

APPEARANCES

AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Jenness McBride, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Steve Nelson, Bureau of Land Management

Scott Flint, California Energy Commission

STAFF

Chris Beale, DRECP Director

Kristy Chew, California Energy Commission

ALSO PRESENT

Josh Hart, Inyo County

Unidentified Male

Richard Button, Paiute/Shoshone Reservation

Unidentified Female

Susan Sorrells, Town of Shoshone

April Zrelak

Laura Beardsley, Friends of the Inyo

Michael Prather

Earl Wilson, China Lake Astronomical Society

Sophia Merk

Sam Goldman, Conservation Lands Foundation

Kathy Bancroft

Philip Anaya

Sally Miller, Wilderness Society

APPEARANCES (CONT.)

ALSO PRESENT

Nancy Masters

Robert Strub

AGENDA

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P R O C E E D I N G S

4:10 p.m.

LONE PINE, CALIFORNIA, MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2014

MR. HART: On behalf of Inyo County, good afternoon and welcome. My name is Josh Hart and I'm the Inyo County Planning Director. Thank you for joining us today to learn more about the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. And as a government bureaucrat I like acronyms, and so the acronym for that is DRECP.

The DRECP is to be a General Conservation Plan and Natural Communities Conservation Plan spanning over 22.5 million acres of Eastern California. The plan is intended to facilitate renewable energy permitting to meet the state's and national goals for renewable energy generation.

Inyo County has been participating in the DRECP since its inception in 2010. And we have been fortunate enough to utilize the depth of resources developed through the DRECP, as well as funding from the Energy Commission to develop our own Renewable Energy Plan.

Regardless of what you think about the DRECP, I wanted to congratulate the DRECP team on the momentous achievement of publishing the draft DRECP. This is one of the most ambitious conservation plans ever attempted, and I want to acknowledge all of the hard work from the Energy Commission, the Bureau of Land Management, the California

1 Department of Fish and Wildlife, the US Fish and Wildlife
2 Service, and the many other agencies, individuals, and
3 participating organizations. They have worked tirelessly
4 over the years to get to this noteworthy milestone. So
5 again, congratulations.

6 And with that I'd like to turn the program over to
7 Chris Beale who is with the DRECP. Thank you.

8 MR. BEALE: Great. Thank you, Josh.

9 On behalf of -- on behalf of the California Energy
10 Commission, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife,
11 the Bureau of Land Management, and the United States Fish
12 and Wildlife Service, I'd like to welcome you to this
13 meeting about the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation
14 Plan. And like Josh, I'm going to try to avoid going
15 straight to acronyms, I'll try to use the full term, but
16 that's what the meeting is about today.

17 I'm Chris Beale. I'm the Director of the Desert
18 Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. And we're here today to
19 help introduce you to our draft plan. It was released about
20 a month ago. It's a substantial document. We don't expect
21 you to have read the full thing by now. And what we're
22 hoping to do is answer some basic questions about the plan,
23 if you have them, what it is, why we're preparing it and
24 where we are in the process.

25 If you have more detailed questions we have folks

1 here who can help you locate information in the document.
2 And I'm joined today with several members of the planning
3 team from the agencies and the consulting team that
4 developed the plan.

5 They can help you do that. We also want to
6 provide an early opportunity for comments based on your
7 early impressions. This is a really an early opportunity.
8 You can comment as many times as you like in the draft plan.
9 We fully expect that after you've read more of the plan
10 you'll have more or different comments later, and that's --
11 that's just fine.

12 The scope of the meeting today is really -- it's
13 about our draft plan. And it's important to note that the
14 Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan is a planning
15 document. No specific renewable energy projects or
16 transmission projects are proposed. This is really a
17 document to help plan for those projects in the future.
18 So -- but if you have experiences with individual projects
19 we understand that they may help you make comments on this
20 planning document. So I just wanted to be clear about the
21 scope of the plan.

22 The format for the presentation today or the
23 meeting today is we'll start with a 30-minute or so
24 presentation to orient you to the basics of the plan. After
25 that we will have a breakout session. You kind of see all

1 of the posterboards up. We'll have these information
2 stations set up. Members of the planning team will be at
3 the stations to answer your questions. And then after that,
4 at 5:30 we'll go to public comments. And we'll try to
5 start -- we will start promptly at 5:30 for the public
6 comments to make sure everybody that would like to make a
7 comment can do that.

8 And just to back up a little bit, the first
9 opportunity for public comment will actually be during the
10 information stations. We have a Court Reporter here to
11 record all the public comments here. Marlee is here.

12 Marlee, could you raise your hand?

13 So if you want to make a comment but you'd rather
14 not make it in front of a full group, you can do that during
15 the information stations. Go talk to Marlee. She'll record
16 your comment. And it's just as if you submitted a written
17 comment; it will be a formal comment on the record. All of
18 the comments made during the public comment session will
19 also be on the record as if you've submitted a written
20 comment.

21 We also have folks here, I just want to point out,
22 in addition to our information stations about the DRECP,
23 some other folks are here to answer your questions. We have
24 Scott Kiernan for the Department of Defense.

25 Scott, if you could raise your hand?

1 He's here to answer any questions you might have
2 about the Department of Defense's activities in the plan
3 area, their concerns about renewable energy projects and so
4 forth. If you've seen the draft plan we have an appendix
5 about Department of Defense training and operations in the
6 desert.

7 And then also in the back, Katherine and Josh, if
8 you could raise your hand?

9 There's the table if you're here to learn about
10 the county's planning efforts. So lots of folks here to
11 answer your questions.

12 For the public comment period, you probably saw as
13 you came in, we have some blue speaker cards. If you would
14 like to make a public comment, please just put your name on
15 the card. All we need is your name. And the reason we want
16 to do that is we want to have a sense of how many want to
17 speak so we can adjust the time accordingly. What I'll do
18 is when we get to that period, you know, start with the
19 first card submitted and let you know who's next so you'll
20 know the order in which we're going and you can be ready
21 with your comments.

22 And then we're scheduled to go for about an hour
23 on public comments. That's probably enough. If we need to
24 go a little bit over to get everybody in, we'll do that.

25 All right, so with that I'm going to turn -- turn

1 this over to Jenness McBride from the Fish and Wildlife
2 Service who will start with our about 30-minute PowerPoint
3 presentation. Feel free to come forward if you want. We
4 have some seats up here in the front if you want a front row
5 seat. It doesn't cost any more than the seats in the back.

6 MS. MCBRIDE: Can you hear me now? Okay.

7 So good afternoon. I'm Jenness McBride of the US
8 Fish and Wildlife Service, Palm Springs office. The Palm
9 Springs Fish and Wildlife office is the Service's lead
10 office for the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan.
11 And I'm going to go ahead and call it the DRECP because
12 that's easier to say for me.

13 The DRECP is the result of an intense
14 collaborative interagency planning process. It's a
15 comprehensive plan that contains a great deal of
16 information. We've organized the document to make it as
17 accessible as we can for you in a format that's similar to
18 the environmental impact reports and environmental impact
19 statements that you are used to seeing.

20 The DRECP contains six volumes and an additional
21 volume of technical appendices.

22 Volume I provides background on the development of
23 the DRECP, including the purpose and need. Volume II
24 describes the alternatives. Volume III describes the
25 environmental setting and the existing conditions. Volume

1 IV is the draft environmental analysis. Volume V describes
2 scoping and public participation. And Volume VI includes
3 details about implementation of the mitigation measures.

4 There are 24 appendices that provide additional
5 information on covered species, biological goals and
6 objectives, climate change, and many other topics. There
7 are also appendices that provide additional detail for the
8 three agency plans that together form the DRECP and which
9 I'll explain a little bit later.

10 Volume I describes how the agencies developed the
11 DRECP. The draft DRECP is an unprecedented collaboration of
12 state and federal agencies. Many federal, state and local
13 agencies, tribes, and private citizens provided helpful
14 input to the development of the draft plan. The four
15 agencies that were principally responsible for preparing the
16 DRECP are the California Energy Commission, the Bureau of
17 Land Management, California Department of Fish and Wildlife,
18 and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

19 The purpose and goals of the draft DRECP are to
20 provide a long-term adaptable plan for renewable energy
21 development and resource conservation within 22.5 million
22 acres of the Mojave and Sonoran/Colorado deserts of Southern
23 California. The DRECP has a 25-year planning horizon and is
24 intended to be implemented through the year 2040.

25 The draft DRECP is intended to streamline the

1 environmental review and permitting process for renewable
2 energy projects cited in appropriate areas. And by
3 "streamlined," streamlined under the DRECP means the review
4 and permitting process would be more efficient and more
5 predictable. Streamlined does not mean that environmental
6 analysis would be incomplete or that steps would be skipped.
7 The DRECP would not weaken requirements for environmental
8 review under state or federal law; it would just make them
9 more efficient and more predictable.

10 The DRECP would conserve 37 sensitive species and
11 their habitats, including species listed as threatened or
12 endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act or the
13 California Endangered Species Act.

14 On BLM lands the DRECP would also conserve other
15 valuable resources such as recreation, cultural, visual, and
16 wilderness characteristics. A core element of the DRECP is
17 the significant increase in conservation and recreation
18 designations that BLM is proposing to protect these valuable
19 resources and uses on BLM lands.

20 The DRECP would provide a framework for
21 considering renewable energy conservation and a range of
22 other resources and values in one land use and conservation
23 planning process.

24 The DRECP identifies appropriate areas for
25 renewable energy projects, it creates incentives for

1 developers to site projects in those areas by streamlining
2 the permitting process, and it would conserve sensitive
3 species, their habitats and ecological processes. The DRECP
4 would also protect other desert resources and values on BLM
5 lands.

6 Now, as it is now the siting of renewable projects
7 and the mitigation of the environmental impacts are
8 considered on an individual project-by-project basis and not
9 on a comprehensive landscape scale such as proposed under
10 the DRECP. The DRECP would also help to improve the
11 coordination of federal, state, local, tribal and private
12 conservation efforts in the desert by identifying high
13 priority landscape-scale goals that can be used to guide and
14 achieve greater conservation outcomes. Consideration of
15 renewable energy development with transmission and
16 conservation of a range of values and uses together in one
17 land use and resource planning process is, as we like to
18 say, smart from the start.

19 Okay, the DRECP plan area covers about 22-and-a-
20 half million acres across portions of seven counties in the
21 California Deserts, and it includes both federal and non-
22 federal lands. The plan area includes only small portions
23 of some counties, like San Diego, and large portions of
24 others such as San Bernardino County.

25 This map shows you the general land ownership

1 within the DRECP plan area. The land is -- the largest land
2 holdings are BLM lands in yellow, National Park Service
3 lands in green, military lands in dark gray, and private
4 lands in light gray. Okay. And you'll have other chances
5 to look at this map later at the information stations.

6 The DRECP is a combination of three different
7 types of plans, a BLM Land Use Plan Amendment which we call
8 LUPA, the L-U-P-A, a US Fish and Wildlife Service General
9 Conservation Plan or GCP, and a California Department of
10 Fish and Wildlife Natural Community Conservation Plan, NCCP.

11 These three plans are integrated together and together help
12 achieve the DRECP's overall goals.

13 Each of the agency's plans apply to a different
14 portion of the DRECP plan area. The BLM Land Use Plan
15 Amendment applies only to BLM lands which cover nearly 10
16 million acres of the plan area. The US Fish and Wildlife
17 Service General Conservation Plan covers about 5.4 million
18 acres of non-federal lands; the GCP does not apply to BLM or
19 to any other federal lands. And the Natural Community
20 Conservation Plan, in contrast, applies to both federal and
21 non-federal, and that's nearly 19 million acres.

22 The DRECP would provide a more efficient and
23 predictable environmental review and permitting process for
24 certain types of covered activities. Renewable energy
25 projects that would be sited within development focus areas,

1 and those are the DFAs on the slide, DFA, development focus
2 area, those projects are the largest category of covered
3 activities and they include solar, wind and geothermal
4 projects. Transmission is also a covered activity. And
5 transmission would be covered both within and outside of the
6 development focus areas so that the energy produced in the
7 DFAs can be delivered where it is needed outside the DFAs.

8 Covered activities include biological conservation
9 and compensation actions to avoid, minimize and mitigate for
10 the impacts of renewable energy and transmission
11 development. On BLM lands there are conservation and
12 compensation actions for a variety of other resources and
13 uses such as cultural, recreational and visual.

14 The DRECP would cover all phases of renewable
15 energy covered activities, including preconstruction,
16 construction, operation and maintenance over the long term,
17 and decommissioning of projects when they've completed their
18 operational life.

19 The DRECP plans for up to 20,000 megawatts of new
20 renewable energy generation and transmission in the plan
21 area through the year 2040. It's important to note that
22 20,000 megawatts of new generation is not a goal or a
23 target. The DRECP is not intended to drive that level of
24 development. Instead, a 20,000 megawatt estimate of demand
25 for renewable energy in the desert was used to estimate the

1 acres of ground disturbance that might occur as a result of
2 that level of development. And we used these estimates to
3 conduct the environmental analysis.

4 So the potential for 20,000 megawatts of renewable
5 energy development in the DRECP plan area is based on
6 certain assumptions about energy generation in California as
7 a whole, including an assumption of nearly 30,000 megawatts
8 of distributed generation such as rooftop solar. It's also
9 based on the assumption of limited generation from nuclear
10 and fossil fuel sources, and state policies that limit
11 imports of renewable energy from outside the state.
12 Renewable energy in the DRECP plan area through 2040 would
13 be lower than 20,000 megawatts if there are changes in
14 technology or changes in public policy that encourage or
15 require different technologies for generation.

16 We estimate that the production of 20,000
17 megawatts would result in about 177,000 acres of ground
18 disturbance from renewable energy projects in the plan area.
19 But the actual amount of renewable energy development would
20 be driven by market conditions as it is now. And we're just
21 estimating that that would be about 177,000 acres.

22 The DRECP analyzes the effects of all phases of
23 renewable energy development under a range of alternatives.
24 And one of the key differences among the alternatives is the
25 size and location of development focus areas where renewable

1 energy projects would be sited.

2 The DRECP includes specific renewable energy
3 designations. The most important of these are the
4 development focus areas, the DFAs. This is where renewable
5 energy projects would benefit from a more efficient and
6 streamlined environmental review and permitting process.
7 These areas are suitable because they have renewable energy
8 resources. They're windy or their sunny or they have
9 geothermal resources. And also because they are compatible
10 with the conservation of species and other resource values
11 and uses.

12 In most of the alternatives -- most of the
13 alternatives -- the development focus areas are located
14 where natural resource values are relatively low to minimize
15 the conflicts between renewable energy and resource
16 conservation. And BLM would also offer incentives to
17 renewable energy projects that are sited in DFAs on BLM
18 lands.

19 Study areas are the other type of renewable energy
20 designation. Study areas are lands that could be
21 appropriate for development in the future, but require
22 further analysis. Study areas are not regarded as
23 development focus areas in the draft DRECP.

24 The DRECP's biological conservation strategy was
25 used to develop the Land Use Plan Amendment, the General

1 Conservation Plan, and the Natural Community Conservation
2 Plan. The biological conservation strategy considered 37
3 sensitive species and 31 natural communities. It's designed
4 to protect species and their habitats, natural communities,
5 and ecological processes, and is based on a set of
6 overarching biological goals and objectives.

7 The biological conservation strategy includes
8 specific conservation management actions to avoid, minimize
9 and mitigate for impacts covered species and to contribute
10 to their recovery. The conservation strategy also includes
11 a monitoring and adaptive management program to allow the
12 DRECP to incorporate new information throughout the 25-year
13 term of the plan.

14 Okay, let's go on to the next slide and six
15 alternatives. Six alternatives are presented and analyzed
16 in the draft DRECP. There are five action alternatives and
17 one no-action alternative. The agencies have identified one
18 of the five action alternatives as the preferred
19 alternative. And the no-action alternative describes what
20 is expected to happen if the DRECP is not completed or not
21 approved.

22 The BLM Land Use Plan Amendment, the Natural
23 Community Conservation Plan, and the General Conservation
24 Plan are included in all five of the action alternatives.
25 Other common elements of the five action alternatives

1 include the conservation strategy, the development focus
2 areas, recreation designations, and the monitoring and
3 adaptive management program.

4 Each of the five action alternatives analyzes the
5 potential -- excuse me -- the potential production of 20,000
6 megawatts of renewable energy, which would result in about
7 177,000 acres of ground disturbance. This acreage is
8 disbursed and analyzed differently in each action
9 alternative depending on the configuration of the DFAs.

10 This is a map of the no-action alternative which
11 assumes the DRECP would not be approved. The light pink
12 areas are where renewable energy projects could potentially
13 be built today without the DRECP. And this is an area of
14 about 9.8 million acres. And let me say that again, without
15 the DRECP 9.8 million acres could potentially be built
16 today. The dark pink hatched areas that have just shown up,
17 these are where renewable energy projects would occur under
18 the DRECP's preferred alternative in the DFAs, an area of a
19 little over 2 million acres.

20 And if you'll excuse me. Okay.

21 All right, now one of the most important
22 differences among the DRECP alternatives is the six
23 alternatives and geographic distribution of the development
24 focus areas, the DFAs. This slide shows you a comparison of
25 the DFAs in three of the action alternatives. And the DFAs

1 are shown in pink.

2 On the left is Alternative 1 which has the
3 smallest extent of development focus areas. The preferred
4 alternative is in the middle and it has somewhat larger
5 development focus areas than Alternative 1. Alternative 2,
6 on the right, has the largest acreage of development focus
7 areas. Alternative 2 with the largest development focus
8 areas would provide the flexibility for siting renewable
9 energy projects in the most geographically dispersed areas.
10 And Alternative 1, on the right -- on the left, would
11 provide the least. The preferred Alternative in the middle
12 would provide moderate flexibility for siting projects.

13 This slide also shows where the development focus
14 areas differ among these three alternatives. Okay. So for
15 example, Alternative 1 on the left and less land proposed as
16 DFAs than the preferred or Alternative 2, and especially in
17 the West Mojave, Imperial Valley, and Eastern Riverside
18 County areas. So you can see those differ between on the
19 left and in the middle. Alternative 2 on the right has more
20 land proposed as DFAs than the other two alternatives,
21 especially in the West and Central Mojave and in the Owens
22 Valley areas.

23 So please remember, regardless of the size of the
24 DFAs and their distribution, we are estimating about 177,000
25 acres of ground disturbance impacts in each of the five

1 action alternatives. And again, these are just three of the
2 five.

3 Okay. Let's move on. This is it. Okay. It's
4 hard to see from here. So another important difference
5 among the DRECP alternatives is the amount of BLM lands that
6 are proposed as additional to the National Landscape
7 Conservation System, and that's NLCS on the slide. We also
8 call them National Conservation Lands, and they're shown in
9 purple. Again, Alternative 1 is on the left and it has the
10 least amount of new NLCS lands proposed. Alternative 2 is
11 on the right, it has the most National Landscape
12 Conservation System lands proposed. And the preferred
13 Alternative in the middle has a moderate amount of proposed
14 National Conservation Lands.

15 Now the amount of proposed National Conservation
16 Lands is related to the amount of development focus areas in
17 each alternative. Larger, more geographically dispersed
18 development focus areas would put more natural resources at
19 risk, so larger National Conservation Land designations are
20 proposed to address the increased impact.

21 This map orients you to the Owens Valley part of
22 the DRECP plan area. Proposed development focus areas are
23 shown in pink, study area lands are in brown, and they're
24 way up there at the top, the brown study area lands,
25 conservation planning areas are shown in light green, BLM

1 proposed conservation designations are in blue, National
2 Landscape Conservation System lands are in yellow, and
3 special recreation management areas proposed are in a light
4 slashed gray. And again, dark gray areas are military
5 lands, and dark green lands are existing conservation lands
6 such as Death Valley National Park. And here are
7 some basic highlights about the preferred alternative. The
8 overall biological conservation strategy for the preferred
9 alternative covers about 15 million acres, and this includes
10 about 7.6 million acres of existing conservation lands such
11 as National and State Parks. BLM conservation designations
12 cover about 4 million acres, development focus areas a
13 little over 2 million acres, the study area lands are about
14 183,000 acres, and BLM recreation designations cover about
15 3.6 million acres.

16 This map gives you a general picture of the
17 preferred alternative. And here you see again the
18 development focus areas in pink, in relation to the DRECP's
19 proposed conservation lands, study area lands, recreation
20 lands, existing military bases, and existing conservation
21 land. And you'll be able to see this map up close later at
22 the information stations.

23 For the preferred alternative, which we always
24 show in pink, a little over 2 million acres are proposed as
25 development focus areas. And that's what the big circle

1 represents, a little over 2 million acres. But to meet the
2 DRECP's planning assumption of 20,000 megawatts, the
3 planning assumption of 20,000 megawatts of new renewable
4 energy generation, projects actually would be built on only
5 about 177,000 acres or about nine percent of the total DFA
6 acreage. The dark striped slice at the top of the pie
7 represents this estimated ground disturbance as a portion of
8 the total DFA area, nine percent. If less than 20,000
9 megawatts of new generation is actually needed in the DRECP
10 area, then the actual amount of ground disturbance would be
11 corresponding less than 177,000 acres.

12 The total proposed DFA acreage is much larger than
13 the estimated acres of impact to allow for flexibility in
14 locating where projects actually would be built within those
15 DFAs.

16 Okay, this map shows the development focus areas,
17 again in pink, and the amount -- and the estimated amount of
18 ground disturbance expected to occur in each county within
19 the DRECP plan area. So for example, in Inyo County, in the
20 upper left corner, in Inyo County we estimate that renewable
21 energy projects would be built on about 5,000 acres, or up
22 to 5,000 acres, which would be about 11 percent of the
23 proposed DFA acreage in Inyo County. So the little gray box
24 that you see to the right of the map legend for Inyo County,
25 that little gray box, that gives you an idea of how large

1 that 11 percent ground disturbance within the DFA would be
2 in comparison with the total pink area of DFA in Inyo
3 County.

4 So for the other counties in the DRECP plan area,
5 the estimated ground disturbance that would occur within
6 DFAs ranges from about 5 percent to 16 percent of the total
7 proposed DFA acreage. And again, in Inyo County it's about
8 11 percent.

9 Okay, Environmental Analysis. A description of
10 the environmental setting is in Volume III, and
11 environmental impact analysis in Volume IV. The
12 environmental analysis considers 23 resource categories.
13 And we identified these categories based on scoping
14 meetings, preliminary analysis, and input from tribes, the
15 public, and agency experts.

16 In the environmental analysis for each of these
17 resource categories we compared the alternatives based on
18 the proposed level of renewable energy impacts, conservation
19 and management actions to avoid, minimize, and mitigate
20 impacts to covered species, conservation and management
21 actions for recreation, visual, cultural and other resources
22 on BLM lands, and the types and acreages of land allocations
23 on those BLM lands.

24 The draft analysis concludes that impacts to most
25 of these 23 resource categories would be less than

1 significant. For ten of the resource categories which are
2 listed here in the slide, impacts would be significant in
3 one more of the alternatives, including the no-action
4 alternative.

5 And now I'll just briefly describe how the DRECP
6 would be implemented.

7 It's important to note that there are -- that no
8 new government entity would be created by the DRECP. All
9 agencies would retain their current authority and
10 responsibilities. The purpose of identifying an
11 implementation structure for the DRECP is to improve agency
12 coordination and communication. Implementation would also
13 include participation and input from tribes, local
14 governments, the public, and the scientific community. Now,
15 the DRECP also estimates the cost of implementing the plan's
16 biological conservation strategy and identifies sources of
17 funding.

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

1 local jurisdictions.

2 Okay, and now I'll talk about options for public
3 participation.

4 If you will excuse me. (Takes a drink of water.)

5 So the agencies have completed our work for the
6 draft plan, and now we need your help and input to shape the
7 final plan.

8 We created a dedicated website for the DRECP at
9 www.drecp.org. To help you understand the DRECP we have
10 prepared a series of fact sheets, a list of frequently asked
11 questions, and an informational video. They're all
12 available on the website. The draft DRECP is on this
13 website, and on the Bureau of Land Management and US Fish
14 and Wildlife websites, as well. We also have -- did I say
15 US Fish and Wildlife Service? Okay. We also have an
16 innovative mapping tool called the DRECP Gateway, and I'll
17 talk more about that in a minute.

18 So you can review the DRECP at local libraries and
19 agency offices in the plan area. And DVDs are available
20 upon request. And all of the information on this slide is
21 on a handout available at the front table, and it's also
22 posted on www.drecp.org.

23 Public review and comment is absolutely critical
24 to developing the final DRECP. You can give us your
25 comments by email, fax, US Mail, in person, and at these

1 public meetings. And addresses for sending your comments
2 are on a handout at the front table and at drecp.org. We
3 want your voice to be heard. And we assure you that all
4 public comments are welcomed, valued, and will be
5 considered.

6 As Chris said earlier, the public comment period
7 opened last month on September 26th and it closes on January
8 9th of next year.

9 Public meetings are being held throughout the
10 DRECP plan area and its surrounding population centers. All
11 the information about the public meetings is posted at
12 drecp.org.

13 All right, we have some tips for you for preparing
14 your comments. To help us develop a final plan we need to
15 know what you want us to change. Substantive comments will
16 have the greatest effect on the final DRECP because they
17 will tell us specifically what you want added, what you want
18 removed or otherwise changed, and why.

19 For example, substantive comments could be
20 comments that raise significant environmental concerns,
21 issues that require clarification or modification of any of
22 the alternatives, new or different alternatives, new or
23 missing information, or corrections that could substantially
24 change the conclusions of the environmental analysis.

25 DRECP Gateway is our innovative online data and

1 mapping tool. It's free, user friendly, and we encourage
2 you to go in and explore. There's a sign-in function, but
3 you only have to use it -- you only have to use it if you
4 want to save information and come back later and use it
5 again. So anybody with a computer, regardless of your
6 experience with GIS, you can use the Gateway to view, edit
7 and analyze maps and data. You can create custom maps and
8 put your comments right on those maps, and then save, print
9 or export the maps for inclusion with your written comments.

10 The Gateway web address is at the bottom of the
11 slide, drecp.databasin.org. This site is a really useful
12 tool, but it's just a tool. It's not necessary for you to
13 use the Gateway to review, understand or comment on the
14 DRECP. It's an optional resource available for your use.

15 So that's the end of our presentation this
16 afternoon. Thank you for your interest in the DRECP. And
17 we look forward to talking with you and hearing your
18 comments at the information stations in the next segment of
19 the meeting tonight.

20 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Jenness.

21 All right, so what we have, this is the section
22 where we go to -- sorry about all the clicking. We do the
23 information stations. This is sort of our open house. We
24 have six stations. And I want to just orient you to where
25 they are. So if our agency folks could go to your

1 appropriate station to help me identify them.

2 We start -- one of our stations is a general
3 station. If guys could raise your hands back there, to my
4 right. That's where you go if you just want to ask some
5 general questions about the DRECP, what it is. If you have
6 questions about the alternatives and how they're different,
7 or if you have questions about the environmental impact
8 analysis, that's all at Station 1. We have several -- we'll
9 have several folks over there to answer your questions.

10 Just going around the room, if you'd like to ask
11 questions about the renewable energy assumptions and
12 planning assumptions that we used you can go to our
13 renewable energy station.

14 David, could you say hi?

15 MR. BEALE: Also transmission.

16 And then, let's see, actually, we're going -- it's
17 set up in order. This is perfect. If you have questions
18 about the BLM's Land Use Plan Amendment, come over and talk
19 to Mike right there.

20 And going around the room, if you have questions
21 about the US Fish and Wildlife Service's General
22 Conservation Plan see Jenness and Chris there.

23 And for the Natural Community Conservation Plan,
24 Scott's doing double-duty there, that's in the middle over
25 there.

1 And then we have a station for the biological
2 conservation strategy on the end.

3 And again to remind you, Marlee our Court Reporter
4 is here to take any comments you have.

5 But also, just in case you didn't catch it
6 earlier, the bathrooms are just at the door on your way out.

7 So what we'd like to do is just feel free to go.

8 And, of course, Inyo County, thank you Josh, back
9 there, if you have a question about Inyo County's land use
10 planning process, they're there to answer questions.

11 So we'll -- because we have limited time we want
12 to make sure we start promptly at 5:30 for public comments.
13 We'll have the information stations available for about 45
14 minutes. So anyway, thank you very much for coming tonight.
15 We look forward to your -- your questions. And we'll kind
16 of reconvene here at 5:30

17 (Off the record at 4:47 p.m.)

18 (Breakout Session Public Comment begins at 4:47 p.m.)

19 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: One of my comments is I
20 understand there is -- I understand the document has 6,000
21 pages plus. How long do we have to read this and digest it
22 before this becomes a law? Are we just going to sign it
23 without reading it, or do people get a chance to actually --
24 to have time to read 6,000 pages? Okay.

25 Another one is instead of all these transmission

1 lines running from the Owens Valley or places north of Los
2 Angeles or San Diego coming through the Owens Valley, why
3 don't we consider rooftop solar first and see what we can
4 get out of that. I have rooftop solar on my house. I've
5 had it for five years plus. I haven't had an electric bill
6 in five years because it's so efficient.

7 Another comment on rooftop solar on residential,
8 according to what I've been told, that does not count into
9 the 33 percent of renewable energy. It was put into the
10 bill that residential does not count at this point. Also,
11 hydro does not count. How did this ever happen? Why isn't
12 that part of the 33 percent of renewable energy? Who -- who
13 did this? Okay. You don't know. Okay. Okay.

14 Again, transmission lines, the way I've been told
15 by different experts, they're archaic, 300 to 400 miles of
16 lines running like from the Owens Valley down to Southern
17 California. This is ridiculous.

18 Again, back to rooftop solar, there must be 1,000
19 square miles of rooftops down there where we could put solar
20 units on. Probably DWP, Bureau of Land Management, federal
21 buildings, I bet probably none of those have rooftop solar
22 right now. Why don't we start with our government agencies.
23 Thank you.

24 MR. BUTTON: My name is Richard Button. I'm Vice
25 Chair of the Lone Pine Paiute/Shoshone Reservation. And I

1 would like to know if working with BLM on acquiring land for
2 reservation, whether it's for use for renewable energy or
3 not for use for renewable energy, if this plan is going to
4 affect in any way acquiring land for tribals, for the Lone
5 Pine Paiute/Shoshone Reservation. That's it.

6 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Because there's so much to
7 look at and to decide on, I would like the comment period
8 extended beyond the January 9th deadline.

9 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'd like to make another
10 comment. I live in the Inyo County. I've been here 40-some
11 years. I would hate to see any giant or any windmill
12 project put in the Owens Valley just because of the visual
13 eyesore, and also because of the -- the way they kill the
14 birds and everything fly through.

15 Also, there's another type of solar which is solar
16 towers that put out a lot of heat, and I understand it's
17 within the 500 to 1,000 degree range, if I'm not mistaken.
18 Anything that flies near it is barbecued instantly. And I
19 would hate to see any solar towers put in our area, or
20 anywhere else in California. Thank you.

21 MS. SORRELLS: My name is Susan Sorrells. I live
22 in Shoshone, California in the Shoshone/Tecopa area. And
23 the first comment that I would like to make is that I would
24 like to request a public meeting in the Shoshone/Tecopa area
25 since this very much affects our area.

1 And the other comment I'd like to make is that I
2 feel that it's very inappropriate to have the Charleston
3 View area considered a DFA. There are Paiute sacred sites
4 there. The Old Spanish Trail, which is a unit of the
5 National Park Service, as a trail goes directly through that
6 area. There are residents there that are very much opposed
7 to any kind of development. There are also water issues.
8 The Pahrump Valley Basin is already overdrawn. So it would
9 just exasperate that situation. And there are no
10 transmission lines. So I think there are many reasons to
11 reconsider that area as a DFA. Thank you.

12 (On the record at 5:35 p.m.)

13 MR. BEALE: All right. Thanks everyone. So this
14 is the public comment session. So this is the part of the
15 meeting where the agencies are here to hear your input. We
16 have folks from agencies -- oh, do we have another one? It
17 looks like we have nine comment cards. And this is an
18 opportunity for you to come up to the mike and make comments
19 for the record to our agency representatives. And I'll ask
20 them to introduce themselves here in a minute.

21 We have a time here. We have -- I think we're
22 going to have plenty of time today. We've been using three
23 minutes for comments. I'll turn this on. It's yellow until
24 it gets to one minute, then it goes red. But frankly, with
25 eight comments, if folks want to comment twice they can. We

1 just want to make sure everybody gets a chance to be heard
2 within a reasonable -- a reasonable time.

3 So this is -- this is not a Q and A, you know,
4 there won't be responses to your comments. This is really
5 for you to -- for you to talk and for -- for us to listen.
6 And I want to thank you all for coming and for being willing
7 to make comments. I know it's not easy to come out on a
8 weeknight. It's not easy to get up in front of a group to
9 speak your mind but -- but we really appreciate it. We know
10 that your comments during this -- this phase of the
11 development of this draft plan are going to make it better.
12 And we're thankful that you're here. Your comments are
13 quite welcome.

14 So I'm going to ask our -- our agency folks to
15 introduce themselves.

16 MR. FLINT: Hi. I'm Scott Flint, the California
17 Energy Commission.

18 MR. NELSON: Good evening. I'm Steve Nelson. I'm
19 the Bureau of Land Management Bishop Field Manager. I want
20 to echo that sentiment. Thank you all for coming and
21 spending some time with us this afternoon. It's really
22 important, and I look forward to hearing your comments.
23 Thanks.

24 MS. MCBRIDE: Hello again. Jenness McBride, US
25 Fish and Wildlife Service of the Palm Springs Office. And

1 we are the Service's desert office for California.

2 MR. BEALE: Okay. Thank you. So it looks like we
3 actually have nine comment cards. Our first speakers are
4 April Zrelak.

5 MS. ZRELAK: That was just a placeholder, and now
6 I don't have any questions.

7 MR. BEALE: Oh, okay. So you don't want to make a
8 comment? Okay.

9 So first commenter will be Laura Beardsley, then
10 Ileene Anderson, then Michael Prather.

11 So Laura Beardsley, come on up. Thank you.

12 MS. BEARDSLEY: Hi. Laura Beardsley. I'm the
13 Executive Director of Friends of the Inyo. And as you know,
14 we are a regional organization that -- whose mission is to
15 protect and care for public lands in the Eastern Sierra.
16 We've been working for many years on public lands that are
17 managed locally by the BLM. And we've been working to
18 become an important ally in community-based conservation and
19 stewardship for those local lands.

20 We are part of a larger network of almost 60
21 Friends groups that work collaboratively to ensure that the
22 BLM's National Conservation Lands are protected and
23 restored. And we're really encouraged by the DRECP in that
24 it identifies certain places that are too special for future
25 development. We encourage the agencies to continue to

1 identify the most important places that should be set aside
2 for conservation and recreation through this planning
3 process. Some of these areas in Inyo County are truly
4 spectacular natural and national treasures. And we look
5 forward to providing more extensive comments as we move
6 forward in this process. Thank you.

7 MR. BEALE: Thank you very much. Ileene, and then
8 Michael Prather and Earl Wilson.

9 MS. ANDERSON: Hi. I'm Ileene Anderson. I'm with
10 the Center for Biological Diversity. And I want to just
11 start out by saying the development of renewable energy is a
12 critical component of efforts to reduce greenhouse gas
13 emissions and hope of avoiding the worse consequences of
14 global warming. The Center strongly supports the
15 development of renewable energy production in general to
16 reduce emissions, while supporting essential electrical
17 infrastructure.

18 I have a number of points but I'm going to try to
19 focus on the ones in this area tonight. We see the DRECP as
20 an opportunity to craft a habitat conservation plan under
21 the Federal Endangered Species Act and the California
22 Natural Communities Conservation Plan that could balance
23 protecting our irreplaceable desert lands and wildlife while
24 wisely planning for additional renewable energy development.

25 I want to thank the agencies for the work that's

1 been done to increase the knowledge base on plant
2 communities in some areas previously under-surveyed, and for
3 utilizing the Databasin as a repository for publicly
4 accessible data sets on a range of resources. While we
5 think far more work needs to be done to gather the needed
6 information, we believe that this is a solid beginning.

7 Probably like most people in this room, we have
8 not yet had an opportunity to fully digest the 10,000 pages
9 and the appendices of the draft plan. However, we will
10 speak to several critical issues that we see as being
11 missing from the document.

12 And first I want to turn to an issue here in Inyo
13 County. We certainly urge the DRECP to take a hard look at
14 the Charleston View area that's being proposed as a
15 development focus area. This area has been well studied
16 from a proposed project, the Hidden Hills Project. And
17 groundwater studies have recently been completed to clarify
18 there is a continuity between the Pahrump Valley and the
19 Amargosa Valley in this area.

20 Our concerns stem from the existing previous
21 overdraft of the Pahrump Aquifer and all of the applications
22 on the Nevada side of the state line that are waiting to be
23 developed. And we believe that basically any type of
24 development in this area is inappropriate at best, so we --
25 because of the groundwater overdraft issues, so we -- and

1 how that will affect the springs and seeps that support
2 wildlife in this area. So we definitely urge you to re-look
3 at that and give it a hard look for its appropriateness.

4 We believe that the document should analyze
5 alternatives other than just industrial scale solar that's
6 relatively remote from the areas that is under consumption.

7 And I guess I'll just take the rest of my comments to -- in
8 either written form at future meetings. Thank you.

9 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Ileene. And like I said,
10 there's probably time to come back again if you want to
11 finish. Thank you. We do want those comments.

12 Michael Prather, then Earl Wilson, then Sophia
13 Merk.

14 MR. PRATHER: Good evening. Thank you for coming
15 to Lone Pine. Usually everything in our valley goes to
16 Bishop. And we at the south end appreciate that.

17 One of my main concerns is dealing with just the
18 legalities of a document this big, that the opportunity must
19 be provided to the public to just have a common sense, horse
20 sense chance of reading a document in order to understand
21 it. And to me the limit is far beyond being stretched
22 dealing with 6,000 or 7,000 pages and appendices, very
23 difficult text at times, that that truly is not meeting the
24 legal need of the law under NEPA. I have a
25 concern that I'd like to make sure that the plan comports or

1 goes with the views of the Inyo County Board of Supervisors.
2 I'm glad that they're here tonight, some of our elected
3 people and the planning department. And there is -- there
4 is a position that was formed with public comment locally
5 within Inyo County dealing with renewables that's in a
6 process of its own right now. And it would be really good
7 to have this line up with that nicely.

8 There was a mention of -- this is just a personal
9 thing. I try to not to do this, but I couldn't help this
10 one. There was a mention of a dot on a map of being just a
11 dot that shows how small something really is. And this
12 whole planet is a dot in the solar system. Ivanpah was a
13 dot and we saw what happened to tortoises supposedly
14 protected with the Endangered Species Act there. So a dot
15 has real significance if you're down on that scale.

16 I think I'll wind this up.

17 I was very glad to see more protection for
18 National Conservation Lands under the -- with the BLM under
19 their Conservation System. I hope that those have all the
20 letter of the law that protects other areas in federal
21 government that are protected for conservation, that they --
22 that all of the -- all of the language is in there to
23 protect those lands over time. And I hope that there's
24 sufficient connectivity with those lands and other
25 conservation lands with other agencies such as the Forest

1 Service or the Park Service. I know there's some language
2 in there. I haven't really fleshed it fully out. But that
3 really needs to be emphasized. And I think -- I believe
4 it's a requirement, a guidance for all federal agencies in
5 adapting to climate change to have that kind of connectivity
6 vertically, and also protecting refuges and riparian and
7 things like that.

8 Lastly, just please, with -- with a document of
9 this size, really requesting an extension of the comment
10 period, that the document, I think, did not come out on time
11 on its own schedule, the public should be given some of
12 that -- that sway also. Thank you.

13 MR. BEALE: Thank you for your comment.

14 We have Earl Wilson, then Sophia Merk, then Sam
15 Goldman.

16 MR. WILSON: My name is Earl Wilson. I'm a
17 resident of Lone Pine. A little clarification about the
18 Center for Biological Diversity. Just to get it on the
19 record, that was the Hidden Hills Project by Brightsource.
20 And there is a serious problem in that water basin. And
21 California is addressing that now with legislation and the
22 governor's proclamation.

23 So to continue, I'm also President of China Lake
24 Astronomical Society and on the Board of Directors of
25 Western Amateur Astronomers, and I'm authorized to represent

1 them at this meeting, over 2,500 members, that was the last
2 number I was given.

3 And there's concerns about access in the
4 mitigation areas as being closed off to public access. A
5 lot of amateur astronomers throughout their night using the
6 public lands that they have a right to get onto to do
7 astrophotography, get their telescopes out, take their kids
8 out, have group activities and a lot of other things that go
9 on out there in the desert that a lot of people really don't
10 know about. That's our main thing is access.

11 A secondary thing is night lighting. These huge
12 solar system -- or solar projects like the Brightsource one
13 out there in Hidden Hills, they were going to have lighting
14 on out there most of the time cleaning mirrors. Bright
15 lights shining around in circles in all directions,
16 unacceptable from our point of view.

17 The other thing is the conservation issue, that
18 needs to be looked at very extensively. There's no reason
19 for nights to be lit up and cities with domes that go up to
20 30 degrees into the sky where you can't even see most of the
21 stars when you're downtown in the center of cities. The
22 other day I saw Las Vegas from Ridgecrest, night before
23 last, a tremendous amount of light. It's wasted energy.
24 There's no need for it. You could cut a lot of this solar
25 invasion into our desert down by just conservation.

1 I will make my own comments, personal comments,
2 written. This is a huge document. I've never gone more
3 than about 3,500 pages for review and comments. We need and
4 extension on this. And I'm not sure that this is even a
5 valid document. The EIS is already obsolete. How long is
6 this one even going to last before the invasion of the
7 desert has already eaten up all the private land and
8 fulfilled the 20,000 kilowatts. Thank you.

9 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Sophia Merk, then Sam
10 Goldman, and Kathy Bancroft.

11 MS. MERK: Well, it's as tall as the books are
12 when they're printed out. My name is Sophia Merk. I live
13 in Ridgecrest, California. I'm just going to make some
14 basic comments.

15 I haven't had time to go through the whole
16 document. Like I said, it's 10,000 pages. That's an awful
17 lot of pages for people to look at to clearly understand
18 what's -- what's being presented.

19 I have concerns about the legalities in regards to
20 this document, whether it really -- whether it really -- the
21 purpose and the need conform to the BLM's purpose and need,
22 to the Fish and Wildlife -- US Fish and Wildlife and the
23 state Fish and Wildlife. I have great concerns.

24 This is also an unfunded mandate for the BLM. And
25 with half the lands being under their jurisdiction, unless

1 congress appropriates money, and we know how that goes, it's
2 not going to happen. They're not going to be able to
3 implement it, not properly. We're looking at lawsuits.

4 So we don't want that to happen, so let's make it
5 right. Let's give everybody a chance to look at this
6 document completely. I would also like to present the
7 Sustainable Groundwater Management Act that was just passed
8 because it's not identified in this under Volume III,
9 Section 6, the closest data points they have is 2003, and
10 they're not clearly identifying seeps and springs throughout
11 the whole CDCA. They're not looking at air quality. And
12 it's -- it's really sad that they're not looking at these
13 type of things. I would have liked to have seen an
14 alternative, a distribution alternative make it to the
15 higher ground; it did not. The document implies that all
16 the counties have signed onto it. Kern County still has not
17 signed onto it.

18 And I've got a lot more but I'm not going to say
19 it tonight. I'll submit written documents. But please
20 grant an extension so that people and the counties can look
21 at this document carefully, for the agencies to look at this
22 document and decide whether it's covered under FLPMA or
23 what, because it's not. Thank you.

24 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Okay, we have Sam Goldman,
25 Kathy Bancroft, and then Philip Anaya.

1 MR. GOLDMAN: Hi. I'm Sam Goldman. I'm with the
2 Conservation Lands Foundation. Like all of the counties in
3 the -- in the plan area, there are unique concerns. Here in
4 Inyo County the preferred alternative includes areas that
5 should be off limits to development, places for conservation
6 and recreation. And these places are some of the gems in
7 the desert that we have here, right here in Inyo County that
8 I think we would all agree should be left off out of
9 renewable energy development and able to be preserved for
10 future generations.

11 I, for one, spend every year camping in the
12 Panamint Valley, and have for the last seven years. So I'm
13 excited that places like the Panamint and Trona Pinnacles
14 could be added to the National Conservation Lands.

15 My foundation works with Friends groups around the
16 West that work in partnership with the BLM to manage special
17 places like Panamint Valley and the Trona Pinnacles. And
18 with the plan identifying more areas in the desert to be
19 added to the National Conservation Lands, I'm working to
20 find citizens that care about these places that can work in
21 partnership with the BLM. So if there's people here that
22 want to get involved in helping ensure that these place are
23 protected, I'd love to talk to you.

24 There are other places, though, that aren't added
25 in the plan that should be, places like Silurian Valley,

1 Sheephole Valley and Iron Mountains, all gems in the desert
2 that should be left alone and open for recreation and
3 conservation.

4 I will be submitting further comments around how
5 we manage the National Conservation Lands. And the big
6 plan, as you've heard, is quite large. So we want to make
7 sure that we get it right when we are looking at managing
8 these places for the future. And my comments will outline
9 those areas in partnership with the community groups that we
10 work with.

11 But I'm really excited about future areas here in
12 Inyo County that will be set aside for conservation and left
13 alone for our kids to enjoy, as well. Thanks for much.

14 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Kathy Bancroft, then
15 Philip Anaya, and Sally Miller.

16 MS. BANCROFT: Hello. I am Kathy Jefferson
17 Bancroft. And I just -- I've got a lot of comments, but I'm
18 going to just limit it to a couple having to do with this
19 process. And one of them is I had to get off work an hour
20 early tonight just so I could make it to this meeting. But
21 I have a lot of friends who work on the Owens Lake Project
22 that don't get off until 5:30, and so they couldn't come to
23 the meeting tonight. So maybe some consideration could be
24 taken for people that work.

25 And the other thing is that I have a little

1 trouble with some of the land ownership maps. They're not
2 really -- they don't really reveal exactly the land
3 ownership and it adds to some confusion, especially like on
4 the Owens Lake. And then you have a big area around Lone
5 Pine to be developed, and it's all DWP land. And perhaps it
6 might be a good thing to actually designate LADWP land as
7 not just private property, because they don't follow all the
8 rules of private property in this county. And so it might
9 be a good thing to designate them in something different.
10 Thank you.

11 MR. BEALE: Philip Anaya, Sally Miller, and Nancy
12 Masters.

13 MR. Anaya: My name is Philip Anaya and I'm from
14 Bishop California. It -- even though it -- it's an hour's
15 drive in both directions, it was a beautiful drive down here
16 this afternoon. I can tell you, it was just gorgeous.

17 I do want to compliment the process, okay, for --
18 for designating 20 million acres of potential conservation
19 lands, okay, and only going after 2-point-whatever million
20 acres as potential renewable energy sites. With that being
21 said, I do have some -- some requests and some criticisms of
22 the process.

23 I came to this public meeting here in Lone Pine
24 because I thought I was going to get a handout. There was
25 not an agenda at the table. Thankfully I had my own from

1 the website. But if I wanted to look at the agenda after it
2 disappeared off the screen I was out of luck. Okay. So I
3 suggest at future meetings that you provide some paper to
4 people.

5 I also came here to get a handout of what was
6 going to be happening locally here in Inyo County. Right
7 now the geographic organization of -- of the maps is -- does
8 not define the areas. Okay. They're just splotches on
9 paper, and it's our best guess to where -- to where one
10 plant or one animal may or may not be. And you're asking us
11 to publicly comment on -- on issues, okay, without a clear
12 definite definition, okay, of these geographic locations.

13 I think that I appreciate the -- the understanding
14 of the general scope that -- of the DRECP as part of this
15 meeting. But I think that a bigger part of this meeting
16 should have been specifically about the locality, okay, of
17 the area, okay, that is -- that is represented here by -- by
18 the people attending.

19 And so with that in mind I think that you might
20 consider not only an extension of the public comment time
21 period, and I'm thinking a minimum of 90 days. I don't know
22 if you have any regulatory deadlines. But if you don't have
23 any regulatory deadlines then 120 days, 160 days, what does
24 it matter after you're 2 or 3 years over -- over your
25 timeframe anyway? Because we do need to get this right.

1 Along with that extension, okay, what I would like
2 to see would -- I would like to see another round of public
3 meetings, okay, in each locale where more specific
4 discussion and presentation of the areas, okay, of the DFAs,
5 okay, are going to be considered. And I thank you for the
6 opportunity to contribute to the process.

7 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Thank you for your
8 comments.

9 Sally?

10 MS. MILLER: Hello. Can you hear me? Okay.
11 First of all I wanted to say really thank you to the
12 agencies. I know you've worked long and hard to get this
13 out on the street, and now it's our turn. And in light of
14 what other people have said, we also -- I'm representing the
15 Wilderness Society, excuse me -- we would like to ask for
16 more time for public comment. Susan Sorrells who had to
17 leave early from Shoshone/Tecopa would like to see a meeting
18 in her community.

19 I think we'd also recommend that there be public
20 hearings or some kind of hearings or additional public
21 comment session in the new year, assuming you grant an
22 extension, so that people can have better formulated
23 comments. I think a lot of us now are just trying to digest
24 what's in the document.

25 The second thing I wanted to talk about is our

1 support, the Wilderness Society's support for a plan like
2 the DRECP, something that allows our communities, the
3 stakeholders, to be proactive in the agencies with respect
4 to where development may go, where it shouldn't go, and also
5 figure out where -- what are the wild lands and wildlife
6 habitat that needs to be preserved, and also how to preserve
7 ongoing recreational and traditional uses. So we're very
8 supportive of the process. And we hope that the DRECP -- we
9 see a lot of things that concern us -- we hope that it will
10 be improved so that folks can rally behind it.

11 And then the last comment I really have is that
12 we've worked a lot with Inyo County on their proposed
13 Renewable Energy General Plan Amendment. The county has
14 done a tremendous job, and there's been a lot of public
15 discourse about that. And it's really important to us that
16 the agencies and the counties, and all counties but I'll
17 just speak about Inyo now, figure out how to resolve
18 discrepancies, how to use the best available information to
19 get the best possible plan, not just for the development
20 areas but also for the lands, public lands that could be put
21 off limits to development. So thank you very much.

22 MR. BEALE: Thank you. And the last card I have
23 is for Nancy Masters.

24 MS. MASTERS: Good evening. My name is Nancy
25 Masters. I'm a citizen of Inyo County. And I just want to

1 make four comments. I've only had a cursory glance at the
2 55 pounds of paper or the DVD. So my comments are brief and
3 pretty specific.

4 I wanted to thank you for taking the time to
5 produce this document. I know that all of us don't agree
6 about the contents of the document. But planning for
7 conservation and to protect the lands and the species that
8 need conservation is critical. And so thank you very much,
9 agencies.

10 We live in Inyo County. It's a region known for
11 its beauty. It attracts worldwide attention. And it's
12 certainly a county that needs resource conservation in order
13 to continue that economic benefit to us by our tourist-based
14 economy.

15 First, I noticed the Charleston View area as
16 designated on the boundary of Inyo County with Nevada. I
17 also understand after today in talking with people here that
18 this document will not analyze cumulative impacts across the
19 geopolitical boundary. I am concerned about effects of
20 generators in Nevada or users in Nevada relative to any
21 development that might occur in Charleston View area. And
22 it might be a reason to look more carefully at not including
23 that as a DFA.

24 Second, understanding again after conversing today
25 that the Owens Valley proper does not fall within an area

1 where National Conservation Lands can be designated.
2 Nonetheless, I would like to encourage the BLM to look at
3 its lands in the Owens Valley for including in ACECs, the
4 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, to preserve the
5 biological and cultural values. Many of you know that we
6 went through sort of a painful process with the Southern
7 Owens Valley Solar Ranch about those very same values. And
8 so it might be an appropriate time to look at those lands.

9 Third, I am concerned about the West-wide Energy
10 Corridor, the transmission corridor that comes down through
11 the Owens Valley. It has been designated, thanks to the
12 Wilderness Society's efforts, as a corridor of concern. But
13 we need to work towards de-designation of this corridor or
14 we will be courting development in this unique resource of
15 the Owens Valley.

16 And finally and fourth, and I'm not real clear on
17 all of this, but I understand that the 177,000 acres is a
18 bit of a cap in terms of the impacts that occur by
19 developing that 177,000 acres but there can be some shifting
20 around of that -- those impacts to other regions. And I
21 would just caution that shifting around needs to be looked
22 at carefully relative to the biological species. Thank you
23 very much.

24 MR. BEALE: Thank you. And we have one additional
25 speaker card. And then I'll ask folks in the room if they'd

1 like to make another comment.

2 Robert Stralls [sic]?

3 MR. STRUB: Strub.

4 MR. BEALE: Strub.

5 MR. STRUB: I haven't had a chance to really
6 review the document. It's a pretty bulky document, but I
7 thank you for putting it together. And I don't know to whom
8 I'm speaking. So as far as your government agencies that
9 you represent because I got here late.

10 Anyway, I am for solar development, I'll make that
11 clear, because I think it's good for the desert, because in
12 the overall view of things the carbon footprint that's
13 coming from all over the world is landing in our soil and
14 changing our desert. And so I think we have to do our fair
15 share and have some development here, and have it near the
16 cities, and have it near where it's beneficial, rather we
17 get more solar utilization per acre, and that's right here
18 in Inyo County.

19 I notice in reviewing the executive summary and
20 the appendices there of that executive summary they have
21 some graphs. And my view of that is if I compare San
22 Bernardino County to Inyo County, I know that San Bernardino
23 County is twice as big. And I look at the acreage of San
24 Bernardino County and then I look at the acreage for solar
25 in Inyo County and I see that there's, you know, a rough

1 ratio of ten-to-one, something like that, per area, per
2 square mile of area that -- that you're proposing. And I
3 find that Inyo County is very isolated and at one end of the
4 spectrum, and I don't think that's good for Inyo County.
5 And I think Inyo County has to have protections and options
6 so that if at a later time they want to have more solar they
7 can do that.

8 So this great economy based on tourism doesn't
9 seem to be holding us afloat in Inyo County, and I find that
10 troublesome. Some people made studies, not you, per se, but
11 others, saying that this was going to hold us up
12 economically, and it doesn't appear to be doing so.
13 Businesses are closing, etcetera. So I think we need to
14 explore those options. We need to have those options to
15 have other sources of income.

16 I also note in the executive pamphlet that you're
17 going to review some of the options that are available to
18 you based on your past performance, and I didn't see too
19 much of a review there. And I know that a lot of people are
20 sensitive on that review because a lot of us have set goals,
21 if we do this, good things will happen, such as if you
22 eliminate mining, which used to be a primary industry here
23 in this county, good things will happen, and I don't see any
24 reviews relative to that. I know there was a segment of the
25 WEMO plan that addressed that but never got into adoption

1 with that where it said that mining really wasn't that
2 disturbing of an element in the overall environment. But
3 yet that's what the focus was on the desert plan was to
4 eliminate those mines and have more wilderness and more
5 wilderness.

6 And I would support the idea that we need to take
7 these animals and their environment and hold them in our
8 hands and be active in that, and produce habitat that will
9 support that animal life in order to make up for some of
10 things that are happening out there with global warming and
11 the change of our desert due to additions or additives into
12 our soil from the air from pollution all over the world. So
13 we need to be proactive. We need to spend money, millions
14 of dollars in Death Valley, millions of dollars in these
15 Joshua Trees doing development every year to support those
16 species. And wilderness doesn't necessarily fit into that,
17 and yet it's the prime habitat for that because you've
18 selected it for that. And yet you can't support the animals
19 living in that habitat indirectly because of the rules of
20 wilderness. You're -- you're making yourself a little more
21 inefficient.

22 We're here, this environment is here for the
23 animals. And wilderness is there for the animals. It's not
24 for the people that just want to hike it and be undisturbed.
25 The primary purpose is the animals. And yet two-thirds of

1 Inyo County is wilderness. And it's difficult to serve
2 those animals and protect them with just wilderness. The
3 options have diminished, the time has changed. Our
4 environmental is decreasing. I think the Fish and Wildlife
5 Service has agreed with that, that our soil is changing,
6 therefore our plants can no longer survive here that used to
7 survive here because the soil is too rich because of all
8 this pollution. We need to be proactive in protecting the
9 environment if we want to preserve this desert. And it's
10 going to take action, not just protections, actions,
11 development to help those animals survive.

12 That's the end of my comments. Thank you.

13 MR. BEALE: Thank you, sir.

14 All right, so that's the -- concludes the
15 speaker -- speakers who have submitted speaker cards. Would
16 anyone else like to comment or would anyone who has already
17 commented like to make a follow-up comment?

18 All right, well, I want to thank you all very much
19 for coming tonight. Again, I know it's hard for you to get
20 here on a weeknight. And it's hard to get up in front of
21 people to make comments, but we really do appreciate it. We
22 appreciate your interest and your interaction and all the
23 input you've provided, so thank you very much.

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25 (The meeting adjourned at 6:13 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, MARTHA 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 27th day of October, 2014.

/s/ Martha Nelson
MARTHA 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

October 27, 2014