

APPEARANCES

AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Scott Flint, California Energy Commission

Ken Corey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Betty Courtney, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Teri Ramel, Bureau of Land Management

STAFF

Chris Beale, DRECP Director

Kristy Chew, California Energy Commission

ALSO PRESENT

Jason Caudle, City of Lancaster

Vern Biehl, Transition Habitat Conservancy

Kyle Hidalgo

Ginger Stout

Linda Wucher-Pfennig, California Off-Road Vehicle Assoc.

Sophia Merk

Greg Suba, California Native Plant Society

Garry George, Audubon Society

Dianne Erskine-Hellrigel, Community Hiking Club

Linda Castro, California Wilderness Coalition

Christopher Lesso

Jeremy Berg

Neil Nadler, Alliance for Desert Preservation

Aura Vasquez

APPEARANCES (CONT.)

ALSO PRESENT

Sarah Friedman, Sierra Club

Jeff Olesh, Transition Habitat Conservancy

Margaret Rhyne, Poppy Reserve Mojave Desert Int. Assoc.

Erin D'Orio, Mojave Communities Conservation Collaborative

Susan Zahnter, Friends of Antelope Valley Open Space

Ruth Hidalgo

AGENDA

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P R O C E E D I N G S

4:06 p.m.

LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2014

MR. BEALE: Hi everyone. Welcome 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 or DRECP.

Can folks in the back hear me? I just want to make sure.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

MR. BEALE: No?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I can barely hear you right there.

MR. BEALE: Right there? Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: But barely.

MR. BEALE: How about this?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It's about the same.

MR. BEALE: Is this mike better? It's not helping?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No, that's better.

MR. BEALE: A little better? Okay.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Just project.

MR. BEALE: All right, I'll project.

1 Hi all. I'm Chris Beale. I'm the Director of the
2 DRECP. I want to you all for coming tonight. We know it's
3 not easy to get here, to take time out during the week to
4 make it here. I want to -- I want to make sure you know
5 that we are grateful for your interest and your time. I'm
6 going to talk a bit about why we're here and how we're going
7 to approach the meeting.

8 But first I'd like to ask -- we have a special
9 guest tonight from the City of Lancaster, Jason Caudle, the
10 Assistant Deputy City Manager is here and I think is going
11 to make a few introductory remarks. Thank you very much.

12 MR. CAUDLE: I just want to welcome everybody to
13 the City of Lancaster. Those of you who are from the
14 Antelope Valley, you know that we are the alternative energy
15 capital of the world. So we are -- we are proud of what
16 we've done here, not only our friends in Kern County but our
17 sister city to the south, as well as L.A. County, have done
18 a significant amount of, how would I say, development or
19 partnership to accomplish what I think this state is trying
20 to accomplish, which is the 33 percent renewable goal, and
21 obviously lowering the greenhouse gases so that we can
22 someday save the planet.

23 You are also -- we are also proud to announce that
24 we, at this point, are tracking to be the third community
25 choice aggregator in the State of California which will

1 allow our local government to take control of its energy
2 procurement and to make sure that we set the goals that are
3 represented to our local agencies and our local citizens
4 that say we want to take control of the type of power we
5 buy, how we buy it, and control the pricing of this power.
6 So we're excited about that, as well, and that -- you'll
7 hear some more of that coming in the future.

8 But we look forward to the DRECP and the processes
9 that you guys are going to -- to engage today. And we're
10 honored to host it today for everybody who is taking part.
11 So we thank you guys for coming and enjoy the -- enjoy the
12 festivities, so to speak. Thank you.

13 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Jason.

14 All right, so I first wanted to start with a bit
15 about the purpose of the meeting tonight. We're here to
16 help you understand the Draft Desert Renewable Conservation
17 Plan. We'd like to be able to answer your basic questions
18 about what's in the plan, why we're developing the plan and
19 where we are in the process. We don't expect you to have
20 read the plan. It's substantial. It's been out about a
21 month.

22 But if you have specific questions about
23 particular areas of interest, the other thing we want to do
24 is help you find in the document where -- where the
25 information is or the analysis that is relevant to your

1 particular question or concern. So that's another thing we
2 want to do.

3 And then the other thing, the final -- the third
4 main thing we're hoping to do today is give you an early
5 opportunity for comment. Again, we know you haven't read
6 the full document. There's no limit on the number of
7 comments you can make. So this is a sort of early
8 opportunity for you to let us know what your first
9 impressions are. You can submit more comments later. We'll
10 talk more about the different ways you can submit comments.
11 And I'll say more in just a moment about how you can submit
12 comments tonight.

13 One thing I did want to cover just briefly before
14 we get into the substance of the meeting is to stress for
15 you that what we're talking about tonight in the Draft
16 Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan is a planning
17 document. There's no -- the DRECP does not include a
18 proposal for any specific renewable energy project or any
19 specific transmission project; it's a planning document.

20 And the other thing that has been reported, I
21 think, in some -- some articles about the plan that I do
22 want to touch on is the comment that the DRECP is opening up
23 the desert for development. Essentially, we'll say more
24 about this in the presentation. But, you know, by our
25 estimate there are, oh, 9 million acres or more in the

1 desert where renewable energy could potentially be sited now
2 because it's not prohibited there. One of the most
3 fundamental things that this plan is trying to do is to
4 identify where in that 9 million or more acres where
5 development could potentially go now, where is it most
6 appropriate? So this is a plan that focuses on that. There
7 are -- it does other things, but I just wanted to cover that
8 basic point about this before we -- we dive in.

9 The format of the meeting tonight is shown in the
10 agenda. We're going to start with a brief presentation,
11 it's about 30 minutes. It's intended to give you kind of an
12 overview of the document and touch upon a couple of other --
13 other points.

14 After the presentation we'll go into our sort of
15 open house. We'll have information stations. You can
16 already see the posterboards around the back of the room.
17 The purpose of this part of the meeting is for you to talk
18 to the planning team. With me tonight are several members
19 of the planning team, the agencies that prepared the plan,
20 the consulting team that supported them, they're all here to
21 answer your questions tonight. And you'll see them again
22 just after the presentation.

23 During that part of the meeting, too, just after
24 the presentation when we have the open house will be your
25 first opportunity to provide public comment. And the public

1 comment you provide tonight will be taken as an official or
2 formal comment on the draft document. We have a Court
3 Reporter here today, Marlee. I'm going to point over on
4 this side of the room. So during the information stations,
5 if you would like to make a comment on the record please go
6 talk to Marlee. Anything, you know, that you -- any comment
7 you make to Marlee is going to be taken down in writing and
8 submitted as if you had submitted a written comment. So
9 it's an opportunity for formal comment. We provide another
10 opportunity later. But the opportunity you have during the
11 information stations is for -- for folks who may not want to
12 make their comment in front of the room or just want to make
13 their comment early in the -- early in the presentation or
14 early in the meeting. So that's your first opportunity
15 for -- for public comment.

16 We also have tonight a representative from the
17 Department of Defense, Scott Kiernan.

18 Scott, if you could raise your hand?

19 If you have any questions about the Department of
20 Defense's activities in the desert, their interest in or
21 concern about renewable energy development, Scott is here to
22 answer those questions tonight.

23 We also have Connie Latham somewhere here, right
24 there, from the California State Department of Parks and
25 Recreation. The Department of Parks and Recreation and

1 Department of Defense haven't prepared the document, but
2 they are entities that we have been collaborating with and
3 they're here to answer your questions.

4 So that's -- so we have the presentation. We have
5 the open house with the information stations. And then
6 finally at 5:30 sharp we will start on our public comment
7 session. And this is an opportunity for you to come to the
8 podium, speak to the agencies and provide your -- your early
9 comments on the document.

10 For that part of the meeting we're asking that you
11 fill out a speaker card. They are the blue cards on the
12 table in the front as you came in. When you signed in I
13 think Valerie may have pointed them out to you. If you
14 would like to make a public comment during our public
15 comment portion of the meeting, please do fill out the card.
16 There's a lot of information you can put it on it. All we
17 really need is your name. If you would like your
18 affiliation associated with your public comment tonight,
19 please add that too. I'll use the -- the public comment
20 cards to call folks up. I'll let you know who's coming so
21 you have some preparation and you'll know when it's your
22 turn to speak. And that will -- that's the conclusion of
23 the meeting. We essentially want to give you the last word,
24 the opportunity to tell us what you think.

25 So that's the format for the meeting. Again, I

1 want to thank you all for coming.

2 To my left is Scott Flint from the California
3 Energy Commission, and he will be making our presentation
4 tonight. And you can see it on -- on either screen. So
5 thank you.

6 MR. FLINT: Thank you, Chris.

7 Good evening, everyone. My name is Scott Flint
8 with the California Energy Commission. And on behalf of the
9 California Energy Commission, the Bureau of Land Management,
10 the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the US
11 Fish and Wildlife Service, I'd like to welcome you to this
12 public meeting and introductory presentation on the Draft
13 Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan or DRECP.

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

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

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

1 environmental setting and existing conditions. Volume IV
2 contains the draft environmental analysis. Volume V
3 describes public scoping and public participation process.
4 And Volume VI includes about implementation of mitigation
5 measures.

6 There are 24 appendices that provide additional
7 information on covered species, biological goals and
8 objectives, climate change, and many other topics. There
9 are also appendices that provide additional detail for the
10 three agency plans that together form the DRECP.

11 The four agencies that were principally
12 responsible for preparing the DRECP are the California
13 Energy Commission, Bureau of Land Management, California
14 Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the US Fish and
15 Wildlife Service. Many federal, state and local agencies,
16 tribes, and private citizens provided helpful input into the
17 development of the Draft DRECP.

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

24 The DRECP is intended to streamline the
25 environmental review and permitting process for renewable

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

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

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

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

22 The DRECP identifies appropriate areas for
23 renewable energy projects, creates incentives for developers
24 to site projects in those areas by streamlining the
25 environmental review and permitting processes, and would

1 conserve sensitive species, their habitats and ecological
2 processes. The DRECP would also protect other desert
3 resources and values on BLM lands.

4 As it is now the siting of renewable energy
5 projects and the mitigation of environmental impacts are
6 considered on an individual project-by-project basis and not
7 on a comprehensive landscape scale as proposed under the
8 DRECP. The DRECP would also help to improve the
9 coordination of federal, state, local, tribal, and private
10 conservation efforts in the desert by identifying high
11 priority landscape-scale goals that can be used to guide and
12 achieve greater conservation outcomes.

13 The DRECP plan area covers about 22-and-a-half
14 million acres across portions of 7 counties in the Mojave
15 and Sonoran Deserts of Southern California and includes
16 federal and non-federal lands. The plan area includes only
17 a small portions of some counties, like San Diego, and a
18 large portion of others, such as San Bernardino County.

19 This map shows you the general land ownership in
20 the DRECP plan area. The largest land holdings are BLM
21 lands in yellow, National Park Service lands in green,
22 military lands in dark gray, and private lands in light
23 gray.

24 The DRECP is a combination of three different
25 types of plans; a BLM Land Use Plan Amendment or what is

1 called the LUPA, a US Fish and Wildlife Service General
2 Conservation Plan or GCP, and a California Department of
3 Fish and Wildlife Natural Community Conservation Plan or
4 NCCP. The three plans are integrated and together help to
5 achieve the DRECP's overall goals.

6 Each of the agency plans applies to a different
7 portion of the DRECP plan area. The BLM Land Use Plan
8 Amendment applies only to BLM land which cover nearly 10
9 million acres of the plan area. The US Fish and Wildlife
10 Service General Conservation Plan covers 5.4 million acres
11 of non-federal lands; the GCP does not apply to BLM or any
12 other federal lands. The Natural Community Conservation
13 Plan applies to both federal and non-federal lands and
14 covers the entire plan area, about 19 million acres.

15 The DRECP would provide a more efficient and
16 predictable environmental review and permitting process for
17 certain types of covered activities. Renewable energy
18 development projects that would be sited within development
19 focus areas, or DFAs, are the largest category of covered
20 activities and include solar, wind and geothermal projects.
21 Transmission is also a covered activity and would be covered
22 both within and outside of the development focus areas so
23 that energy produced can be delivered to where it is needed.

24 Covered activities also include biological
25 conservation and compensation actions to avoid, minimize and

1 mitigate for the impacts of renewable energy and
2 transmission development. On BLM lands there are
3 conservation and compensation actions for a variety of other
4 resources and uses such as cultural, recreation and visual.

5 The DRECP would cover all phases of renewable
6 energy project development, including preconstruction and
7 construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning
8 of projects when they have completed their operational life.

9 The renewable energy component of the DRECP is one
10 part of California's comprehensive strategy for addressing
11 climate change and meeting the energy needs of residents and
12 businesses. The statewide strategy includes utility-scale
13 renewable energy development and associated transmission,
14 distributed generation, energy conservation, strong energy
15 efficiency standards, and investments in energy research and
16 development.

17 Utility-scale renewable energy plays an important
18 and complementary role in this overall strategy, allowing
19 for immediate and sizeable deployment of renewable energy
20 generation, transmission grid stability, and optimal use of
21 the state's best renewable energy resources, while allowing
22 for technologies with unique benefits such as energy
23 storage.

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. It is important to note that
2 20,000 megawatts of new generation is not a development goal
3 or target. The DRECP is not intended to drive that level of
4 development. Instead, an estimate of 20,000 megawatts of
5 demand for renewable energy in the desert was used to
6 estimate the acres of ground disturbance that might occur,
7 and we used these estimates to conduct the environmental
8 analysis.

9 The potential for 20,000 megawatts of new
10 renewable energy development in the DRECP plan area is based
11 on certain assumptions about energy generation in
12 California, including an assumption that nearly 30,000
13 megawatts of distributed generation would also be built
14 statewide. The draft plan does assume there would be 20,000
15 megawatts of customer-side distributed generation like
16 rooftop solar. And for a comparison, that's about ten times
17 the amount of customer-side distributed generation that's
18 installed today. Other assumptions include limited
19 generation from nuclear and fossil fuel resources, and state
20 policies that limit imports of renewable energy from outside
21 of the state. Renewable energy in the DRECP plan area
22 through 2040 would be lower than 20,000 megawatts if changes
23 in technology or public policy encourage or require
24 different resources for energy generation.

25 We estimate that production of 20,000 megawatts

1 from central station renewable energy plants would result in
2 about 177,000 acres of ground disturbance in the plan area.

3 The DRECP analyzes the effects of all phases of
4 renewable energy development under a range of alternatives.
5 One of the key differences amongst the alternatives is the
6 size and location of the development focus areas where
7 renewable energy projects would be sited.

8 The DRECP includes specific renewable energy
9 designations. The most important of these are the
10 development focus areas where renewable energy projects
11 would benefit from a more efficient and streamlined
12 environmental review and permitting process. These areas
13 are suitable because they have renewable energy resources;
14 they are either windy or sunny or have geothermal resources,
15 and also because they are compatible with the conservation
16 of species and other resource values and uses.

17 In most of the alternatives the development focus
18 areas are located where natural resource values are
19 relatively low to minimize conflicts between renewable
20 energy development and resource conservation.

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

1 The DRECP's biological conservation strategy was
2 used to develop the Land Use Plan Amendment, the General
3 Conservation Plan, and the Natural Community Conservation
4 Plan. The biological conservation strategy considers 37
5 sensitive species and 31 natural communities. It is
6 designed to protect species and their habitats, natural
7 communities and ecological processes, and is based on an
8 overarching set of biological goals and objectives.

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

16 Six alternatives are presented and analyzed in the
17 draft DRECP; five action alternatives and one no-action
18 alternative. The agencies have identified one of the five
19 action alternatives as the preferred alternative. The no-
20 action alternative describes what is expected to happen if
21 the DRECP is not completed or not approved.

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

1 conservation strategy, development focus areas, recreation
2 designations on BLM lands, and a monitoring and adaptive
3 management program.

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

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, an area of about 9.8 million acres. In the
14 dark pink hatched area show where renewable energy projects
15 would occur under the DRECP's preferred alternative, an area
16 of about 2 million acres of development focus areas.

17 One of the most important differences among the
18 DRECP alternatives is the size and geographic distribution
19 of development focus areas. This slide shows you a
20 comparison of the DFAs in three of the action alternatives.
21 The DFAs are shown in pink.

22 On the left is Alternative 1. In the center is
23 the preferred alternative. And on the right is Alternative
24 2. This slide shows where development focus areas differ
25 among these three alternatives. For example, Alternative 1

1 overall has less land proposed as DFAs than the preferred
2 alternative or Alternative 2, especially in the West Mojave,
3 Imperial Valley, and Eastern Riverside County areas.
4 Alternative 2, on the right side of the screen, has more
5 land proposed as DFAs than the other two alternatives,
6 especially in the West and Central Mojave and in the Owens
7 Valley area.

8 Remember, regardless of DFA size and distribution,
9 we are estimating about 177,000 acres of ground disturbance
10 impacts in each of the five action alternatives.

11 Another important difference amongst the DRECP
12 alternatives is the amount of BLM lands proposed as
13 additions to the National Landscape Conservation System,
14 NLCS or National Conservation Lands, which are shown here in
15 purple. Again, Alternative 1 is on the left and it has the
16 least amount of new National Conservation Lands proposed.
17 Alternative 2 on the right has the most. The preferred
18 alternative in the middle has a moderate amount of proposed
19 National Conservation Lands.

20 The amount of the proposed Natural Conservation
21 Lands is related to the amount of development focus areas in
22 each action alternative. Larger, more geographically
23 dispersed development focus areas would put more natural
24 resources at risk, so larger natural -- national -- Natural
25 Conservation Land designations are proposed to offset that

1 increased impact.

2 This map orients you to the West Mojave and
3 Lucerne Valley part of the DRECP plan area. Proposed
4 development focus areas are shown in pink, study area lands
5 are in brown or orange color, conservation planning areas
6 are in light green, BLM proposed conservation designations
7 are shown in blue, National Landscape Conservation System
8 Lands are in yellow, it's a hatched yellow, difficult to see
9 but you'll be able to see these maps at the poster stations.
10 And proposed special recreation management areas are in
11 light -- light gray, and that's a hatched light gray. So
12 again, you'll see that better at the poster station maps.
13 Dark gray areas are military lands, and dark green are
14 existing conservation lands such as Death Valley National
15 Park and wilderness areas and national parks and wilderness
16 areas.

17 Here are some basic highlights about the preferred
18 alternative. The overall biological conservation strategy
19 for the preferred alternative covers about 15 million acres,
20 including about 7.6 acres of existing conservation lands,
21 including national and state parks. BLM conservation
22 designations cover about 4 million acres, development focus
23 areas cover about 2 million acres, study area lands of about
24 183,000 acres, and BLM recreation designations cover about
25 3.6 million acres in the preferred alternative.

1
2 This map gives you an overview of the preferred
3 alternative. And here you see the development focus areas,
4 again in pink, in relation to the DRECP proposed
5 conservation lands, study area lands, recreation lands,
6 military bases, and existing conservation lands.

7 For the preferred alternative a little over 2
8 million acres are proposed as development focus areas.
9 However, even if 20,000 megawatts of new renewable energy
10 generation were needed in the DRECP plan area, renewable
11 energy projects would be built on only about 177,000 acres,
12 or about 9 percent of that total DFA acreage. The dark
13 striped slice at the top of the pie chart represents this
14 estimated ground disturbance as a portion of the total DFA
15 acreage. If less than 20,000 megawatts of new generation is
16 actually needed in the DRECP plan area, then the amount of
17 ground disturbance would be less than 177,000 acres.

18 The total proposed DFA acreage is much larger than
19 the estimated acres of impact to allow for flexibility in
20 locating where projects would be built.

21 This map shows the development focus areas in pink
22 and the amount of estimated ground disturbance expected to
23 occur in each county within the DRECP plan area. So again,
24 this is plan-wide, 2 million acres of development focus
25 areas and proportionately different amounts of acreages

1 would be developed, depending on the size and location of
2 the development focus areas. For all the counties in the
3 plan area the estimated ground disturbance that would occur
4 in each individual county ranges from 5 to 16 percent of the
5 total proposed DFA acreage.

6 Let's zoom back into the West Mojave and Lucerne
7 Valley and look at the estimated ground disturbance numbers.
8 For Kern County there's approximately 360,000 acres of DFA,
9 and up to 21,000 acres could be developed, or 6 percent. In
10 Los Angeles County 218,000 acres of DFAs, the pink area in
11 that county, with up to 10,000 acres being potentially
12 developed to achieve the 20,000 megawatts of renewable
13 energy development desert-wide, and that's 5 percent in L.A.
14 County. And San Bernardino County has 399,000 acres of DFA
15 identified with up to about 30,000 acres of potential
16 development, or 8 percent.

17 The environmental analysis considers 23 resource
18 categories. We identified these resource categories based
19 on scoping meetings, preliminary analyses, and input from
20 tribes, the public, and agency experts.

21 In the environmental analysis for each of these
22 resource categories we compared the alternatives based on
23 the proposed level of renewable energy impacts, conservation
24 and management actions for covered species, conservation and
25 management actions for recreation, visual, cultural and

1 other resources on BLM lands, and then the types and
2 acreages of land allocations on BLM lands.

3 The draft analysis concluded that impacts for most
4 of the 23 resource categories would be less than
5 significant. For ten of the resource categories listed here
6 on the slide, impacts would be significant in one more of
7 the alternatives and -- and including the no-action
8 alternative.

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

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

1 of Fish and Wildlife for permits to cover renewable energy
2 projects within their local jurisdictions.

3 Now a little bit about options for public
4 participation.

5 The agencies have completed their work for this
6 draft plan, and now we need your help to shape the final
7 DRECP. We have created a dedicated website for the DRECP at
8 www.drecp.org. To help you understand the DRECP, we have
9 prepared a series of fact sheets, a list of frequently asked
10 questions, and an informational video, and all of those are
11 available on the website. The draft DRECP documents are
12 available on this website, and on the Bureau of Land
13 Management and the US Fish and Wildlife Service websites.

14 We also have an innovative mapping tool called the
15 DRECP Gateway, which I'll talk about in a moment.

16 You can also review the DRECP at local libraries
17 and agency offices in the plan area. DVDs are also
18 available upon request. And all of the information on this
19 slide is on a handout available at the table outside, or on
20 www.drecp.org. There's also instructions on how to request
21 a DVD if you'd like one of those.

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

1 are on -- are on the handout at the, and at drecp.org. We
2 want your voice to be heard. And we want to assure you that
3 all public comments are welcomed, valued, and will be
4 considered.

5 The public comment period opened on September 26th
6 and closes on January 9th, 2015.

7 Public meetings like are being held throughout the
8 DRECP planning area and in surrounding population centers.
9 And all information about future public meetings is posted
10 at www.drecp.org.

11 To help us develop a final plan we need to know
12 what you want us to change. Substantive comments will have
13 the greatest effect on the final DRECP because they will
14 tell us specifically what you want added, removed or
15 otherwise changed, and why you want those changes.

16 Examples of substantive comments include comments
17 that raise significant environmental concerns, comments that
18 raise issues that require clarification or modification of
19 any of the alternatives, comments that identify new or
20 different alternatives, comments that provide new or missing
21 information, or comments that provide corrections that could
22 substantially change the conclusions of the environmental
23 analysis.

24 The DRECP Gateway is an innovative online data and
25 mapping tool, and it is free and very user friendly and we

1 encourage you to go in and explore and play with this.
2 There is a sign-in function, but you only have to use it if
3 you want to save information and come back later and use
4 that same information again. Anyone with a computer,
5 regardless of your experience level with GIS, can use the
6 gateway to view, edit and analyze maps and data. You can
7 create custom maps and put your comments right on those
8 maps, and then save, print or export the maps for inclusion
9 with your written comments.

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

16 That is the end of our presentation this
17 afternoon. We thank you for your interest in the DRECP. We
18 look forward to talking with you and hearing your comments
19 in the next two parts of the meeting. Thank you.

20 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Scott.

21 Well, as Scott mentioned, we are now shifting over
22 to our open house. And I want to say a couple of things
23 before we start.

24 Can I ask the -- our agency folks to -- and
25 consultants to man your stations, please?

1 So we have six separate information stations that
2 are divided up in what we thought might be your area of
3 interest, and I'll let you know where they are.

4 At the back of the room to my left, to your right,
5 we have Station 1, our general DRECP station. Thank you for
6 raising your hand back there. This is where you go if you
7 just want to know what is in the DRECP, how the alternatives
8 are different, and how the environmental analysis of impacts
9 on the human environment are dealt with. We have lots of
10 posterboards. That's -- that's Station 1.

11 Moving around to my right, to your left, in the
12 back of the room we have our renewable energy station. Dave
13 and Eileen are back there raising their hands. This is
14 where you should go if you have questions about the
15 renewable energy planning assumptions we used or how
16 renewable energy demand forecast fits into the plan.

17 Moving around one more to my right, your left, we
18 have the BLM Land Use Plan Amendment station. Mike Sintetos
19 is raising his hand. Go there if you have any questions
20 about BLM's proposed Land Use Plan Amendment.

21 Moving further around we have the Fish and
22 Wildlife Service's General Conservation Plan station.
23 Please go there if you have questions about the GCP.

24 Moving further we have the Department of Fish and
25 Wildlife's Natural Community Conservation Plan station.

1 Raise your hands back there. So those are the three types
2 of plans, the LUPA, the GCP, and the NCCP, a separate
3 station for each.

4 And then finally on the end we have our biological
5 conservation strategy station with Scott and Mike. And
6 that's where you go if you want to understand the kind of
7 overarching conservation strategy that was used to develop
8 all three of the plan components.

9 I also want to remind you that Marlee, our very
10 nice Court Reporter, is on the side here. So if you'd like
11 to make comments now feel free to go there and talk to
12 Marlee. And I'll be here if you want to ask any questions
13 of me. And also, just remember, we will be reconvening at
14 5:30 to start our public comment session. So anyway, thank
15 you very much again for coming. And we will gather again
16 here at 5:30. Thank you.

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

18 (Breakout Session Public Comment begins at 5:07 p.m.)

19 MR. BIEHL: I feel the plan should include a
20 mechanism whereby when the estimated acreage in each
21 development -- development focus area is reached something
22 should kick in to limit further development in that area.
23 I'm not sure what that process would be, but something
24 really should be included at that point so that they don't
25 just keep developing past that point.

1 MS. HIDALGO: The only thing that I would like to
2 say is for your development is try and keep Gem Hill and
3 Brown Butte off of the list area for the focus areas.

4 And another thing, also, would be to extend the
5 comment until April 9th due to the 8,000 pages of trying to
6 read everything that is in the DLECP -- DRECP. Thank you.

7 MS. STOUT: I am concerned that when taking into
8 consideration the endangered species that the ecosystem that
9 they need to live is not being counted or looked at. The
10 amount of land they need because the species can't survive,
11 especially the larger animals can't survive unless they have
12 the smaller animals to live on who need a habitat also. And
13 they in turn feed on something else. And I never hear that
14 discussed, nor anyone walking out there, and that needs to
15 be looked at if you're going to really talk about seriously
16 the conservation of a species.

17 The species number of down to 31 for the
18 endangered species seems too small to be taken into account
19 because the possibility of other species being driven into
20 an endangered area, either through lack of available forage
21 because of manmade or just nature. And that -- I think that
22 a larger number of species needs to be included to be sure
23 that there is enough actual habitat. The desert is very
24 fragile and once it's gone it really can't be put back, like
25 possibly other areas can be.

1 The idea of the -- of -- the idea of the solar and
2 wind and geothermal to be connected by a very fragile grid
3 system seems to me a poor plan for the future. Somehow
4 where they're scattering everything all over the place, be
5 it coal fired or be it solar renewable energy, and depending
6 on a grid system that goes on power poles across the land to
7 me seems to be, you know, something that needs to be re-
8 looked at. And when you're locating and looking at these
9 things there isn't -- it seems to me that we're just
10 scattering things all over and connecting it by a power
11 transmission system that could go down at any time, that is
12 very fragile, that loses a lot of electricity in the
13 transmission of the power to the ultimate location. And I
14 don't hear any of that addressed.

15 I don't know if this is the forum for addressing
16 it. But since you are in charge of setting up renewable
17 energy, I think those things, also, since they're co-
18 related, need to be addressed.

19 (On the record at 5:32 p.m.)

20 MR. BEALE: So this is the part of the meeting
21 where we ask you to share your thoughts with us. You get
22 the last word for the day. This is not a Q and A session.
23 This is a chance for you to make comments and for the agency
24 folks to hear them. Your comments will be recorded by
25 Marlee, our friendly Court Reporter, and added to the record

1 as if they were written comments. What happens to the
2 comments that are formally submitted is they go to all the
3 agencies. I had a good question at the beginning, whether
4 you have to submit comments to all the agencies separately;
5 you do not. When you make comments in the public record for
6 the DRECP all the agencies will consider them. We'll meet
7 and discuss them. And written responses will be provided
8 along with the final document. So your comments today will
9 be responded to in writing.

10 I'm going to ask my agency partners here to
11 introduce themselves in just a minute. But I did want to
12 remind you that if you would like to speak during our public
13 comment session, please fill out one of these blue speaker
14 cards there on the front table. You can either give them to
15 Valerie at the front table or Kristy to my left, and we'll
16 add you to the queue.

17 So let me -- let me stop there and ask my agency
18 folks/partners here to introduce themselves.

19 Ken, would you like to start?

20 MR. COREY: Sure. Ken Corey with the Fish and
21 Wildlife Service out of Palm Springs.

22 MS. COURTNEY: Betty Courtney, California
23 Department of Fish and Wildlife. Our office is in San
24 Diego.

25 MR. FLINT: Scott Flint, DRECP Program Manager,

1 California Energy Commission.

2 MS. RAMEL: Teri Ramel. I'm the District Manager
3 for the Bureau of Land Management.

4 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Can't hear you.

5 MS. RAMEL: Is that better? There we go. All
6 right.

7 I'm Teri Ramel. I'm the desert -- I'm the
8 District Manager for the California Desert District for the
9 Bureau of Land Management.

10 MR. BEALE: Thank you. We have, I guess, 55
11 minutes left in the meeting. I have 14 speaker cards. I
12 think that means everyone that would like to speak today can
13 speak. What we have been doing is asking folks to limit
14 their comments to three minutes, just to make sure we get
15 through all the comments and everyone can speak. If we have
16 time at the end I'll ask if anyone else wants to make a
17 comment. And even if you already made a comment and you'd
18 like to come up and comment again, that would be fine.

19

20 So we're going to begin with the public comments.
21 I'm going to identify the first three folks so you can --
22 you can be ready. We're just going in the order in which
23 you submitted your comments today because I think we can get
24 through everyone.

25 We're starting with -- Linda, I'm going to

1 apologize with what I'm going to do to your name here --

2 Linda Wucher Pfennig?

3 MS. WUCHER-PFENNIG: Very good.

4 MR. BEALE: Oh, thank you. All right. And then
5 Sophia Merk, and Greg Suba.

6 So, Linda, please come up. And Kristy is going to
7 be running our timer. It's three minutes. I think these
8 lights in the front go to yellow at -- is it two minutes?
9 Yeah, yellow at two minutes, and then red when you get --
10 when you're on the last minute. So --

11 MS. WUCHER-PFENNIG: Okay.

12 MR. BEALE: -- thank you, Linda.

13 MS. WUCHER-PFENNIG: Like I said, I'm Linda Wucher
14 Pfennig. I am a resident of the Antelope Valley, in
15 addition to being a representative of the California Off-
16 Road Vehicle Association. Some people know us as CORVA.
17 This is going to be real brief and really easy.

18 There is so much information and so many things to
19 go through and so many volumes that I am asking as a
20 resident and a representative of CORVA for more time. The
21 90-day comment period is not going to be enough to get
22 through this and be able to intelligently and knowledgeably
23 address the issues that we may or may not have.

24 In addition to that I think that we -- I'm
25 formally requesting another set of public meetings, perhaps

1 maybe one on the weekend for the various desert areas, and
2 later in the evening when the general public can attend. As
3 an example, my husband works, he doesn't get home until 5:30
4 or 6:00 at night, and he would have loved to have been here.
5 He has great concerns with the water quality.

6 Thank you for your time and thank you for having
7 the meeting.

8 MR. BEALE: Thank you for your comment.

9 All right, Sophia Merk, Greg Suba, and then Garry
10 George.

11 MS. MERK: Hi. My name is Sophia Merk. I live in
12 Ridgecrest, California. And I want to speak to you tonight
13 about the DVDs. Mine doesn't work. I went to -- I went to
14 a couple sections in the DVD and I got hung up in a couple
15 places, one of which was Air Quality. Another one was
16 Appendix R. I was looking for some information in Appendix
17 R. And so Teri has kindly offered to send me a new DVD.

18 I also wanted to find out something, too, and it's
19 not real clear to me. When you have all these water basins
20 that you're identifying under groundwater, and I printed it
21 all out, 100 pages or so, and most of them say "uncertain",
22 you know, that doesn't give you a very good warm and fuzzy
23 feeling as far as recharge goes into the water basins when
24 you absolutely know nothing about the baseline, how much
25 water is there, how deep is the aquifer, is it one single

1 aquifer, is it three single -- is it three aquifers? But
2 some of these questions really need to be answered better.

3 Thank you very much.

4 Oh, and I need the comment period extended because
5 my DVD doesn't work.

6 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Greg Suba, Garry George,
7 and the Dianne Erskine.

8 MR. SUBA: Good evening. My name is Greg Suba.
9 Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak with you
10 and review the plan and offer some comments. I'm the State
11 Conservation Program Director for the California Native
12 Plant Society, and I am from Sacramento.

13 So CNPS, the California Native Plant Society, has
14 been part of the solar energy process here in California
15 since 2009. And I bring that up because from when we were
16 interveners during the Ivanpah project hearings at the CEC
17 to today we've seen the process evolve. And we -- we see
18 the DRECP as an opportunity, a real opportunity to establish
19 good conservation measures for plant -- plant communities,
20 animals, ecological processes in the desert region, if we
21 can do it right. And we're still going through the plan,
22 like most people here.

23 I have about three things, I think, three points
24 to hit on as comments for tonight. And one is that the
25 biological goals and objectives that we've seen so far for

1 the natural communities, the 31 natural communities, they
2 have to be more quantitative to be achievable. They --
3 they've taken a step backwards from where they were in March
4 through May of 2013 when there were the -- the BGO memos,
5 driver memos that came out. So we'd like to work with folks
6 to see if we can find a way to make those more quantitative,
7 otherwise we're not really sure we're achieving what we're
8 achieving with the plan.

9 The second thing is that while we understand the
10 development within the DFAs aren't going to be wall to wall,
11 if it happens at all, that -- the DFA for the Antelope
12 Valley definitely can be refined to avoid areas we know are
13 sensitive ecologically, and in so doing establish north-
14 south and east-west migration and dispersal corridors
15 through the DFAs and across the DFAs, because this is a very
16 important transitional habitat ecologically, both in the
17 elevation from the valley to the mountains and vice versa,
18 and across gradients of soil types in the valley.

19 And the last thing is I need more time. Thank you
20 very much. So we'd like an extension on the -- on the
21 review deadline.

22 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Greg.

23 Garry George, Dianne Erskine, and Linda Castro.

24 MR. GEORGE: Thank you. My name is Garry George,
25 and I'm the Renewable Energy Director for Audubon

1 California, State Program of the National Audubon Society.

2 We take a special interest in the Antelope Valley
3 because it's a globally significant important bird area, as
4 I think you know. We see that the Antelope Valley has
5 pretty much been identified, all the private lands, as a
6 development focus area. But we haven't seen much of the
7 identification of the lands that would be of conservation
8 interest. We think there's a great deal more. We'll be
9 submitting written comments on that. But we think it should
10 be very -- be made very clear to the public and to us that
11 you're not going to just hope to develop the entire Antelope
12 Valley wall to wall.

13 And I think Greg made that comment earlier. That
14 could be emphasized a little bit more in the DRECP
15 documents, I think, that the Antelope Valley development
16 focus area actually is permeable and that not every lot in
17 the Antelope Valley can be constructed with renewable
18 energy, that there are some conservation interest lands.

19 Second of all, we also would like an extension;
20 12,000 pages is a lot to go through. We'd like a 90-day
21 extension on the comment period. And that's our comments.
22 Thank you.

23 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Dianne Erskine, Linda
24 Castro, and Christopher Lesso.

25 MS. ERSKINE-HELLRIGEL: Hi. Dianne Erskine

1 Hellrigel of the Community Hiking Club. We spend a great
2 deal of time in the desert, camping and hiking and just
3 enjoying the desert. So there's a few things that I would
4 like to address, first to the BLM, changes that I would like
5 to see in the preferred alternative.

6 Number one is to make the make the conservation
7 lands off limits to mining and mineral leasing.

8 Number two, to designate National Conservation
9 Lands as either visual resource management Class 1 or 2 so
10 that the approved activities will only cause limited changes
11 to the landscape.

12 Number three, retain areas of critical
13 environmental concern within National Conservation Lands
14 instead of removing that special management designation so
15 that there will be an added layer of protection for more
16 specific values within these lands.

17 Also, I work a great deal with the condors, and I
18 had a lot of concern about especially turbines with condors.
19 I got some great information from back there, from Scott.
20 And I suggested that we might have a hotline or something
21 like this for reporting, because otherwise how do you know?
22 Somebody finds a dead condor under a turbine or, you know,
23 from energy flux from solar, I'd like that to be reported,
24 otherwise we don't know. And then I'd like to more about
25 the mitigation.

1 I would also like some information about Middle
2 Knob. I know there's an ACEC out there. I would like to
3 know -- it's kind of hard to see where the ACEC is and how
4 much is covered, how much is protected. Nobody seems to
5 know. I would like the ACEC enlarged.

6 And those are my comments, so thank you.

7 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Linda Castro, Christopher
8 Lesso, and Jeremy Berg.

9 MS. CASTRO: Hi. I'm Linda Castro. I am a
10 resident of Los Angeles County, and I'm also here on behalf
11 of the California Wilderness Coalition.

12 I'd also like to see an extension of the comment
13 period. We're also still in the process of analyzing and
14 trying to understand it.

15 Having the DRECP is better than what we have right
16 now, which is no plan. Right now, without a plan we've been
17 fighting project by project to try an extract mitigation.
18 Right now without a plan we've been seeing applications for
19 development in places in our deserts that should never be
20 developed, like Silurian Valley.

21 The preferred alternative does a pretty good job
22 of identifying those places in our deserts that should be
23 forever protected from development, while also identifying
24 places that may be appropriate for development. The
25 preferred alternative does not go far enough to protect some

1 of the roadless and special places in our deserts.

2 And I ask that the preferred alternative be
3 improved by including the following places in their entirety
4 in both areas of critical environmental concern and National
5 Conservation Lands: Silurian Valley, Cadiz Valley area
6 including Bristol Lake and the abutting Iron Mountains,
7 Panamint Valley, Big Maria Mountains and the surrounding
8 flats, Palen Lake Area, Danby Lake, Riverside Mountains,
9 Sacramento Mountains, Red Mountain, the one near
10 Johannesburg, and Valley Mountain which is near Twentynine
11 Palms. Thank you.

12 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Christopher Lesso, Jeremy
13 Berg, and Neil Nadler.

14 MR. LESSO: Hello. I'm Christopher Lesso. I am a
15 native of Kern County. And I'm here -- as a small miner
16 these proceedings really are of interest to me because of
17 access to the desert. And also as a rock hound I would hate
18 for access to these -- to these established collecting areas
19 to be limited by solar arrays or wind turbines.

20 And I would also like to ask for more time to --
21 to review all the materials, because there's a lot of stuff
22 to go through. And so the 90 days that we have, for me it's
23 not enough.

24 So that concludes what I have to say, my comments
25 today. But more time, I really would like more time. Thank

1 you.

2 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Jeremy Berg, Neil Nadler,
3 and Aura Vasquez.

4 MR. BERG: Hello. My name is Jeremy Berg. And
5 was just told about this last week, and so I decided to
6 write down some of my feelings and comments about it so I
7 wouldn't go off on tangents.

8 But my name is Jeremy Berg and I've been
9 collecting rocks and minerals since I was six years old. My
10 grandfather got me started, as he was a rock hound and did
11 lapidary arts, cutting and polishing of rocks. And when I
12 lost my job in 2009 I ended up selling my lifelong
13 collection to support my family and provide for my family.
14 And since then I've turned it into my business.

15 And in a world where children are raised on video
16 games and television and Facebook and tweeting and texting,
17 a hobby that takes you into the outdoors, camping, hiking,
18 socializing with real people face to face, is getting harder
19 and harder to find. And my children are five and six years
20 old now and do not play video games. They go help me at
21 rock and mineral shows, camping, and being in the outdoors.
22 Soon they'll be out digging with me in the field, exploring
23 these areas, hopefully, if they are not closed by the
24 government that's supposed to serve us. Pretty soon most of
25 our areas will be off limits if we don't do something about

1 it.

2 There's definitely something wrong with this --
3 this world when there's a government that's supposed to be
4 for the people but most of the time is against what the
5 majority of the people really want. When one crazy
6 politician gets an idea to do something the land that's
7 supposed to belong to us, not only to us but to the future
8 generations that are to come, there just has to be something
9 done about people trying to close lands that are supposed to
10 belong to us for solar panels or wind or whatever they think
11 needs to be done at the time.

12 I know most of the time there's no way to stop the
13 government once they start. So I would like to ask for more
14 time to look at all this information. The one thing that
15 really disturbed me when this meeting began is the gentleman
16 said we do not expect you to read it all. I mean, how can
17 we vote or move action towards something that they don't
18 even expect us to read in its entirety?

19 So I just want to talk about one place, Gem Hill,
20 real quick that's a local collecting site. I live in
21 Victorville, so it's just across the desert to me. My first
22 trip to Gem Hill was amazing. I followed the directions out
23 of the Gem Trails of Southern California book. The site was
24 easy to reach and the book said to get in the green dirt.
25 So I began to dig in the green dirt, and I dug for hours

1 just hoping to find something. And after about six hours I
2 found a huge fossilized log entrapped in the green dirt.
3 And just as the book described, it was brown and green with
4 white. What an exciting find. And I left enough samples
5 for the next person.

6 And I just want -- I'd hate to see Gem Hill closed
7 because it's good for the seasoned rock hound to the
8 beginner. If Gem Hill is closed it will be a very, very sad
9 day. Thank you.

10 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Neil Nadler, Aura Vasquez,
11 and Sarah Friedman.

12 MR. NADLER: My name is Neil Nadler. I'm with the
13 Alliance for Desert Preservation. And thank you for hearing
14 me again tonight.

15 In 1999 the California Legislature passed what is
16 called the Garamendi Principles. The major thrust is
17 locating new transmission lines within existing rights of
18 way or adjacent to or close proximity to existing
19 transmission lines and corridors. The legislation calls for
20 a coordination of transmission and land planning.

21 I do not believe the Garamendi Principles were
22 considered -- considered by the TTG in proposing Appendix K,
23 1,000 miles of new transmission lines, actually, more than
24 1,000 miles of new transmission lines, and almost none of
25 these are proposed within the existing transmission

1 corridors.

2 According to transmission experts Flynn Resources,
3 the 1,000 miles plus would cost ratepayers, which includes
4 transmission lines, it includes substations, mitigation,
5 rights of way purchases, etcetera, would cost upwards of
6 \$100 billion over the 30-year projected life. This same
7 \$100 billion could provide 2.5 million homes with rooftop
8 solar.

9 The DRECP must locate a majority of the
10 development focus areas in close proximity to transmission
11 corridors, for example, the Kramer Junction area along
12 Highway 58 from Kramer Junction all the way to Yermo, which
13 is east of Barstow.

14 Next I would like to talk about the timing. I was
15 told by somebody at the BLM today that the TTG group had two
16 weeks to come up with the plan for the DRECP. Why was the
17 Garamendi Principles not the cornerstone of the DRECP?
18 That's what I would like to know. Thank you.

19 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Aura Vasquez, Sarah
20 Friedman, and Jeff Olesh.

21 MS. VASQUEZ: Hi. Good evening. My name is Aura
22 Vasquez, and I am -- have been a lifelong environmental
23 activist and hiker. And I have personally enjoyed this area
24 very much in the desert.

25 So I'm here before you to urge you for sustainable

1 development of any solar development that you might consider
2 in this area. This is -- I see solar as something that is
3 really good for our overall climate, so especially because
4 we can divest from fossil fuel and we can also fight climate
5 change that way. So the DRECP is a good option for
6 thoughtfulness planning. So now that you have this
7 opportunity, this is the right place to consider renewables
8 in the right way. And I'm very much in agreement with a lot
9 of the people that have stood here to urge you to protect
10 his land and the species that -- that live here.

11 So I personally work closely with the AQMD, with
12 the Air Quality Management District in Southern California.
13 And we definitely need to see more distributed generation,
14 also more large scale. But again, we need to meet these
15 goals responsibly. We need to be mindful of the sensitive
16 species, the habitat, and especially the wildlife that lives
17 here. So I'm urging you for a DRECP that reflects that,
18 that protects these species, especially because they're
19 already at risk because of climate change. So this whole
20 plan ahead of us can really set us to a beautiful adventure
21 in which we can protect the environment in so many different
22 ways, and that includes the species.

23 And I'm also urging you for more time to revise
24 this plan. And I didn't even know that people are still
25 using DVDs, but I guess they do. So I don't personally have

1 a DVD. So if you -- it would be wonderful if you can offer
2 in other much more technological friendly ways that we can
3 read this plan. Thank you.

4 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Sarah Friedman, Jeff
5 Olesh, and Margaret Rhyne.

6 MS. FRIEDMAN: Hey, my name is Sarah Friedman.
7 I'm a resident of L.A. County, and also a representative of
8 the Sierra Club. Thank you for the opportunity to be here
9 today.

10 We see the DRECP as a good opportunity for
11 thoughtful planning and sustainable development. If done
12 right it's a real opportunity to avoid scattershot
13 development like that we've seen throughout the desert and
14 in this area.

15 To be successful the DRECP must have engagement
16 and input from local communities, including the counties,
17 and should utilize particularly information from L.A. County
18 about the significant ecological areas. And this
19 information should be used in the conservation planning for
20 this area and really considered.

21 As well, there really needs to be great engagement
22 with local communities. You know, I think as folks have
23 mentioned, this time of day is not -- doesn't really work
24 for a lot of people. I live in L.A. and this is my job, so
25 I could come. But I know others who live in the Los Angeles

1 area who really care about the desert and renewable energy.
2 You know, traffic to get here by 5:30 is really not possible
3 in this area, other than if you just happen to be in
4 Downtown Lancaster at 5:25. And so that's a Southern
5 California problem that we should be addressing in many
6 other forms as part of climate change work.

7 But in the meantime, you know, I think we need to
8 have meetings at more locations later in the day and on the
9 weekend, as brought up earlier. Because there really are a
10 huge amount of desert lovers in cities and all across
11 Southern California. And people really do want their voices
12 heard on this issue.

13 As well, I think there should be better outreach
14 in Spanish. I don't know that there's been a lot of that so
15 far. I'm not really seeing that community represented here
16 particularly.

17 You know, I think specifically, as other folks
18 have mentioned, you know, some of the current DFAs are
19 really too large and should be refined to avoid areas,
20 particularly in the Western Antelope Valley, that are
21 critical for plants and wildlife to survive climate change.
22 You know, the DFA must be refined to preserve an essential
23 east-west and north-south corridor. And the corridor should
24 use as building blocks lands that have already been acquired
25 for conservation. You know, as I mentioned earlier, the

1 SCAs, as well, and then also lands that, you know, land
2 trusts are currently targeting is really important for
3 conservation should be included in kind of creating these
4 corridors that will help wildlife to survive. Thank you.

5 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Jeff Olesh, Margaret
6 Rhyne, and Ginger Stout.

7 MR. OLESH: My name is Jeff Olesh and I'm with
8 Transition Habitat Conservancy, and also with the Lake
9 Elizabeth Mutual Water Company.

10 Also, I've lived in Los Angeles County for 58
11 years, in the AV for 27 years. So I've kind of watched the
12 development here.

13 I also would like to thank the City of Lancaster
14 for their efforts in distributed generation. They're really
15 doing a great job that way.

16 And also to extend the comment period, like
17 everyone else. It wasn't even in the paper that this
18 meeting was going on.

19 So we have reached the 33 percent statewide. And
20 heaven knows, the Antelope Valley has taken a big ding. And
21 if you don't believe it, in renewable energy development,
22 just go to anyone of the high spots around here and look
23 down on the valley. You can't see the development as your
24 driving around, but you can see it from any little high
25 spot. So what I mean by that is the development focus areas

1 definitely can be refined.

2 There's pink areas where 300 bird species migrate
3 through. There's pink areas where 22 rare and endangered
4 species are. There's pink areas where globally recognized
5 bird areas are. So more study needs to be done, is what I'm
6 saying. San Bernardino County has a moratorium for more
7 study. And I don't think we're there. We're -- actually,
8 the DRECP is behind the curve. You know, the -- the build-
9 out is happening now. It's already happening. So we're --
10 we're not -- it's not happening with the DRECP.

11 Our -- our Conservancy has 2,060 acres in the West
12 Antelope Valley at this point. It's not on your map
13 anywhere. So still the maps need to be refined. And that's
14 it. Thanks.

15 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Margaret Rhyne, Ginger
16 Stout, and Erin D'Orio.

17 MS. RYHNE: Thank you for letting me comment
18 today. I'm President of the Poppy Reserve Mojave Desert
19 Interpretive Association. We're the 501(c)(3) State Park
20 cooperating association for five parks in the Mojave Desert,
21 including the Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve.

22 We're very concerned that we see too much pink in
23 the western -- particular in the Western Antelope Valley.
24 We already have thousands and thousands of acres of solar
25 panels in the West Antelope Valley, an area that is a

1 globally recognized important bird area by the Audubon
2 Society. And we need to -- we'll be using the opportunity
3 that you have described today to really bring up those maps,
4 and I thank you for that opportunity. And talking
5 specifically about the areas that we think need a closer
6 look for protection and should not be development focus
7 areas, particularly here in the Antelope Valley, concerning
8 the Poppy Reserve and the other State Parks that are here.

9 But statewide I'd like to comment on the fact that
10 I believe that more attention needs to be paid in the DRECP
11 to issues involving California State Parks, particularly
12 viewshed and protection of biological resources by not
13 allowing development up to the edges of State Parks. And I
14 think that's an important issue that needs to be included
15 because these parks are the -- are the treasures of
16 California. They are the -- they protect the biological
17 treasures of our state, the historical resources, and
18 provide wonderful healthy family recreation. And if we
19 damage the viewshed and the ecological resources that are
20 now protected I think we will regret it forever.

21 Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you
22 today.

23 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Ginger Stout, Erin D'Orio,
24 and Susan Zahnter.

25 We can -- we'll lower the podium for you.

1 MS. STOUT: My name -- can you hear me? My name
2 is Ginger Stout. And I also very quickly would like to
3 request an extension of time. It's just impossible, you
4 know, especially when you're working and when you have other
5 things to do to go through this and to really be the help
6 that you have asked for, to be what -- you know, when you've
7 asked for that you need to give us the time, you know, in
8 order for us to really do the work that we'd like to do to
9 help make this a success.

10 And in looking at this, one of the things is that
11 I'm -- I live in the West Antelope Valley. And what I see
12 out there from the solar and the wind farms that are up
13 there is the tremendous amount of fragmentation of the land.
14 I don't see that mentioned anywhere. It's -- it chops
15 everything up. It destroys the ability for even humans to
16 get from one area to another because of the chain-link
17 fences, miles and miles of it. And it certainly -- and it
18 alters the migration routes of animals. And anybody who
19 knows the desert at all knows that it's so fragile,
20 especially the larger animals. If a water source dries up
21 here they have to be able to move. And they are -- and I'd
22 like to see something like that addressed so that you don't
23 just say here's where you -- here's where you are and if it
24 doesn't -- you know, in the future if something happens to
25 this area, well, we don't know where you're going to go.

1 And the other things I'd like to see addressed,
2 also, is more of the biology of the area. For instance, the
3 larger animals require smaller animals, which in turn
4 requires something else. And if something happens to that,
5 you know, everything needs to move. I don't see any studies
6 being done on if we move them here, what's to guarantee that
7 they will live? For instance, the kit foxes that were moved
8 off the Blythe BLM project that all died because they said,
9 well, we didn't know, whatever, on that. There's not
10 enough -- there's just not enough going on. All the
11 streamer birds that they talk about that fly across the
12 project and get cooked, as they say, on that good article in
13 the L.A. Times about that, the hundreds of birds that
14 they're losing over there. And so I'd like to see more of
15 that looked into a little more closely, you know, especially
16 in -- with BLM and the Forest Service, you know, getting
17 together and addressing that on that. It's a critical issue
18 that we have to get it right the first time. Thank you very
19 much.

20 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Erin D'Orio, and then
21 Susan Zahnter.

22 MS. D'ORIO: Hello. My name is Erin D'Orio. And
23 I'm a resident of Apple Valley, and also here to represent
24 the Mojave Communities Conservation Collaborative.

25 One of the things I've been noticing going around

1 to the different meetings is that the general public really
2 doesn't have a very good understanding of this. I'm pretty
3 well attached to my community in Apple Valley. And I've
4 been trying to spread the word, along with a lot of other
5 people, as much as possible.

6 But you know, to really be helpful to you, we
7 would like a lot more time to be able to educate the general
8 public on what's going on. And it seems like if it took
9 five years to outline this plan that we need a substantial
10 amount of time to really delve into what would be the best
11 for the desert, where are we at with distributed generation,
12 and to truly educate the general public in what -- what
13 would be best for the people, and particularly the humans.
14 The humans aren't mentioned in the 37 species. And I think
15 that we really need to take note of that because I know for
16 the people that have been going to all the meetings
17 there's -- there's a lot of concern about the stress
18 involved with our viewshed, Valley Fever, many different
19 chronic kind of problems that might arise from this. And
20 so, you know, what I'm -- what I'm really concerned with is
21 getting people educated.

22 And so -- now let me go on this side and say I've
23 got a sign-up sheet for anybody that wants to get more
24 involved and find out more about it. And we want to really
25 try to educate more people and ourselves. You know, I'm

1 stumbling along, learning about this as I go too. But -- so
2 I've got a sign-up sheet. If anybody afterwards is
3 interested, I'd really like to get some -- some activity
4 going so we can all learn more about this. And hopefully we
5 can get it, also, to a vote of some kind and really be
6 heard, because that's what we really need. Thank you.

7 MR. BEALE: Thank you. And our last speaker card
8 is for Susan Zahnter.

9 MS. ZAHNTER: As you know, my name is Susan
10 Zahnter. I am a resident of the Northwestern Antelope
11 Valley. I am a member of the Friends of the Antelope Valley
12 Open Space and Concerned Citizens of the Western Antelope
13 Valley. I'm not here speaking as a town council member, but
14 I am an elected representative of the Three Points Libre
15 (phonetic) Mountain Town Council.

16 I'm particularly disturbed about the expansive
17 development focus areas that you have. It's almost the
18 entire Western Antelope Valley, which I view as extremely
19 valuable biologically. And just as the lady before me
20 mentioned, please don't forget, this is a human environment.
21 And the rural residents of the Western Antelope Valley have
22 been deeply affected by the development of thousands of
23 acres currently of solar energy, utility-scale solar energy.

24 There's a quote from the New Yorker Magazine
25 published in January of 2014 by a Los Angeles County public

1 health official that the incidents of Valley Fever has
2 increased 500 percent from the last development boom in the
3 area. So it's a real concern for people and livestock and,
4 I presume, animals, as well, biological resources.

5 So please keep in mind that your plans and designs
6 and ideas affect humans, as well. And I really am concerned
7 about the extensive nature of the development focus areas
8 and what it will do to our rural communities. Thank you.

9 MR. BEALE: Thank you. That takes us through our
10 list of speaker cards. Is there anyone else that would --
11 would like to speak tonight? And if you've already spoken
12 you can feel free to speak again.

13 Yes, please, ma'am.

14 MS. HIDALGO: Hi. I'm Ruth Hidalgo. And I came
15 here today for two specific areas, to comment on two
16 specific areas that are within the focus area that I, as a
17 rock hound, have taken my kids to. They have been in the
18 books and known to rock hounds for decades, since the '50s.
19 Specifically, one is known as Gem Hill. That would be
20 Township 10 North, Range 13W, Sections 26, 27, 34 and 35.
21 There is BLM land contained in those sections, as well.

22 The other location is Brown Butte. There are
23 fossilized reeds found in Brown Butte, as well as agate.
24 This is another area that has been open and collected by
25 rock hounds for many, many years. There is plenty of

1 material on both of these sites to keep many generations in
2 the field and getting out with their kids. And our rock
3 clubs take Girl Scouts and Cub Scouts out to these areas.
4 They earn various badges. They do lapidary work with the
5 material they collect. The Brown Butte is Township 10
6 North, Range 11W, Sections 2, 3, 10 and 11.

7 And I would like to request that those areas be
8 re-designated and take out of the focus area and be re-
9 designated as recreational, and access to those be
10 maintained for future generations.

11 Additionally, I've gotten to two sites in the --
12 one focus area of the preferred plan. There are other sites
13 out there. And in order to get this information to be
14 specific and provide it we would definitely request more
15 time to be able to go through and -- and identify those
16 additional areas that might be of a concern. Thank you.

17 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Would anyone else like to
18 make a closing comment tonight?

19 Neil?

20 MR. NADLER: I'm not an expert on this, but I'd
21 like to address the concerns regarding monitoring,
22 mitigation, and what's called adaptive management in the - -
23 in the DRECP documents. My experience in San Bernardino
24 County regarding the -- the BLM is they're understaffed.
25 The -- the budget is tight. There's not enough expertise in

1 certain areas like botanical, monitoring. And from what I
2 understand from talking with some of the people down in San
3 Diego, the monitoring and mitigation is flawed. And it's of
4 grave concern to myself, and I'm sure many people in the
5 room, that -- that this plan is -- is designed around
6 mitigation measures and monitoring.

7 And what spurred me was the Valley Fever, which
8 was brought up by a few people. With all due respect to New
9 Yorker Magazine, from what I understand, which is the CDC
10 statistic, there's a 900 percent increase in California
11 cases of Valley Fever since the year 2000, a 900 percent
12 increase.

13 And that falls right in line with monitoring and
14 mitigation. When you -- when you scrape the land of its
15 crust in the desert you get -- you get dust, and you also
16 have microbes. And there is Valley Fever in the high
17 desert, there is here in the Antelope Valley, and there's
18 also in the Victor Valley as well. And you know, you get
19 either dust or you -- or you get a fertile area where you
20 have Valley Fever actually growing. The microbes with
21 water, actually, it germinates and it grows. And -- and it
22 affects the people who actually work and live in that rural
23 living area.

24 And it's -- it's very, very critical that the
25 DRECP have some method of monitoring and mitigating that

1 goes beyond what's in this document presently. And whether
2 it be developer fees that are charged for developers, and
3 I'm not just talking about hiring mitigation monitoring
4 people, things like that, because those people are easily
5 influenced, and they're not allowed to post their results
6 because they're sworn to confidentiality agreements. And
7 this is -- this is really an issue and it needs to be
8 addressed. Thank you.

9 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Neil.

10 Anyone else have closing comments?

11 All right, well, I'd like to thank you. If you
12 stay to the end I have an announcement to make that I think
13 hasn't gone out in the public notice yet. But I want to
14 thank you all for coming here. We know it's not easy to get
15 here. We did -- we have heard that four o'clock is early
16 for a lot of folks. Whether that's the right time or not,
17 please know that we thought that would be the time that
18 would work for the most -- most people. I know it's not
19 easy to get here, in any event. And it's also not easy to
20 stand up in front of people and speak your mind. We really
21 appreciate your interest and your taking the time to do
22 that.

23 We have other public meetings coming up this week.
24 If you would like to -- if you think of any additional
25 questions for our planning team or you want to make any

1 additional comments, or if you just like our slide show,
2 please join us. On Wednesday we'll be in Blythe. On
3 Thursday we're in Ontario. And on Friday we're in Palm
4 Desert.

5 And this is the announcement; we have scheduled an
6 additional meeting in Joshua Tree for November 19th. So
7 that's -- we just got the logistics worked out.

8 And am I right about that, Kristy?

9 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: What day of the week is
10 that?

11 MR. BEALE: Wednesday, November 19th, 5:30. We
12 hear you.

13 All right, thanks everyone for coming. We really
14 appreciate it.

15 (The meeting adjourned at 6:17 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 3rd day of November, 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

November 3, 2014