



APPEARANCES

AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Betty Courtney, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Ken Corey, Fish and Wildlife Services, Palm Springs

Tom Zale, Bureau of Land Management

Scott Flint, California Energy Commission

STAFF

Chris Beale, DRECP Director

Vicki Campbell, Bureau of Land Management

Kristy Chew, California Energy Commission

ALSO PRESENT

John Renison, Chairman, Imperial County Board of Supervisors

Erin D'Orio

Donna Tisdale, Backcountry Against Dumps

Carolyn Allen

David Smith

Edie Harmon

Andy Horne, County of Imperial

Kelly Fuller, Protect Our Communities

Neil Nadler, Alliance for Desert Preservation

Shayne Ferber, Imperial Irrigation District

Luis Olmedo, Comite Civico del Valle

APPEARANCES (CONT.)

ALSO PRESENT (CONT.)

Sarah Friedman, Sierra Club

PRESENT ON WEBEX

Ken Waxlax

P R O C E E D I N G S

4:08 p.m.

EL CENTRO, CALIFORNIA, MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2014

MR. BEALE: Hi, everyone. On behalf of the California Energy Commission, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, I'd like to welcome you to this meeting about the draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.

I'm Chris Beale. I'm the Director of the DRECP. And I'm joined here today by a group of folks from the agencies and our consulting team that have helped prepare the plan.

I'd like to start with just a couple of quick housekeeping details. I first of all want to thank the Imperial Irrigation District for letting us have our meeting here tonight. I also wanted to let you know, if you haven't seen -- didn't see it on the way in, the bathrooms are just down the hall to the left.

And before we start our program tonight I want to invite John Renison up. We understand he's been good enough to help us introduce here tonight. Mr. Renison is Chairman of the Board of Supervisors in Imperial County, and we are very grateful for his participation.

Yes, please.

1 MR. RENISON: Is that okay here? Thank you very  
2 much, and thanks for my -- thanks for waiting for me. It's  
3 4:09. I got here like at 4:04, but I figured you wouldn't  
4 want to hear long-winded politicians. And I promise I'm  
5 going to be really brief.

6 A matter of fact, I'm glad you're all here.  
7 Normally I'm apprehensive about public hearings because  
8 nobody shows up. But I'm sure glad that you're all here.

9 I want to introduce my colleague from District 2,  
10 and actually you're in District 2 of the Imperial County  
11 Board of Supervisors, that would be Jack Terrazas here.  
12 Jack? And we'll be having a long meeting tomorrow. We  
13 don't see each other much, but they're a great group to work  
14 with.

15 I'm a very proud member from District 1. I  
16 represent Calexico and the border all the way to  
17 Winterhaven, including the Quechan Casino, and all of that  
18 good stuff. So it's very exciting, the border dynamic.

19 But anyway, we're here today to talk about the  
20 DRECP. And it's important that these public hearings be  
21 held because when you get that many agencies together, four  
22 principle agencies, as related on your handout, but more  
23 importantly, to get the public input. So often we get  
24 people saying that we -- we hold meetings and we don't let  
25 people know, and we don't communicate. But you know,

1 certainly you folks have done a great job in communicating  
2 these public hearings, and certainly of our 2 million acres  
3 here in Imperial County, I was just informed, that qualifies  
4 to be looked at for the DRECP.

5           It's important because we're living in an era of  
6 renewable energy. We know that solar might be coming to a  
7 halt here pretty quick in the county. But certainly  
8 geothermal has got a great future. Solar still has a great  
9 future, we just don't know how much more land we're going to  
10 dedicate to solar or to geothermal. But we certainly hope  
11 it's going to go forward.

12           It creates a lot of jobs for our residents, it  
13 really does. Sometimes people will be apprehensive about  
14 the temporary nature of those jobs. But overall I think it  
15 helps the county, especially when it's a point of sale from  
16 Imperial County, and we push for that. We also push for  
17 agreements with the solar-geothermal companies to help us  
18 out, and so far it's been very successful.

19           So we thank you for having this public hearing  
20 today. So on behalf of Imperial County, we wish you a lot  
21 of luck. And if there's any way that the Imperial County  
22 Board of Supervisors can be of any further assistance,  
23 please call on me personally or any of the board members.  
24 We've very, very receptive and we've very, very accessible.

25

1           So thank you very much, once again, for being here  
2 today, and we wish you a lot of good luck. And, please,  
3 let's collaborate. It's all about collaboration, it's all  
4 about non-parochialism, and it's all about regional  
5 collaboration. That's kind of my mantra. So thank you very  
6 much.

7           MR. BEALE: Thank you very much.

8           All right, well, thank you all for coming out  
9 today. I appreciate your making -- making the trip. I know  
10 it's not easy to take time out of your day for this meeting,  
11 but we really appreciate your time.

12           Before we jump in I was just going to start with a  
13 few introductory comments that explains to you kind of  
14 what's -- what's in store for you the next two-and-a-half  
15 hours.

16           The purpose of the meeting is to introduce you to  
17 the draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. We're  
18 here to explain, you know, what -- what the plan is, why  
19 it's being developed, where we are in the process, some  
20 basic questions, and also to, you know, to -- to direct you  
21 to places in the document where you can find information  
22 that speaks to your particular interest or question or  
23 concern. The document was released just about three weeks  
24 ago; it's substantial. We don't expect you to have read it.  
25 In fact, why we're here is to kind of help you focus on what

1 you think is important in the document as best we can.

2 We're very interested in getting your comments, and so we're  
3 trying to help you make those comments.

4           We will have several opportunities for public  
5 comment during the meeting today. But again, this -- you  
6 can comment as much as you want on this plan. We know these  
7 are early comments. We're really looking for your input  
8 based on your early impressions on the plan. So don't worry  
9 about the fact that you haven't read the document or that  
10 you don't have full answers. And you can always -- we're  
11 hoping we hear from you later in the comment process too.

12           One of the things I do want to stress is that what  
13 we're talking about today in the draft Desert Renewable  
14 Energy Conservation Plan is a planning document. You know,  
15 this is a draft document, as you know. It's out for public  
16 review. It's not -- it's not a proposal for any specific  
17 renewable energy project or any specific transmission  
18 project. It's a planning document only. It does not  
19 involve any specific project approvals.

20           A little bit about the format of the meeting.  
21 What we're going to be doing today is starting with a brief  
22 presentation, it will take about 20 or 25 minutes, and  
23 that's intended to kind of orient you to the document. Some  
24 of you I spoke to before the meeting have actually sort of  
25 dived in and you're reading it, others I know haven't. So



1 we want to, you know, make sure that everybody understands  
2 generally what's in the document, its structure and some  
3 other things.

4           After that we're going to have a breakout session  
5 for about an hour. This is sort of an open house. You see  
6 the easels here and you can see all the poster boards we  
7 have. What we plan to do is have a set of information  
8 stations that allows you to interact with the folks that  
9 have developed the plan, ask them your questions. And  
10 during that time it will be our first opportunity for formal  
11 public comment.

12           We have a Court Reporter, Marlee over here.

13           Marlee, can you raise your hand?

14           So during the open house session, if you like, you  
15 can make comments on the record with Marlee, anything that  
16 you want to submit in the record you can, you know, give to  
17 Marlee. We're asking folks to make comments of about three  
18 minute increments so there's time for as many people to make  
19 comments as we can -- we can cover. If we have more time  
20 you're welcome to make additional comments.

21           After the information station session or sort of  
22 open house, we'll have an open public comment period for at  
23 least an hour. And that's an opportunity, for anyone who  
24 wants to, to get up to the mike and make public comments.  
25 Marlee will be recording the comments. So anything that you

1 say during that session will become a formal comment on  
2 the -- on the public -- on the draft document.

3           We have speaker cards on the front desk. I ask  
4 that if you do want to make a comment during the public  
5 comment session, if you could just put your name on the card  
6 and either give it to me or give it to Kristy who is in the  
7 corner there.

8           Kristy, if you could raise your hand?

9           The purpose of that is just to know how many  
10 speakers we have. And also I will give you a warning. I'll  
11 say, you know, who's up in the next two or three speakers so  
12 you know when you're up.

13           There's a lot of other information you can provide  
14 on the card, if you want to, get on our distribution list.  
15 But all we really need is your name, and that's just so we  
16 can call you up to speak with when that's the right time.

17           We also have folks on the phone. This meeting is  
18 being an internet meeting, as well as an in-person meeting.  
19 We're recording the meeting, so that meeting will be  
20 available on the internet if you want to see the recording.  
21 If once isn't enough you can listen to it again.

22           And we'll provide an opportunity for folks on the  
23 phone, also, to make public comments during the public  
24 comment session. There's two ways, if you're on the phone,  
25 that you can do that. One is if you use the chat function

1 in WebEx and let Kristy Chew who is running our WebEx  
2 meeting know. That will be like submitting a comment card.  
3 If you're calling in just by phone, there's no way for you  
4 to submit a chat or a comment card, obviously. So what  
5 we'll do is just, during that session, open up the phone and  
6 ask anyone who is on whether they want to make a comment,  
7 and we'll just note that down.

8           So that's the basic housekeeping details.

9           So what we're going to do, again, is start with  
10 the -- a brief presentation. If you've seen our video on  
11 the web, this will be very familiar. Other things that we  
12 have here that you may already be familiar with are on the  
13 front table as you walked in we have a lot of information,  
14 all the fact sheets that we have online are there. The  
15 DRECP brochure is there. We are hoping to make this an  
16 information-rich experience for you. You can take as much  
17 or as little as you like.

18           And with that I think we'll move to our  
19 presentation portion of the meeting. Vicki Campbell from  
20 BLM, up here to my left, will be making the presentation.

21           And, please, please feel free, Vicki. Thank you.

22           MS. CAMPBELL: Good afternoon, everyone. Can  
23 everyone hear me okay? Yeah, usually it's not a problem  
24 with my voice. So hi, I'm Vicki Campbell. I am the Bureau  
25 of Land Management DRECP Program Manager, and I'm your

1 narrator for this presentation today.

2           As Chris said, this is a presentation that would  
3 be very familiar if you saw the video online. This is an  
4 abbreviated version of that video. And if you were on the  
5 October 9th WebEx with us it's an abbreviated version of  
6 that presentation because the video and the October 9th  
7 WebEx were the same presentation.

8           So on behalf of the California Energy Commission,  
9 Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Fish and  
10 Wildlife, and US Fish and Wildlife Service, I welcome you to  
11 this public meeting and to this introductory presentation on  
12 the draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.

13           This presentation is intended to explain generally  
14 what the DRECP, Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan,  
15 is, and to touch briefly on important elements of the draft  
16 Plan. These are the topics on the screen that we will touch  
17 on. For a more detailed introduction to the DRECP, please  
18 go to the web, [www.drecp](http://www.drecp), and look at the informational  
19 video and the executive summary.

20           So the structure of the document. The DRECP is  
21 the result of a very intense collaboration, and interagency  
22 planning process. It's a comprehensive plan that contains a  
23 great deal of information, as you can tell by anyone that  
24 got in, of its size. We've organized the plan to make it as  
25 accessible as possible. The DRECP is organized in a format

1 very similar to Environmental Impact Statements and  
2 Environmental Impact Reports that you are used to looking  
3 at.

4           The DRECP contains six main volumes and an  
5 additional volume of technical appendices. The volumes in  
6 the DRECP correspond to Chapters that you are used to seeing  
7 in Environmental Impact Statements and Environmental Impact  
8 Reports.

9           Volume I contains the background of the DRECP,  
10 including the purpose and need. Volume II describes the  
11 alternatives. Volume III is the environmental setting and  
12 existing conditions. Volume IV is the draft environmental  
13 analysis and environmental consequences. And I have no idea  
14 why that screen went out. Volume V describes scoping and  
15 public participation. And Volume VI details the  
16 implementation of CEQA mitigation measures.

17           There are 24 appendices, including appendices for  
18 covered species, biological goals and objectives, and  
19 climate change. There are also appendices that provide  
20 additional detail for the Bureau of Land Management Land Use  
21 Plan Amendments, the US Fish and Wildlife Service General  
22 Conservation Plan, and the California Natural Community  
23 Conservation Plan.

24           So I'm going to introduce you briefly into the  
25 plan itself.

1           So the draft DRECP is the result, as we've said  
2 before, of an unprecedented collaboration of the state and  
3 federal governments. Many federal, state, local agencies,  
4 tribes, and private citizens provided helpful input into the  
5 development of the draft DRECP. The four agencies that were  
6 principally responsible for preparing the plan are the  
7 California Energy Commission, Bureau of Land Management,  
8 California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and US Fish and  
9 Wildlife Service.

10           The purpose and goals of the draft DRECP are to  
11 provide a long-term adaptable plan for renewable energy  
12 development and resource conservation for more than 22.5  
13 million acres in the Mojave and Sonoran/Colorado deserts of  
14 Southern California. The DRECP has a 25-year planning  
15 horizon and is intended to be implemented through the year  
16 2040.

17           The plan includes monitoring and adaptive  
18 management program that is designed to facilitate  
19 improvements in the plan over time based on new information.

20           The draft DRECP is also intended to streamline the  
21 environmental review and permitting process for renewable  
22 energy projects cited in appropriate areas. "Streamlined"  
23 under the DRECP means the review and permitting processes  
24 will be more efficient and more predictable. Streamlined  
25 does not mean that environmental analysis will be incomplete

1 or steps skipped. The DRECP will not weaken requirements  
2 for environmental review under state or federal law; it will  
3 make them more efficient and more predictable.

4           The DRECP will cover sensitive species and their  
5 habitat, including species listed as threatened and  
6 endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act or the  
7 California Endangered Species Act.

8           On BLM administered lands the DRECP will also  
9 conserve other valuable resources, including recreation,  
10 cultural, visual, and wilderness characteristics, among  
11 others. A core element of the DRECP is the significant  
12 increase in conservation and recreation designations  
13 proposed in the BLM Land Use Plan Amendment that are  
14 designed to protect valuable resources on BLM land.

15           Currently the siting of renewable energy projects  
16 and environmental mitigation are considered on an individual  
17 project-by-project basis. With a large landscape level  
18 plan, natural resource values and other valuable resources  
19 and uses across the desert can be considered when  
20 identifying suitable locations for renewable energy projects  
21 and priority areas where natural resources can be conserved  
22 and managed. Consideration of renewable energy development  
23 with transmission and conservation of a range of values and  
24 uses together in one land use and resource planning process  
25 is smart from the start.

1           The DRECP identifies suitable areas for renewable  
2 energy development called development focus areas or DFAs.  
3 These areas are suitable because they have renewable energy  
4 resources; they're windy, sunny, and/or have geothermal  
5 resources, and also because these areas are compatible with  
6 the conservation of species or other resource values and  
7 uses in the desert. In most of the alternatives the DRECP's  
8 development focus areas are located where natural resources  
9 are relatively low to minimize conflicts between renewable  
10 energy development and resource conservation.

11           As previously discussed, the DRECP is needed to  
12 improve the efficiency and predictability of the  
13 environmental review and permitting processes for renewable  
14 energy sited in appropriate places, which under the plan are  
15 development focus areas. By streamlining review and  
16 permitting processes for renewable energy projects the DRECP  
17 will create an incentive for projects to be sited there.

18           The DRECP will also help improve the coordination  
19 of federal, state, local, tribal, and private conservation  
20 efforts in the desert by identifying high priority  
21 landscape-scale goals to be used to guide actions which will  
22 achieve greater conservation outcomes than if they were  
23 applied on an individual project basis.

24           The DRECP encompasses 22-and-a-half million acres  
25 across portions of seven counties in the Mojave and



1 Colorado/Sonoran deserts of Southern California. Here's the  
2 map of the entire area. It includes federal and non-federal  
3 lands. The plan area only includes a small portion of some  
4 counties, like San Diego, and a large portion of others,  
5 like San Bernardino County.

6 This map shows you the general ownership in the  
7 plan area. The largest land ownership holds that you see on  
8 the map here are BLM in yellow, National Park Service in  
9 green, Department of Defense in dark gray, and private lands  
10 in light gray.

11 The DRECP is a combination of three different  
12 plans: a BLM Land Use Plan Amendment referred to as the  
13 LUPA, so that's our fun little acronym for that, a US Fish  
14 and Wildlife Service General Conservation Plan, referred to  
15 as the GCP, and a California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
16 Natural Community Conservation Plan referred to as an NCCP.

17 The three plans are integrated and together help achieve  
18 the DRECP's overall goals.

19 Each of the different plans applies to a different  
20 portion of the plan areas. The BLM Land Use Plan Amendment  
21 applies only to BLM lands covering nearly 10 million acres  
22 of BLM land. The General Conservation Plan applies to about  
23 5.4 million acres of non-federal land; it does not apply to  
24 BLM or any other federal lands. And the Natural Community  
25 Conservation Plan applies to both federal and non-federal

1 lands covering nearly 19 million acres.

2           The DRECP's covered activities are the categories  
3 of actions for which the DRECP could provide a more  
4 efficient and predictable environmental review and  
5 permitting process. Renewable energy development projects  
6 that are sited within the DRECP's development focus areas,  
7 DFAs, are the largest category of covered activities and  
8 includes solar, wind, and geothermal projects. Transmission  
9 needed for renewable energy generation is another category  
10 of covered activity. Transmission projects would be covered  
11 both within and outside of development focus areas in order  
12 to deliver the energy to where it is needed.

13           Biological conservation and compensation actions  
14 are also covered activities. On BLM land, conservation and  
15 compensation actions for a variety of resources and uses are  
16 also covered activities, including but not limited to  
17 biological, cultural, recreation, and visual values.

18           Under the DRECP all phases of covered activities  
19 must be addressed. This includes the preconstruction and  
20 construction activities, operation, and maintenance  
21 activities over the long term, and then finally  
22 decommissioning a renewable energy project when they've  
23 completed their operations.

24           The DRECP plans for up to 20,000 megawatts of new  
25 renewable energy generation and transmission in the plan

1 area through the year 2040. For the purposes of the DRECP  
2 the 20,000 megawatts of new generation is a planning tool;  
3 it is not a goal or a target. The DRECP is not intended to  
4 drive levels of development. The 20,000 megawatt estimate  
5 for renewable energy in the desert was used to develop an  
6 estimate of the amount of ground disturbance that might  
7 occur as a result of that development. The ground  
8 disturbance estimate is an average of the alternatives of  
9 about 177,000 acres for each of our 5 action alternatives,  
10 but it's dispersed and analyzed differently in each  
11 alternative depending on the configuration of the  
12 development focus areas. The actual amount of development  
13 in the plan area will be driven by market conditions, just  
14 like it is now.

15           The DRECP analyzes the effects of both  
16 constructing and operating new generation under a range of  
17 alternatives. One of the key differences among the DRECP  
18 alternatives is the size and location of the development  
19 Focus Areas where renewable energy projects could be sited.

20           The DRECP includes the specific renewable energy  
21 designations. Here you see the development Focus Areas.  
22 This is where renewable energy projects would benefit from a  
23 more efficient and streamlined environmental review and  
24 permitting process. BLM would also be offering incentives  
25 to renewable energy projects sited in DFAs on BLM land.

1 Study areas are another type of renewable energy  
2 designation. Study area lands could be appropriate for  
3 development in the future but require further analysis and  
4 are not currently regarded as development focus areas for  
5 the purposes of the DRECP. The study areas also vary by  
6 alternative.

7 The DRECP also includes a biological conservation  
8 strategy. There are 37 covered species identified in the  
9 draft DRECP. The biological conservation strategy is to  
10 ensure the conservation of habitat, natural communities, and  
11 ecological processes for the 37 covered species. The  
12 conservation strategy includes a set of overarching  
13 biological goals and objectives, and specific conservation  
14 and management actions, also referred to as CMAs, to avoid  
15 and minimize or compensate for impacts to these species and  
16 habitat in order to contribute to their recovery. The  
17 conservation strategy also includes a monitoring and  
18 adaptive management program to allow the DRECP to  
19 incorporate new information throughout its 25-year term.

20 Volume II, the Alternatives.

21 We have six alternatives presented in the DRECP  
22 and analyzed; five action alternatives and one no-action  
23 alternative. The agencies have identified a preferred  
24 alternative from one of the five action alternatives. The  
25 no-action alternative describes what is expected to happen

1 if the DRECP is not completed or approved.

2           The BLM Land Use Plan Amendment, the Natural  
3 Community Conservation Plan and the General Conservation  
4 Plan are included in all of the five action alternatives.  
5 Other common elements of the five action alternatives  
6 include a conservation strategy, development focus areas,  
7 recreation designations, and a monitoring and adaptive  
8 management program.

9           One of the most important differences among the  
10 DRECP alternatives is the size and geographic distribution  
11 of the development focus areas. This slide shows you a  
12 comparison of three of the five action alternatives. The  
13 DFAs are shown in hot pink. Alternative 1, on the left, has  
14 the smallest extent of development focus areas. The  
15 preferred alternative in the middle has somewhat larger  
16 development focus areas than Alternative 1 and provides a  
17 moderate siting flexibility and moderately dispersed  
18 development impacts. Alternative 2, on the right, has the  
19 largest acreage of development focus areas and would provide  
20 the most siting flexibility and the most geographically  
21 dispersed impacts.

22           The circled areas on the map are provided to show  
23 you the primary areas where the development focus areas are  
24 substantially different among the alternatives.

25           Remember, regardless of the size and configuration

1 of the DFAs, we are estimating an average of about 177,000  
2 acres of impacts in each of the five action alternatives.

3 Another important difference among the DRECP  
4 alternatives is the extent of BLM lands proposed to be added  
5 to the National Landscape Conservation System. This slide  
6 is showing the same three alternatives as the previous  
7 slide. The proposed National Conservation lands are shown  
8 in purple. Alternative 1, on the left, has the least amount  
9 of new National Conservation lands proposed. The preferred  
10 alternative in the middle has a moderate amount of proposed  
11 National Conservation lands. And Alternative 2, on the  
12 right, has the greatest amount proposed.

13 The amount of proposed National Conservation lands  
14 corresponds to the amount of development focus areas in each  
15 of the action alternatives. The larger and more dispersed  
16 DFAs mean that more natural resources are put at risk of  
17 being impacted. So larger Natural Conservation land  
18 designations are proposed to address a potential increase in  
19 impact.

20 Here are some basic details and highlights about  
21 the preferred alternative. The overall biological  
22 conservation strategy for the preferred covers approximately  
23 15 million acres, which includes existing conservation such  
24 as National Park lands. The BLM conservation designations  
25 cover about 4 million acres, the development focus areas,

1 about 2 million acres, study area lands, about 183,000  
2 acres, and the BLM recreation designations, about 3.6  
3 million acres.

4           This is the complete map of the preferred  
5 alternative. It has all the proposed land allocations and  
6 designations all mashed onto one colorful map. Here you see  
7 development focus areas in relation to conservation lands,  
8 study area lands, recreation lands, military bases, and  
9 legislatively and legally protected lands. This map gives  
10 you a full but generalized picture of the preferred  
11 alternative.

12           This section is about environmental analysis,  
13 Volumes III and IV. Volume III is the environmental  
14 setting. Volume IV is the environmental analysis, also  
15 known as environmental consequences.

16           Twenty-three resource areas were considered in the  
17 environmental analysis. These resource areas were  
18 identified based on scoping meetings, preliminary analysis,  
19 and input from tribes, the public, and agency experts.

20           In the environmental analysis we compared  
21 alternatives based on renewable energy development impacts,  
22 proposed conservation and management actions for the covered  
23 species, proposed conservation and management actions for  
24 recreation, visual, cultural, and other important resources  
25 on BLM lands, and acreages and types of land allocations on

1 BLM land.

2           The draft analysis concluded that impacts to most  
3 of the 23 resource areas would be less than significant.  
4 For 10 of the 23 resource areas impacts would be significant  
5 in 1 or more of the alternatives, including the no-action  
6 alternative. Below is the list of those ten resource areas.  
7 We also have a poster board of this, and this is also in the  
8 documentation, so you don't have to scribble quickly.

9           So how will the DRECP be implemented?

10           It's very important to note that no new government  
11 entity will be created by the DRECP. All existing agencies  
12 retain their current authorities and responsibilities. The  
13 purpose of identifying an implementation structure is for  
14 the DRECP to improve agency coordination and communication.  
15 Implementation will also include tribal, local government,  
16 public, and scientific participation and input. The DRECP  
17 also includes an estimated cost for implementing the DRECP's  
18 biological conservation strategy, and some sources of  
19 funding.

20           Local governments may use the DRECP to inform  
21 their land use planning decisions. The DRECP will not  
22 restrict or change any local land use planning or permitting  
23 authority for renewable energy projects. Local governments  
24 will have the option of applying for permits from the US  
25 Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish



1 and Wildlife to cover renewable energy projects within their  
2 jurisdictions.

3 This concludes our overview of the draft DRECP.

4 I'm going to now go into options for public  
5 participation. The agencies have completed our work on this  
6 draft plan, and now we need your help and input to shape the  
7 final.

8 We have a dedicated website for the DRECP,  
9 [www.drecp.org](http://www.drecp.org). I'm sure many of you have already visited  
10 this site. The draft DRECP is also available at this site  
11 and on the BLM website, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service  
12 websites.

13 We have an innovative mapping tool called the  
14 DRECP Gateway, which we'll talk about in a few minutes. The  
15 DRECP is also available for review at local libraries and  
16 agency offices in the plan area. You can find the addresses  
17 of these local libraries and agency offices at the website  
18 listed on the screen, and it's also available at  
19 [www.drecp.org](http://www.drecp.org). We also have DVDs available for request if  
20 you prefer to look at the plan on a DVD and not open it in  
21 the -- on the web. You can send your request for a DVD to  
22 the email address listed on the screen, or call the toll  
23 free number listed. The information on the screen, all of  
24 it, is also available at [drecp.org](http://drecp.org), so you don't have to  
25 scribble again. And also we have some handouts out front

1 that have this information provided for you.

2           Public comment and review is absolutely critical  
3 to developing the final DRECP. Your comments will be  
4 accepted by email, fax, physical delivery, and at these  
5 public meetings. We have listed here two guides that may be  
6 of help to you in putting together your comments, one for  
7 the National Environmental Policy Act, the other for the  
8 California Environmental Quality Act. We want your voices  
9 to be heard. You can find these links also at  
10 [www.drecp.org](http://www.drecp.org).

11           We want to assure you that all public comments are  
12 welcomed, valued, and will be considered.

13           The public comment period opened on September  
14 26th, 2014 and closes 106 days later on January 9th, 2015.  
15 You can see the email and US Mail and hand delivery  
16 locations where your comments can be sent. Again, these  
17 addresses are also found -- these addresses are also found  
18 at [www.drecp.org](http://www.drecp.org). We are also accepting -- if you have  
19 written comments we can accept them at public meetings also.

20           So we have some tips for you when preparing your  
21 comments. To help us develop a final plan we need to know  
22 what you want us to change. Substantive comments will have  
23 the greatest effect on the final DRECP because they tell us  
24 specifically what you want added, removed, or otherwise  
25 changed, and most importantly why.

1           Some examples of specific types of comments that  
2 will have the greatest effect include comments that raise  
3 significant environmental issues that weren't addressed,  
4 issues that require clarification or modification to one or  
5 more of the alternatives, inclusion of a new or different  
6 alternative, addition of new or missing information that  
7 could substantially change our analysis conclusions, or  
8 corrections in our analysis that could substantially change  
9 conclusions.

10           To help you understand the DRECP, we prepared a  
11 series of fact sheets, a list of frequently asked questions,  
12 and the informational video that we talked about earlier.  
13 They are all available at [www.drecp.org](http://www.drecp.org).

14           Public meetings are being held throughout the  
15 planning areas -- this is our first -- and in the  
16 surrounding population centers. All the information  
17 including dates, times, and locations of all the public  
18 meetings is posted at [www.drecp.org](http://www.drecp.org).

19           This is the DRECP Gateway, our innovative online  
20 data and mapping tool. It is free and user friendly. There  
21 is a sign-in function, but you only have to use the sign-in  
22 function if you want to save information, come back later  
23 and use it again. In this tool you can view, edit, and  
24 analyze maps and data. The Gateway contains data sets, so  
25 everyone with a computer, regardless of your experience or

1   inexperience, as the case may be, with GIS can use this  
2   data.

3           We encourage everyone to go in and explore. You  
4   can create custom maps and put your comments right into  
5   those maps, and then save, print, or export them for  
6   inclusion with your written comments. You can see the  
7   website on the bottom of the screen, [drecp.databasing.org](http://drecp.databasing.org).  
8   You will also find the link at [www.drecp.org](http://www.drecp.org). It's very  
9   important to note that this site is an innovative tool, but  
10   it is just a tool. It is not necessary to use this tool in  
11   order to review, understand, or comment on the DRECP. It is  
12   an optional resource available for your use.

13           Here is a snapshot of the front page of the DRECP  
14   Gateway. The buttons across the top and those along the  
15   left side have drop-down menus with instructional videos,  
16   narratives on how to explore the site, details about the  
17   site itself, and very clear instructions of how to create  
18   new maps, how to insert comments, and many other functions.  
19   It is easy to use, and we do encourage you to go in and  
20   explore.

21           This concludes our presentation. And we do thank  
22   you for your interest and your attendance here at the  
23   meetings, and those of you on the phone. And we look  
24   forward to talking with you during the information stations  
25   and hearing your comments during the public comment phase.

1 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Vicki. So we're going  
2 to -- it's about -- it looks like it's a little after 4:45.  
3 We're going to switch over to our sort of open house session  
4 here. Again, if you would like to submit any public  
5 comments during next session, please see Marlee at the table  
6 here. She's our Court Reporter.

7 I'm going to go over the topics that will be  
8 covered at each of these information stations as agency  
9 folks come on up and get them set up. We have a total of  
10 six tables.

11 The first table, starting from your left over  
12 there -- and Emily, could you raise your hand so that --  
13 that's our first table. That's -- that's the DRECP and the  
14 draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan overview  
15 table. That's where you can go if you have very general  
16 questions about what's in the DRECP and want to ask some  
17 very general questions, introduce yourself to the plan.  
18 That's also where you can learn about the alternatives that  
19 are being proposed in the plan.

20 I'm sorry you guys can't see me. I'll see if I  
21 can stand between the signs here.

22 That's also where you can go to learn about where  
23 the differences among the alternatives are. And then also  
24 if you have questions about the environmental analysis that  
25 Vicki went over, that's at table one. That's -- that's

1 Emily.

2 To her left, moving to your right, is our  
3 renewable energy table. That looks -- that's David and Eli.  
4 Could you guys raise your hand? That's where you should go  
5 if you are interested in learning about the renewable energy  
6 planning assumptions that inform the document. David and  
7 Eli are from the California Energy Commission.

8 And Eileen, are you going to be there to help too?  
9 Okay. Great.

10 To their left, moving one to your right, is our  
11 BLM Land Use Plan Amendment station. Vicki you know. Liz  
12 is over there to help Vicki answer questions about the BLM  
13 Land Use Plan Amendment.

14 Over here, let's see, coming up -- all right.  
15 Thank you, you guys.

16 MS. CAMPBELL: I'll just do Vanna.

17 MR. BEALE: The next one over is the Fish and  
18 Wildlife Service General Conservation Plan station. And  
19 Jenness is there to answer questions you may have about  
20 that.

21 And here, if I can ask our Department of Fish and  
22 Wildlife -- oh, all right, there you are. I didn't see you  
23 behind the sign.

24 MS. COURTNEY: Betty Courtney and Eric Weiss.

25 MR. BEALE: Betty and Eric from the Department of

1 Fish and Wildlife will be there to answer any questions  
2 about the Natural Community Conservation Plan.

3 And then finally, our sixth station with Scott and  
4 Mike. Please raise your hand. We have our biological  
5 conservation strategy station. That station is about the  
6 planning that was done on a plan-wide basis that was used to  
7 inform the conservation, the biological conservation  
8 elements of the LUPA, the GCP, and the NCCP.

9 So please feel free to come on up and ask  
10 questions. And we'll probably convene the public comment  
11 section in about 55 minutes at 5:45. So thanks. Please --  
12 please come on up.

13 (Off the record at 4:50 p.m.)

14 (On the record at 5:45 p.m.)

15 MR. BEALE: Thank you, everyone.

16 So we have 11 comment cards. And we'll also ask  
17 folks on the phone, after we've gone through speakers here  
18 in the room, to see if they'd like to make comments.  
19 Because we have just 11 cards so far, you know, I'm  
20 proposing to put the speaker amount at three minutes. If we  
21 get through the cards and people still want to talk you can  
22 come up there, or you can speak again if you like. So  
23 we'll -- I think with this group we can make sure everybody  
24 that wants to speak today has an opportunity.

25 I am joined at the podium with representatives of

1 each of the four agencies that has been in the lead in the  
2 development of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation  
3 Plan. And I'm going to ask them to introduce themselves.

4 Mr. Flint?

5 So just starting from my far right, please. And  
6 you have to press the button until the red light goes on.  
7 Sometimes it -- yeah.

8 MS. COURTNEY: Okay. Hi. I'm Betty Courtney from  
9 the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

10 MR. COREY: Hello. Ken Corey at the Fish and  
11 Wildlife Service office in Palm Springs.

12 MR. ZALE: Good evening. Tom Zale with Bureau of  
13 Land Management here in El Centro.

14 MR. FLINT: Hi. Scott Flint, California Energy  
15 Commission.

16 MR. BEALE: And these are senior representatives  
17 at the key agencies that are just here to hear your  
18 comments -- hear your comments tonight.

19 So let's start, as I said, if I can work this  
20 timer correctly I'll let you know how much time you have  
21 left. And please try to keep your comments, at least your  
22 initial comments, to three minutes.

23 We have -- just to let you know the order in which  
24 we're going, first up is Ronald Washington. So if you'd  
25 come up, please, we'd like to hear your comments.



1           Following that, Anne Morgan and Erin D'Orio.

2           So Ronald Washington. Is Ronald here? Okay.

3           Anne Morgan? Is Anne here? Would you like to  
4 speak? I'll go through -- check again later in case they  
5 just left the room.

6           Erin D'Orio? Yes, please, at the podium. The  
7 mike should be on. Thank you very much.

8           MS. D'ORIO: Hello. My name is Erin D'Orio. And  
9 I want to thank the Committee for having this meeting today  
10 and for letting us make our comments.

11           My particular concern is with Apple Valley and  
12 Lucerne area. And we've been collaborating a lot with  
13 different conservationist groups. And I think my main  
14 concern is being heard. And I'm happy to be able to talk to  
15 some of you today and feel that I'm being heard.

16           But, for instance, the Lucerne group out there  
17 proposed some sites that they felt were areas that they  
18 would put some wind or solar up, and like Tamarisk Flats,  
19 for instance, and that was bypassed and not recognized. And  
20 we're quite a passionate group out there and we want to work  
21 together and we want to find solutions, particularly on  
22 existing substructure, on -- we've got an old dump out there  
23 that would be a good spot. We have places that -- that we  
24 would consider, but we've got some beautiful foothill lands  
25 that we really want to protect. We have some valid concerns

1 of the BLM land up above Milpas Highlands.

2           And you know, we've got some incredible views out  
3 there. And I saw the view shed being a consideration. And  
4 you know, I always ask myself, whose consideration is it  
5 going to be, you know? We've got those purple mountain  
6 majesties and we -- we don't want giant white windmills, you  
7 know, in front of those. And it's a heartbreaking scenario.  
8 And I always have to tone down my emotion about this  
9 because, you know, a lot of us have put our time and effort  
10 and blood, sweat, and tears into the -- the things that we  
11 care about out there.

12           And again, we all need power. We want to find  
13 those solutions. And we're working hard with -- with some  
14 other agencies to -- to present you with solutions, as well,  
15 and not just complaints and bellyaching and things like  
16 that. But I think we particularly want some of these ideas  
17 on a vote. We still are the land of the free and the brave,  
18 and I think that we sometimes feel like we're being overrun  
19 with government ideas and not really having it on a vote  
20 where the people are being heard.

21           So one of my main concerns is just getting to a  
22 point where a greater majority could vote and could, you  
23 know, participate. I know in my area a lot of people don't  
24 even know about any of this. And -- and part of my group's  
25 efforts are to get the word out and to get people to the

1 meetings. Victorville, we hope, will be very attended. But  
2 it's not generally well known. And so, you know, we -- we  
3 will be getting the word out and trying to get those letters  
4 out and come up with those ideas. Thank you very much.

5 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Erin.

6 Let's see, the next names I have are Bruce Wiley  
7 [sic], Donna Tisdale, and Carolyn Allen.

8 Bruce, are you here? Would you like to speak?

9 Okay.

10 Donna Tisdale, are you here? Would you like to  
11 speak? Thank you.

12 MS. TISDALE: Good evening. Donna Tisdale. I'm a  
13 landowner and farmland owner in the DRECP impacted areas of  
14 both Imperial County and San Diego County. And I just want  
15 to say that the name of this project is deceptive and  
16 misleading.

17 And this is a formal request for an extended  
18 comment deadline by at least 60 to 90 days to accommodate  
19 the public need for more time to fully comprehend this over  
20 8,000 pages. It is, in my opinion, a controversial and  
21 disruptive plan.

22 At the same time, Imperial County is working on  
23 their, in my opinion, equally controversial and disruptive  
24 general plan update for renewable energy and transmission.  
25 That's funded by a California Energy Grant, which makes us

1 worry about how the outcome will be. And that's expected  
2 out soon for only a 45-day comment, and we're going to  
3 request a longer comment for that too.

4           So inclusion of most, if not all, of Imperial  
5 County's irrigated farmland as a development focus area is,  
6 in my opinion, inappropriate, unconscionable,  
7 disproportionate, and outright exploitation of one of the  
8 nation's most productive breadbaskets, and also one of the  
9 most socioeconomically vulnerable areas. Conversion of  
10 productive farmland -- farmland is non-renewable -- equals a  
11 loss of control of IID water resources that will likely be  
12 transferred to water-hungry cities, and this will be at the  
13 long-term expense of Imperial Valley overall.

14           The list of cumulative impacts and projects seems  
15 to be vastly underestimated. The use of water for  
16 construction of projects in desert lands also seems to be  
17 vastly underestimated based on the firsthand experiences  
18 that we've seen at large scale energy and transmission  
19 projects so far.

20           SDG&E's \$435 million eco-substation project is  
21 still under construction in Eastern San Diego County;  
22 through my community and others an estimated 30 million  
23 gallons of water. They had to amend their water supply plan  
24 several times, up to 90 million gallons. And they also had  
25 to curtail the use of controversial groundwater sources that

1 had not been properly authorized and were not allowed really  
2 to sell water or had not gone through all the approval  
3 processes.

4           Most of the listed renewable energy stakeholders  
5 appear to have some form of conflict and/or vested interest  
6 in converting Imperial County into a renewable energy  
7 sacrifice zone. The loss -- the loss of long-term  
8 agriculture jobs and agricultural-related jobs cannot be  
9 replaced with temporary construction jobs for large scale  
10 projects. It's simply not sustainable.

11           The loss of related property and other taxes  
12 represent an extensive and a cumulative impact to Imperial  
13 Valley.

14           San Diego County should also have been included as  
15 a stakeholder due to the apparent DRECP inclusion of the  
16 Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative and comprehensive  
17 energy zone, competitive energy zones identified for San  
18 Diego County south, which includes Boulevard and Jacumba,  
19 and San Diego north-central for wind solar transmission  
20 projects. There was virtually no public notice, involvement  
21 or transparency for those disproportionately impacted  
22 communities on those plans.

23           The map for transmission plan for the Preferred  
24 Alternative Number V shows a new 500-kV line through  
25 predominantly low-income rural communities in both Imperial

1 and San Diego County, and very few, if any, real community-  
2 based community groups from either DRECP or Renewable Energy  
3 Transmission Initiative impacted areas were included as  
4 stakeholders.

5           The San Diego-Imperial Chapter of the Sierra Club  
6 is not allowed to comment on the DRECP or general plan  
7 update without permission from the staff and the hierarchy,  
8 most of whom do not live in the most impacted areas. And  
9 the underlying RETI (phonetic) process was not well  
10 advertised or transparent. Again, these renewable energy  
11 zones were not identified for -- with public notice or input  
12 from the community level. And truly distributed generation  
13 on already existing structures, parking lots, brown fields,  
14 and military bases are a better solution than covering --  
15 converting productive farmland and carbon sequestering  
16 desert soils and vegetation into environmental and  
17 culturally sensitive areas.

18           More detailed comments will be submitted. Thank  
19 you. Oh, and this is on behalf of myself, and also two  
20 nonprofits, Backcountry Against Dumps and Backcountry  
21 Resource Advocacy Group. Thank you.

22           MR. BEALE: Thank you, Ms. Tisdale. And just to  
23 confirm, you know, because these comments are being  
24 recorded, your request for an extension is -- is part of the  
25 record.

1 MS. TISDALE: Thank you.

2 MR. BEALE: Next we have Carolyn Allen, David  
3 Smith, and Edie Harmon.

4 Is Carolyn here? Hi, Carolyn. Thank you.

5 MS. ALLEN: Yeah. My name is Carolyn Allen. And  
6 these comments are being made on behalf of myself and the  
7 organization Backcountry Against Dumps. I also will submit  
8 further comments at a later date, before the deadline is  
9 over.

10 I'm an Imperial Valley resident, and I'm also a  
11 member of a local farm family. First, I ask that the draft  
12 DRECP and EIR and EIS comment period be extended past the 90  
13 days. It's such a massive document. And to expect those of  
14 us that want to make comments to go through it with any kind  
15 of thoroughness, it doesn't allow enough time. I would  
16 think at a minimum it would need to have an additional 90  
17 days, and preferably longer than that.

18 The draft DRECP preferred alternative map shows  
19 all of Imperial Valley farmland as part of the development  
20 focus area. The precious farmland that we have down here  
21 should not be industrialized for so-called green energy  
22 projects. The potential for further destruction of our  
23 farmland would be devastating to our local economy. We've  
24 already been impacted so far by the ones that they've  
25 already approved and the ones that have been built.

1           And if you took the time to talk to some of the  
2 people that have been -- either lived in the area and had to  
3 move away from those, you know, they had to move away from  
4 those areas around the solar panels because they were just  
5 not livable anymore, or the farmers that have been affected  
6 by the adjacent -- having their fields adjacent to these  
7 huge solar projects you would see that it is just very, very  
8 destructive. The conversion from agricultural land would  
9 mean the loss of many long-term agricultural jobs. And  
10 solar projects offer very few long-term jobs per acreage  
11 when you compare them to farming.

12           Our open spaces should not be industrialized by  
13 renewable energy projects either. I support putting them on  
14 the point-of-use energy generation and rooftop solar.

15           I think that maybe not enough attention has been  
16 given to the -- the fact that -- that our agricultural  
17 fields offer a source of forage and water for our wildlife.  
18 And it's quite a wide diversity of wildlife that we have  
19 down here. Also, the -- the DFA shows that we will be  
20 disproportionately affected. It seems that we are being  
21 offered up as a sacrifice area.

22           And as a further point, I just wanted to ask if  
23 there are any comments that are being made by any officials  
24 from local agencies, such as the county or IID, will the  
25 public be allowed to ask questions of them tonight?



1 MR. BEALE: There won't be any statements from --  
2 you're asking if later tonight there will be statements from  
3 local officials?

4 MS. ALLEN: Yeah. Is there anybody --  
5 representatives from the IID or the county that are going to  
6 be making comments or presentations?

7 MR. BEALE: We have one making a comment at the  
8 podium. If you'd like to make a subsequent public comment,  
9 you're welcome to do that.

10 MS. ALLEN: After that? Okay. Thank you very  
11 much.

12 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Ms. Allen.

13 Next speakers are David Smith, Edie Harmon, and  
14 Andy Horne.

15 David? David Smith? Thank you.

16 MR. SMITH: My name is David Smith. I'm one of  
17 many people employed by Spreckels Sugar Company, formally  
18 known and still known to most of us as Holly Sugar. I've  
19 worked for this company for over 30 years and have seen not  
20 only the factory grow in efficiency, but especially seen  
21 flourish the productivity of our growers. In fact, it's our  
22 growers who actually produce the natural sugar; we just  
23 extract it.

24 Spreckels Sugar does not support taking out of  
25 production any additional farmland for the purpose of

1 alternative renewable energy projects. With a finite number  
2 of available acres devoted to agriculture, even removing a  
3 small number of acres can create the economic tipping point  
4 that forces competitive efficient enterprises such as ours  
5 out of business. Fewer acres, less supply, higher cost for  
6 farmland, less competitiveness, which basically means less  
7 profits, and no profits, and we all know what ultimately  
8 happens after that.

9           While we all support renewable energy, the impact  
10 on the future of agriculture in the Imperial Valley is at  
11 stake, as are the economic futures of Imperial Valley worker  
12 and businesses. Many energy companies that supply power to  
13 areas outside of the valley have met or will soon meet their  
14 alternative energy percentage goals. And it is unfair and  
15 unnecessary to continue to sacrifice productive agricultural  
16 ground to the detriment of the Imperial Valley, its workers,  
17 and the businesses that support the agricultural community  
18 and the community as a whole.

19           The unemployment rate in Imperial County is  
20 approximately 25 percent. And National Beef in Brawley just  
21 recently closed its doors, laying off 1,400 people. Such  
22 alternative renewable energy projects tend to reduce long-  
23 term employment by employing only temporary and many out-of-  
24 area workers during the construction phase, and then  
25 employee very few workers long term.

1           Please preserve the farmland for agriculture and  
2 help protect this long-lasting food-producing economic base  
3 of the Imperial Valley. Thank you.

4           MR. BEALE: Thank you, Mr. Smith.

5           All right, next we have Edie Harmon, Andy Horne,  
6 and A. Medina.

7           Edie?

8           MS. HARMON: Yeah. Edie Harmon. I have lived on  
9 an inholding surrounded by BLM, ACEC, and wilderness since  
10 1977. And my background is geography. I earned my way  
11 through college making maps, and then did graduate work in  
12 biology. And I have some great difficulties in reading and  
13 making sense out of many of the maps, including the one for  
14 the preferred alternative that was out there.

15           My concern is Imperial County because that's the  
16 area I know best. It's very difficult to try to distinguish  
17 the colors and anything else, especially when you've got the  
18 county in the bottom part of the map and the legend is in  
19 the upper part of the map. There's not -- for those of us  
20 that have older eyes, it's really difficult to distinguish  
21 between the reds and the pinks and whatever because there's  
22 not -- it's not clear. So the maps need to be made better  
23 or -- I mean, that's -- that's a real concern. Because  
24 you -- when you want to read a document you need to be  
25 flipping for text and maps and appendices.

1           And -- oh, that leads me -- we need a 90-day  
2 extension on the comment deadline if you really want  
3 substantive comments that are directed to things in the  
4 text, the maps, and the appendices.

5           I also would like to point out that some of the  
6 projects in the areas that are proposed are areas that were  
7 abandoned by the military for future activities after World  
8 War II because of the prevalence of coccidioides, the fungus  
9 in the soil that can cause Valley Fever. Coccidioides  
10 immitis, the fungus in California desert is listed as a  
11 select agent with potential development as a bioweapon. It  
12 has been weaponized by the Russians and the U.S. And the  
13 U.S. Department of Defense labels Valley Fever as an ethnic  
14 weapon.

15           I think there's real concern about some of the  
16 project locations in areas that were once used for military  
17 activities during World War II and have been well documented  
18 in a study by the U.S. Army as place name. So even the  
19 project at Palen is a place name that's specifically  
20 identified in the military study on Valley Fever that came  
21 out after World War II.

22           So I'm really concerned about some of these  
23 projects which would scrape and disturb the surface of the  
24 earth and potentially have a very significant public health  
25 impact. We already know the California Department of Public

1 Health has been very concerned about Valley Fever among  
2 employees at the solar projects in San Luis Obispo. People  
3 ended up with Valley Fever coming in from as far away as  
4 Georgia.

5           So this is not just because so many of these  
6 projects, solar and wind, bring in employees from other  
7 parts of the country, it's more than just a local public  
8 health impact that we need to be concerned with. And the  
9 California Department of Public Health, when you look at  
10 their website on Valley Fever, they're even recommending N95  
11 masks and all work and activity stopped when there's dust  
12 being generated.

13           Another section of the population that's of  
14 concern for the Department of Public Health is Border Patrol  
15 and employees, anyone that's out in the field. I know  
16 there's Valley Fever in Imperial County. There have been  
17 deaths. In Ocotillo area there's been a dog that was  
18 diagnosed as dying of Valley Fever. So you know, we know  
19 it's here. We know people are sick. And I am concerned  
20 about the long-term impacts.

21           And when you look at the studies that are coming  
22 out on drought in California there was recently an article  
23 that came out that the Dust Bowl of 1934 was the worst  
24 drought in 1,000 years. There's a book that's published. I  
25 think the author is from UC Berkeley. And she's concerned

1 that this is the beginning of a 200-year drought in  
2 California. If we're really facing a 200-year drought,  
3 according to some of the information I'm reading, we're  
4 looking at population relocations. And some of the areas  
5 along the coast that are supposedly the recipient of the  
6 renewable energy, people are going to be moving to places  
7 where there's more water, because water is going to be a  
8 defining issue in the future.

9           And if there's significant drought we're not going  
10 to have the water resources and the melt from the snows that  
11 we have. And I think that that's something that has to be  
12 taken into serious consideration on the project.

13           Also, I would like to request that for any of  
14 these projects that biologists that are doing field surveys,  
15 pre project, during projects or afterwards, mitigation  
16 monitoring, that they report directly to US Fish and  
17 Wildlife and California Department of Fish and Game -- or  
18 Fish and Wildlife and not go be reporting through project  
19 applicants or contractors or either county or federal  
20 agencies, so that biologists are giving the information that  
21 they find in the field directly to the agencies that need to  
22 have the information.

23           Sorry, I'm -- I will be submitting more comments.  
24 But hopefully you'll give us 90 days to go through things.  
25 Thank you.

1 MR. BEALE: Thank you for comments, Ms. Harmon.

2 So we have Andy Horne, A. Medina, and Kelly  
3 Fuller.

4 Andy, thank you.

5 MR. HORNE: Thank you, Chris. And thanks for  
6 coming down and having your inaugural workshop here in  
7 Imperial County. We are truly honored to figure that you  
8 can come down here and try to snow us, you know, practice  
9 snowing us anyway. No, I'm just kidding.

10 I'm Andy Horne. I'm with the County of Imperial.

11 And we have a number of people, or we did have earlier  
12 today, certainly -- Phyllis is still here -- and that will  
13 be looking at this massive document, as it has been  
14 characterized and is accurately characterized. And we will  
15 be providing written comments, I'm sure, prior to the  
16 deadline. But I wanted -- I didn't want to disappoint  
17 anybody by not getting up here and speaking, so I'm going to  
18 do that.

19 One of the things, and I think it was talked about  
20 a little bit earlier, is that we have been given a grant by  
21 the Energy Commission, I think Donna mentioned it, that is  
22 supposed to align the, at least in the concept, the  
23 principles of the DRECP with county land use policies. And  
24 that's the way we are -- are approaching it.

25 However, I can tell you, and it's already been

1 made clear, and I'm sure that you'll hear it in more places,  
2 there is one area that probably isn't so well aligned, and  
3 that is in this area of the use of ag land. If you look at  
4 that map, and I think you all know which map I'm looking at,  
5 it's already been referred to, the one there that shows this  
6 big bright pink blob down there in Imperial County, which is  
7 mostly ag land, we -- we -- and that's unfortunate because  
8 it gives, I think, a perception that that's what we want.  
9 And I think it also may be the perception that that's what  
10 you guys want or the DRECP team.

11           And it was unfortunate because you guys, and we  
12 had this conversation on many occasions, had asked us, well,  
13 where do you want us to locate these. And because of the  
14 mismatch of the timeline of the DRECP process and our county  
15 planning process, which got started much later, we were  
16 forced to basically say -- because we can't make land use  
17 decisions without going through the same CEQA process, and  
18 in your case CEQA/NEPA as DRECP is doing. And so we were  
19 just forced to say, look, you know, leave us a clean slate  
20 and then we will figure out where we think projects, under  
21 our current land use policies they are, in fact, entitled to  
22 go -- not entitled, but allowed to go wherever in the  
23 agricultural area, and we've seen that, and we've seen it to  
24 the tune of some 20,000 acres of land, farmland that has  
25 been permitted for solar projects.



1           One of the chief concerns identified in your --  
2 and I'm looking at page 54 of the -- of the Executive  
3 Summary. It says, "Other areas of controversy are," the  
4 first bullet, "potential use of ag lands for renewable  
5 energy." And if that's -- it's not numbered, but down here  
6 that's the number one concern. We've heard that loud and  
7 clear with a number of workshops that we've held down here  
8 in relation to our general plan update.

9           So I just want to emphasize that our general plan  
10 update is looking at incorporating new technologies that are  
11 being deployed here and in other parts of the state, such as  
12 wind and solar and brine ponds and other things that we  
13 don't have currently addressed very well in our -- in our  
14 amendment -- in our element. We're looking and taking a  
15 very hard look at the -- at the opportunities that might  
16 exist at the Salton Sea, not only for energy development but  
17 for conservation. And we're looking at minimizing or,  
18 hopefully, eliminating land-use conflicts with existing land  
19 uses.

20           As had been made clear in one of the slides you  
21 had, we do insist on and have insisted, and I probably sound  
22 like a broken record to you guys because you've heard me say  
23 this, on local control of these issues on private lands  
24 where the county maintains and will insist on maintaining  
25 their local land use prerogatives. We will look forward to

1 working with the DRECP team as this plan gets implemented.  
2 And we will be looking at how we will be involved in that.  
3 I know you've got several options in there as to how the  
4 counties could be involved going forward.

5 We support the general goals and objectives of the  
6 DRECP and, again, look forward to working with state and  
7 federal agencies, and our local constituents and industry  
8 and other non-governmental agencies in this process. Thank  
9 you.

10 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Andy.

11 We have A. Medina, Kelly Fuller, and Neil Nadler.

12 A. Medina? Okay.

13 Kelly Fuller?

14 MS. FULLER: Here I am.

15 MR. BEALE: Oh. Thank you.

16 MS. FULLER: Thank you for this opportunity to  
17 speak to the agencies and to speak to the public. My name  
18 is Kelly Fuller. I am the Executive Director of Protect our  
19 Communities. And that is an organization that protects  
20 communities in nature in San Diego County, Imperial County,  
21 and Northern Baja, Mexico from harmful energy development,  
22 and advocates better energy solutions throughout advocacy  
23 and law).

24 This is, as others have said, a massive plan. And  
25 one of the things that I'm interested in is that I have yet

1 to get a consistent answer on how many pages it is. I have  
2 heard some folks in the agency say more than 8,000. I've  
3 heard some folks say -- in the agency say more than 11,000.

4  
5 And the fact that there could even be any  
6 confusion in agency staff amongst how long this document  
7 actually is really points me to the first thing I want to  
8 say, which is we really need more time to look at this. And  
9 I think it's going to help not just the public to have more  
10 time to comment, but the impression I have is that the  
11 agency staff is still trying to learn this document. I  
12 can't tell you how many questions I've asked of agency staff  
13 about this plan. And they say, "That's a really good  
14 question. Could you put that in your comments?" And they  
15 don't know themselves how it's going to work out.

16 That really concerns me that we can't get answers  
17 on certain questions, on a lot of questions at the time,  
18 which is our only time, for commenting on this. I think  
19 that the agency staff really does need to be able to answer  
20 things. And -- and the impression I have is that the agency  
21 staff is still trying to learn this massive document, not  
22 just the public. And we'd like to see a 60- to 90-day  
23 extension on that public comment period.

24 There are a number of concerns that we have. This  
25 is just the first time we'll be commenting. We'll also be

1 submitting written comments.

2           In Imperial County our biggest concern is this  
3 issue that's already been identified by other speakers about  
4 the use of ag lands. We're concerned about losing ag land  
5 to renewable energy production for the impacts on human  
6 beings, the economic impacts.

7           The -- we've already had one speaker talking about  
8 a kind of food-related industry that maybe not all of us  
9 even thought about as being impacted by that ag land. But  
10 there are all kinds of subsidiary services, people that work  
11 baling the alfalfa hay, people that pick the crops. There  
12 are businesses that provide mechanical repair. I mean, you  
13 name it, there's so much dependent on the ag fields in  
14 Imperial County. So we're concerned about the impacts.

15           Then we're also concerned about what the impacts  
16 of taking out ag land in Imperial County are going to be on  
17 wildlife species, and that has been mentioned. A great deal  
18 of concern about birds, because there are many birds that  
19 forage in those fields. And there's kind of a challenge in  
20 the DRECP. There's this kind of assumption that for  
21 wildlife maybe what we need to do is protect as much  
22 pristine habitat as possible and get lands, acquire more  
23 habitat lands that are in really good shape, and that will  
24 protect the wildlife. And for certain wildlife species that  
25 is the way to go. But we've got this issue in Imperial

1 County where the birds are foraging on those ag lands.

2           And there's another issue with the birds that  
3 comes out in Appendix M in the US Fish and Wildlife Services  
4 General Conservation Plan. They say in there that there was  
5 an avian avoidance alternative that they did not put forward  
6 to study, in part because protecting the birds was going to  
7 harm other wildlife species, you know, getting into those  
8 tradeoffs. Well, we think that you really do need to  
9 analyze that and bring that alternative forward, and that  
10 the public should have the ability to comment on it because  
11 there may be pieces of it that should go forward. We  
12 certainly -- it needs to be more transparent how the  
13 agencies are -- are determining which wildlife species  
14 they're going to favor over another when there's conflict,  
15 because there does appear to be conflicts.

16           We're very concerned about Flat-tailed Horned  
17 Lizard. We want to see, in Imperial County, that the --  
18 there's formal recognition of the existing conservation for  
19 the 2003 Rangewide Management Strategy for the Flat-tailed  
20 Horned Lizard which after all is how, theoretically, we're  
21 going to keep that lizard from needing to be listed under  
22 the ESA. And anything done to protect the lizard or as  
23 mitigation for the lizard under the DRECP should not be  
24 things that are already part of that, you know, needed for  
25 conservation for that Rangewide Management Strategy. It

1 really does need to be additive.

2           Similarly, a lot of concerns about Burrowing Owl.

3       And I'll -- we'll get to this in other more detail later.

4           And I think that that -- I see you there. I can  
5 wrap it up here. We will be talking more about the  
6 underlying assumptions that this plan is based on. We've  
7 got a great deal of interest in that 20,000 megawatt figure  
8 and whether or not the whole way we're going for this is  
9 really the right way to be going. But with this I'll wrap  
10 it up, and thank you.

11           MR. BEALE: Thank you, Ms. Fuller.

12           Neil, and then Bruce Wiley, and Luis Olmedo.

13           MR. NADLER: My name is Neil Nadler. And I'm just  
14 going to rapid fire some of the comments because it's --  
15 time is short here.

16           Like I said to Chris Beale earlier, the meetings  
17 should start at 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. Most people work during  
18 the day, and you would have much better turnout and it would  
19 be much more transparent to all people if you started your  
20 meetings at 6:00 or 6:30 p.m.

21           The RPS calculator is outmoded. The calculator  
22 has big gaps in important information that need to be  
23 addressed. The DRECP's approach to groundwater and air  
24 quality and documentation is totally inadequate.

25           What we do know about air and groundwater shows

1 that the DFAs proposed, and I'm speaking for San Bernardino  
2 County now, the DFAs are a bad idea where they're located.

3 Also, the DRECP grossly lacks in the environmental  
4 justice area.

5 Regarding transmission lines, there's  
6 approximately 600 miles of TTG proposed transmission lines,  
7 and they're incredibly expensive and they're environmentally  
8 very harmful. And the justifications in the documents does  
9 very little and is grossly inadequate, as well.  
10 Transmission lines are large contributors, and -- and it's  
11 the worst greenhouse gases that get emitted of all, the ones  
12 that have the longest half-life are from what they use in  
13 transmission lines, and that's in the document, as well.

14 Valley Fever is already an issue in the Antelope  
15 Valley and the Victor Valley. And I know it's a balance  
16 between water and dust but -- but if you're going to do  
17 hundreds of thousands of acres of solar you've got to  
18 balance it right, because Valley Fever, especially in the  
19 high desert, is a huge issue, and it's already existing  
20 in -- in those areas.

21 Distributed generation and brown fields are very  
22 poorly justified as alternatives in the document, and they  
23 need to be -- they're poorly justified. It needs to be  
24 addressed.

25 Lastly but not leastly, I am a resident of Lucerne

1 Valley. And Erin spoke earlier about the close proximity to  
2 population while there's tens of thousands of people right  
3 near and in where the development focus areas are proposed.  
4 And for the DRECP to plan 200,000 acres of DFAs in that area  
5 is -- it's -- it's not right. And we would like those areas  
6 relocated out near Highway 58 and 395, somewhere along that  
7 from Barstow out towards California City and Mojave.

8 And lastly, I want to thank Chris and Scott for  
9 taking the time earlier to speak to me tonight. I am  
10 actually delighted with -- with the discussions that have  
11 taken place tonight. Thank you.

12 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Neil.

13 We have two more comment cards, Bruce Wiley and  
14 Luis Olmedo. Then we'll go to the phones. And then we'll  
15 see if there's anyone who has any additional comments in the  
16 room.

17 Mr. Wiley?

18 MR. WILCOX: I think you may have transposed a few  
19 letters. Is it Wilcox?

20 MR. BEALE: Yeah, I don't have my -- I don't have  
21 my glasses on. I'm sorry. Yes, that's Wilcox. My  
22 apologies.

23 MR. FERBER: Hi. I'm Shayne Ferber. I work in  
24 IID's real estate section. Bruce was unable to stay, but I  
25 wanted to provide a few general comments.



1 IID's generally in favor of the DRECP and supports  
2 renewable energy, but we need additional time to evaluate  
3 how the DRECP that's in the local and regional level  
4 planning -- we would like to request to extend the comment  
5 period to provide a reasonable opportunity for all  
6 individuals, organizations, and agencies sufficient time to  
7 comment. And we would also like to make sure that all the  
8 counties are important players in the final development of  
9 the DRECP document and implementation. Thank you.

10 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Luis Olmedo?

11 MR. OLMEDO: Good evening. Welcome to Imperial  
12 County. My name is Luis Olmedo, Executive Director of  
13 Comite Civico del Valle, a grassroots community-based  
14 organization. We work -- a large part of our work are  
15 environmental health, environmental justice. And I didn't  
16 have enough time to read the whole document before coming  
17 here, so I'm not well informed. I apologize. I ask for  
18 your patience.

19 I talked earlier with a young woman here, I think  
20 she's part of your team, and I asked her, "You know, who  
21 came up with this shading, you know, taking ag land?" I  
22 said, "They must be a genius because I see it differently,  
23 and I'm no genius, of course." But I said, "This looks to  
24 me like a top-down approach."

25 He said, "Well, the bottom-up approach didn't

1 work."

2           And so, you know, we are 85 percent in population  
3 Latino population. That's clearly well represented here. I  
4 do want to echo that there's a lot of concerns, and there's  
5 certainly a lot of weaknesses in environmental justice.  
6 There's a lot of weaknesses in terms of community input. I  
7 do also want to echo that probably just in every aspect I  
8 think we do need the 90 days, at a minimum, to be able to  
9 provide meaningful input and to see how it does match from  
10 the community-based -- well, the community altogether,  
11 their -- their input, you know, in terms of what the  
12 socioeconomic and the opportunities are and how they're  
13 going to align to both create jobs but not take productive  
14 ag land.

15           My not-so-genius look at it says, wow, we're  
16 basically giving up our water, you know? So I don't know if  
17 that puts us in a very strong position by saying, oh, this  
18 is all going to flip it around, and we're not flipping  
19 houses here. You know, I think -- I'm not sure who came up  
20 with it, but I think they -- they probably get their food  
21 imported, I imagine, right, or maybe they don't eat  
22 vegetables. I'm not sure. But we have industries here that  
23 depend on ag. Spreckels Sugars is just one major job  
24 provider. Farm workers are not here. You know, they depend  
25 on these jobs.

1           And I do ask that you grant these 90 days, if you  
2 are the governing authority to that. I'm sorry, I'm just  
3 kind of getting my feet wet on all this.

4           California -- I've been very involved in AB 32 and  
5 California's climate change initiatives, the cap and trade,  
6 and many of those. They've been very successful at getting  
7 meaningful community input and implementing policies that  
8 make sure of that. I'm also a member of the Good Neighbor  
9 Environmental Board. In the '14 report, GNEB, look it up, I  
10 think they put some very good recommendations that I don't  
11 necessarily see reflected, just in the service. But I  
12 recommend that you look at that, the Good Neighbor  
13 Environmental Board.

14           And -- and I hope that through these comments that  
15 you do come back and give the 90 days and provide meaningful  
16 input to meetings that are not just here but throughout the  
17 county, and make sure that -- that you do include that  
18 bottom-up approach. And the bottom up is this whole  
19 community altogether, all stakeholders. And I don't know  
20 that it's a secret, I hope I'm not -- but I was also told  
21 that this was put together by the county and the -- how do  
22 you say that acronym, DRECP?

23           MR. BEALE: DRECP.

24           MR. OLMEDO: DRECP. Was that a secret? Well, if  
25 it is -- and I'm sorry if I -- but, I don't know, maybe the

1 young lady that was there wasn't well informed. But can you  
2 make a community-wide plan? Thank you. Ninety days, I beg  
3 of you that you consider that. Thank you so much for coming  
4 here. Appreciate it.

5 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Mr. Olmedo.

6 That's the -- those are the speaker cards we had.  
7 I wanted to give -- well, what we'll do is go to the phone  
8 lines, and then we'll come back. And if folks want to make  
9 additional comments or other folks want to make comments,  
10 we'll -- we'll do that. We'll try to wrap up by 6:45  
11 tonight.

12 So does -- is there anyone on the phone that would  
13 like to speak? If so, please let us know who you are.

14 MS. CHEW: (Off mike.) Ken Waxlax is ready to  
15 speak. Ken Waxlax.

16 MR. BEALE: Who?

17 MS. CHEW: Ken Waxlax.

18 MR. BEALE: Oh, Ken Waxlax, if you're on could you  
19 please go ahead and make your comment?

20 MS. CHEW: His line is unmuted. (Inaudible.)  
21 He'd like to make a comment.

22 MR. BEALE: We'll come back to that. Was that the  
23 comment, Kristy?

24 MS. CHEW: I think so. From the phones, yes. But  
25 he was the only one who sent -- sent a chat in.

1           MR. BEALE: Okay. Why don't we go ahead and open  
2 the phone lines and see if there are any other comments on  
3 the phone.

4           Anyone on the phone like to make a comment on the  
5 record today?

6           MR. Waxlax: Can you hear me?

7           MR. BEALE: Yes.

8           MR. Waxlax: You couldn't hear me. My phone was  
9 on mute. My name is Ken Waxlax. I'm sorry.

10          MR. BEALE: Thank you. Please go ahead.

11          MR. Waxlax: I'd just like to echo the comments of  
12 the rest of the people asking for an additional period,  
13 additional length of a comment period. Ninety days is not  
14 enough. Even 90 days more may not be enough.

15          And then what -- can you guys answer any  
16 questions, or is this just purely public comment?

17          MR. BEALE: This is just public comment. We're  
18 here to hear your comments.

19          MR. Waxlax: Okay. I would -- I would suggest  
20 that hydropower storage should be a covered activity.

21          Also, I didn't find anything in the document that  
22 spelled out the estimated fixed cost to administer the plan  
23 and how those costs were going to be covered. Maybe it's in  
24 there. If it is you can let me know and I'll go look there.

25          And the discussion of the implementation fee in

1 the Executive Summary kind of said it varies so much from  
2 project to project that we can't tell you, we can't really  
3 give you an estimate of what it is. So I'm suggesting that  
4 maybe you do that -- that implementation fee analysis on a  
5 project that's already been permitted and built so we could  
6 actually get some real numbers on that thing.

7           And I didn't see -- I didn't see any data on how  
8 many acres of private land are included in the plan. There  
9 was a map but it wasn't very clear. So if we could have  
10 that information, that would be great.

11           And thank you for your time. I'll submit my  
12 written comments, hopefully -- hopefully soon. Thank you.

13           MR. BEALE: Thank you very much for the comments.

14           Kristy, are the lines still open?

15           MS. CHEW: Yes.

16           MR. BEALE: Is there anyone else on the phone who  
17 would like to make a comment? Okay. Thank you.

18           So we have a few more minutes here. Again, I want  
19 to try to wrap up by 6:45. But is there anyone else in the  
20 room who would like to make a comment or a subsequent  
21 comment? Okay.

22           Ms. Tisdale.

23           MS. TISDALE: Donna Tisdale again. I forgot to  
24 mention that the 500 kV lines that are proposed for every  
25 alternative, including the preferred alternative, three in

1 San Diego County, I did not see any acreage included for  
2 those. It's all included for Imperial and Borrego, but not  
3 for Eastern San Diego County. And I didn't see any  
4 mitigation for impacts of those lines, the construction of  
5 Sunrise Power Link through our Eastern San Diego County.

6           It's a designated wildfire corridor. We had, at  
7 times, 40 helicopters in the air at one time. We had  
8 displacement of Golden Eagles, displacement of Big Horn  
9 Sheep, displacement of mountain lions killed on the freeway.  
10 Highway Patrol had to go out with bullhorns to get a herd of  
11 Big Horns off the freeway at one point, according to reports  
12 we heard. So we need to have that clarified and included  
13 and mitigation.

14           And all the cumulative impact projects, which I  
15 understand that the cutoff was in 2013, when there's been a  
16 lot more approved and a lot more proposed. And every one of  
17 those projects impacts our communities and should be  
18 included. Thank you.

19           MR. BEALE: Thank you.

20           MR. NADLER: I have one additional comment.

21           MR. BEALE: Okay. Neil, then two more -- am I  
22 seeing three more comments? Okay.

23           So just for the wrap up I'm going to ask folks  
24 to -- if I can reset this to two minutes, just to make sure  
25 we get out by 6:45.

1 MR. NADLER: No problem.

2 MR. BEALE: Okay.

3 MR. NADLER: Recently it has been brought to my  
4 attention that there were transmission lines that were  
5 constructed approximately five years ago. And the  
6 mitigation measures that were -- they were -- they were  
7 essentially shelved for the transmission lines, and it was a  
8 very extensive transmission project.

9 And I'm looking at the gentleman from the BLM  
10 because from what I gather the BLM does a poor, poor job of  
11 actually managing the -- the mitigation measures and the  
12 monitoring of it. And it's something that the BLM must step  
13 up because it's grossly inadequate. And I have more  
14 comments about the BLM for tomorrow. Thank you.

15 MR. BEALE: Yeah, please. And then you in the  
16 back.

17 MS. HARMON: And I just wanted to say that we've  
18 learned from the school of hard knocks that some of the  
19 projects are not really appropriately sited. The problem  
20 with Ocotillo Wind, there have been health problems, impacts  
21 to the water shed. And it's been absolutely devastating to  
22 Native Americans because the cultural resources and sacred  
23 sites in the area are significant, and they have been  
24 destroyed. There's still, as far as I understand, three  
25 ongoing lawsuits that are set for hearing, will be heard by



1 the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

2           So it's an issue of real concern that just because  
3 somebody wants to put a project in, and you're trying to  
4 fast track things, doesn't mean it's a wise place to do it.  
5 There have been public health impacts. And from where I  
6 live it's easier some days to count the few turbine that are  
7 spinning than to look at the ones that are not because it is  
8 not -- I came through yesterday, through the Palm Springs  
9 area. The difference in the activity of the wind turbines  
10 as you're coming east from L.A. is very different than what  
11 you see when you're in the Ocotillo area. The wind turbines  
12 were facing one direction, and a few hours later they're  
13 facing a different direction. So I -- but again, most of  
14 them were not operating.

15           So I think there's some real concerns on some of  
16 these projects and siting. And because of the tax revenues  
17 and the incentives, some of the projects may not be slated  
18 in the most appropriate area in terms of resource  
19 development, but they're being pushed by fast track and tax  
20 problems -- I mean tax incentives, and they're getting, you  
21 know, funding. Whether it's right or wrong, it's taxpayer  
22 money that might better be spent elsewhere. And on a lot of  
23 these projects you really need to look at the life-cycle  
24 cost of some of these projects.

25           And one of the questions I have is if the projects

1 are only intended for 20 or 30 years and you have this  
2 massive amount of equipment, and a lot of it is going to be  
3 classified as hazardous waste when it's finished it's life  
4 cycle because of the materials in it, where is everything  
5 going to go? And if you put large acreage into  
6 photovoltaics and then you have massive amounts of hazardous  
7 waste afterwards, that's -- that's an issue whether it's  
8 private lands or public lands, that's got to be dealt with.

9           And the other thing, they were talking about ag.  
10 If you're losing a lot of ag jobs, who is going to pick up  
11 the tab for providing the services? Because when we do  
12 Williamson Act conversion the land is off the tax rolls. So  
13 that's going to be a heavy impact to the county.

14           MR. BEALE: Thank you again, ma'am.

15           MS. FRIEDMAN: Sorry. I promise I will keep it  
16 brief. I want to echo everyone's comments made previously  
17 about an extension. I do this stuff as a full-time job and  
18 I haven't even been able to look at it. And I can only  
19 imagine community members and folks with full-time jobs who  
20 are passionate about these issues, the amount of material is  
21 really great.

22           I want to talk real briefly. The preferred  
23 alternative emphasizes geothermal in Imperial, which we  
24 support. This valuable resource can play a really important  
25 role in pushing out natural gas in California. And to the

1 extent the DRECP can really emphasize this and prioritize  
2 this in procurement of other areas, this will serve big  
3 climate benefits in California.

4           You know, we also wish that the DRECP should  
5 address federal and state funding for restoration of the  
6 Salton Sea and conservation actions there and provide  
7 greater clarity on that.

8           I also echo the comments earlier on the valuable  
9 role that the agricultural lands in Imperial County can play  
10 for Burrowing Owl, Mountain Plover and other birds that  
11 really rely on this. And we hope that the county's plan and  
12 input will really provide guidance on how to preserve this  
13 rich matrix that serves as a stronghold for agricultural  
14 species.

15           And we really do hope that the next iteration will  
16 take into account the great feedback tonight, and that will  
17 come out of the county planning process. Thank you.

18           MR. BEALE: Sarah, do you want to just identify  
19 yourself?

20           MS. FRIEDMAN: Oh, it's Sarah Friedman with the  
21 Sierra Club.

22           MR. BEALE: Thank you.

23           MS. ALLEN: Yeah, once again, my name is Carolyn  
24 Allen. And I just wanted to address these comments to  
25 Shayne Ferber who said the IID is generally in favor of the

1 DRECP but needs more time to comment. Well, I am hopeful  
2 that -- that Shayne will pass on to the board that the IID  
3 Board needs to be open and transparent in their decision  
4 making, and not to do any of this -- try to do this in  
5 closed session. We hope that they will seek out public  
6 comment because of how badly all of this could hit our  
7 valley farmers and the support business, and that we already  
8 are being -- we have so many negative issues to deal with.  
9 So we hope that the district will be open and transparent.

10 MR. BEALE: All right. Thank you. We're at 6:45.  
11 I want to thank everyone for joining us tonight. I know  
12 it's hard to take time out of the -- your day, especially  
13 during the work week but we really do appreciate it. We  
14 appreciate your comments. We look forward to your comments  
15 in the future. Our next public meeting is in San Diego  
16 tomorrow night. We have additional meetings next week and  
17 the following week. They're all on the website, as Vicki  
18 was saying earlier, [www.drecp.org](http://www.drecp.org). And I hope we see some  
19 of you there. Thank you again for joining us.

20 (The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.)

21 --oOo--

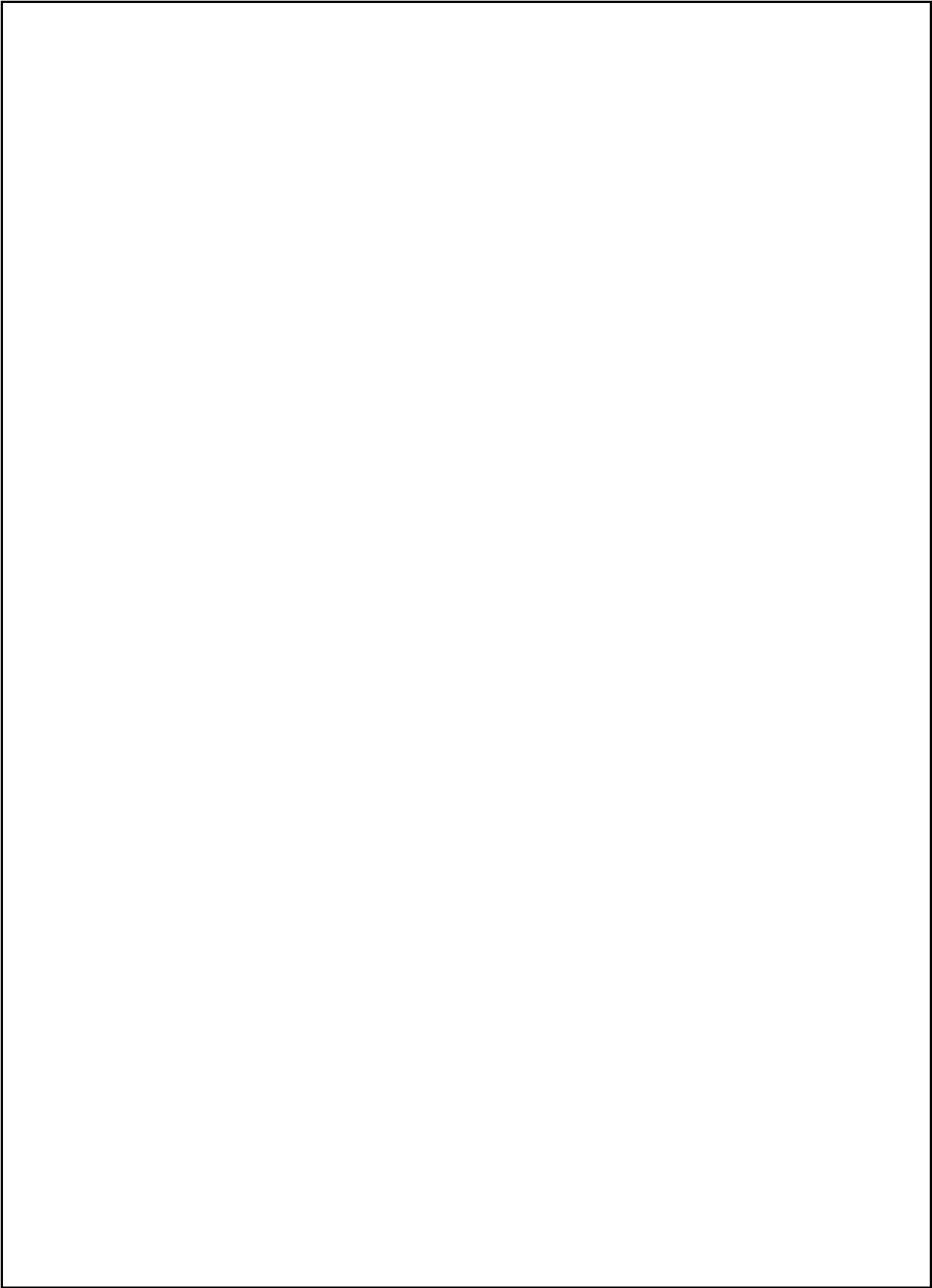
22

23

24

25

1



## CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, MARTHA L. NELSON, an Electronic Reporter, do hereby certify that I am a disinterested person herein; that I recorded the foregoing California Energy Commission's Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan; that it was thereafter transcribed.

I further certify that I am not of counsel or attorney for any of the parties to said conference, or in any way interested in the outcome of said conference.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 20th day of October, 2014.

/s/ Martha L. Nelson\_  
MARTHA L. NELSON

## CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

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.

/s/ Martha L. Nelson  
MARTHA L. NELSON, CERT\*\*367

February 20, 2014