's  
3 out there, there's others. And we all hope to grow  
4 together to help the communities of Imperial County.  
5 They deserve this opportunity, and we definitely can't  
6 forget them so that they can take care of their families  
7 and have a pathway to a middle class.

8           So, I think that paired with project labor  
9 agreements with these companies, and agreements to do  
10 the maintenance for major shutdowns of the projects will  
11 help ensure that the community members of Imperial  
12 County have that work for generations to come. And  
13 that's part of what we're trying to work on, is making  
14 sure that we get those maintenance agreements in place  
15 for the communities.

16           Let's see, what else is there? And then, with  
17 project labor agreements, that also ensures that local  
18 residents will be doing the work. So, we want to make  
19 sure that that happens as well. Again, I appreciate the  
20 time, and I know that this is a big endeavor for  
21 everybody and thank you for doing this. Take care.

22           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Hector?

23           MR. MESA: Hi. My name is Hector Mesa. I'm  
24 from the City of Brawley. I grew up in the City of  
25 Imperial. I am a certified union electrician with the

1 IVW 569. State certified apprenticeships are a path to  
2 real middle class. This is what the Imperial Valley is  
3 going to need. Yes, you can have chemists, but at the  
4 same time you will need the labor force. You'll need  
5 electricians, pipe fitters, operators, and so on.

6 This traits are for those that like more of a  
7 hands on approach, and basically they don't want death.  
8 That is, the apprenticeship, like Cristina said, is you  
9 earn when you learn. And regarding the percentage of  
10 the local force that wok on these projects, all I can  
11 say is that this is why we need local PLA's and CBA's on  
12 all these projects in order to set the percentage and  
13 keep the jobs locally.

14 Thank you, Chair Paz.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So, I will return to  
16 Westmorland. I think there were community members in  
17 Westmorland wanting to speak, and then I will do the  
18 same here in Thermal.

19 MR. CANALES: Yeah, this is Simon Canales,  
20 Brawley Union High School District Superintendent once  
21 again. Just wanted to kind of tie in some — tie up some  
22 loose ends from the second speaker that spoke after us  
23 on education. We were asked to speak regarding  
24 workforce development. But again, an ask from us to you  
25 is, you know, help us help you. We can be a tremendous

1 resource when it comes to environmental literacy. And  
2 so we have built out programs across the community of  
3 Imperial County and we've worked in conjunction with  
4 Comite Civico over the years. We've got the air  
5 monitoring projects, bunch of different resources that  
6 we've been able to develop.

7 So, lean on us and reach out to us and let us  
8 support getting that work out and being a partner in  
9 regards to environmental literacy. Thank you.

10 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

11 MS. FLORES: Hi, good afternoon. My name is  
12 Daniela Flores. Born in Brawley, raised in Calexico.  
13 I'm also a community organizer with Imperial Valley  
14 Equity and Justice Coalition. And I wanted to take a  
15 moment to comment on the community benefits portion,  
16 and, you know relates to all of the things that are  
17 being discussed.

18 Primarily, I want to offer a few resources  
19 that I know —

20 CHAIR PAZ: Daniela, sorry to interrupt you.  
21 If you feel comfortable removing your masks so the  
22 translators can hear you.

23 MS. FLORES: If it's okay, I'd like to keep it  
24 on.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Just, maybe speak a little

1 bit slower so they can hear you, are able to translate.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. FLORES: I can go slower.

4 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

5 MS. FLORES: Yeah. I'm actually — I can also  
6 do it bilingual if it's helpful. So, my name is Daniela  
7 Flores. I'm a community organizer with the Imperial  
8 Valley Equity and Justice Coalition. I am speaking  
9 today on the comment — on the topic of community  
10 benefits. I know you have heard from Angel and Monique  
11 and wanted to emphasize a couple of items and share some  
12 resources with you.

13 So, the first comment regarding community  
14 benefits is that, you know, one of the main things that  
15 we learned from talking with community members or  
16 hearing from community members was the importance of  
17 oversight through this whole process. Oversight from  
18 community members to be in positions that are not only  
19 symbolic, but that place people in decision making  
20 power. That there are committees and groups that  
21 account for resident perspectives when making funding  
22 decisions.

23 There's a lot of distrust from community  
24 members, government. There's a lot of apathy, and it's  
25 important that as we start broadening who gets to learn

1 about lithium, right? Because most people don't know  
2 about it. Who gets to learn about this? We have to  
3 make sure that those people that are most impacted  
4 continue to have a space to inform how, at the local  
5 level, these decisions are made.

6 One comment is related to the breakdown that  
7 was proposed by Imperial County on the tax. I know that  
8 these conversations are just starting, and I would like  
9 to see a forum where community can engage at this level  
10 to discuss their preferences and perspectives on how  
11 that 80 percent in potential tax revenue would be  
12 allocated.

13 One thing that stood out to me, personally, is  
14 the public safety, 10 percent for that. And really just  
15 to make the comparison that there's also 10 percent  
16 allocated for environmental mitigations. Something does  
17 not seem right that environmental mitigations is the  
18 same as public safety. So, making that point.

19 And the final point, is I would just like to  
20 see if the Commission can help us make a couple  
21 documents accessible via the Zoom. So, in person, our  
22 coalition brought paper copies of two things. One is a  
23 Lithium Valley survey. And two, is a preliminary  
24 findings document with some findings from that survey.  
25 So, we have those paper copies. The chat is disable,

1 and so I was not able to share those links. But I can  
2 share those with the Commission and if we can make those  
3 available.

4 We want to invite everyone who is on here to  
5 complete that survey. It's available online. And if  
6 you — it doesn't matter where you sit from, right? You  
7 all have different perspectives, and we want to hear  
8 from everyone. So, it's not too late to participate,  
9 and we will have an updated fact sheet with those  
10 findings, capturing your perspectives as well.

11 Thank you. And for the interpreters, if they  
12 would like me to repeat anything I am happy to do so or  
13 go through Spanish on any items. And thank you for  
14 respecting my preference to keep my mask on.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Daniela. And the  
16 interpreters were able to translate what you said. So,  
17 appreciate you. And, to the request about making some  
18 of the links for the survey available, I believe if you  
19 reach out to the CEC staff directly, maybe Deana, there  
20 should be way of putting that on the Docket. Thank you

21 MS. FLORES: That's wonderful, thank you.

22 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: No more comments.

23 CHAIR PAZ: I don't see anyone else in  
24 Westmorland. I will turn over to here in Thermal.

25 Again, is — from what has been said, I know we still

1 have another topic to introduce, but I just want to make  
2 sure we wrap up this one if there's still something that  
3 needs to be said from our community members.

4 (Pause)

5 MS. RAMIREZ: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) I  
6 would like to emphasize what was previously said by the  
7 other people. That the opportunity of jobs should be  
8 given to the local people. I have seen in other  
9 projects not as big as the lithium project where other  
10 people from other states come to work in these projects.

11 I think the local people have the capacity.  
12 We just need you to believe in us and be given that  
13 opportunity. And obviously, since it is something new,  
14 maybe we will need to have some kind of training.

15 I know that here in East Coachella Valley and  
16 also Imperial Valley, I know we're at the highest rate  
17 of unemployment. So we ask that we are offered job  
18 training so that intentionally — so that those that live  
19 around the lake or that will be around the lithium will  
20 have the opportunity of a job.

21 Because I think the fact that...that we aren't  
22 just impacted by the consequences or the results that it  
23 will have, but that people will also be impacted  
24 economically. Because, like I mentioned before, we are  
25 one of the highest rates in unemployment. So, as such,

1 I know this will not be long-term, and maybe not  
2 everyone knows this, but for now, that we are being  
3 given this opportunity. I think the community does  
4 deserve to be given those jobs where they may develop  
5 skills that are there, but that haven't been developed.

6 And since we have temporary jobs, maybe this  
7 type of job is more stable and can offer a better  
8 lifestyle with a decent compensation. I'm also thinking  
9 of the young people that go the universities. And one  
10 of the greatest barriers that they find when they return  
11 to their communities is the lack of employment. One of  
12 the reasons is because they are not experienced or other  
13 places say that they are overqualified and there is no  
14 job for them anyway.

15 I have worked with the youth from universities  
16 that are picking grapes. And I'm not saying that this  
17 isn't a decent job. It is a decent job. But it is not  
18 a job that they studied for. So we can create a new way  
19 to involve these young people and once they return to  
20 their communities, we can take advantage of their  
21 talents. Thank you.

22 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I will move on to  
23 introduce our new topic, and this one is on water. And,  
24 some of the questions — for guidance, but again, you are  
25 welcome to speak from your own perspectives — is:

1           Do you feel you have enough information about  
2 the water that is used in the planned lithium facilities  
3 - where it comes from and how it will be handled to  
4 protect residents?

5           What are your biggest concerns when it comes  
6 to how these new projects could affect water in the  
7 area?

8           And, I think we have — let me find the  
9 speakers here on water. Adrianna Torres and Cecilia  
10 Armenta.

11           MS. TORRES: In previous meetings that I have  
12 heard, the need for very, very —

13           CHAIR PAZ: Adrianna, can you? Thank you.

14           MS. TORRES: In previous meetings, I have  
15 heard the need for very, very clean water for lithium  
16 extraction process. To me, it makes no sense to do this  
17 in a community that suffers so many community issues.  
18 Many people are dealing with undrinkable water, along  
19 with many mobile home parks that run on wells which  
20 require energy to have running water.

21           And in our communities, where power outages  
22 are very common due to outdated energy infrastructure,  
23 many families living in mobile home parks are now left  
24 without water and energy. I believe that we should be  
25 addressing these issues first, before continuing more

1 harm to the land. We should be prioritizing human  
2 health, community benefits, and protecting the water and  
3 land that we are on, before any big business profits.

4 We need to also prioritize multi-purpose  
5 resilient centers to ensure that when these long power  
6 outages do happen, that we can protect ourselves. And  
7 as a community, we do not have any guarantee on how the  
8 water will be — on how the water itself and the water  
9 sources will be protected. And because of this, such  
10 new technology that is coming with the lithium process —  
11 there has not been any research, very much research that  
12 has been told to the community.

13 We need much, much more research done from  
14 unbiased researchers that are then being shared with the  
15 community.

16 MS. RAMIREZ: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) The  
17 availability and supply of water is a challenge that  
18 humanity faces. The increase in population,  
19 agricultural and industrial requirement, pollution and  
20 impact of climate change are factors that make the  
21 management and the access to water more difficult in the  
22 entire world. The disposition of water it's a human  
23 right. Not having access to it, becomes an obstacle to  
24 other rights. Like health, education, and nutrition.

25 With the slogan "Valuing Water", the United

1 Nations organization in the year of 2021, decided to  
2 promote the reflection of the value that we give to  
3 water. It is an imperative to dimension the relevance  
4 that water has. Its care and sanitation. To adopt  
5 actions, individuals and collective, to be translated  
6 into an action that's sustainable and that's adequate.  
7 And not having access to water can be an obstacle even  
8 for us as parents for our children to have good  
9 education and to grow. To grow with an optimal health  
10 and to be successful in life. And without access to  
11 drinking water, we are also at risk of having more  
12 illnesses.

13 I wanted to say all of this, because it's  
14 really very concerning how it that the issue of the  
15 water that will be used for the extraction of lithium  
16 has been solved? And how will it be supplied to the  
17 houses that are in its surrounding areas?

18 And I want to give a testimony. This  
19 testimony is only so that you know that we have a lot of  
20 water that is contaminated and little water that's  
21 drinkable. Last week, I found out of a young man who  
22 lives on Avenue 70. He has cancer in his bones. And  
23 his parents say that the doctors said he has a lot of  
24 arsenic in his body. He drank water from the faucet.  
25 Sometimes it's because of necessity or ignorance. And I

1 want to bring this here to make you aware that the use  
2 of water is not a game. We cannot fix something that is  
3 wrong and make something else worse.

4 And so, I would like to get more clarity on  
5 how the water will be used without causing a shortage  
6 for the homes around the lake. Thank you.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

8 MR. BAUTISTA: On the other hand, as my  
9 partner was saying regarding the factories and  
10 everything, we all know what causes global warming. As  
11 my partner was saying, now we know everything about what  
12 causes global warming. It's because of the factories  
13 and companies that the rich people established. And  
14 what happens is that this is also consuming our natural  
15 water. And as my partner was saying, what's going to  
16 happen later? The water's contaminated. Because of the  
17 overheat it's drying up. What happens? Then we're not  
18 going to have water left. And apparently the governors  
19 of our planet do not care or aren't interested because  
20 as long as they're receiving the taxes from the  
21 companies, they [cut off].

22 On the other hand, one of the speakers was  
23 saying on the screen about education so that our  
24 children make more money at companies and all that.  
25 Regarding that also, what I've seen since I can

1 remember, the education system isn't just broken, it's  
2 beyond broken. I experienced it in my own flesh with my  
3 children. If we don't advocate for what they want to  
4 learn, the counselors will just say, "Well, study this."  
5 And that's like placing a rock for in our children's  
6 way, because they won't let them study whatever they  
7 want.

8           And they always say, "Well, there's no room  
9 for what you want to study." And what do the kids do?  
10 They get disappointed, and instead they don't even go to  
11 school anymore.

12           And I say this, because like I mentioned, I  
13 experienced it in my own flesh. That happened to me  
14 because when I went to accompany my son, the security at  
15 the schools — if they're not accompanied by the parent,  
16 they will not let them speak to the teachers or what  
17 they want to study. Like I said, fortunately, that's  
18 why, when my son started telling me that I had to go to  
19 in order to let him speak to the teachers about the  
20 classes he wanted and everything, they wanted to do the  
21 same thing to me. "No, there's no room in those  
22 classes." So, I had to take the role of getting angry  
23 and I said, "If you can't provide my son with the  
24 classes he wants, I'm going to go to a superior to get  
25 the classes my son wants."

1           And fortunately, today, my son is an engineer.  
2 But if I hadn't gone like many other parents that cannot  
3 go because of their jobs, that's what the speaker said,  
4 that's why many youths are working in the fields or in  
5 fast-food restaurants or water, because they can't work  
6 in the field, they studied for.

7           And that's why I think that we need to start  
8 by fighting for a change in the system of education  
9 that's being applied today. I think that's all I have  
10 to say now, but we will continue fighting so that our  
11 country, our planet will change, because definitely, our  
12 government does not do anything.

13           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I will — I think  
14 everyone here in Thermal has spoken. No? Si? Okay.  
15 So I will look at Westmorland, if any of our community  
16 guests in Westmorland want to offer their perspectives  
17 on the topic of water?

18           MR. MARTINEZ: Hello? Good afternoon  
19 everyone. My name is Augustine Martinez, I'm a  
20 community member here in Imperial Valley. I have 24  
21 years. In my short life I have worked in big  
22 industries. I have worked in the fields. I have worked  
23 in slaughterhouse. And I see the proportion of how they  
24 use the water irresponsibly. And I think, like, for  
25 example, by the extraction of lithium, it's very

1 important to know how it's going to be used in a very  
2 useful way.

3           So, I hope that the — this, the disadvantaged  
4 communities at least get that information about not  
5 using the water as the other companies have been.  
6 Because, as an example in the fields, we use the water  
7 and we contaminate it with pesticides. Slaughterhouse,  
8 there's a lot of ways it gets polluted. And, well, I  
9 hope that this is another — I hope that this — it's  
10 going to be another bit industry that just gets polluted  
11 our water.

12           And, well, the economy it's also something  
13 important here. We know that the water is increasing,  
14 the price of the water is increasing. And, well, I hope  
15 that I don't have to pay something irrs— from a company  
16 that is being irresponsible. So, that's my opinion.  
17 Thank you.

18           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Is there anyone else  
19 in Westmorland, any of our community — yes?

20           MR. DIOS: Hello, this is Angel. I, first of  
21 all, well, I will go into topic of water. I do want to  
22 emphasize a lot of the things that community members  
23 here in Westmorland as well as Thermal have been saying  
24 and their skepticism. The skepticism seems to be  
25 prominent.

1           And I know we talked about it with our survey  
2 and we talked about how it was in every category. But  
3 it seems to be something that is huge. There is a  
4 distrust of the government here in the Valley, and I  
5 think as well up there.

6           So, to reiterate, there has to be a building  
7 of trust with the community. All of these feelings are  
8 totally valid. And as, you know, as a community member  
9 myself, I understand where we come from when we don't  
10 trust the government. You know, we get told, you know,  
11 promised a lot of things. However, they never come  
12 true.

13           And the best way that a Commission here could  
14 work, is working with local governments to ensure all  
15 these promises will become true, to ensure that, you  
16 know, there is a direct communication as well accessible  
17 communication. We're talking earlier about the areas  
18 around the Salton Sea. Salton Sea City, Bombay Beach,  
19 all these cities, and they don't have the access to the  
20 internet. How come, you know, how can someone from  
21 there come here into this, like, space, and be able to  
22 express themselves? That is not accessible to them  
23 because they don't have those resources. And some of  
24 them don't even have internet.

25           So, and then, to kind of move in to, you know,

1 survey and more so like to emphasize both on the  
2 skepticism, but also water. A lot of folks are  
3 expressing that a solution to, you know, all the  
4 problems that, you know, that are going to come up, or  
5 just kind of their concerns, is to invest in Salton Sea  
6 restoration, but more beautification. So put an  
7 greenery. You know, they want to see, basically, native  
8 plants and just kind of revive the Salton Sea. We are  
9 aware that it used to be a popular spot back in 1950,  
10 1960's, back in the days it was a spot. And now, it  
11 isn't really considered by Imperial Valley residents or  
12 even Coachella residents.

13           So, kind of wanted to emphasize that as well.  
14 You know, community members, out of the 100, over 100 we  
15 surveyed to say that they want Salton Sea to be kind of  
16 the main focus. And also, reassurance that the water  
17 that comes — that, you know, is extracted through this  
18 lithium process doesn't get, doesn't affect us.  
19 Especially our farming population, our farming industry,  
20 which is quite prominent, and also, well, it could  
21 eventually lead to international problems. So, we would  
22 request more of, I guess, research, and as well  
23 clarification with the community.

24           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Angel, and you and  
25 Daniela can— referenced the survey that you're doing,

1 and I'm getting a question from a resident here in the  
2 Coachella Valley on whether that survey is open to all  
3 the communities surrounding the Salton Sea, or only in  
4 Imperial County?

5 MR. DIOS: This is going to be opened up to  
6 everyone, and Coachella Valley included. This, the  
7 Salton Sea affects both of us, whatever happens on this  
8 land is going to affect each and every single one of us.  
9 We live in the same desert, we live in the same  
10 conditions. So, by all means, everyone in Coachella is  
11 welcome to take the survey.

12 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

13 MR. DIOS: And then, if their city doesn't  
14 appear, I know in the link there's another option  
15 provided. Please go ahead and type in your city there.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

17 MR. FLORES: Good afternoon. Jose Flores,  
18 from Imperial Valley. I have a question or kind of  
19 clarification, because I'm kind of getting mixed  
20 messages or different narratives from local entities in  
21 regards to water. Obviously, we're in a drought, and  
22 Colorado River has a lot of issues.

23 And just yesterday I was listening in on a  
24 meeting from the IID, our local utility and water  
25 company here. And they are planning, if I heard

1 correctly, on doing away with green areas. And the cost  
2 would be close to \$1.5 million to get rid of green  
3 areas. But from what I've heard, the state wants to do  
4 increase green areas. So, I'm kind of confused.

5           And as far as directly related to lithium,  
6 these companies that are going to be, housed here, the  
7 three that are currently planning on being here — what  
8 is their plan? Are they going to increase green areas  
9 around their facilities? Or, are they going to do away  
10 with those green areas and make it more like areas that  
11 don't have obviously green areas, which would increase  
12 the heat index. As it is, it is unbearable here in the  
13 summer.

14           So there — just, again, I know there's no easy  
15 answer because there is a drought and we have to  
16 mitigate the use of water, but we're caught in that  
17 dichotomy where we also need green areas to survive out  
18 here in the desert. Thank you.

19           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

20           MS. PALMA-ROJASMS. PALMA-ROJAS: No more  
21 comments, Chair Paz.

22           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I will go to some of  
23 our community members on Zoom and call on Isabel Solis  
24 first, and then Jimmy Elrod.

25           MR. GRAY: Hello, yeah. Eric Gray from los

1 Amigos del Comunidad. Isabel is present. Our (AUDIO  
2 CUT OUT). Some of the things is that there's a distinct  
3 water difference between water being used for the  
4 geothermal and lithium development, which would come  
5 from Imperial Irrigation District, to the water that's  
6 being used that is very contaminated as we know, and the  
7 issues on the Coachella Valley, Riverside County side.  
8 So, that's one. And some of the technology that they  
9 say is going to be closed loop, a closed loop process  
10 that will not expose the hard metals and arsenic to the  
11 environment. But we have had some issues with  
12 geothermal before with not doing that correctly. So, I  
13 think the enforcement issue of how that water is handled  
14 and not a danger to our community is first and foremost  
15 for us to understand. And we have not had a great  
16 education curve coming from industry, the state, or the  
17 enforcement agency at that level. And that's something  
18 we should probably hit on very, very soon so we all get  
19 a better understanding of that.

20           And then the second part, is I — my biggest  
21 concern with water is, as Mr. Jose Flores just stated,  
22 was we are in a drought. We are currently in  
23 negotiations on the seven basin states on the Colorado  
24 River. August 15th is around the corner, we're going to  
25 have a huge announcement of Bureau of Land Management

1 and Natural Resources, of water being cut off to our  
2 region. Not just our region, but all seven states that  
3 are going to be held at Lake Mead to do elevation so  
4 they don't go to deadpool, losing cause of loss of  
5 energy and also trying to elevate Lake Mead and the  
6 water source in the years to come.

7           This drought is serious. And what has  
8 happened, is that at full development, it's my  
9 understanding, they only use industry and residents use  
10 three percent of the largest Colorado River allotment on  
11 the river. And our ag farm use 97 percent of it. And  
12 at full development of the new geothermal that's being  
13 proposed, the 250 megawatts of CTR and additional  
14 geothermal that is in the pipeline, we are going to be  
15 maxed out for any other industrial growth in our region.

16           So, we are maximizing our water industrial  
17 allotment to procure the geothermal lithium extraction.  
18 Does that mean the future of our community no longer has  
19 opportunity for industrial growth in other areas that  
20 would offer opportunities in the future? I think those  
21 are issues that have not been well educated.

22           I follow the water issue very closely, so I  
23 understand what's coming down the, say, you could say  
24 the pipe. But it's not going to be coming down. And  
25 we're going to be facing a water, a water shortage. And

1 August 15th will be announced, and January 1st of 2023  
2 it will start. We're going to have loss of jobs and  
3 economic vitality and economic growth.

4 And now, this future growth is also going to  
5 cause that same, that very same danger that the drought  
6 is causing, because we're putting everything in. We're  
7 all in, we're all hands on deck, we're all in on  
8 lithium. Is that our future? And is it going to be  
9 industrial growth?

10 So, I hope that's something that's on the  
11 radar of the Valley of Lithium Commission, and all  
12 agencies in California to help educate our public much,  
13 much better than what they're doing at this time. Let's  
14 be realistic, and we need to know what's going on.  
15 Thank you very much.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Do we have Jimmy  
17 Elrod?

18 MS. LOZA: Hi Jimmy, you should be able to  
19 unmute yourself?

20 MR. ELROD: Yes, hello. Can you hear me?

21 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

22 MR. ELROD: Hello, Madam Chair, Commissioners.  
23 Thank you very much. I apologize, my comment's more  
24 geared towards the workforce development component that  
25 was being discussed. I had my hand raised, but there

1 was so many speakers on great topics at the end  
2 discussed there.

3           So, I just wanted to kind of piggyback on what  
4 some of my fellow tradespeople were talking upon with  
5 the opportunities to be capitalized, really, with the  
6 workforce development pertaining to the construction of  
7 these facilities. And it's far reaching beyond that as  
8 well, right? I mean, it's not just the construction of  
9 just the lithium extraction facilities and the  
10 maintenance of such facilities, but all of the ancillary  
11 projects that would come about. The secondary  
12 construction such as battery manufacturing facilities,  
13 the infrastructure that's needed, rail, bridges, road,  
14 and utilities, and other public facilities that would  
15 accompany and supplement those projects. Additionally,  
16 the housing that would be needed, commercial projects.

17           And, I think the topic of workforce  
18 development is a very important topic. Because we at  
19 the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters, we  
20 represent over 60,000 hardworking highly skilled union  
21 carpenters all throughout the southwest. We have about  
22 250 that live in Imperial County. We would love to see  
23 that number increase, and ensure that the local  
24 residents there in Imperial County are being  
25 prioritized.

1           So, you know, commend the Commission and, you  
2 know, the various stakeholders for ensuring that that  
3 does come to fruition. And the need to take action on  
4 that is now, and I think it really does start with pre-  
5 apprenticeship programs at the various different high  
6 schools, and partnership with the community college.  
7 And then additionally, doing various different community  
8 outreaches, engaging the community to expose them to the  
9 opportunities.

10           We at the Southwest Carpenters are actively  
11 trying to strike up conversations with the various  
12 different school districts, the County Office of  
13 Education, and would love to have more conversations  
14 with the various different stakeholders to ensure that  
15 we're doing what we can to expose those opportunities.  
16 Either it be the concrete formwork, the scaffolding, the  
17 wood framing, metal stud framing, mill wrights, pile-  
18 drivers, those all fall under the umbrella of the union  
19 carpenters.

20           So, about 70 percent of any structure being  
21 built, a large part is going to be done with union  
22 carpenters. So, I greatly appreciate all of the hard  
23 work that you guys are doing and look forward to these  
24 projects coming to fruition, and all of the  
25 opportunities that is an extend to the community. Thank

1 you.

2 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Are we going to call  
3 John Hernandez?

4 MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay, I've unmuted. Have I  
5 unmuted?

6 CHAIR PAZ: Yes.

7 MR. HERNANDEZ: Okay. Yeah, I just want to  
8 kind of circle back on what I heard in relation to not  
9 only the tribes and their concerns around the Salton  
10 Sea, but as it relates to this topic of water — if the  
11 last hundred years have been any indication of how the  
12 tribes have been left out of almost all of the process  
13 and the development of Imperial County's starting from  
14 its irrigation systems to, you know, gold mining, solar  
15 farms, wind turbines, geothermal, the QSA, the Salton  
16 Sea Management Plan, the 10-year plan, all this. It  
17 just seems to me that there's a lot of catching up to do  
18 and that the Commission needs to find a greater role for  
19 better input and information to the concerns of the  
20 tribes in this whole process.

21 The water, you know, as information trickles  
22 down — no pun intended — on the water crisis, there's  
23 just so much that the community does not really  
24 understand, and I include myself in that. And so, there  
25 just needs to be a better job of educating the community

1 as to the water concerns, and then about the Salton Sea  
2 and the water usages that are going to be — that have  
3 been used by the — for the last 40-something years in  
4 the geothermal industry, and what increases that will be  
5 in the, in the lithium industry. Because they go hand  
6 in hand.

7           And so, I just wanted to make that statement,  
8 that there needs to be, like really, some fast tracking  
9 and some catching up to do. And what I'm sensing that,  
10 that the, that the tribes have really been given a back  
11 seat in a lot of the development around all what's  
12 happening in Imperial County the last 100 years and  
13 that's certainly indicative of what's happening in this  
14 country, you know, over the last several hundred years.  
15 So, I hope that they are given a greater role in maybe  
16 bringing somebody, you know, even from the federal  
17 level, Bureau of Indian Affairs, to give a better  
18 information on this. So thank you.

19           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Stephanie Martin?

20           MS. MARTIN: Hi, sorry about that delay there.  
21 Thank you for this opportunity to speak about the water  
22 specifically. I do want to echo the last commenter  
23 there. This is such a, an important issue. Even the  
24 questions today framed, are what do we know about the  
25 water? Not, here's what it is, here's the differences

1 from what we've heard from the community, and here are  
2 some specifics. What do you think about these  
3 specifics? For example, I'm hearing that, you know, at  
4 one Lithium Valley Commission earlier this or last year,  
5 they said, very tongue in cheek, or in a reassuring  
6 tone, "We won't be taking from the Salton Sea water."  
7 As if, why would anybody want to? Like, yeah. Like, of  
8 course we don't want that water.

9           But, what's really disturbing about this, is  
10 what they are — what the lithium brine is taking is  
11 from. What, as we've heard from the tribal nations  
12 here, and it's that you're taking from the mother. The  
13 mother earth, the space rock, and that's going floating,  
14 the water in the cycle with the fire. It's so  
15 important.

16           Over in the Morongo Valley, okay? We, they —  
17 the water table that is central to all the water cooler  
18 talks. The protecting of the local water source, and  
19 the water table. In Imperial County not so much, and  
20 that's really concerning, because we do need to protect  
21 that water table as a water table, as a resource for all  
22 living things. Not just man and his technology.

23           That is a single mindset that is — we should,  
24 as the gentleman said with the survey, with the — that

1 these are loud concerns. That — I wouldn't call it  
2 mistrust of the government, but definitely ensuring that  
3 the government will work for us and listen to our needs,  
4 listen to our priorities, and honor those priorities and  
5 cultural values. And so, it's not enough to — the  
6 water, what do I know about the water? Is, it's a  
7 separate issue than what's going on about, around the  
8 Salton Sea. And the irrigation, and IID, and the Colo  
9 River, the Colorado River water that's disgusting and  
10 hard to drink.

11           And so, the local residents, I know, I lived  
12 in the City of Coachella for four years. I had to move  
13 to Desert Hot Springs where the water is the type of  
14 water you can cook with, you can bathe in and it doesn't  
15 feel poisonous. So, it's very concerning that we are in  
16 a drought like so many other people have said. And yet,  
17 in this quagmire of an area that is Imperial County, you  
18 cannot, as a resident on your own land, permit, you  
19 know, get the permits necessary to drill a personal well  
20 to get to that precious water table to drink the tap  
21 water to cook and bathe with, in, like, the ancestors of  
22 that land could have done freely.

23           But the lithium, the lithium companies, big  
24 lithium seems to be able to cut so much red — through  
25 so, so much red tape that it's scary. It's go — it's

1 like, pump the brakes. I mean, I like to cut red tape  
2 as much as the next person does a little bit, where it  
3 doesn't make sense, but all the red tape is getting cut  
4 through and the lithium is going to the front of the  
5 line where water importation is so loud, restoring the  
6 Salton Sea is so loud, drought is so loud, but why is  
7 big lithium quietly allowed to do whatever they want in  
8 this region? It's just not right. There's something  
9 really fishy about this.

10           And that's really what my concern is. We, we  
11 do — a lot of the Eastern Coachella Valley is  
12 impoverished. They need clean drinking water, they need  
13 basic living needs that, it — to try to sell them on  
14 high paying faluting jobs and electric vehicles when  
15 there's no roads or the infrastructure is, you've got to  
16 be kidding me. These are where we need to go. It's  
17 what we actually care about. You need to actually sound  
18 informed with what us residents are talking about and  
19 what we're hearing — saying.

20           Thank you. That, I'm sorry for going on so  
21 much. I'm just really concerned about the water here.  
22 The water is precious. Once the water goes, all living  
23 species go. Thank you.

24           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I will now introduce  
25 our final topic for the day, and that is the topic of

1 environmental impacts and public health. And, again, I  
2 will share the questions that are, were provided as a  
3 guide, and reiterate that you all can speak to any  
4 perspective that you bring on this topic.

5           What are your biggest concerns about other  
6 environmental impacts that could result from building or  
7 operating the planned lithium facilities?

8           What health issues are you most concerned with  
9 now and in the future that you feel could be affected by  
10 the new facilities?

11           What information would you like to receive  
12 about environmental impacts and public health issues?  
13 What are the best ways to provide that information?

14           And, I will start here with Cecila Armenta  
15 from Salton City.

16           MS. ARMENTA: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) Yes,  
17 good afternoon once again. In this last topic, it is  
18 for considering and it is very important, because it's  
19 the environmental impact. As we have seen in these  
20 previous topics, all these topics have been important,  
21 but this one is where the community mostly ask, "What  
22 will happen with our health?"

23           That is their worry and their priority as you  
24 extract the lithium. How much will it negatively affect  
25 my health? In Salton Sea and all the areas and the

1 cities regarding this development of lithium. I think to  
2 be clear, we need to develop several criteria to improve  
3 health and the environment. One of those would be  
4 inclusion. It would be the participation of marketing  
5 and decision making in future projects. Being included  
6 so that we can be useful to our community with jobs, and  
7 labor that would benefit our families.

8 Another impact would be the development and  
9 stability. Job and employment opportunities that would  
10 ensure the stability in families. What am I referring  
11 to with this? Somebody spoke about..., as a matter of  
12 fact, I couldn't take the name of one of the persons who  
13 was speaking on the panel, that students would be given  
14 opportunities, students would be trained. Everything  
15 that was said. But what happens with us? Those who  
16 already have a family that we have to maintain? What  
17 kind of employments can you offer us, or preparation?  
18 Because there's people that, although they're very  
19 hardworking in agriculture, or any other job, they have  
20 the ability to reach their maximum limits to develop a  
21 job, even if we don't have experience.

22 There was also the mention of the opportunity  
23 of preparing the high schools in Imperial Valley. In  
24 this inclusion, I would request that you include the  
25 high school of West Shore in Salton City. Since it is

1 in the Salton City in the Imperial County. And since  
2 we're speaking of preparation, I would like to see that  
3 preparation, or that invitation to the students.  
4 Because even though we belong to the school district of  
5 Coachella Valley, we are part of the Imperial County.  
6 Because the students do not live in Coachella, Indio,  
7 Thermal, they live in Salton City. And I extend the  
8 invitation if you would like to. I am Cecilia Armenta,  
9 you can contact me for that project it for those  
10 students.

11 Now, I'll move on to the other topic that's  
12 essential to me, which is health and environmental  
13 sociology. What am I referring to? To the fauna and  
14 water of Salton Sea. And the other one is community  
15 public health.

16 Honestly, my community and several surrounding  
17 communities have a lot of needs, and one of them is  
18 transportation. What am I referring to? In Salton City  
19 we have a little bus that takes people from the home to  
20 the store, but that's not the transportation that I am  
21 referring to. The transportation that I'm referring to  
22 is a bus that when I am in need to come to Coachella,  
23 whether it be Westmorland, Imperial to the hospital or  
24 whatever, I may have available a bus for that type of  
25 transportation. That this would be a public

1 transportation.

2 Also accessible housing and infrastructures.

3 What I am referring to in regards to these requirements  
4 in general? I want you to understand that the  
5 communities surrounding Salton Sea have many needs and  
6 concerns. And one of those solutions would be that you  
7 listen, see or visit us. And not just say that I'm part  
8 of a committee, that I'm part of an association, I'm  
9 part of..., but that you are part of something that's  
10 going to help you in your community, and that will  
11 always help — not only when there is a disgrace.

12 Some time ago, there was a terrible thing that  
13 happened where lives were lost. Many committees showed  
14 up that I did not know of until that day. It was sad,  
15 and it continues to be sad that only at that time I saw  
16 these committees. Why? Because there was social media?  
17 Because there was a tragedy? Or Why? Because they  
18 wanted to be known as helpful to the people and the  
19 community? And that's not fair. Because they only help  
20 in those type of necessities, and there are needs every  
21 day.

22 There's people in the community like the  
23 elderly that have no transportation to go out and buy  
24 essential things that they need. All these needs we  
25 have them in Salton City. Please listen to me already,

1 I've mentioned this in many other meetings similar to  
2 this one and no one has contacted me.

3 I think I've been clear, precise, and direct,  
4 and that is how I would like you to be with me. That  
5 you not only look at me as Cecilia Armenta, but like a  
6 member of my community with needs. And as a  
7 representative of all the members of the community, so  
8 that we can be heard. Because I did not prepare this  
9 myself. I heard others and their needs, their fears and  
10 their anguish, and I am here today because of them. So  
11 please include us, help us and give me the answers that  
12 I need so I can represent you adequately.

13 So, I give you thanks for allowing me to be  
14 here today, to all the representatives who gave us this  
15 opportunity to be able to express our needs. Thank you  
16 very much, and once again my name is Cecilia Armenta,  
17 representative from Salton City. Thank you very much.

18 MS. TORRES: I just wanted to reiterate the  
19 need for much more research on these new machineries and  
20 how they will affect the people's health, but also land,  
21 water, and air we sit on and use. At the moment, there  
22 is not enough of this research being done, and I truly  
23 don't think we should continue with the lithium, with  
24 the process of the lithium extraction before we know  
25 exactly how it will impact everything around us.

1           Information is extreme — at the moment, is,  
2 has been extremely inaccessible about the lithium  
3 process. I have tried to research, and ended up more  
4 confused and with much more questions than I started  
5 with. And I just wanted to share my apologies to the  
6 tribal members and community who expressed their  
7 concerns with the lithium process and the use of their  
8 land earlier. Yet all of this talk about potential  
9 workplace development, business taxes, and concrete  
10 plans have already happened without their discussion.

11           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Adrianna.

12           Okay, I think we have gone through the Thermal  
13 community perspective on this topic. Is there anybody  
14 in Westmorland, any of the community — our community  
15 guests who want to expand on the topic of public health  
16 and environmental impacts?

17           MR. DIOS: Yes, this is Angel. This is more  
18 to kind of also wrap up our, kind of just, findings and  
19 so forth and also in environmental impacts. One thing  
20 that we saw very common was when — what are the effects  
21 of the impacts if we back out? What they mean, is  
22 community members are scared that this project could  
23 possibly fail. And if it fails, what is that effect?  
24 How is that going to be addressed?

25           For example, they invested so much in, and,

1 you know, by year two, they just back out. How would  
2 that first of all affect the community, and also just  
3 the, kind of the environment. Because a lot of our  
4 pretty much economy is based on the, on our production  
5 through the environment. So that's one concern that  
6 people want to know.

7           The next thing, is also making public health  
8 accessible. Again, just to quote—— to quote another,  
9 you know, respondent, we need to incorporate,  
10 "Unincorporate areas of Bombay Beach and et cetera."  
11 So, what this, you know, a lot of people, folks are kind  
12 of alluding to allocating lots of resources. While, I  
13 mean, the Valley may not have the best resources, there  
14 still is some in El Centro, and Calexico and Brawley.  
15 However, there isn't many accessible resources all the  
16 way in Salton Sea, Niland, Bombay Beach.

17           And, like it was previous mentioned by another  
18 community member, they have — the only bus they have is  
19 from their home to a market. There isn't a bus that  
20 takes them to any medical services. And especially  
21 knowing how we are in a community that is, you know,  
22 more prone to asthma, it is concerning. And those are  
23 in demand. The — pretty mu— making of public health  
24 services accessible.

25           And before I wrap up and, you know, we hope

1 you take the survey. I do want to finally just add one  
2 note. And more — so on the distribution of the tax. We  
3 did get a lot of kind of questioning as to why public  
4 safety was on there, and why it was on there in  
5 comparison to other important items like environmental  
6 mitigation, communities, and folks want to know why?  
7 What was the reason behind this? And also, how is  
8 public safety even going to be distributed? Because, I  
9 mean, like we saw today with everyone and the community  
10 members and our survey, which represents 100 people,  
11 folks are really scared of what could happen, and they  
12 would like research to go into this. So, not allocating  
13 of kind of focus — making public safety a big part of  
14 the budget isn't the community's priority. That's what  
15 we saw, and you know, they want to know what the  
16 question is. I mean, what was the reasoning behind  
17 this. But, again, you know, let's put an emphasis on  
18 environmental impacts and doing research first.

19           Alright, that's it for me, and if you can  
20 please do the survey and also find us on IVEquity. We  
21 are going to be posting on social media, and we're also  
22 going to be trying to reach in person Salton Sea, Bombay  
23 Beach, and all those regions. So, those community  
24 members who would also like to reach out to use so that  
25 we can help coordinate, you know, those events. And

1 thanks.

2 MS. URENA: I'd like to add to, I think,  
3 Adrianna's point where she talked about how we kind of  
4 are get— like, it almost feels like we're getting ahead  
5 of ourselves when it comes to these lithium projects.  
6 Not only are we overstepping, you know, tribal lands,  
7 but we also don't have that much information or at least  
8 accessible information on whether this project is even  
9 sustainable in a region where there — it already has a  
10 very — an industry that is very taxing on our land and  
11 our water resources.

12 So, one of my concerns is what is the  
13 information that tells us that lithium will be a  
14 sustainable industry? Especially, again, in land where  
15 we already have a very, a very taxing industry. So, you  
16 know, like, how do we know we have enough water  
17 resources? How do we know if our lands are going to be  
18 secure after this industry is put in place? So, thank  
19 you.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Any other community  
21 guests in Westmorland?

22 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: Yes, one more comment.

23 MR. FLORES: Hi, Luis Flores, from Calxico.  
24 I think one thing I, I — that comes to my mind is often

1 the tone and the kind of — the tone that sort of is in  
2 response to concerns about health and the technology is  
3 about, is one that sort of assumes that community  
4 members are ill informed or don't understand the  
5 science. And I think part of what I would like to see  
6 more fair-grounded is some humility about how much of  
7 the science is actually new and is experimental.

8           These extractive, sort of, processes are still  
9 experimental, and while there's reasons to believe that  
10 we can sort of have a sense of what the environmental  
11 impacts are and aren't, we have, you know, historical  
12 reasons to doubt, or to suspect that unforeseen events  
13 can and often do happen. I'm thinking of oil spills and  
14 these sorts of — the things that are happening with  
15 shale.

16           These kinds of impacts, likely, were not  
17 foreseen at this stage of when it's being pitched to a  
18 community, and community is right to be suspicious of  
19 assurances that everything will be okay. So, what I  
20 think what I want to hear more about is what are the  
21 plans in place? Finally, to make sure that all these  
22 sorts of potential unforeseen are sort of, are  
23 considered, but also when they happen, that their  
24 impacts will be contained and people will be made right  
25 by. Thank you.

1 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

2 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: No more comments.

3 CHAIR PAZ: No more comments in Imperial?

4 MS. PALMA-ROJAS: No more comments in  
5 Westmorland.

6 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. So at this point, I  
7 will — this concludes the community session, community,  
8 and I want to thank —

9 MS. LOZA: We do have two hands raised on  
10 Zoom.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Public comment or community  
12 guests?

13 Because I will open it for public comment soon  
14 as we wrap this up.

15 Am I okay to proceed?

16 Can someone from the CEC tell me if I'm okay  
17 to proceed with wrapping up this session and then  
18 opening it up to public comment?

19 Yes? Okay, thank you.

20 So again, thank you for — to our community  
21 members, both who joined us virtually in Westmorland and  
22 here in Thermal. And, very valuable information that  
23 you've shared. So, muchas gracias.

24 At this point, I will now open it to public  
25 comments for any member of the audience who wishes to

1 speak on the topic of community perspectives. And I  
2 will start here in Thermal and see if there are any  
3 members of the audience who wish to give a public  
4 comment?

5 Yes, Mariela?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (DIALOGUE IN SPANISH)

7 CHAIR PAZ: Yup, thank you.

8 MS. JAIME: Hello, my name is —

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can you hear me?

10 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: We have two speakers.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Oh. Okay.

12 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: — escuchar?

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER (translator?: Can you  
14 hear me?

15 CHAIR PAZ: Quien esta hablando?

16 TRANSLATOR: Who is talking?

17 CHAIR PAZ: We will go to — we will proceed  
18 with our public comment. We will start here in Thermal,  
19 then we will go to Westmorland. And I know there were  
20 some issues with the Zoom in the Westmorland location.  
21 But after we go to the physical locations, we will open  
22 up the public comment in Zoom. So again, Mariela, go  
23 ahead.

24 MS. LOERA: So, my name is Mariela Loera. I  
25 am a policy advocate with Leadership Counsel. So I want

1 to start by saying what great of a conversation this  
2 was. It really did center a lot of the — is this  
3 better? You've got it. I'll start again.

4 My name is Mariela Loera, I'm a policy  
5 advocate with Leadership Counsel. And I want to start  
6 by saying what great of a conversation this was. By  
7 like really, truly centering local voices as part of the  
8 conversation.

9 And I think one thing that really stood out to  
10 me today was how clear it was that from all of these  
11 local voices, there is this, like, shared concerns and  
12 shared questions throughout — which was really great to  
13 see highlighted.

14 And my question now is, what is going to  
15 happen with all of the information that was learned  
16 today from these local voices? I would really, really  
17 get disappointed to see such a great conversation just  
18 become a checked box as to say, okay, community was  
19 involved, local voices were in vote — were involved, the  
20 tribes were involved, that's great. Good to go, now  
21 we're going to continue with our decision making without  
22 considering these really and truly. So that's my first  
23 question.

24 And then as part of that, I just saw in the  
25 docket the proposed timeline for the report that's going

1 to come out from this Lithium Valley Commission. And in  
2 the proposed timeline, there's only 15 days for public  
3 comment, which was really concerning from — one, noting  
4 that this is the first real true conversation where  
5 local voices have been centered, and it had been two  
6 years after all of these conversations had been and  
7 started. And now there's only a 15 minute time window  
8 for residents and tribes and other local voices to be  
9 engaged. And that's just concerning to see, regardless  
10 of the two sessions that are proposed as part of that  
11 process.

12 So again, thank you for the conversation and I  
13 really hope that more conversations like this happen as  
14 part of the report, and that they're really reflected in  
15 the report itself and then future decisions. Thank you.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

17 MS. RUIZ: Hi, good afternoon, my name is  
18 Nilda Ruiz, that is N-I-L-D-A R-U-I-Z. I am with  
19 Alianza Coachella Valley. I wanted to thank all the  
20 community members who were able to participate here with  
21 us in Thermal, Westmorland through Zoom. I —  
22 and(INDISCERNIBLE) part of the planning process, I know  
23 is long and hard. But, I mean, we were able to come  
24 together and really get these amazing group of folks to  
25 provide their perspective today.

1           One thing I did want to share is that for us  
2 here at Alianza, I want to share this with community  
3 members, those joining us through Zoom, we did partner  
4 with Dr. David Lowe (PHONETIC) from UCR to create a  
5 public health analysis based on research that is  
6 available on the — research information available on  
7 environmental impact reports. We are going to make this  
8 available and upload it to the docket, the Lithium  
9 Valley Commission docket. And we request that this is  
10 incorporated into the report.

11           This will be available for the public as well.  
12 For those that do not have access to the docket, you can  
13 reach out to us at Alianza for a copy of that report.  
14 Currently it is not available in Spanish, at the — but  
15 we will be translating it and it will be available in  
16 Spanish as well. And we are going to look to see  
17 perhaps you can have this translated into Purepechae,  
18 because we know that there is a large community of  
19 Purepecha community members in the area of North Shore.

20           With that, I'll wrap up my comment. Thank  
21 you.

22           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

23           MR. WALLACE: Hello. My name's Robert  
24 Wallace, from the Barona Band of Mission Indians.

25           Something that concerns me as a person, would be — this

1 is going to be one of the richest deposits in the world.  
2 If not the richest deposit in the world. And what  
3 contingencies are there for when it expands the growth  
4 of this whole valley right here? Is there anything in  
5 place or any kind of report that's going to, like, do  
6 some type of strategic analysis on this?

7 So, I want that to be on record. Again, this  
8 probably is one of the biggest in the world, and they're  
9 planning on taking it right here from your valley. So  
10 that would be helpful. Thank you.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

12 Any other comments here in Thermal?

13 We do have one more.

14 MR. BAUTISTA: (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) On  
15 behalf of all of our communities, we ask that this isn't  
16 kept written in your books and that you abandon it like  
17 always. But that you can show us that you're actually  
18 fighting so that our country can be better.

19 Thank you very much.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I will now go to  
21 Westmorland, and take public comment from that location.

22 (Pause)

23 While Westmorland resolves the technological  
24 problems, are there any public comments on Zoom?

25 Looks like Westmorland is back.

1           Are we good in Westmorland?

2           Okay, let's go to a public comment first on  
3 Zoom. Erica, or someone from the CEC, do we have a —  
4 any public comment on Zoom? MR. HERNANDEZ: Hello, this  
5 is John Hernandez, and I'd like to comment kind of on  
6 the last topic that was brought up.

7           CHAIR PAZ: John, sorry. I need to take a  
8 break because our person from CEC who is handling the  
9 Zoom public comments is in Westmorland and they're  
10 having technological issues. I apologize.

11           (Pause)

12           Westmorland, can you hear us?

13           (Pause)

14           Should we take a break?

15           Yeah? Okay. We'll take a five minute break  
16 while Westmorland resolves their technology. Thank you.

17           (Whereupon the meeting was off the record at  
18 4:58 P.M.)

19           (Whereupon the meeting resumed at 5:06 P.M.)

20           CHAIR PAZ: Westmorland, can you hear us?

21           MS. LOZA: We can hear you.

22           CHAIR PAZ: Yes? You can hear us?

23           MS. LOZA: Yes.

24           CHAIR PAZ: Okay. Can we start with the  
25 public comments at that location please?

1 MS. LOZA: Yes.

2 MR. FLORES: Hello, and good afternoon,  
3 Commissioners. My name is Eduardo Flores, and I am a  
4 student at the University of San Diego. I grew up here  
5 in Imperial Valley and lived here my entire life, and I  
6 am a third generation.

7 It is essential that we find long-term stable  
8 jobs here in the valley, because most of the youth  
9 around my age are leaving the valley to find jobs  
10 elsewhere. And I believe that it is best if we try to  
11 keep those jobs local to help support and build our  
12 community. Furthermore, it's important that we also  
13 take great consideration as to how this will affect the  
14 environment. Because, no matter how good the money is,  
15 that it's not worth it if it damages our homes and our  
16 community.

17 And that's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

19 MR. FLORES: Hello once again, Jose Flores.  
20 This is more in regards to community engagement. I  
21 wasn't going to mention it back then, but I decided to  
22 mention it again. So, the question keeps being asked of  
23 how can we better engage our community? And I've had  
24 this conversation even with people of DPR, DTSC, CARB,  
25 OEHHA, and they asked the same question.

1           And one good answer, and it's rarely used, is  
2 direct engagement by the CEC with schools. Schools have  
3 the infrastructure to disseminate information to the  
4 community. They know their community. They know the  
5 vulnerable populations, the sub-groups, the migrant  
6 students, and they can readily get any information to  
7 the student which in turn would create dialogue between  
8 that student and the parents, even translation, even  
9 issues with technology or Zoom, the students can handle  
10 that as well.

11           Likewise, that information or responses can  
12 get back into the hands of the student, which will take  
13 that back to the school. The schools have the capacity.  
14 They have the expertise. They've been doing this,  
15 again, for decades, for centuries.

16           And it's time that other agencies begin to use  
17 these opportunities with possible partners. There's  
18 contacts out there at the CDE that directly engage with  
19 environmental literacy engagement with the community,  
20 that can assist the CEC. Or even contacting our local  
21 Imperial County Office of Education to assist you as  
22 well. Thank you.

23           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

24           MS. PALMA-ROJAS: No more comments in  
25 Westmorland.

1           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We will now move to  
2 comments coming in from Zoom.

3           MS. LOZA: Just as a reminder, if you're  
4 joining us by Zoom on the computer, please use the  
5 raise-hand feature. If you've called in, please dial  
6 star-nine to raise your hand and star-six to unmute your  
7 phoneline.

8           So, the first speaker is — will be Stephanie  
9 Martin. You should be able to unmute yourself.

10          MS. MARTIN: Hi, thank you for this  
11 opportunity. And I understand that these are very  
12 important issues. But I will try to be brief. My  
13 comment is in regards to that last topic. What are your  
14 biggest concerns about other environmental impacts that  
15 could result with these lithium places being build?  
16 Okay, like the tribes mentioned: seismic activity  
17 increases, change in seasons and temperature, we're  
18 talking about directly pretty much advancing potentially  
19 the climate change and global warming aspect, as well as  
20 weather changes that we do not — even the best of  
21 science, American or otherwise, do not know yet.

22          So okay, there are unknowns like they keep on  
23 saying. But these unknowns are very, very — this is  
24 mother nature, the force of the nature that we're  
25 talking about that are unknowns. And that's very — a

1 big challenge that we can't just stop at and say, well,  
2 it's an unknown. It's a big unknown that we don't know,  
3 where's the clouds, why are there less coming from the  
4 mountains.

5           We — moving on to the, again, the gentleman  
6 who I Believe his name is Angel, how he said with his  
7 survey, the survey man. Okay? The health issues are a  
8 biggie. Let's talk about them. The lack of  
9 infrastructure. Getting to medical clinics, lack of,  
10 thereof is an obvious one. But, the more direct thing  
11 is if we put more infrastructure, focus priority in to  
12 the lithium areas, then that's local power and clean—  
13 (INDISCERNIBLE) create to them, and less to the people  
14 in that region. And a decrease in accessibility to  
15 clean water. It's inevitable, because it's already  
16 happening. So we need to focus on that.

17           So, the info, how can we get it? As an  
18 academic, these need to be researched and published in  
19 scholarly articles that are peer-reviewed. And then,  
20 accessible on your website and company, distributed,  
21 ready to go. And the — that's — that will ensure that  
22 you did your homework. You can say more than just, "Oh,  
23 it's an unknown."

24           That these all are things that need to happen  
25 when we're looking at the health issues and the local

1 concerns. We've been sitting on this for a tr— pretty  
2 much all of the 20th century. Sure, we've had some good  
3 days in the 30's and 50's and 60's, but it's high time  
4 that we address the concerns that the people have been  
5 crying about for about a hundred and change years.

6 We need to look at these. And, the  
7 environmental impacts are huge. And because they  
8 directly will impact the people and all of our ecosystem  
9 directly. So yes. Thank you.

10 MS. LOZA: Next speaker is John Hernandez.  
11 You should be able to unmute yourself.

12 MR. HERNANDEZ: Yes, thank you. My comment  
13 also kind of backtracks to other environmental concerns.  
14 There is, you know, strong connection with the Colorado  
15 River, the Colorado River Delta that used to empty into  
16 the Gulf of California. And strong connections with  
17 this whole region with the Mexicali Valley, Imperial  
18 Valley, how it used to be connected and so forth.

19 So, the known geothermal resource area of  
20 which the lithium extraction is planned — I also have  
21 questions and concerns. Not only related to the, you  
22 know, the dust and the shrinking sea. But I've seen  
23 that the shrinking sea has exposed quite a number of  
24 geysers. And we have a big geyser in Niland already  
25 that seems to be pretty uncontrollable, off they Highway

1 111 and the railroad tracks. That geyser that's there,  
2 then there's other geysers that are now being exposed  
3 with the drying and shrinking Salton Sea. We're not  
4 seeing too much about that, because I guess it's on the  
5 leased land, but we've seen some holes and some  
6 emulsions also around Calipat.

7           And based on the total number of wells that we  
8 now have around the Salton Sea, and the connection with  
9 Serra Prieto, and the Mexicali Valley Geothermal  
10 processes and their concerns about lithium also, I think  
11 that I'd like to see some type of a report as to the  
12 connections with the two regions. They have the same  
13 amount of wells that we do, several hundred together.  
14 And so, I'd like to see something to kind of alleviate  
15 some of the concerns regarding these geysers and  
16 earthquake and seismic too that we're seeing in Mexico.  
17 Thank you.

18           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

19           MS. LOZA: We do have comments on Zoom. The  
20 first one is from Ray Teran. It says, "I have a call in  
21 number but no meeting code."

22           The second comment is from Brenda Ortiz. She  
23 — it says, "I had my hand up for the community benefits  
24 section. Was that not the correct way to make a comment  
25 on Zoom?"

1           The third comment is from Jimmy Elrod. It  
2 says, "Hello, my name is Jimmy Elrod, and I'm a  
3 representative with the Southwest Regional Council of  
4 Carpenters. I have had my hand raised to speak on  
5 workforce development. Would the opportunity to do so  
6 no longer available, as the meeting as moved to another  
7 topic? Thank you.

8           Another comment is from Anonymous. It says,  
9 "Are the current small earthquake swarms happening on  
10 the west side of the Salton Sea caused by drilling  
11 that's currently happening near the south side of the  
12 sea?"

13           The next comment is from Ray. It says, "I  
14 would appreciate your letting the tribes in the Big  
15 Water, Lake Cahuilla area, know that a consortium of the  
16 tribes is being formed. Lake Cahuilla Tribes  
17 Consortium, LCTC, and that there is a mission and  
18 objective statement available for their review. If  
19 someone would like a copy of the LCTC statement, email  
20 Ray Teran at [rteran@biejas-nsn.gov](mailto:rteran@biejas-nsn.gov).

21           The next comment is from James Gibson. It  
22 says, "we still need the first and last names of all  
23 speakers inviting. It's often unclear who is talking."

24           The next comment is from Paula Marvin. It  
25 says, "Can water quality and air monitoring systems be

1 placed at the sea and school sites? We would even  
2 request at the new lithium plants. Working class people  
3 need protection.”

4 The next comment is from Paula Marvin. It  
5 says, “Thank you Catrina.”

6 The next comment is from Paula Marvin. It  
7 says, “Students can’t — couldn’t even participate in  
8 distance learning. How can the community access  
9 information? Maybe some lithium money, CNA, can be used  
10 for internet access for all in the community.”

11 The next comment is from Paula Marvin. It  
12 says, “Have you addressed the sinkholes?”

13 The next comment is from Daniela Flores. It  
14 says, “Hi, I would like to share some document to all  
15 Zoom attendees. Is there a way you can circulate to  
16 all? IV residents Angel and Monique provided paper  
17 copies of the preliminary findings from their Lithium  
18 Valley survey, and I would like to make that available  
19 to everyone online. We also want to invite people to  
20 complete the Lithium Valley survey. Can you share the  
21 following two links?” And, she’s included some links.

22 The next comment is from Paula Marvin. It  
23 says, “Maybe something to warn the community. When the  
24 wind and sand blowing, it’s too much to drive safely  
25 home and an area should be set in place too.”

1           The next comment is from Jasmine Phillips. It  
2 says, "Thank you to the Commission for this meeting to  
3 hear the thoughts and concerns of the tribal and  
4 community representatives. Also, thanks to the panel  
5 that presented the findings on their community survey."

6           The next comment is from Jasmine Phillips. It  
7 says, "Yes, very important recommendation by a public  
8 commenter to utilize our school systems to disseminate  
9 information. We do the same through our non-profit, and  
10 it is highly effective."

11           Those are all the public comments. Back to  
12 you, Chair Paz.

13           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And I do have a  
14 written comment that was left here with me from Pasha  
15 from the Quechan tribe. And it says, "Is there any  
16 oversight regarding psychiatric mental health,  
17 Commissioner involved? What are the standards of  
18 lithium monitoring and mental health, trust? I.E.  
19 mental health services oversight and accountability  
20 commission, National Institute for Mental Health, which  
21 is the leading federal agency. Thank you"

22           And that concludes our public comment. And  
23 again, thank you for all who participated in our  
24 community's perspective. We still have, and I just want  
25 to do a check that we still have quorum, because the

1 next topic is really important as to how we're going to  
2 move forward with the report. And if there is a need  
3 for us to make any decision right now, I want to make  
4 sure that we still have quorum in case we need to vote  
5 on anything. So, can I just get a confirmation from the  
6 CEC?

7 Okay, we're checking

8 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Castaneda?

9 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yeah.

10 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Colwell?

11 Commissioner Dolega?

12 Did I hear a, "Present," from Commissioner

13 Dolega?

14 Okay, no.

15 Commissioner Flores?

16 COMMISSIONER FLORES: Present.

17 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Hanks?

18 Vice Chair Kelley

19 Commissioner Lopez?

20 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Present.

21 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Olmedo?

22 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Present.

23 MS. LOZA: Chair Paz?

24 CHAIR PAZ: Present.

25 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Reynolds?

1 COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: Present.

2 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Ruiz?

3 Commissioner Scott?

4 COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Present.

5 MS. LOZA: Commissioner Soto?

6 Commissioner Weisgall?

7 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Still here

8 MS. LOZA: Thank you. So, I have eight here.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Thank you. So, we  
10 will, and I apologize I'm jumping over to the next item,  
11 recognizing that we are behind schedule. But I — before  
12 I do that, I do want to see if there are any  
13 Commissioner comments on the community's perspectives  
14 panel. So, I will start here in Thermal to see if there  
15 are any Commissioner comments.

16 Yes, I have Richie Lopez?

17 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Hi, I want to thank the  
18 tribal community and the community for coming out and  
19 sharing their concerns today.

20 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

21 COMMISSIONER SCOTT: Yeah. Manfred Scott.  
22 I've been hearing a lot of concerns from the public, and  
23 it's almost the same way as the tribal was putting on  
24 their concerns as well. And again, I'm hearing about,  
25 you know, the workforce, and hearing about the

1 environment impacts and so forth. And so, seems like if  
2 we had this meeting, similar like we had today, seems  
3 like you would've probably moved a lot faster or moved a  
4 lot better with a lot of the input from the public. And  
5 seems like maybe that's something that we still need to  
6 do, is try to inform a meeting like this, where the  
7 public can really chime in.

8           Again, sounds like there's not enough  
9 information out there for the public, and seems like  
10 that needs to be given to the public as any information  
11 that we have. And again, unforeseen — the unforeseen  
12 is, again, we don't know what's going to play out with  
13 this lithium extraction. So, yeah. It's just kind of  
14 really concerned to hear, you know, how the public feels  
15 about, you know, not getting enough information. Thank  
16 you.

17           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

18           Commissioners in Westmorland? Commissioner  
19 Olmedo?

20           COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: Thank you, Madam Chair.  
21 For the translator, I'm going to say it in Spanish, so  
22 you can translate. (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH) I'd like  
23 to thank the participants, the communities from Imperial  
24 Valley to Coachella for their participation. I know  
25 that it's been a long day. I know some of you were not

1 able to stay. Something that remains in my mind while  
2 listening to all the comments is that there's still a  
3 lot of work to be done as a lithium commission, as well  
4 as the Energy Commission. To assure that the community  
5 has significant participation in this process.

6 I feel sad that the community still does not  
7 have the confidence to feel as they have ownership in  
8 this process. I want to assure you that the community  
9 is owner of this process. The community should decide  
10 the future of how this industry will develop. Or maybe  
11 the community will determine that it is not the best  
12 thing for the community.

13 The important thing is that there be  
14 responsibility on behalf of all of those who need to be  
15 involved in this process. It is to assure that the  
16 tribes be involved. Assure that the communities that  
17 are close by and all the communities that are around  
18 Salton Sea, that they have a participation in this, and  
19 have all the necessary information. All transparency  
20 possible, to make sure that they can make informed  
21 decisions for their community.

22 Today I heard worries regarding health, water,  
23 air, jobs, education. But the most important thing is  
24 making sure the community, the way the development of  
25 the extraction of lithium is accelerating, it should be

1 equal with the acceleration of awareness and information  
2 to the community so they go hand in hand. Again, as  
3 commissioner of this lithium commission, with the  
4 responsibility of making sure the disadvantaged  
5 communities participate. I want them to feel confident  
6 coming forward and continuing to express their worries,  
7 and demand the information they need to be able to make  
8 an informed decision.

9 I have asked, the same way that we've had  
10 several conversations between the committee of the  
11 community involvement. The state of California just  
12 approved a historic surplus budget. Sadly, steps were  
13 not taken to ensure that this lithium committee had the  
14 necessary resources to ensure an outreach and all the  
15 necessary resources for community involvement. I am  
16 committed during my time with the commission. I will  
17 continue to demand that the Lithium Valley Commission  
18 and I will ask continuously to my commissioned my  
19 colleagues that we continue to demand the energy  
20 commission to support us to ask the State, the Governor,  
21 or the Legislature that we need resources to ensure that  
22 there will be significant participation.

23 COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: I'm sorry, was that  
24 translated?

25 CHAIR PAZ: Yes, it was translated, thank you.

1                   COMMISSIONER OLMEDO: (TRANSLATED FROM  
2 SPANISH) At the very last, I'd like to give thanks to  
3 all of the participants and hope that this is one of  
4 more forums to come in the near future. Listening to  
5 all of the comments of today, the worries, and knowledge  
6 of the community, it's obvious that we should have  
7 started with this forum from the beginning.. Thank you.

8                   CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Any of the  
9 Commissioners joining us via Zoom?

10                  If you have the ability to use the raise-hand  
11 function, that way either I or somebody from the CEC  
12 team can help me flag who wants to speak?

13                  COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Jonathan here.

14                  CHAIR PAZ: Jonathan, thank you. Go ahead.

15                  COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Lots to say, I'm going  
16 to try and keep it very brief, focus on just a couple  
17 points. A big thank you, again, to all of the speakers  
18 for taking the time out of their day to express their  
19 views. Again, we learned a lot.

20                  I want to focus specifically on the workforce  
21 development panel, and especially the comments of Angel  
22 de Dios, and I don't know the name of the young lady,  
23 the student next to him. We could not agree more on the  
24 need to attract students to STEM curricula, and the  
25 possible benefits of jobs in the lithium industry in

1 Imperial Valley, and to attract them at a young age.

2 Last year, we donated \$130,000 to the  
3 Westmorland Unified School District. That's K-12. So,  
4 we're with you, get 'em early. And we donated \$25,000  
5 to Imperial Valley College for them to pick scholarships  
6 for STEM students. And we're looking at donations this  
7 year to more area schools, especially aiming at middle  
8 and high school students. That is when to get their  
9 interest, to let them know that there are future good  
10 jobs in the industry.

11 And yes, local hires, 100 percent local hires,  
12 that's their goal. I could go on, but it's a late day  
13 and we've got more to do. So, let me stop there.  
14 Thanks very much.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Anyone else?

16 COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: This is Alice  
17 Reynolds. I just wanted to add a quick thank you for  
18 all of the community members who came today. I do  
19 recognize that this was time out of their day, and they  
20 provided such valuable information. I appreciated the  
21 honesty, the kind of broad issues that were raised, the  
22 heart-felt views. And was listening very carefully and  
23 look forward to talking about next steps after today's  
24 really informative meeting. So, thanks everyone.

25 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I do not see anyone

1 else wanting to speak on Zoom. I — so I will take the  
2 time to offer my own comments as I've been sitting here  
3 listening both to the tribal perspectives and the  
4 community perspectives. And, there is a lot that I need  
5 to sit with to reflect and find the words on how to put  
6 it out there. But, I — the few things that I'm piecing  
7 together right now is that the only commitment that I  
8 can make as a Chair, is that we include these  
9 perspectives in the report.

10           We need to make sure that we can present this  
11 in an accurate way as possible to the legislature,  
12 because ultimately it is our elected leaders who are  
13 making these decisions. Right? When this Commission  
14 was formed, there was already a moving train on the  
15 conversation of lithium. So, if anything, I am grateful  
16 that the purpose of this Commission has been to broaden  
17 that conversation and to be able to bring community and  
18 tribal voices to the conversation. Although,  
19 recognizing that it has been late, we were late to begin  
20 with, and we're late in this Blue-Ribbon Commission as  
21 well.

22           I heard many sort of tensions that I think  
23 arrive — arise from the context, where the lithium is  
24 being extracted. And, I think that the needs for jobs,  
25 for good education, opportunities, trainings, good

1 paying jobs, are there and should not be confused with a  
2 desire or a lack of desire for industry, or this  
3 particular industry in particular.

4           And I heard, you know, from the morning  
5 session, very clear, almost energy to borrow some words  
6 from our tribal neighbors, that you know, they are  
7 seriously considering taking an against approach to this  
8 industry. And then those same concerns were echoed by  
9 the community. And if you all who — the CEC, who's  
10 capturing these notes for the report heard the same  
11 thing, that needs to be said, and that needs to be said  
12 loud and clear to the decision makers. And I think  
13 that's the responsibility that, as a Blue-Ribbon  
14 Commission, we have to be able to, you know, put the  
15 perspectives that we've heard and put them out there.

16           So, with that, again, I will reflect more on  
17 this and see what conversations or next steps need to be  
18 had after this. But thank you, everybody, for the  
19 conversation.

20           So, we will now transition to the next item,  
21 which I think it's probably going to echo some of the  
22 sentiments that we heard around how much, you know,  
23 engagement and how much time we're going to allow for  
24 the public to review and give us their input on this  
25 report. Let me find the right page here.

1           So, I want to raise a few key points for  
2 discussion regarding the path to develop the report to  
3 the legislature. We are currently about 10 weeks away  
4 from the date that was set for us through the bill that  
5 formed this Commission. The report is due to the  
6 legislature October 1st. And while that sounds like a  
7 lot of time, I think we do have a compressed schedule to  
8 reach that date and allow for each of the steps.

9           The CEC staff has been documenting our  
10 discussions to support the development of a draft report  
11 and today's meeting provided additional content that CEC  
12 staff will review and include in the draft. CEC staff  
13 provided me with a Roadmap to show these steps to get to  
14 the final report.

15           So, if you could advance to the next slide,  
16 please.

17           Do we have the roadmap?

18           Okay. So, we have physical copies, I hope  
19 everyone got one of the roadmap. And, I mean, in full  
20 transparency, in preparing for this meeting, both Vice  
21 Chair Kelley and myself talked about different scenarios  
22 with the CEC staff and, obviously we — we're not in a  
23 position to make a final decision, and that's going to  
24 be the decision of the Commissioners here as to how we  
25 approach it. But the roadmap anticipates being able to

1 release a draft report by early to mid-August for our  
2 review, and for review and comment by the public.

3 A critical issue for us to discuss is the  
4 community engagement around the draft report. In  
5 discussion with community groups and during meetings we  
6 have heard requests for community meetings when the  
7 draft is released, but there is, you know, if we want to  
8 meet the October 1 deadline, it limit, you know, the  
9 time that we have.

10 Practically speaking if we release the draft  
11 report in mid-August we could conduct two community  
12 engagement meetings in late August during the public  
13 review period, which is estimated at 15 days. Having  
14 the community engagement meetings would serve the  
15 purpose of engaging those communities who are not likely  
16 to give us written comments. So having a setting  
17 similar as today only focused on the report is something  
18 that could be done during those 15 days.

19 We also have a Commission meeting scheduled  
20 for August 25th which would offer us an opportunity to  
21 hear public comments and discuss the draft during the  
22 review period. We anticipate all comments would need to  
23 be received by the end of August to provide sufficient  
24 time to review and consider the comments received and  
25 revise the draft as needed before a mid-September

1 release to the public of the final draft, that we can  
2 consider at a Commission meeting in the last week of  
3 September.

4 I recognize that some parties may feel this  
5 amount of community engagement around the report and the  
6 length of the comment period are not sufficient, but if  
7 we want to meet the deadline, and I'm saying, "If, what  
8 if," because that's a decision that this Commission can  
9 choose to not meet the deadline. This is the roadmap  
10 that would get us to meeting the deadline, or as close  
11 to it as possible.

12 The alternative would be to plan for  
13 additional engagement or a longer comment period, or  
14 both, with the understanding that we will miss the  
15 deadline for delivery of the report to the legislature.  
16 The decision actually needs to be made today if at all  
17 possible, because if we anticipate missing the deadline  
18 we will want to make parties aware of the delay, let the  
19 public know about the schedule and we will also want to  
20 start planning now for community engagement activities.

21 Since we currently do not have another meeting  
22 scheduled until after the draft would be released, today  
23 — today is our best opportunity. While we could  
24 consider an additional brief, single item meeting for  
25 early August to have more discussion and reach a

1 decision on the approach, it's really not ideal due to  
2 the difficulty of adding another meeting on process  
3 decisions only.

4 So, for today, I welcome the discussion and  
5 hope we can reach a decision on the path forward and  
6 would like to hear from other commissioners. And I will  
7 start here in Thermal.

8 There will be public comment, yeah. We will  
9 have discussion, public comment, and after public  
10 comment, if the Commission wishes to make a motion, we  
11 will do it after public comment.

12 We will lose the quorum in 15 minutes, so if  
13 anybody from the Commission wants to —

14 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Madam Chair, you're  
15 going to l— if it's — if you're depending on me, you're  
16 going to lose it in about three minutes. So —

17 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I would like to share  
18 that, you know, we heard from one of the tribal  
19 communities and the community in itself, and it shares a  
20 lot of the same, similar concerns. And I think it — I  
21 think if we really want to get our input into this  
22 report like we're tasked to do, I think we need to push  
23 this agenda back.

24 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yeah. Madam Chair?

25 CHAIR PAZ: Yes?

1                   COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: 'Cause I'm going to  
2 sign off here momentarily, I've got a babysitter here.

3                   CHAIR PAZ: Before you sign off, maybe you can  
4 do a motion, or just —

5                   COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Well I, you know, let  
6 me just let me make a real quick comment that I don't  
7 think is going to have a lot of, probably, dissention.  
8 Maybe it will, I don't know. But based on what I heard  
9 today from both tribal members, tribal community, and  
10 the local public, we are miles apart. And quite  
11 frankly, as a Commissioner that's got to vote on  
12 something, I'm not even sure what, you know, I can't  
13 leave this process the way it is. You know, I've  
14 written a lot of government reports over my years, and  
15 we just, you know, I don't know whether we need to  
16 contact the authors of the legislation, or who we would  
17 talk to, but there is absolutely no way we're going to  
18 have a report that I think I can vote on and feel good  
19 about, and certainly, that the folks that we represent,  
20 the folks that basically are dependent on whatever  
21 guidance we give to the legislature and the Governor's  
22 office, are going to be satisfied with. And, you know,  
23 it just, it really just doesn't make a lot of sense to  
24 try to rush something that is this significant. Not  
25 only to the community, but also to the economy, of not

1 only this region but the state, to do that.

2           So, I would like to make a motion that we make  
3 a formal request to do two things. That we extend the  
4 period of time in which we are required to produce a  
5 report, not by a lot. But we also ask, and we implore  
6 upon the CEC, that we have resources that allow us to  
7 get into these communities and really, you know, provide  
8 industry and obtain feedback. Because what I hear  
9 today, it was just a lot of misinformation.

10           We have a lot of people that really — and I  
11 mean, we've talked about this at these meetings. And,  
12 it's very clear, having these meetings, and whether we  
13 have them, and unfortunately we were disabled by, you  
14 know, three quarters of our work by COVID, and the fact  
15 that we had to do this all by Zoom and so forth. We  
16 just, we haven't gotten anywhere. And I don't feel  
17 comfortable that we have — you know, I mean, we —  
18 you're — we're never — or anything of this magnitude  
19 we're never going to have 100 percent buy in.

20           But, I would like to make a motion that we  
21 request whomever we need to request that we extend the  
22 period, and that we expand resources to do public  
23 outreach and get into these communities and have these  
24 conversations, and really try to provide as much  
25 information that is accurate to folks, so they really

1 understand what it is. Because, there are people that  
2 are all over the map here. And it's just, I don't — I'm  
3 not ready to vote on anything yet.

4 So, that's my motion, and I would just ask for  
5 a second.

6 COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I'll second.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We have a motion and a  
8 second. I still see some discussion from the  
9 Commissioners, and then we have to go to public comment  
10 before we take the vote. So, Commissioner Reynolds?

11 COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: Yeah, thank you, Chair  
12 Paz. So, I think it's important to think about what  
13 this report is. Because, we're not going to be  
14 recommending going forward or not going forward with  
15 this development with any particular project. And so, I  
16 guess, I look at it as, it's important to pretty quickly  
17 communicate some of the things that we're hearing. And  
18 then, it would be a good — this doesn't have to be the  
19 end of the conversation, this is not going to be a final  
20 decision on anything. But I would be in favor of seeing  
21 this report as a step forward, or a, you know, a way to  
22 get some of the information that we are hearing out to a  
23 wider audience.

24 And I'm not sure that it makes sense to set  
25 ourselves up now to plan to miss the deadline, but

1 rather to see what kind of progress we can make between  
2 now — using this, an expedited schedule, doing as much  
3 public input as we can, and then pulling that together.  
4 And if somewhere along the process we feel like we need  
5 an extension, then do it then.

6 But I'm just worried about delaying getting  
7 this important information more widely available. And I  
8 would be in favor of using the report as more of a, you  
9 know, maybe it's an interim step, or maybe it's a sun-  
10 lighting and a way to communicate some of what we're  
11 hearing in the process. And moving forward on it with  
12 the schedule that's suggested by the CEC. But, I'm  
13 certainly open to conversation on that idea.

14 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I'll jump in if it's  
15 okay? Jonathan here.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Go ahead.

17 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I agree with  
18 Commissioner Reynolds completely, and I strongly oppose  
19 any kind of extension. The law, the law calls for a  
20 report by October 1. We've known that for — we've known  
21 that for over two years.

22 We get a report it. We're not going to  
23 change. There are people whose minds are made up.  
24 There are people whose — they're not going to change  
25 their views. By extending the time, what, are we going

1 to go house to house to try to convince people that  
2 lithium development is okay? It's not going to cause  
3 great environmental or health harm?

4 Steve, you're right. I heard gigantic amounts  
5 of misinformation today. You know, 500,000 gallons of  
6 water to make a ton of lithium, which is a number in  
7 South America. You know, you could go on and on.

8 But, we're not going to change people's minds.  
9 And I think the goal here is to get a report out. I  
10 mean, if this is changed individual Commissioners minds  
11 then they will vote as they vote when we get a draft  
12 report out. But, it's our job to get a report out.

13 And, it will be — it will hardly be  
14 definitive. If anything, I think it will help set the  
15 stage for future discussions. But look. You know, sp—  
16 a company like mine, we're four years away at best from  
17 going being commercial. So, there's going to be plenty  
18 of time to deal with a lot of these issues. So, I feel  
19 very strongly that we should meet our deadline, and  
20 we've got a huge amount of information that we can get  
21 into this report. So I would oppose the motion. Thank  
22 you.

23 CHAIR PAZ: Commissioner Castaneda?

24 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: You're on mute.

25 You're on mute, Steve.

1           COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yeah, thanks. So,  
2 you know, maybe there's a misunderstanding that I have  
3 in terms of, you know, what our ultimate goal here is in  
4 terms of a report. I mean I don't, you know, I think as  
5 Commissioner Reynolds said, our role here is not to say  
6 whether we, you know, the state should move forward or  
7 not move forward. That's not what it is.

8           But I think that one of the reasons that we,  
9 and again, I don't think it's anybody's fault, I think  
10 it's the pandemic, I think it's the fact that, you know,  
11 these meetings via, you know, the cyber, the web, are  
12 not beneficial to getting out information as much as you  
13 think it would be.

14           But the issue is, is I think that we've got a  
15 lot of people that just, you know, that have a lot of  
16 misinformation, or they have a lot of strong feelings.  
17 And they're opposed. And what I would like to do, and  
18 if we can, and I'm willing to roll up my sleeves and  
19 work as much as I can to get this done. There's not — I  
20 don't want to prolong this. I don't. But I just — from  
21 what I heard today, you know, there are huge, you know,  
22 distances between I think what people think is going to  
23 happen and what — probably for those of use that have  
24 been sort of following this for the last couple of  
25 years, and certainly you, Jonathan, have been following

1 it and been involved in it for years — what is actually  
2 going to happen and what it means to the region and so  
3 forth.

4           And so, if there's a path forward to do that,  
5 I'm more than willing to do meetings, several during the  
6 month. You know, those are the kinds of things I'm  
7 willing to do. But I just, you know, the amount of you  
8 know, the amount of discontent —

9           COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: You know, let me jump  
10 in here. Let's assume, let's assume we get some sort of  
11 a delay. What are we going to accomplish in the next  
12 five months, or two months. Are we going to have —

13           CHAIR PAZ: We've lost a quorum, just to let  
14 you know. So, we can continue the discussion, but we  
15 won't have a quorum.

16           COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: So, it wasn't my  
17 fault. I stayed.

18           (Laughter)

19           Yeah, well, I mean, I think, Jonathan, that,  
20 you know, what I don't think we want, really, and again,  
21 I, you know, this is not supposed to be political, but  
22 we issue something and we've got groups of people going  
23 up to Sacramento and not saying that we've provided  
24 enough information to community. You know? And that's,  
25 you know, I mean, I've been around government long

1 enough to know that when people say that there wasn't  
2 enough information, there wasn't enough outreach, the  
3 meetings were held in, you know, virtually, and, you  
4 know, most people don't have access to the, you know, to  
5 the web and all this kinds of things. You're going to  
6 get legislators to react to that. And I think that, you  
7 know what, Jonathan, you've got a tough enough job as it  
8 is.

9 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: Well my view, I'm —

10 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: And again, I just, I  
11 just think that, I think that it's, I think that it, you  
12 know, again, and maybe we issue an interim report that  
13 says everything that we need to do, but we ask the  
14 legislature to continue to do that public outreach. I,  
15 that, I think that's a, that's a good, you know, and  
16 that way we've kind of, we've made our goal, and we're  
17 continuing in our work. I just, I don't know that an  
18 issue of this magnitude will made a lot of sense to put  
19 a finite period of time to issue a report with virtually  
20 no resources.

21 (CROSSTALK)

22 CHAIR PAZ: I have a—

23 COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: Yeah, so anyway.

24 CHAIR PAZ: I'm going to jump in here to allow  
25 Richie to also jump in in the virtual conversation.

1           COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: I have to agree with what  
2 you are saying is, is that, you know, we — it's our  
3 obligation is to make sure that we get our community  
4 outreach input into this report and making sure that  
5 there's enough information that's given. And, you know,  
6 there's ways like, you know, we have to figure out how  
7 to kind of move forward with it. I'm not trying to stop  
8 the project, just more trying to make sure that we get  
9 all the input that's valuable to our communities into  
10 this report and having that voice for them.

11           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you for those comments. I  
12 do want to go back to Jonathan, one of the things you  
13 said about, you know, people have made up their minds.  
14 I think on the same token, this community and we've  
15 heard it both from the tribe and the community members.  
16 This community feels that the decision has already been  
17 made on lithium. That the decision on how to spend  
18 resources, potential resources that at this point are  
19 imaginary, have already been made.

20           And, so, we're you know, at the same time by  
21 providing and pushing a report without further community  
22 engagement, I — what I've heard, what that report is  
23 going to read is, people are opposed to this, because  
24 decisions have already been made. Because that's what I  
25 heard loud and clear today.

1           So, I think we really need to be able — a. if  
2 that's what it is, we put it in the report, and that's  
3 what the report says. Or, b. we explore if there is a  
4 medium alternative so that we can continue the  
5 discussion and continue to include more voices and see  
6 what the balance of that information results in.

7           But at this point, I don't' feel that we have  
8 it.

9           COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I'll jump in with one  
10 sentence. In terms of that we haven't had enough  
11 information. We've had 19 meetings. Okay? Alice, over  
12 to you. I'm sorry, you had your hand up and I jumped  
13 in.

14           COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS: Yeah, thanks. I just  
15 wanted to say that I may be looking at the report a  
16 little bit differently. Although I think I'm agreeing  
17 with what you're saying, Commissioner Castaneda and  
18 Chair Paz. But I think that the report itself can be  
19 part of the, you know, it's not a dialogue because it's  
20 a written report, although we can have meetings around  
21 the report to talk about it. We can use it to structure  
22 a meeting where we say, okay, here's our report. It's  
23 an informational document, it compiles both information  
24 about what the plans are, what impacts are, and what  
25 we've heard from communities and use that as a point of

1 discussion.

2           That's why I'm kind of anxious to get the  
3 report so that then we have something to continue to  
4 talk about. And again, this is not going to be a go or  
5 no go on the project. And as we heard today, a lot of  
6 people are opposed. And so, let's communicate that.  
7 And then, let's continue to get information out into  
8 communities and talk to communities.

9           But I don't see a need to delay the report.  
10 And I — in fact, I think it will be helpful to get it  
11 out sooner rather than later.

12           COMMISSIONER CASTANEDA: I would agree that we  
13 should move forward on a draft. I should. And then the  
14 Commission should decide whether or not it should be  
15 stamped final, interim, work in progress, whatever we  
16 want to call it. So I would amend my, well, we don't  
17 have a quorum. So, that —

18           COMMISSIONER LOPEZ: Yeah, there's no quorum.

19           (Laughter)

20           So, I think, you know, one of the biggest  
21 things that we're hearing today, is basically, it's the  
22 opportunity of that voice. And that's the thing. We're  
23 taking that opportunity away from them when we're — if,  
24 by pushing this report through. And that's the concern.

25           Yeah, we had 19 meetings, but there's was also

1 said that community engagement that wasn't part of some  
2 of this. And that's the concerning part of it. And  
3 then, when we started off with the smaller pilot  
4 projects and on the tribal side there was — it was more  
5 of Imperial County handling that process.

6 And going through there, there was no  
7 information and there was no conversation with the  
8 tribes and so forth. And that was a concern on that  
9 end. And I think that's kind of where, you know, some  
10 of these guys that were talking today, like our tribal  
11 communities and our regular communities, there was no  
12 voice for them. And they didn't have no opportunity and  
13 that's the concern. And I think that's what, you know,  
14 we need to take a look at.

15 CHAIR PAZ: Well, thank you everyone for the  
16 conversation. We do not have quorum, and I don't know  
17 that we have a clear direction and a unanimous direction  
18 from the members of this Commission. But we will  
19 continue to push for getting the draft report out as  
20 soon as possible, and then re-evaluating once we see the  
21 draft report on the next steps.

22 I will open it for public comment at this  
23 point. Again, given we don't, we're not going to be  
24 making a decision on this.

25 MS. COYLE: May I go ahead, Madam Chair?

1 Yeah, Hi. I'm Courtney Coyle, the attorney with Carmen  
2 Lucas, Kwaaymii Laguna. So, I have three points of  
3 concern on the compressed schedule. We just saw this  
4 today, I don't know if the Commissioners had, you know,  
5 advanced notice of this. But, I don't really see this  
6 about changing minds. I'm a very practical person, and  
7 I see this about a realistic timeline. And a way for  
8 obtaining quality public input. Otherwise, this looks  
9 like a very performative public input schedule.

10 And I'll just give you three examples. The  
11 first one, is trying to get a draft report released by  
12 mid-August. It's already mid-July, right? So, that's  
13 four weeks. Has staff already been working on a draft?

14 CHAIR PAZ: Yeah. They have been working  
15 alongside every workshop in drafting something. But,  
16 that draft has not been available to any of the  
17 Commissioners or the public.

18 MS. COYLE: So, you know, so there's that.  
19 So, this comes out in mid-August, a draft, and then a  
20 15-day public comment period. Most of us have trouble  
21 getting something in on a 30-day public comment period,  
22 and this schedule would have us having a public meeting  
23 within that 15-day public comment. So maybe you get  
24 three, four, five workdays maximum to look at it? What  
25 kind of quality public input would you be able to get in

1 that short time frame with a document that we haven't  
2 been involved at all in reviewing or drafting. So  
3 that's my first place of concern.

4           The second one, is the staff taking the public  
5 comments and then making modifications to the draft  
6 report. And that would be late-September and into  
7 October. But if it's due October 1<sup>st</sup>, you know, is there  
8 really going to be enough time for staff to make  
9 revision and then, you know, is there going to be  
10 another point for folks to consider the final report?  
11 Often times tribes need to see a draft to see if their  
12 issues have been filtered wrong or heard right or  
13 translated wrong. And I'm worried here that it's just  
14 not going to be enough time. Sorry, I'm having a hard  
15 time with the translation in my right ear here.

16           The third piece is erring on the side of not  
17 rushing. I think many of us have been around the  
18 California legislature enough that deadlines and bills  
19 sometimes don't get met. And that's just how things  
20 work. And they're action-forcing, but you know, there  
21 can be a little bit of room there. So, I thought the  
22 motion had some elegance to it and reaching out to the  
23 legislator or the drafters of the bill, that they can  
24 understand why, maybe, there needs to be a little bit of  
25 cushion there. What's the rush? What's the rush?

1           That's what I'm concerned about. This is a  
2 very aggressive timeline, I'm not placing blame on  
3 anybody, but if there have been 19 meetings, to address  
4 the gentleman on the Commission from industry, why are  
5 we squeezing this in at the end? It's a real concern,  
6 and I think the community and tribes have been there  
7 before at the very end of the process. And we don't  
8 like getting squeezed. We know what that feels like,  
9 and that's kind of what this roadmap feels like. So,  
10 thank you for considering these public comments.

11           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Any additional public  
12 comments? I see two. So, if you can start — well, you  
13 have — if you have that microphone, you can use it if  
14 it's working, and then Mariela, you can — you'll be  
15 next. Okay.

16           MR. WALLACE: You know, from sitting here in  
17 these two meetings that I have, you know, I feel like  
18 pretty comfortable that, you know, people will be able  
19 to be brought to the table. But then again, with the  
20 words I've just heard, I've been hearing these words all  
21 my life. And I'm serious. This is the truth. I'm  
22 serious. This is the truth. You know, Alice wants the  
23 report, Jonathan opposes it, says it's the law. But  
24 actually, why would there be a way to do an extension if  
25 this is the case? You know? So that is very

1 untruthful. You know?

2           It seems to me, the way I see it, is the  
3 underrepresented people here in this valley don't get a  
4 voice. And an underrepresented by my people, we don't  
5 get a voice. That's what you're saying. You want to  
6 create a draft, you know, and stamp it? You know,  
7 that's fine. But, why don't you give an extension of  
8 time and give people a chance. I've heard it right here  
9 with these people right here, and people coming in on  
10 the Zooms, that they need more information. That was  
11 the consensus here today. So why rush it?

12           You know, how would the legislators feel about  
13 a move on a draft without getting all the correct  
14 information? Would they be very thrilled? Or would  
15 they send you guys back to the drawing board and then  
16 have people up there marching around? Thank you.

17           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. And can you state your  
18 name again for the record please?

19           MR. WALLACE: Robert Wallace of the Barona  
20 Band of Mission Indians in San Diego.

21           CHAIR PAZ: Thank you, Robert. Mariela?

22           MS. LOERA: So, this is Mariela Loera with  
23 Leadership Counsel. So, I would really encourage the  
24 Commission for in their next conversation when there's a  
25 quorum and you all discuss this, to really discuss what

1 the role of this report is. From our conversations with  
2 policy makers throughout the last two years, we have  
3 really been made to understand that the role of this  
4 report will be to really guide the decision-making  
5 process of further policy and funding and anything else  
6 related to this.

7 And if that is the case, conversations like  
8 this and community input and tribe input and any other  
9 local voices need to be in that report in an effective  
10 way. And in a way that really shows what has been  
11 spoken about today. And we need more time for that.  
12 And we need more than 15 days of time for that. Not  
13 just like was spoken earlier for just us to review it  
14 and give comment, but also for us to meaningfully take  
15 that back to communities and capture those comments.  
16 So, I would really like that to be considered next time.  
17 Thank you.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Ceci?

19 MS. ARMENTA: Sí. (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH)  
20 My comment is the following you are giving us 15 days  
21 for this report. I have mentioned and I mentioned in my  
22 comments, in my presentation. That there are people who  
23 don't have the capacity or don't even know how to read a  
24 written page. And we have to, we, and I commit to...I'm  
25 committed to a group in my community, to read the report

1 once it gets written. Now, we need the translation into  
2 Spanish of this report. If sometimes it is hard for us  
3 to understand the word lithium. Imagine the meaning  
4 for them to understand it. In 15 days, they will not  
5 understand this. We have to explain to them as the  
6 representatives to the community what this extraction  
7 means. What does this report mean? Why are we doing  
8 this report? So, I came to speak here to be heard. And  
9 that my words can be exposed in this report. Because  
10 they are not my words, but the words of the community.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Ceci? Ceci, si le da tiempo a la  
12 traductora para que.

13 MS. ARMENTA: Ay, sí, perdón. Se me olvidó. Me  
14 emocioné.

15 CHAIR PAZ: (Reply in Spanish) I was just  
16 asking Ceci if she can slow down so the translator can  
17 translate.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Está bien. Adelante.  
19 Siga adelante.

20 MS. ARMENTA: Sí. Lista?

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Claro que sí.

22 MS. ARMENTA: Okay. (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH)

23 Oh, I forgot, but allow me to begin. In that explanation  
24 for the community, like I previously said, if people  
25 cannot understand the word lithium, which is a short

1 word, just imagine us reading this report to them. I am  
2 committed with the community to present this report to  
3 them. So, in 15 days, I do not think this community is  
4 going to be able to understand it. Because it is a  
5 process of understanding why it's going to be done.

6 I understand that there's a date for you as  
7 representatives to submit it. But us as residents of  
8 the community, we want to live safely. Now, all these  
9 people that want to truly know the truth, they need to  
10 be represented in that report. The words the community  
11 has said, which was what I presented today. They have  
12 the right to read it. And I'm not saying it's not going  
13 to be a good report, but we do need more information for  
14 the communities.

15 Sometimes, we say time to time.

16 CHAIR PAZ: Ceci? Si por favor puede  
17 completar su por que tenemos el comentario publico es  
18 de dos minutos.

19 MS. ARMENTA: Sí. (TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH)  
20 I'm only asking for time, to give us time to read the  
21 report well and to accurately present it to the  
22 community.

23 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Any other public  
24 comments here?

25 MS. RUIZ: Hi, good afternoon. My name is

1 Nilda Ruiz. Thank you for opportunity to speak. I'm  
2 with Alianza Coachella Valley. Support a lot of the  
3 comments shared by many folks here. We need more than  
4 15 days for this public comment period. I recommend  
5 sticking with the comment, 30-day comm— comment 30-day  
6 comment public period. This report is like this going  
7 to be, it's going to be pages and pages long. I know  
8 I've struggled as it is to keep up with reading the NEPA  
9 Environmental Assessment release for the SSMP 10-Year  
10 Plan. And I'd imagine trying to read this report,  
11 that's, I meant, and they says it's going to be pages  
12 and pages long, so I think we need more than 15 days to  
13 review this report.

14 I agree, this is not necessarily about  
15 changing minds. It's about ensuring that community is  
16 informed on this report and has the opportunity for  
17 meaningful input and engagement around the report.  
18 Otherwise, as previously mentioned by, I believe  
19 Courtney, I feel like this is just ends up being a sort  
20 of performative action of, you know, checking a check  
21 box of they got a public comments from community members  
22 and that's supposed to fill, fulfill everything. But I  
23 strongly urge the Commission to extend this 15-day  
24 public comment period. And if that means extending the  
25 deadline, missing the deadline, I think it's more than a

1 valid reason for that to be the case. Thank you.

2 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We do have other  
3 members here wishing to speak.

4 MS. MCGEE: This is Gloria McGee from the  
5 Quechan tribe. We deal with this constantly with the  
6 BLM and different people. We have to fill out  
7 paperwork, and they send it to us, like, two or three  
8 days before its due. And they send it to us 15 days  
9 before its due, and you're supposed to have 30-days.

10 This is a constant for us. So, we need to  
11 really give us a good date when this is going to happen,  
12 so that we can work with our people. Because some of  
13 them had to leave and do our tribal business. So, they  
14 need to know, because they're meeting tomorrow to try  
15 and get that letter done that I read this morning. But  
16 you do need to establish a date today so that we can get  
17 our work done.

18 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. I don't see any other  
19 members of the public here in Thermal wishing to speak,  
20 so I will see if there's anyone in Westmorland.

21 (Pause)

22 MS. CARRILLO: Thermal, do you hear us?

23 CHAIR PAZ: Westmorland.

24 MS. CARRILLO: (THERMAL) Westmorland, sorry.  
25 We're in Thermal. It's been a long day. Westmorland,

1 do you hear us?

2 MS. VILLEGAS: (WESTMORLAND) Yeah, we can hear  
3 you.

4 MS.MS. CARRILLO: (THERMAL) Do we have any  
5 comments?

6 MS.MS. VILLEGAS: (WESTMORLAND) Just in the  
7 mic.

8 No comments.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Do we have any public  
10 comments via Zoom?

11 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: One more from Jonathan  
12 when you have a chance.

13 MS. CARRILLO: Public comment on Zoom. CEC  
14 staff, any public comment on Zoom.

15 MS. LOZA: Yes, I have a (AUDIO CUT OUT).  
16 Stephanie Martin?

17 CHAIR PAZ: Yes, we can hear you, go ahead.  
18 You have two minutes.

19 MS. MARTIN: Okay, great. I think I will try  
20 to do it, keep within that. We are working so hard here  
21 as a collective community and complex community here.  
22 From all different walks of life, to try and ask to pump  
23 the brakes, give us more information. Help us  
24 understand. Answer our questions. Do the homework.

25 The report is due October 1<sup>st</sup>, okay, we know

1 that. But as we are saying now, to reflect on what I  
2 believe Commissioner Steve is saying basically to that,  
3 is you know, they're just pushing for their, their goal  
4 here, no matter what. It's almost as though they're  
5 just, the 19-meeting wait is to get enough support for  
6 their project, push comes to shove.

7           So, the report looks like an intentional  
8 skewing of this really important process in our  
9 democratic society here. This report needs to have  
10 experts weighing in on, on these, these. Attorney,  
11 those four things need to go on there. A performative  
12 action check-box? It's sounding just like that, when  
13 these are important checks and balances.

14           These are put in place for these times like  
15 this when we, the people, are strongly opposed to a  
16 certain industry from dominating or taking over. Sure,  
17 we're a capitalist country, but this is, this is a,  
18 literally an imperialist type of thing that's just  
19 taking over here, and they need to hear that yeah, this  
20 is not good. It's not something that can wait around  
21 and hopefully collect some more positive words of  
22 encouragement for your project.

23           It is a no, from all sorts of communities.  
24 The Anglos, the Mexican-Americans, the Indigenous  
25 Tribes, we have all spoken here and we're all in

1 agreement on this. This is important. This is  
2 legendary, this is what matters today, right now in the  
3 present. And this needs to be honored and heard. Thank  
4 you.

5 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Do we have any other  
6 comments via Zoom?

7 MS. LOZA: Yes. Our first comment is from  
8 Paula Marvin.

9 CHAIR PAZ: Yeah, she already, I think, that's  
10 who spoke, right now.

11 MS. LOZA: I'm sorry?

12 CHAIR PAZ: I think she just spoke.

13 MS. LOZA: Okay. No more comments.

14 CHAIR PAZ: No more, no other comments? Thank  
15 you.

16 That concludes the public comment section on  
17 this item. And I will — there was a question around,  
18 for the tribes, if we can give them a date. The CEC has  
19 committed to work towards releasing the draft in mid-  
20 August. So, when that draft is released, it will be  
21 made available to the public, to the tribes. And I will  
22 ask — and I'm sure I don't even have to ask this  
23 question. But I'm sure Katrina will make sure that she  
24 continues in communication with the tribes to make sure  
25 you get the, the report.

1 I know — Jonathan you had requested to speak?  
2 I will ask if there are any closing comments then,  
3 before we go to general comment session after having  
4 heard from the public already.

5 CHAIR PAZ: Sorry, Jonathan, we do have one  
6 more comment from —

7 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: No more comments.

8 CHAIR PAZ: Okay, thank you, no more comments  
9 I heard from—

10 COMMISSIONER WEISGALL: I'm done.

11 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. We do have a member of  
12 the tribe here wanting to clarify something, I think.

13 MS. MCGEE: Okay. This is Gloria McGee for  
14 the Quechan tribe again. On the fact sheet that you  
15 gave, you — right there, it says, "The Lithium Valley  
16 Commission is charged with investigating and analyzing a  
17 range of related issues collaboratively with other  
18 government agencies and members of the public. The  
19 Commission must submit a report of findings and  
20 recommendations to the State Legislature by October 1st,  
21 2022."

22 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you.

23 Okay, we will now take general public  
24 comments. So, that is comments on anything not on the  
25 agenda. And, I will again look here if there are any

1 general public comments in Thermal? I do not see any.  
2 Can we confirm if there are any members of the public in  
3 Westmorland wishing to speak?

4 MS. LOZA: No comments in Westmorland.

5 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. Can we go to general  
6 public comment via Zoom?

7 MS. LOZA: Checking. Just as a reminder, if  
8 you are joining on Zoom, please use the raised-hand  
9 feature. If you called in, please dial star-nine to  
10 raise your hand and star-six to unmute your phoneline.

11 I don't see any hands raised, but we do have  
12 comments. Okay, so the first comment was from  
13 Anonymous. It says, "Please say the name of the tribe  
14 Cahuilla correctly. It sounds like Ka-we-ah. Thank  
15 you, this is for the record. Thank you."

16 The next comment is from Nikola Lakic. It  
17 says, "Here, Nikola Lakic again. If you want to see  
18 relatively short video presentation, here's a link."  
19 And includes the link.

20 The next comment is from Anonymous. It says,  
21 "I would like to submit a comment for the public record.  
22 I am an enrolled member of the (INDISCERNIBLE/AUDIO  
23 FEEDBACK) Camp-em-we (PHONETIC) Indan Tribe. Over the  
24 past few days, I have heard presentations that are not  
25 have adequately addressed the concerns of the tribes who

1 are most affected by this project. There is no  
2 consultation regarding cultural resources, traditional  
3 ecological knowledge, or the economics that will affect  
4 these tribes. These presentations have been a reactive  
5 addressing of tribal concerns, as opposed to a proactive  
6 attempt to include Native American Tribes as equal  
7 partners in preserving their environment. If you do not  
8 include tribes and their traditional ecological  
9 knowledge, then all of this talk of environmental  
10 protection and preservation of cultural resources means  
11 nothing. Thank you for your time."

12 The next comment is from Paula Marvin. It  
13 says, "Is there any concern about all the sink holes and  
14 the boulders being used to fill them?"

15 Our next comment is from Paula Marvin. It  
16 says, "How many jobs does the Commissioner believe a  
17 plant employs? It is my understanding that not many  
18 employees needed. Also, how can we need schools if the  
19 air quality degrades more?"

20 The next comment is from Ray Teran. It says,  
21 "Please inform my sisters and brothers in Big Water,  
22 Lake Cahuilla Tribes, a mission and objectives document  
23 for the Lake Cahuilla Tribe's Consortium. Contact me at  
24 [rteran@biejas-nsn.gov](mailto:rteran@biejas-nsn.gov)."

25 Two more comments. Both from Paula Marvin.

1 It says, "The goal is not a report. It is to report  
2 that those who live in the community. I am H O."

3 And the second one is, "Do you want more  
4 sinkholes and earthquakes?"

5 So those are all the comments on Zoom. Back  
6 to you, Chair Paz.

7 CHAIR PAZ: Thank you. That concludes the  
8 public comments.

9 And we adjourn our meeting at 6:26. Again,  
10 thank you, everybody, for showing up today and staying  
11 with us this long. Appreciate you.

12 (Whereupon the meeting was adjourned at 6:26  
13 P.M.)

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## 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 1st day of September, 2022.



MARTHA L. NELSON,

CERT\*\*367

## 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.



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MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT\*\*367

September 1, 2022