



APPEARANCES

AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Jenness McBride, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Magdalena Rodriguez, California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

Mendel Stewart, US Fish and Wildlife Service

John Kalish, Bureau of Land Management

Roger Johnson, California Energy Commission

STAFF

Chris Beale, DRECP Director

Kristy Chew, California Energy Commission

ALSO PRESENT

Michelle DeArmond, Chief of Staff, Supervisor John Benoit

James Kainz, Bermuda Dunes Strategic Planning, Inc.

April Sall

David Buehn

Elijah Cervantes

Cynthia Portillo

Marina Barragain

Barbara Boyle, Sierra Club

Joan Taylor, Sierra Club

Bill Christian, Nature Conservancy

Allan Muth, Desert Advisory Council

Frazier Haney, Mohave Desert Land Trust

Betsy Perloss

APPEARANCES (CONT.)

ALSO PRESENT

Sam Goldman

Danielle Murray

Cindy Thielman-Braun, Riverside County Planning Department

Stephanie Dashiell, Defenders of Wildlife

Mark Algazy, Desert Advisory Committee

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P R O C E E D I N G S

4:03 p.m.

PALM DESERT, CALIFORNIA, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2014

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

I'm Chris Beale. I'm the Director of the DRECP. And I'm here today with several members of the planning team that developed the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, or DRECP. And I'm going to, in just a minute, I'm going to be going over the format for the meeting and let you know what we have in store.

But first I'd like to welcome -- we have a special guest tonight. Michelle DeArmond from -- Chief of Staff for Supervisor John Benoit is here and has agreed to make some welcoming introductory comments.

Thank you, Michelle.

MS. DEARMOND: Thank you very much, Chris.

Thank you and welcome, all of you, to Riverside County's 4th Supervisorial District. The Supervisor, we don't let him away very often for vacation, but he is in Mexico at the moment, so he sends his best wishes to all of you. He's celebrating 36 years of marriage, so we figured

1 that was a legitimate excuse to let him get away for a  
2 little while, but not for very long. We'll bring him back  
3 tomorrow.

4           So thank you very much and welcome here to our  
5 beautiful desert on this gorgeous November day. And I want  
6 to take a moment, too, to thank Chris who is going to be our  
7 master of ceremonies this evening, so to speak, for running  
8 these public meetings. I know that he's traveled far and  
9 wide, Ontario last night, out to Blythe, which is also in  
10 the supervisor's district, two nights ago. And for that  
11 matter, I think there were trips to El Centro and Lone Pine  
12 and places in between last month. So thank you very much  
13 for doing that for all of us.

14           And I want to thank UC Riverside for hosting us at  
15 their facility here. And lastly to all the state and  
16 federal agencies who have been involved in this process.

17           So tonight, as Chris said, you're going to get an  
18 opportunity to hear a little bit about the plan, which many  
19 of you have reviewed or tried to review, a somewhat  
20 voluminous document of 8,000 pages or so. To kind of put  
21 that in perspective I think you're average bible is  
22 somewhere around 1,500 pages. So if you haven't made it all  
23 the way through I can certainly relate to that.

24           But I'm hoping that you're here so you can learn a  
25 little something and also provide some comment, which is

1 critically important to this entire process. And I'm glad  
2 to see that we've got some people who are taking time out to  
3 do that.

4           The Supervisor's district is over 4,900 square  
5 miles. It stretches from the windmills all the way to the  
6 Colorado River. So we care deeply also about balancing the  
7 need for conserving our desert lands with renewable energy  
8 development which I know many of you are aware, we already  
9 have some of that in the Supervisor's district. So this is  
10 something that we in Riverside County care deeply about.  
11 And that's why it's critically important we have the voices  
12 of our residents here in Riverside County involved in this  
13 process, and the government in Riverside County, all of us  
14 together taking an opportunity to provide some -- some input  
15 on all this.

16           So again, I want to thank everyone for coming out  
17 this evening, for -- if you're not from this district, for  
18 visiting, again, the 4th Supervisorial District. Supervisor  
19 Benoit does send his well wishes. And thank you to everyone  
20 for providing some input on this draft and giving us  
21 thoughts on -- or giving the organizers of this thoughts on  
22 the proposal and what would be best for our future here  
23 moving forward. So thank you very much for coming.

24           MR. BEALE: Thank you. Thank you, Michelle.  
25 Sorry about that.

1 I also want to thank you for coming tonight. We  
2 know it is -- it's not easy to make it here on a weeknight,  
3 especially a Friday night, but we really appreciate your  
4 interest in the plan and your time.

5 What I'd like to do is just talk a bit about the  
6 purpose of the meeting and the scope and the format. And  
7 then Jenness McBride from the Fish and Wildlife Service will  
8 start her presentation.

9 The purpose of the meeting tonight is to help you  
10 understand and get to know the Draft Desert Renewable Energy  
11 Conservation Plan. We have several folks here to answer  
12 your questions about what's in the plan, why we're  
13 developing it and where we are in the process. If you have  
14 more detailed questions, you want more specific information,  
15 members of the planning team are here to help you find that  
16 information in this document.

17 As Michelle said, it is substantial. It's been  
18 out for about a month, a little over a month, but we don't  
19 expect you've all read it fully. And what we're trying to  
20 do is help you focus on parts of the document, the issues  
21 that are of most interest to you.

22 We're also going to be providing opportunities for  
23 formal public comment tonight. There will be a couple of  
24 opportunities that I'll explain in more detail. You know,  
25 again, we know that you haven't read the entire plan, but we

1 want to give you an opportunity tonight to share your early  
2 impressions of the plan. Anything that you'd like to say on  
3 the record tonight is welcome. Whether it's a supportive  
4 comment or a comment about how we can do better, we welcome  
5 that.

6           You can comment as many times as you like on the  
7 document. So you can comment tonight. You can comment more  
8 than once tonight, if you like. You can also comment later,  
9 after you've had more time to review the document.

10           I do want to encourage folks, if you want to, to  
11 come down here. I mean, you have an unobstructed view down  
12 here. We kind of -- we think we have plenty of seating down  
13 here. We're going to have a presentation. So either now or  
14 later, feel free to wander down and take up one of these  
15 many empty seats.

16           One of the things I want to stress before we jump  
17 in is what the DRECP is in terms of its scope. A couple of  
18 things that we've gotten comments about or questions about  
19 at meetings that I'd like to focus on right at the outset.  
20 One is that the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation  
21 Plan is a planning document. It doesn't include any  
22 specific proposals or propose any specific renewable energy  
23 development project or any specific transmission project.  
24 It's a document to help plan for the development of projects  
25 in the future.

1           Another thing is that the -- it's not the purpose  
2 of the DRECP -- it's been described in a couple of articles  
3 I've read -- it's not the purpose of the DRECP to open up  
4 the desert to renewable energy development. As we'll say  
5 more later, by our estimate there are nearly 10 million  
6 acres in the desert now where renewable energy projects  
7 could potentially be sited, you know, areas of -- where  
8 renewable energy development is not prohibited. One of the  
9 main things that we're trying to do with this draft plan is  
10 identify where within that roughly 10 million acres is it  
11 most appropriate to actually site projects. So that's one  
12 of our key goals in the plan and one of the things that we  
13 hope you can help us with.

14           The format tonight is that we will start with a  
15 brief presentation, it's about 30 minutes. And that's to  
16 give you an overview of the plan, introduce the basics of  
17 the plan, also to talk about opportunities for public  
18 comment, and a bit about Data Basin which is an online GIS  
19 mapping tool that we've made available for folks to help  
20 them dive into the plan.

21           I do want to stress that the presentation you'll  
22 see tonight will be posted online. We have had questions  
23 about, you know, can we see the slides? All of the  
24 presentations that we're making in the meetings are  
25 substantially similar but they'll all be posted on the web,

1 so you can download the presentation or review it later, if  
2 you like.

3           After the presentation, after our 30-minute  
4 presentation we'll have an open house. The posterboards you  
5 see around the room are for purposes of the open house. For  
6 about 45 minutes beginning at about 4:45 or so we'll have  
7 members of the planning team stationed at the information  
8 stations to answer your questions.

9           This will also be -- the open house session will  
10 also be your first opportunity for public comment. We have  
11 Marlee, our friendly Court Reporter, here tonight. And if  
12 you would like to make comments during the open house you're  
13 welcome to go talk to Marlee. And anything that you would  
14 like to put on the record she will record, make part of the  
15 formal written record, and it will become part of the  
16 overall formal record for the Draft DRECP.

17           We also have a representative from the Department  
18 of Defense here tonight. The Department of Defense didn't  
19 prepare the plan. They're one of the agencies that we have  
20 been working with in developing the plan. And Steve Chung  
21 is here for DOD. If you have any questions about the  
22 interest of the Department of Defense in renewable energy  
23 development or the Conservation Plan, he's here to answer  
24 your questions.

25           And I know if -- do we have -- oh, thank you.

1 Lara from the National Park Service is here in the back of  
2 the room, Lara Rozzell. She's here to answer --

3 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: (Off mike.) (Inaudible.)

4 MR. BEALE: Oh, great. Thank you. So we have two  
5 folks from the National Park Service here to answer your  
6 questions. Similarly, they didn't prepare the plan but they  
7 are agencies that we work with. We know folks that enjoy  
8 the parks are very interested in this plan. So if you have  
9 questions about National Park Service's role in the process  
10 or impact on parks, please -- please talk to them.

11 And is Connie here? I don't think we have --  
12 okay. All right.

13 So we have the 30-minute presentation, about 45  
14 minutes of the open house. And then promptly at 5:30 we'll  
15 have another opportunity for public comment. We have a  
16 microphone set up in the room for folks to make comments in  
17 front of the group. And again these will be on the public  
18 record. Marlee will be recording comments, comments made at  
19 the mike. So those -- those comments you make at the mike  
20 also will be part of the formal written record, just as if  
21 you submit a written comment.

22 If you would like to make a comment tonight during  
23 the public comment session we ask that you fill out one of  
24 our blue speaker cards which are on the tables as you came  
25 in. There's a lot of information you can put on the card

1 that you can associate with any comment you make. All we  
2 really need is your name. What we'll do is we'll use the  
3 cards to determine how many people would like to speak,  
4 which will then determine, you know, how much time we can  
5 allot for each speaker, and also use it to call you up and  
6 let you know where you are in the queue, as it were.

7           And then after we've -- just to let you know that  
8 this meeting is also being broadcast or shared on the  
9 internet. And we will open up the phones -- after folks  
10 here have had a chance to comment we'll open up the phones  
11 and allow folks on the phone to make a comment.

12           So that's our format for tonight. And with that  
13 I'd like to ask Jenness McBride from the US Fish and  
14 Wildlife Service to start with our presentation. So thank  
15 you very much for coming.

16           MS. MCBRIDE: Okay. Thank you, Chris.

17           Can everybody hear me with the microphone here?

18           UNIDENTIFIED MALE: No.

19           MS. MCBRIDE: Who said no?

20           UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Right in front.

21           MS. MCBRIDE: How about this?

22           UNIDENTIFIED MALE: A little closer.

23           MS. MCBRIDE: How about this?

24           UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Better --

25           MS. MCBRIDE: All right.

1 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: -- I guess.

2 MS. MCBRIDE: Okay. Well, good afternoon,  
3 everybody. I'm Jenness McBride of the US Fish and Wildlife  
4 Service's Palm Springs office. And the Palm Springs Fish  
5 and Wildlife office is the Services lead office for the  
6 DRECP.

7 The DRECP is the result of an intense  
8 collaborative interagency planning process. It's a  
9 comprehensive plan that contains a great deal of  
10 information. We've organized the document to make it as  
11 accessible to you as possible in a format similar to the  
12 environmental impact reports and environmental impact  
13 statements that you're used to seeing.

14 The DRECP contains six volumes and an additional  
15 volume of technical appendices.

16 Volume I provides background on the development of  
17 the DRECP, including the purpose and need. Volume II  
18 describes the alternatives. Volume III describes the  
19 environmental setting and the existing conditions. Volume  
20 IV is the draft environmental analysis. Volume V describes  
21 scoping and public participation. And Volume VI includes  
22 details about implementation of mitigation measures.

23 There are 24 appendices that provide additional  
24 information on covered species, biological goals and  
25 objectives, climate change, and many other topics.

1           Volume I describes how the agencies developed the  
2 DRECP. The draft DRECP is an unprecedented collaboration of  
3 state and federal agencies. Many federal, state and local  
4 agencies, tribes, and private citizens provided helpful  
5 input into the development of the draft plan. The four  
6 agencies that were mostly responsible for preparing the  
7 DRECP are the California Energy Commission, California  
8 Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land  
9 Management, and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

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

16           The DRECP is intended to streamline the  
17 environmental review and permitting process for renewable  
18 energy projects that are cited in appropriate areas.  
19 "Streamlined" under the DRECP means the review and  
20 permitting process would be more efficient and more  
21 predictable. Streamlined does not mean that the  
22 environmental analysis would be incomplete or that steps  
23 would be skipped. The DRECP would not weaken requirements  
24 for environmental review under state or federal law; it  
25 would make them more efficient and more predictable.

1           The DRECP would conserve 37 sensitive species and  
2 their habitats, including species listed as endangered or  
3 threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act or the  
4 California Endangered Species Act.

5           On BLM lands the DRECP would also conserve other  
6 valuable desert resources such as recreation, cultural,  
7 visual, and wilderness characteristics. A core element of  
8 the DRECP is the significant increase in conservation and  
9 recreation designations that BLM is proposing to protect  
10 these resources and uses on BLM lands.

11           The DRECP would provide a framework for  
12 considering renewable energy, conservation, and a range of  
13 other resources and values in one land use and conservation  
14 planning process.

15           The DRECP identifies appropriate areas for  
16 renewable energy projects, creates incentives for developers  
17 to site projects in those areas by streamlining the  
18 environmental review and permitting process, and it would  
19 also conserve sensitive species, their habitats and  
20 ecological processes. The DRECP would also protect  
21 recreation and other desert resources and uses on BLM lands.

22           As it is now, the siting of renewable projects and  
23 transmission projects and the mitigation of the  
24 environmental impacts are considered on an individual  
25 project-by-project basis and not on a comprehensive

1 landscape scale as proposed under the DRECP. The DRECP  
2 would also help to improve the coordination of federal,  
3 state, local, tribal and private conservation efforts in the  
4 desert by identifying high priority landscape-scale goals  
5 that can be used to guide and achieve greater conservation  
6 outcomes.

7           The DRECP plan area covers about 22-and-a-half  
8 million acres across portions of seven counties in the  
9 deserts of Southern California and includes both federal and  
10 non-federal lands. The plan area includes only a small  
11 portion of some counties, such as San Diego, and a large  
12 portion of others such as San Bernardino County.

13           This map shows the general land ownership within  
14 the DRECP plan area. The largest land holdings are BLM  
15 lands in yellow, National Park Service lands in green,  
16 military lands in dark gray, and private lands in light  
17 gray.

18           The DRECP is a combination of three different  
19 types of plans; a BLM Land Use Plan Amendment, the US Fish  
20 and Wildlife Service General Conservation Plan, and the  
21 California Department of Fish and Wildlife Natural Community  
22 Conservation Plan. The three plans are integrated and  
23 together help to achieve the DRECP's overall goals.

24           Each of the agency's plans applies to a different  
25 portion of the DRECP plan area. The BLM Land Use Plan

1 Amendment applies only to BLM lands which cover nearly 10  
2 million acres of the plan area. The US Fish and Wildlife  
3 Service General Conservation Plan covers about 5.4 million  
4 acres of non-federal lands and does not apply to BLM or any  
5 other federal lands. The Natural Community Conservation  
6 Plan applies to both federal and non-federal lands covering  
7 nearly 19 million acres.

8           The DRECP would provide a more efficient and  
9 predictable environmental review and permitting process for  
10 certain types of covered activities. Renewable energy  
11 projects that would be sited within development focus areas,  
12 and those are called DFAs on the slide here, those covered  
13 activities would include solar, wind and geothermal  
14 projects. Transmission is also a covered activity and would  
15 be covered both within and outside the development focus  
16 areas so that the energy produced can be delivered where  
17 it's needed.

18           Covered activities include biological conservation  
19 and compensation actions to avoid, minimize and mitigate for  
20 the impacts of renewable energy and transmission  
21 development. On BLM lands there are conservation and  
22 compensation actions for a variety of other resources and  
23 uses such as cultural, recreation, and visual.

24           The DRECP would cover all phases of renewable  
25 energy covered activities, including preconstruction,

1 construction, operation and maintenance, and decommissioning  
2 of projects when they've completed their operational life.

3           The DRECP plans for up to 20,000 megawatts of new  
4 utility-scale renewable energy generation and transmission  
5 in the plan area through the year 2040. The DRECP's  
6 renewable energy strategy is only one part of California's  
7 comprehensive plan for addressing climate change and meeting  
8 the state's energy needs.

9           The statewide strategy includes utility-scale  
10 renewable energy development, transmission, distributed  
11 generation, demand response, energy conservation, a strong  
12 energy efficiency standard, and investment in research and  
13 development. Utility-scale renewable energy plays an  
14 important role in this overall strategy for the state by  
15 allowing for immediate deployment of large-scale renewable  
16 energy generation, grid stability, optimal use of the  
17 state's best renewable energy resources, and technologies  
18 with unique benefits such as energy storage.

19           It's important to note DRECP's plan for 20,000  
20 megawatts of new renewable energy generation is just a  
21 planning assumption; it is not a goal or a target. The  
22 DRECP is not intended to drive that level of development or  
23 any other level of development. Instead, a 20,000 megawatt  
24 estimate of demand for renewable energy in the desert was  
25 used to estimate the acres of ground disturbance that might

1 occur as a result of that level of development. And we used  
2 those estimates to conduct the environmental analysis --  
3 environmental analysis.

4           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 that nearly 30,000  
8 megawatts of distributed generation, which includes rooftop  
9 solar, that 30,000 megawatts of distributed generation would  
10 be built in California statewide. The Draft DRECP assumes  
11 that about 20,000 megawatts of customer-side distributed  
12 generation, such as rooftop solar, would be built by 2040.  
13 And this projection is about ten times the amount of  
14 customer-side distributed generation that's currently  
15 installed today and represents roughly 3.3 million new  
16 rooftop residential solar systems.

17           Other assumptions for the DRECP include limited  
18 generation from nuclear and fossil fuel sources, and  
19 continued state policies that limit imports of renewable  
20 energy from outside the state.

21           Okay, again, we want to emphasize that the DRECP  
22 is not targeting the production of 20,000 megawatts in the  
23 desert. It's possible that the potential for renewable  
24 energy in the DRECP plan area through 2040 would be lower  
25 than 20,000 megawatts if changes in technology or changes in

1 public policy encourage or require different resources for  
2 energy generation.

3           We estimate that the production of 20,000  
4 megawatts from utility-scale renewable energy projects would  
5 result in about 177,000 acres of ground disturbance in the  
6 DRECP plan area.

7           The DRECP analyzes the effects of all phases of  
8 renewable energy development under a range of alternatives.  
9 One of the key differences among the alternatives is the  
10 size and location of the development focus areas where  
11 renewable energy projects would be sited.

12           The DRECP includes specific renewable energy  
13 designations, and the most important of these are the  
14 development focus areas, the DFAs. Renewable energies  
15 would -- renewable energy projects would benefit from a more  
16 efficient and streamlined environmental review and  
17 permitting process if they are sited within those DFAs.  
18 These areas are suitable because they have renewable energy  
19 resources; they're windy or they're sunny or they have  
20 geothermal resources, and also because they are compatible  
21 with the conservation of species and other resource values  
22 and uses.

23           In most of the alternatives the development focus  
24 areas are located where natural resource values are  
25 relatively low to minimize conflicts between renewable

1 energy development and resource conservation. BLM would  
2 also offer incentives to renewable energy projects sited in  
3 DFAs on BLM lands.

4 Study areas are the other type of renewable energy  
5 designation. Study areas are lands that could be  
6 appropriate for development in the future, but require  
7 further analysis. Study areas lands are not regarded as  
8 development focus areas in the draft DRECP.

9 The DRECP's biological conservation strategy was  
10 used to develop the Land Use Plan Amendment, the General  
11 Conservation Plan, and the Natural Community Conservation  
12 Plan. The biological conservation strategy is designed to  
13 protect 37 sensitive species and their habitats, 31 natural  
14 communities, and desert ecological processes. And it's  
15 based on a set of overarching biological goals and  
16 objectives.

17 The biological conservation strategy includes  
18 conservation and management actions to avoid, minimize and  
19 mitigate for impacts to covered species and contribute to  
20 their recovery. The conservation strategy also includes a  
21 monitoring and adaptive management program to allow the  
22 DRECP to incorporate new information throughout over 25  
23 term -- 25-year term of the plan.

24 Alternatives. The Draft DRECP analyzes six  
25 alternatives; there are five action alternatives and one no-

1 action alternative. The agencies have identified one of the  
2 five action alternatives as the preferred alternative. And  
3 the no-action alternative describes what is expected to  
4 happen if the DRECP is not completed or not approved.

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

12           Another common element of each of the five action  
13 alternatives, which is not listed on this slide, is the  
14 potential production of 20,000 megawatts of renewable  
15 energy. And we estimate this would result in about 177,000  
16 acres of ground disturbance. And this acreage is disbursed  
17 and analyzed differently in each of the action alternatives  
18 depending on the configuration of the development focus  
19 areas in that particular alternative.

20           This is a map of the no-action alternative which  
21 assumes the DRECP would not be approved. The light pink  
22 areas are where renewable energy projects could potentially  
23 be built today, an area of about 9.8 million acres. The  
24 dark pink hatched areas show where renewable energy projects  
25 would occur under the DRECP's preferred alternative, and

1 that's a little over 2 million acres of development focus  
2 areas.

3           One of the most important differences among the  
4 DRECP alternatives is the size and geographic distribution  
5 of the development focus areas, again, DFAs on this slide.  
6 This slide shows you a comparison of the DFAs in three of  
7 the action alternatives, and the DFAs are shown in pink.

8           On the left is Alternative 1 which has the  
9 smallest extent of development focus areas. The preferred  
10 alternative, in the middle, has somewhat larger development  
11 focus areas than Alternative 1. Alternative 2, on the  
12 right, has the largest acreage of development focus areas.  
13 Alternative 2 would provide the flexibility for siting  
14 renewable energy projects in the most geographically  
15 dispersed areas. Alternative 1 would provide the least  
16 flexibility. And the preferred alternative would provide a  
17 moderate siting flexibility.

18           This slide also shows where the development focus  
19 areas differ among these three alternatives. For example,  
20 Alternative 1, on the left, has less land proposed as DFAs  
21 than the preferred alternative or Alternative 2, especially  
22 in the West Mojave, Imperial Valley, and Eastern Riverside  
23 County areas. Alternative 2 on the right, has more land  
24 proposed as DFAs than the other two alternatives, especially  
25 in the West and Central Mojave and in the Owens Valley

1 areas. And again, we estimate the size and distribution of  
2 DFAs in each of the five action alternatives would result  
3 177,000 acres of ground disturbance impacts.

4 Another important difference among the DRECP  
5 alternatives is the amount of BLM lands proposed as  
6 additions to the National Landscape Conservation System, and  
7 that's noted as NLCS designations on the slide. We also  
8 refer to those lands as National Conservation Lands.

9 They're show in purple on these slides. Again, Alternative  
10 1 is on the left and it has the least amount of new National  
11 Conservation Lands proposed. Alternative 2, on the right,  
12 has the most. The preferred alternative in the middle has a  
13 moderate amount of proposed National Conservation Lands.

14 The amount of proposed National Conservation Lands  
15 is related to the amount of development focus areas in each  
16 alternative -- each of the action alternatives. Larger,  
17 more geographically dispersed DFAs, such as those in  
18 Alternative 2, would put more natural resources at risk, so  
19 larger designations of Natural Conservation Lands are  
20 proposed to offset that increased impact.

21 This map orients you to the Imperial and East  
22 Riverside Regions of the plan in the DRECP plan area for the  
23 preferred alternative. Proposed development focus areas are  
24 shown in pink, and non-federal conservation planning areas  
25 are in light green. On BLM lands you see DFAs in pink

1 again, proposed areas of critical environmental concern in  
2 blue, proposed National Landscape Conservation System Lands  
3 are in yellow.

4           And note that the combination of ACECs overlaid  
5 with the National Conservation Lands yellow create a  
6 hatching of green. And you can see this much better in  
7 close-up maps during the open house portion of the meeting  
8 tonight on the posterboards. So you don't have to really  
9 concentrate on this particular slide.

10           Proposed special recreation management areas on  
11 this slide are a slight slashed brown. Dark gray areas are  
12 military lands. And dark green are existing conservation  
13 lands such as national and state parks.

14           Here are some basic highlights of the preferred  
15 alternative. The overall biological conservation strategy  
16 would cover about 15 million acres of the desert, and that  
17 includes about 7.6 million acres of existing conservation  
18 lands such as national and state parks. BLM conservation  
19 designations would cover about 4 million acres, development  
20 focus areas about 2 million, study area lands about 183,000  
21 acres, and BLM recreation designations about 3.6 million  
22 acres.

23           This map gives you a general picture of the  
24 preferred alternative. And you can see again the  
25 development focus areas again in pink, in relation to the

1 DRECP's proposed conservation lands, study area lands,  
2 recreation lands, military bases, and existing conservation  
3 lands. You'll be able to see this map close up later during  
4 the posterboard session at the information stations. And  
5 it's also on one of the handouts at the front table outside.

6           For the preferred alternative a little over 2  
7 million acres are proposed as development focus areas. But  
8 to meet the DRECP's planning assumption of 20,000 megawatts  
9 of new renewable energy generation, projects would actually  
10 be built on only about 177,000 acres or about 9 percent of  
11 that total DFA proposed acreage. The dark striped slice at  
12 the top of the pie chart represents this estimated ground  
13 disturbance as a portion of the total DFA acreage. Now if  
14 less than 20,000 megawatts of new generation is actually  
15 needed in the DRECP plan area, then the actual amount of  
16 ground disturbance would be less than 177,000 acres. The  
17 total -- the total proposed DFA acreage is much larger than  
18 the estimated acres of impact to provide for flexibility in  
19 locating where projects would actually be built within a  
20 DFA.

21           This map again shows the development focus areas  
22 in pink and the amount of estimated ground disturbance  
23 expected to occur in each county within the DRECP plan area.  
24 For the seven counties in the plan area the estimated ground  
25 disturbance that would occur within the DFAs ranges from 5

1 percent to 16 percent of the total proposed DFA acreage in  
2 each county. Now this map has a lot of detail, and it's  
3 also on one of the handouts that's available at the front  
4 table outside if you'd like to look at that in more detail.

5           Okay, so we're zooming in again to the Imperial  
6 and East Riverside regions. The preferred alternative has  
7 734,000 acres of DFAs in Imperial County of which we  
8 estimate 69,000 acres or only 9 percent would actually be  
9 developed, and that's based on the planning assumption of  
10 20,000 megawatts within the plan area. In Riverside County  
11 the DFAs total about 268,000 acres of which we estimate  
12 about 42,000 acres or 16 percent would be developed under  
13 the planning scenario of 20,000 megawatts. Okay.

14           Environmental analysis includes a description of  
15 the environmental setting in Volume III, and the  
16 environmental impact analysis in Volume IV. The  
17 environmental analysis considers 23 resource categories. We  
18 identified these resource categories based on scoping  
19 meetings, preliminary analysis, and input from tribes, the  
20 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, on the  
24 conservation and management actions that would avoid,  
25 minimize and mitigate impacts to covered species,

1 conservation and management actions for recreation, visual,  
2 cultural and other resources on BLM lands, and the types and  
3 acreages of land allocations on BLM lands.

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

10           And now I'll just briefly describe how the DRECP  
11 would be implemented.

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

23           Local governments may use the DRECP to inform  
24 their independent land use planning decisions. The DRECP  
25 would not restrict or change local land use planning or

1 permitting authority for renewable energy projects. With  
2 the DRECP local governments would have the option of  
3 applying for permits from the US Fish and Wildlife Service  
4 and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for  
5 renewable energy projects within their local jurisdictions.

6           And now a little about -- a little about options  
7 for public participation. The agencies have completed our  
8 work for this draft plan, and now we need your help and  
9 input to shape the final plan.

10           We created a dedicated website for the DRECP at  
11 [www.drecp.org](http://www.drecp.org). To help you understand the DRECP we've  
12 prepared a series of fact sheets, a list of frequently asked  
13 questions, and an informational video, and these are all  
14 available on the website. The draft DRECP is also on this  
15 website, and it's also on the Bureau of Land Management and  
16 US Fish and Wildlife Service websites. We also have an  
17 innovative mapping tool called the DRECP Gateway, which I'll  
18 talk about in a moment.

19           You can review the DRECP at local libraries and  
20 agency offices in the plan area. And DVDs are also  
21 available upon request. You can give us your comments by  
22 email, fax, US Mail, in person delivery, and at these public  
23 meetings. If you want to receive automated updates about  
24 the DRECP, including public meetings and other news  
25 releases, please sign up for the DRECP Listserv at the

1 internet address on the slide. And all of the information  
2 on this slide is available on a handout at the front table  
3 outside, and it's also posted at [drecp.org](http://drecp.org).

4 Public review and comment is absolutely critical  
5 to developing the final DRECP. We want your voice to be  
6 heard, and we assure you that all public comments are  
7 welcomed, valued and will be considered.

8 The public comment period opened on September 26th  
9 and closes on January 9th next year.

10 Public meetings are being held throughout the  
11 DRECP planning area and in surrounding population centers.  
12 Information about the public meetings is posted at  
13 [drecp.org](http://drecp.org).

14 To help us develop the final plan we need to know  
15 what you want us to change. Substantive comments will have  
16 the greatest effect on the final DRECP because they will  
17 tell us specifically what you want added, removed or  
18 otherwise changed, and why you want those changes. Examples  
19 of comments that would be most helpful include comments that  
20 raise significant environmental concerns, issues that  
21 require clarification or modification of any of the  
22 alternatives, new or different alternatives, new or missing  
23 information, or corrections that could substantially change  
24 the conclusions of the environmental analysis.

25 The DRECP Gateway is our innovative online data

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

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

15           And that's the end of our presentation this  
16 evening. Thank you for your interest in the DRECP. And we  
17 look forward to talking to you at the information stations  
18 and hearing your comments later in the meeting.

19           MR. BEALE: Thank you, Jenness.

20           All right, if I could ask our planning team folks  
21 to go to your stations. We are going to start our open  
22 house now. And just to let you -- I want to orient you to  
23 where our different information stations are.

24           I do want to remind you, sorry to sound like a  
25 broken record, that Marlee, our friendly Court Reporter, is

1 here. If you would like to make a comment please talk to  
2 Marlee. You can just walk up any time you like during the  
3 information station session. If you would like to make a  
4 public comment at the -- during our public comment period  
5 please fill out one of the blue cards at the front table.

6           So we have six stations for you tonight. And  
7 let's see, starting to my right we have Station 1, our  
8 general -- thank you. Thank you. Starting to my left we  
9 have our general -- general station. So this -- the station  
10 here is if you have basic questions about what the DRECP is,  
11 what's in it, how are the alternatives different, how is the  
12 environmental analysis on the human environment, and the EIS  
13 and EIR, how is that conducted, those are all questions for  
14 Station 1. They're pulling a heavy duty. They have by far  
15 the most posterboards and have lots to share with you if  
16 you'd like to ask them questions.

17           Moving clockwise we have -- I hope we're in the  
18 same order -- we have our renewable energy station.

19           Roger and David, if you could raise your hands?

20           If you have questions about our renewable energy  
21 planning assumptions, the transmission planning that's  
22 behind the plan, please go to that station.

23           Moving clockwise a bit more we have our BLM land  
24 use planning station. Russ and Vicki are raising their  
25 hands there. If you have any questions about the LUPA

1 please go there.

2           Moving clockwise further we have the General  
3 Conservation Plan station. Folks from the Fish and Wildlife  
4 Service there to answer your questions.

5           Moving down one more we have our Natural Community  
6 Conservation Planning Station, the California Department of  
7 Fish and Wildlife.

8           And then finally on the far right moving further  
9 clockwise we have our biological conservation strategy  
10 station. And this is the station that explains the  
11 conservation strategy that was used for the Land Use Plan  
12 Amendment, the General Conservation Plan, and the Natural  
13 Community Conservation Plan.

14           So invite you all to get up and visit the stations  
15 and ask questions. And we will start -- we'll resume at  
16 5:30 -- 5:30 for our public comment session. So again,  
17 thank you all for coming here.

18                           (Off the record at 4:45 p.m.)

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

20           MR. KAINZ: My name is James F. Kainz,  
21 K-A-I-N-Z.

22           There's a one-word solution to climate change:  
23 Photosynthesis. Only one renewable energy strategy reverses  
24 already existing greenhouse gases that are a problem in the  
25 atmosphere, biofuels or biomass. By growing plants we

1 reverse the greenhouse gas effect because we take carbon  
2 dioxide out of the air and replace it with oxygen.

3 I'm about to publish a book called *Cheap Car Fuel*  
4 *From Switchgrass* which will outline a detailed plan for how  
5 we cut our addiction to foreign oil within six years, as  
6 President George W. Bush stated in his 2006 State of the  
7 Union message, and we never acted upon it.

8 On October 13th of 2014 the Department of Defense  
9 issued their roadmap outlining that the climate change and  
10 dependence on foreign oil is a threat to our national  
11 security. Now that we have officially recognized as a  
12 country that this is a threat to our national security we  
13 should apply the remedy that President George W. Bush  
14 proposed in his 2006 State of the Union address which is to  
15 grow switchgrass to eliminate our dependence on foreign oil  
16 within six years. That's it.

17 (On the record at 5:30 p.m.)

18 MR. BEALE: This is our public comment portion of  
19 the meeting. The idea of this portion of the meeting is to  
20 give the public, all of you that would like to comment, the  
21 last word of the day. This is not a question and answer  
22 session. That was what the open house was for. But I do  
23 want you to know that comments that are submitted, you know,  
24 spoken during this portion of the comment period will become  
25 part of the formal record. And what that means is that when

1 the agencies -- all four agencies involved in the  
2 development of the plan will be reviewing the comments,  
3 discussing them, and providing written responses in the  
4 final document. So your -- your comments today will receive  
5 a response, but today the agencies are here to listen.

6 I do want to -- I'm going to ask our agency folks  
7 up here to introduce themselves. But before I do that I  
8 just want to remind you that if you would like to speak  
9 during this portion of the meeting please fill out one of  
10 the blue speaker cards at the front table. And you can  
11 either give them to Valerie at the front table, or to Kristy  
12 or to me and we will add you to the -- add you to the queue.

13 So let me ask our agency folks to introduce  
14 themselves.

15 MS. RODRIGUEZ: Magdalena Rodriguez from CDFW,  
16 Ontario Office.

17 MR. STEWART: I'm Mendel Stewart. I'm the Manager  
18 of the US Fish and Wildlife Service offices in Carlsbad and  
19 in Palm Springs.

20 MR. KALISH: Hi. I'm John Kalish. I'm the Field  
21 Manager for the Bureau of Land Management for the Palm  
22 Springs-South Coast Field Office.

23 MR. JOHNSON: Good evening. I'm Roger Johnson  
24 with the California Energy Commission. I'm the Deputy  
25 Director for the Siting, Transmission and Environmental

1 Protection Division.

2 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Just a couple of thoughts  
3 about the public comment session. We have about 13 cards.  
4 We've allocated an hour for public comment, so I think  
5 everybody who would like to speak today can speak. I do  
6 want to remind you that after we go through the comment here  
7 in the room we're going to open up the line for folks on the  
8 phone to make a public comment.

9 We have been using three minutes as the kind of  
10 time for speakers to make a comment. What we'll do is allow  
11 everyone who is submitted a card to speak for three minutes.  
12 If we have more time at the end you're welcome to come back  
13 up. We are happy to stay here for the full comment period.  
14 If you want to make a comment more than once, that's fine.  
15 But we want to make sure we get through the list at least  
16 once, so we'll be using the three-minute time limit.

17 I have a timer here that I have learned how to use  
18 over the course of the meetings. I'm going to set it to  
19 three minutes. It will be yellow for the first two minutes.  
20 And then when it gets down a minute it will turn red, and  
21 then at the end of three minutes will make this kind of  
22 annoying beeping sound, which I'll turn off as quickly as I  
23 can. All right.

24 So let's, without further ado, let's get started.  
25 The first three speakers tonight are April Sall, David

1 Buetton [sic] --

2 MR. BUEHN: Buehn.

3 MR. BEALE: -- Buehn, and Elijah Cervantes.

4 So April?

5 MS. SALL: All right. Thank you for the  
6 opportunity to speak tonight. I'm just going to make a few  
7 quick points. And I want to thank you for adding the  
8 meeting in the Morongo Basin. And we'd like to see the REAT  
9 agencies consider another round of meetings closer to the  
10 end of the comment period because many members of the public  
11 and constituents and stakeholders have not had opportunity  
12 to review the plan, let alone formulate substantive  
13 comments. So please consider how the public is able to  
14 comment and interact with this plan.

15 We would also like to see an extension for the  
16 public comment period.

17 And one of the concerns that has been brought up  
18 by the conservation community several times is the need for  
19 durable conservation. And we still want to have a plan that  
20 is going to allow more durable conservation, especially on  
21 the BLM lands, and that is unclear. And especially given  
22 that mitigation is currently, as I understand it, is only  
23 going to extend to the life of the plan and not the life of  
24 the impacts, and that doesn't meet my definition of durable  
25 conservation.

1 I also would like to point out that although this  
2 plan is considering impacts from climate change, one of the  
3 most important concepts from an ecological standpoint is  
4 that we have landscape-level connectivity. And there are  
5 areas like the future assessment area in the preferred  
6 alternative that is between Mojave National Preserve and  
7 Joshua Tree National Park that threatens that landscape-  
8 level ecological connectivity. And it's really important  
9 that if we're trying to address impacts from climate change  
10 that that connectivity from national park units and  
11 wilderness areas is intact.

12 I'd also like to see more engagement with the  
13 counties and an update on how county interaction and how the  
14 issues that the county addressed in their letter of kind of  
15 key -- it wasn't necessary -- but key issues for the  
16 counties is being addressed. Because the -- both the  
17 conservation and the development on private land is an  
18 incredibly important concept for this plan to succeed and to  
19 be able to meet the NCCP requirements. And we want to  
20 understand that not only county residents are being  
21 represented, but issues related to funding and  
22 implementation, that those questions are being answered for  
23 the counties so that there's a good understanding as to what  
24 implementation is going to look like.

25 I'll leave it there. Thank you.

1           MR. BEALE: Thank you. Just before we get to the  
2 next speaker, I was asked to announce that we found some  
3 sunglasses in one of the bathrooms. So if this is yours,  
4 please feel free to come up and get it. It will be over  
5 here on the side of the podium.

6           All right, so we have David --

7           MR. BUEHN: Buehn.

8           MR. BEALE: -- Buehn --

9           MR. BUEHN: Hi. My name is --

10          MR. BEALE: -- Elijah Cervantes, and then Cynthia  
11 Portillo.

12          MR. BUEHN: Okay.

13          MR. BEALE: Thank you.

14          MR. BUEHN: My name is Dave Buehn. I'm a resident  
15 of Palm Desert. I'm 68 years old and have been coming out  
16 to the Southern California deserts for most of my life. I  
17 live in -- I used to live in Long Beach and the Huntington  
18 Beach area until 12 years ago. My grandparents even  
19 homesteaded ten acres in Rancho Mirage in 1951, and I have  
20 seen the wonderful development of this area.

21                 Now that I live in Palm Desert I've come to learn  
22 and participate in prospecting and mining for gold in  
23 Riverside and San Bernardino Counties. It has become a  
24 major part of my life, and for many others as well. Over  
25 the last few years I've seen more and more of our outdoor

1 areas restricted from usage, and I'm not too happy about  
2 that.

3           The Federal Mining Law of 1872 guarantees citizens  
4 the right to claim and pursue mining minerals on federal  
5 lands. And when Congress passed RS 2477 in 1866 and  
6 replaced it with the Federal Land Policy of 1976 it  
7 specifically and explicitly reaffirmed all RS 2477 grants  
8 previously made. This protects all highways in use prior to  
9 1866, and that includes dirt roads, as most were in 1866.  
10 So RS 2477 confirms that any road leading to a potential  
11 mine or mining area is open for all citizens to use at any  
12 time.

13           As a federal mining claim owner I would therefore  
14 like to vote against any change -- changes to the current  
15 land use of the desert and mountain areas that are under  
16 consideration for further restrictions and changes in their  
17 current designation. Thank you very much.

18           MR. BEALE: Thank you. Elijah Cervantes, Cynthia  
19 Portillo, and Marina Barragain.

20           MR. CERVANTES: Hello and good afternoon. My name  
21 is Elijah Cervantes. And I support a plan for building  
22 large-scale renewables rather than what has been happening  
23 in recent years.

24           It's important to put these large projects in  
25 places that have already been disturbed and keep them away

1 from wildlands and other places important for California  
2 wildlife. But we should be emphasizing smaller scale and  
3 rooftop solar as much as we are large scale. Okay.

4 Well, personally, I've been working on a project  
5 in high school on building a solar panel canopy to develop  
6 the process in a renewable source of energy for our school  
7 to, I guess you would say, start our generation to  
8 understand that it's important because, I mean, well, we  
9 live in a poor community, as I'm sure you know. We live in  
10 Thermal. Okay. And -- excuse me.

11 I have experience job shadowing with grid  
12 alternatives. And I understand how it works and how it  
13 goes. So, I mean, it's not too hard, in my personal  
14 experience. While I think the community should focus more  
15 on that. And that's all I have to say. Thank you.

16 MR. BEALE: Thank you. We have Cynthia Portillo,  
17 Marina Barragain, and Barbara Boyle.

18 MS. PORTILLO: Hello. My name is Cynthia  
19 Portillo. And I would just like to point out that I would  
20 like to have the comment period extended at least 30 or 60  
21 more days, especially to publicize and just bring more about  
22 this. Because I did not find out about this until today on  
23 my way here, so I didn't know that I was going to be doing  
24 this or I was going to be learning about this. And I think  
25 that we should extend these days because of the smaller

1 communities, the rural areas. And I live in one rural  
2 community called Mecca. Of course, it's very small, and  
3 there's a lot of fields out there.

4 But a lot of people in the community are very  
5 involved, and one of them is my mom, and a lot of our  
6 neighbors. Now if they knew about this, as well, they would  
7 be here right now, ready to speak with Marina and whoever is  
8 after here. So I would just like to say that because they  
9 would bring up fabulous points, some that maybe I'm not --  
10 might not think about or bring up right now, because they're  
11 going to be the ones affected in some of this.

12 I mean, all of this preferred alternative  
13 development area, a lot of it is also probably in someone's  
14 backyard. I mean, I'm not far away from the desert. I  
15 could probably drive like 20 minutes and be out by the  
16 mountains, and it's going to be affecting them as well. I  
17 mean, it's a beautiful area out there and I don't want to  
18 see some more land disturbed when you could also be building  
19 rooftop solar panels or other renewable energy sources near  
20 houses. I mean, it's going to be affecting a lot of small  
21 communities, as well, not just these areas out here like in  
22 Palm Springs and Palm Desert. Thank you so much for your  
23 time.

24 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Marina Barragain, Barbara  
25 Boyle, and then Joan Taylor.

1 MS. BARRAGAIN: Hi. My name is Marina. I'm born  
2 and raised in the Coachella Valley, eastern -- Southeastern  
3 Coachella Valley, to be exact. I am from Thermal, very  
4 small. I come from a very rural area with a lot of Spanish  
5 speakers. That's one of my biggest things is the Spanish  
6 speakers.

7 I brought my two volunteers here today. Obviously  
8 they were kind of -- it was like they're very amazing. But  
9 like I said, I, just as well, just heard about this a couple  
10 days ago, and I am extremely involved in my community. I  
11 was raised to be extremely involved in my community and I  
12 just heard of it.

13 I feel like it needs to be publicized more,  
14 especially in Spanish. Like I was -- as I was walking  
15 around I was talking to people, and I was talking and I  
16 found out that there was a meeting in Imperial recently.  
17 But like I said, that's -- that's a very low income place,  
18 so that doesn't mean that they can necessarily travel there.  
19 If it was -- if it was more accessible to like Mecca, Oasis  
20 or Thermal, I feel like more people would be able to attend,  
21 especially if it was publicized like through either Spanish  
22 radios that are more well known, TV. Because I didn't even  
23 hear about this, being so involved in my community.

24 Another point that I was looking at was I was  
25 looking at the things that would be highly impacted. One of

1 them was water quality. Like I said, I'm very southern in  
2 California. And we have a community where they don't even  
3 have drinkable water. And how much worse can that get if  
4 it's going to be like more impacted? You know, I don't want  
5 to know the answer to that, by the way. And just trying to  
6 make small improvements along those lines.

7 Another thing is the jobs. I understand that it's  
8 going to provide jobs and I know that that's a very good  
9 thing, especially for our local economy, but will those jobs  
10 be for locals? Would we -- like I would like to see them be  
11 for the local economy, for local jobs, not necessarily  
12 people coming from out of town to come get these jobs when  
13 we're already struggling as it is, and we would really need  
14 those jobs as well. Just different points like that that I  
15 feel.

16 Also when I was mentioning about having this open  
17 more to Spanish speakers, also getting more time so that  
18 they can go over -- I understand that this document is or  
19 this plan is over 8,000 pages. I don't think that just  
20 springing it on them like it was sprung on me was being  
21 like, oh, so this is 8,000 pages. In two hours the meeting  
22 is starting, by the way.

23 You know, so I feel like if it was translated, if  
24 it was open more to the public, my mom raised me to be super  
25 involved, I know lots of parents would be super involved if

1 you could like open it out to Mecca-Thermal-Oasis area and  
2 let them know that this is going on. If you guys need help  
3 finding like media that you would like to go to, I know a  
4 lot of local media places that are perfect that get out  
5 there everywhere through social media, through radio,  
6 anything. You guys can connect with me and I can help you  
7 find that. Like I'm willing to help you. I know my  
8 community and I really want you to help them, and I want to  
9 help you help them. Thank you.

10 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Barbara Boyle, Joan  
11 Taylor, and James Kainz.

12 MS. BOYLE: Thank you for this opportunity to  
13 speak. Barbara Boyle, and just a few comments.

14 I really support what the previous speaker said.  
15 Really concerned that the folks who get to comment on this  
16 reflect the communities that will be affected. Just a few  
17 questions and comments today.

18 On the funding question, it's unclear from the  
19 document how the -- how the overall plan will be funded and  
20 how the -- particularly the conservation on BLM lands will  
21 be guaranteed. It's difficult to ascertain where the  
22 mitigation fees are going to go to and how they're going to  
23 be managed.

24 And that also relates to a kind of broader  
25 question that I have, and that is that we still have not

1 seen the draft implementing agreement for the plan. And  
2 this is sort of the, as I understand it, this is sort of the  
3 whole superstructure of how everything is coordinated and  
4 all the agencies and different county and other government  
5 entities work together to make sure that all the pieces of  
6 the plan are carried out properly and as -- as delineated in  
7 the plan. And that, I think as you know, that implementing  
8 agreement should be able to be commented on during the same  
9 comment period as the plan itself.

10           So we're eagerly awaiting that document, because  
11 we're really looking forward to more pages to read. But,  
12 no, we think that that's -- that's a super important piece  
13 of this that is right now really difficult to understand.  
14 So I hope that comes out soon that we'll have -- so that  
15 we'll have a full opportunity to review it.

16           And I -- we strongly support -- I'm speaking on  
17 behalf of the Sierra Club as well as myself, and we strongly  
18 support a second round of public meetings so that -- you  
19 know, this first round is just, I think, an opportunity for  
20 people to get their feet wet in the process and to  
21 understand the basics of what this plan is all about. And  
22 after they've had a chance to read more of the documents and  
23 so forth there should be a second round of meetings where  
24 people really have an opportunity to speak and give more  
25 feedback.

1 I would also recommend that you give -- that you  
2 hold this part of the meeting at the beginning, as well as  
3 at the end. Because I think some people just really don't  
4 have the time to sit through the whole presentation and  
5 the -- and the listening stations. And so it might be good  
6 to do some of this feedback at the beginning, and then again  
7 after people have participated in the other part so that  
8 everybody's time is addressed, you know, respectfully.

9 That's it for now. Thank you.

10 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Let's see, Joan Taylor,  
11 James Kainz, and Bill Christian.

12 MS. TAYLOR: Hi. I'm Joan Taylor, a local  
13 resident, and also speaking for Sierra Club. I'm the Chair  
14 of the California Nevada Desert Energy Committee of the  
15 Sierra Club, and activist.

16 I just wanted to say it's a laudable goal to  
17 undertake this 22 million acre plan, a herculean task.  
18 There's still some loose ends, though, that need to be tied  
19 up.

20 Basically, habitat plans are all about certainty.  
21 You've got to provide certainty for the developers. You've  
22 got provide certainty for the permittees and for the  
23 environmental, namely the species. And I think the  
24 developers, even though they protest, do get some -- a lot  
25 of certainty, way more than now; 2,000 acres of DFAs with

1 expedited permitting, and that's compared to 300,000 acres  
2 of development if you count all the wind areas entirely.  
3 That's well over the three-to-five ratio that was  
4 contemplated in 2012. So certainty for the permittees. I  
5 think certainty for CEC and some other state once there is.  
6 But it's yet to be seen whether the counties would have the  
7 kind of certainty they need.

8           Critical to this is how well the NCC portion --  
9 NCCP portion of this would work. There is, as you know,  
10 this MOU that's being done in a separate process right now  
11 from the draft plan. This MOU purports to provide the kind  
12 of durability that the NCCP Act requires. However, even on  
13 compensatory mitigation lands the final arbiter of any  
14 disagreements between CDFW and BLM is the BLM director in  
15 Washington. And I don't think that's appropriate for state  
16 law to have that person be the final arbiter. And in any  
17 case, if there are to be changes contemplated they ought to  
18 be amendments, and not done out of the public eye.

19           So I would suggest that, A, the MOU become part of  
20 this plan, subject to public scrutiny, and the sooner the  
21 better. And that there be a better process for future and  
22 potential, you know, amendments to the compensatory  
23 mitigation areas which are allegedly durable.

24           As far as other general BLM lands that are part of  
25 the NCC [sic] process, they have very little durability,

1 maybe 25 years for some of them. It's not clear on where  
2 the boundaries are, which BLM lands would be subject to even  
3 a 25-year break from renewable energy. This is a key and  
4 very important issue that has to be -- if it isn't -- if it  
5 isn't solved the NCCP part doesn't work, it won't work for  
6 the permittees, it won't work for the species, it probably  
7 won't even work for the developers.

8           The project description is very unclear in this  
9 plan. I'm a veteran of many HCPs since the 1980's; I'm  
10 having trouble understanding it and I've worked on the DRECP  
11 for about four or five years now. I don't see how the  
12 public could possibly understand it. And there has to be a  
13 way to make it more clear. Coachella Valley MSHCP had one  
14 plan. You could look on a map and read what was going to be  
15 conserved. You didn't have to filter through all these  
16 various layers that this has. And I know there are layers  
17 but there must be a way to map it and explain it, short of a  
18 100-page executive summary.

19           As far as Riverside County goes, I would say some  
20 of the local concerns are what happens to the Salton Sea?  
21 Are the Salton Sea authorities going to come up with a plan?

22           What will be the process? We have to have a good process  
23 to dovetail with the DRECP that won't require some huge  
24 major amendment in order to implement the Salton Sea plan.

25           Cultural resources in Eastern Riverside County are

1 given very short shrift. They are basically punted to a  
2 programmatic agreement. That's not appropriate. At least  
3 the impacts ought to be looked at in the public eye in the  
4 DEIS/DEIR.

5 Sand dune habitat and sand source and sand  
6 transport is not adequately addressed. That has to be  
7 addressed in Eastern Riverside County.

8 And it's not clear on how renewable energy will be  
9 proportioned. I mean, there are -- there are theoretically  
10 conceptual proportions of wind and solar in various of these  
11 DFAs. But it could be that one DFA is all solar or all  
12 wind, or that all of the solar and wind in the DRECP ends  
13 out on Riverside County. I think the plan needs to look at  
14 all those options if -- if indeed those could happen. And  
15 the way I read the plan it would happen. It's basically  
16 going to be market driven. The DRECP is not going to  
17 dictate where things go. So they have to look at worse case  
18 analyses in these various DFAs.

19 Wind, wind power, the DRECP ought to look at  
20 repower of wind. I know here in the San Gorgonio Pass  
21 there's a lot of potential for it. I believe in the  
22 Tehachapi Pass you could probably come up with 600, 1,200,  
23 1,000 megawatts of incremental renewable energy through wind  
24 repowering at the end of the useful life of older turbines.  
25 And in addition, there are 4,200 megawatts of approved but

1 un-built projects in the Tehachapi area that could fulfill  
2 the whole need for the DRECP. And it would be reasonable to  
3 say let's develop those areas that have the best wind  
4 speeds, the less per acre impact, and are already  
5 industrialized. And then, once that is maximized, to look  
6 at other areas.

7           Thanks very much.

8           MR. BEALE: Thank you. James Kainz, Bill  
9 Christian, and Alan Muth.

10           MR. KAINZ: My name is Jim Kainz. There's a one-  
11 word solution to climate change, photosynthesis. I haven't  
12 heard that word mentioned all this day.

13           The only renewable energy which counteracts  
14 greenhouse gases already in the atmosphere is biomass or  
15 growing biofuels. Why is it it's never discussed?

16           You get a group of environmentalists together to  
17 talk about renewable energy, solar is generally mentioned  
18 first, then wind, then geothermal, and then it drops off a  
19 cliff. Maybe somebody mentions plugin cars or algae or wood  
20 pellets, but you almost never hear flex-fuel cars. We have  
21 15 million flex-fuel cars on the road in the United States  
22 today which will run on 85 percent alcohol and 15 percent  
23 gasoline. It's never mentioned.

24           Brazil runs their entire fleet of cars on ethanol  
25 and they sell their oil to other countries at \$100 a barrel.

1 It makes total economic sense. We can do the same thing.

2 The United States Department of Defense came out  
3 with a roadmap three weeks ago that identified climate  
4 change and our addiction to foreign oil as a national  
5 security issue. President George W. Bush in his 2006 State  
6 of the Union message said there's a solution to our  
7 addiction to foreign oil within six years, it's called  
8 growing switchgrass. We've known about this ever since 2006  
9 in the State of the Union message. We never did anything  
10 about it.

11 In order to eliminate half of our petroleum needs  
12 for cars, which is 7 billion barrels of oil a year, I need  
13 100 million acres of switchgrass. That will eliminate 4  
14 billion barrels of oil. And we can use it in our flex-fuel  
15 vehicles which are available today.

16 Where do we locate all the ethanol pumps and gas  
17 stations? In the Midwest where we grow corn, which is the  
18 worst possible thing you can make ethanol out of. Where are  
19 the people? The northeast and the west coast. Do you know  
20 how far it is to drive to get to a gas pump that has ethanol  
21 85 from where we are right now? Forty miles to the Salton  
22 Sea. The second closest is 60 miles one way in Beaumont.

23 We're putting all of the ethanol 85 pumps where we  
24 grow the worse possible fuel -- fuel source, which is corn,  
25 and we don't put it where the people are, New York and

1 California. We make the -- ethanol 85 pumps so distant that  
2 they're not practical. Who wants to drive 40 miles to get  
3 their car filled up and then drive 40 miles back? You'd use  
4 about a third of your tank of gas just to get it filled with  
5 ethanol 85. It's nuts. Thank you.

6 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Bill Christian, Allan  
7 Muth, and Frazier Haney.

8 MR. CHRISTIAN: Hi. My name is Bill Christian. I  
9 work for the Nature Conservancy. And I've been the Amargosa  
10 River Project director for the last 11 years.

11 First of all, I wanted to give a hand clap for the  
12 people who worked on this incredible plan. I mean, what an  
13 amazing effort it's been. And it's really needed. We  
14 really need a plan that looks at an entire landscape and  
15 tries to figure out where things ought to go, where things  
16 ought not to go, and how conservation ought to be done  
17 across a landscape.

18 That said, the plan really needs some work and it  
19 needs some improvements. The Nature Conservancy scientists  
20 that I work with will be submitting -- we will be submitting  
21 a series of comments, fairly detailed comments. But tonight  
22 I wanted to just say a couple words about my little region  
23 in the Amargosa.

24 Amargosa is a little river in sort of the  
25 southeast corner of Death Valley, the area where I work in

1 the Shoshone and Tecopa area. And it has from Ash Meadows  
2 down through -- Ash Meadows in Nevada down through really  
3 into Death Valley, it has a world class collection of  
4 endemic and listed and sensitive species. And it's an  
5 entirely groundwater-fed river.

6           So what I've been working on for the last probably  
7 ten years is making sure that the groundwater that feeds the  
8 river and its springs, tributary springs, stays in place.  
9 And I have to say that the plan that you've developed does  
10 open up some areas and really ignores some things which I  
11 think are important for groundwater.

12           First of all, the CMAs for groundwater in the plan  
13 are really not very adequate, they're not mandatory, and  
14 they really don't -- won't do a good job, I think, unless  
15 they're administered in ways that the plan doesn't reveal at  
16 this point, protecting groundwater and dependent resources.

17           Secondly, because groundwater doesn't follow state  
18 lines, a great deal of what goes on in my part of the river  
19 happens in Nevada. And Nevada is the source of most if not  
20 probably 80 percent of the water in the river. And right on  
21 the other side of the border then the Las Vegas Resource  
22 Management Plan is now being changed. And it proposes, at  
23 least the initial draft proposes to open up large areas,  
24 both for disposal as well as for solar energy in the  
25 Amargosa drainage. And I think it's very important to link

1 both Nevada and California. And the plan really -- the  
2 DRECP really ought to concern itself with what's happening  
3 just on the other side of the border, for transmission  
4 purposes, for -- particularly for groundwater purposes, and  
5 for integrated management of these landscapes that cross the  
6 borderline.

7           So just a couple of other comments. I want to  
8 emphasize that I think that BLM's durability provisions are,  
9 at the moment, inadequate. And we would like to work on  
10 ways that those -- that one could be assured that the  
11 conservation that's in the plan is going to remain, not only  
12 for 25 years, not only for 40 years, but be permanent and be  
13 really truly enduring.

14           Mitigation policy I find is a little confusing.  
15 And the BLM, where are we going to get the resources to  
16 administer this plan properly and to keep -- the  
17 conservation promises in the plan are not apparent at the  
18 outset. Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity.

19           MR. BEALE: Thank you. Allan Muth, Frazier Haney,  
20 and Betsy Perloss.

21           MR. MUTH: I'll be brief. I'm a member of the  
22 Desert Advisory Council. I received my DVD of the plan the  
23 day it was released. Unfortunately, that's not my job. I  
24 have other things to do. And I haven't been able to devote  
25 time to 300 pages a day. Having a 90-day comment period for

1 the public is -- borders on the absurd, in my opinion. And  
2 really the REAT agencies should seriously consider extending  
3 the comment period.

4 My other comments have to do with how long NLCS  
5 lands, the durability, how long that protection will run.  
6 My comments have been eloquently stated by Ms. Sall, Ms.  
7 Taylor.

8 Chris, I forgot your last name.

9 So with that I'd like to yield the rest of my time  
10 to Mr. Haney who will speak next. Thank you.

11 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Frazier Haney, Betsy  
12 Perloss, and Sam Goldman.

13 MR. HANEY: Thanks for getting it right tonight,  
14 Chris.

15 MR. BEALE: Thank you.

16 MR. HANEY: My name is Frazier Haney and I work as  
17 the Conservation Director for the Mojave Desert Land Trust.  
18 I appreciate the opportunity to speak tonight.

19 We respect the effort that's been put forward by  
20 the REAT agencies to create the planning framework to guide  
21 development. A few years ago there was no planning  
22 framework. There was over a million acres of application on  
23 public land across the California desert, and this could  
24 have led to a major catastrophe. So we support the idea of  
25 a framework and a plan to put renewable energy where it

1 needs to be, and also identify areas for conservation.

2           We still have some pretty serious concerns about  
3 the DRECP. And I'll use my time to just drill into one  
4 example. I'm sorry to the couple of you that had to hear me  
5 say this last night.

6           I'm going to use the example that's in Lucerne and  
7 Johnson Valley. There have been two scientific studies  
8 completed for this part of the planning area that the DRECP  
9 appears to have overlooked or at least not taken into  
10 account. The first is a study on Bighorn Sheep migration  
11 corridors by Clint Epps detailing the movement from the San  
12 Bernardino Mountains to the Granite Mountains, and from  
13 there into other central Mojave ranges.

14           The second is the study published by the US Fish  
15 and Wildlife Service detailing the landscape connections  
16 necessary for tortoise movement between the established  
17 critical habitat units, in this case the Ord-Rodman Critical  
18 Habitat Unit and Joshua Tree National Park. In both cases  
19 DFAs appear to have serious effects, particularly in the  
20 case of the Desert Tortoise corridor which would be entirely  
21 blocked by the DFAs in Johnson Valley and Lucerne Valley.  
22 And there appears to be no consideration of the effects of  
23 the DFAs on this connectivity that's represented by the  
24 studies in the document so far from our review, although I  
25 admit it might be on page 9,000 and I just haven't gotten

1 there yet.

2           We're also concerned, as are many others, about  
3 the way the plan creates non-permanent mitigation actions in  
4 compensation for nearly permanent impacts, particularly as  
5 it pertains to conservation management actions on national  
6 conservation lands. And that's under the proposed MOU  
7 between the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and  
8 the Bureau of Land Management.

9           Compensation, mitigation and management actions  
10 must be for the life of the impact rather than the life of  
11 the DRECP permit only which is only out to 2040. It's also  
12 critical that the BLM take any action necessary to ensure  
13 the highest standards for the designation of National  
14 Conservation Lands, including designation which is stronger  
15 than a simple land use plan amendment and only allows the  
16 highest quality conservation lands into the designation.  
17 Thank you.

18           MR. BEALE: Thank you. Betsy Perloss, Sam  
19 Goldman, and Danielle Murray.

20           MS. PERLOSS: My name is Betsy Perloss. And first  
21 of all, thank you for hosting this meeting and for your very  
22 helpful panel presentation, and also to our young Sierra  
23 Club people, I'm very inspired by you. Thank you.

24           I just want to say we need more time to offer  
25 comments. I'm a layperson. I don't have any experience in

1 environmental planning. And reading the document, the DRECP  
2 document, has just been very intimidating, very difficult,  
3 and I don't understand it so that's why I'm here. And so  
4 I'd just ask more time, particularly for people who don't  
5 represent an environmental agency or a group who need time  
6 to listen to others to translate that for them.

7 I do work for a small nonprofit in the Owens  
8 Valley that takes people into the desert, people who fall in  
9 love with the desert. And I love the desert, too, so I'm  
10 very concerned about how this plan will be implemented and  
11 what it means.

12 So I would love to have some more time to look  
13 into the document, to hear what other people have to say  
14 about, and to comment on it. I want to be a part of this  
15 process. So thank you.

16 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Sam Goldman, Danielle  
17 Murray, and Cindy Thielman-Braun.

18 MR. GOLDMAN: Thank you so much for your time. I  
19 want to first thank the agencies and the planning staff.  
20 I've been to most of the meetings and they've traveled a  
21 long way across the desert to do these hearings. And if you  
22 think sitting through this once is hard, these guys are  
23 doing this nine times. So thank you guys so much for your  
24 hard work and for working on this plan. And likewise, I  
25 want to thank the young folks that are -- that came from

1 Thermal and far away to be here tonight. And I want to  
2 thank the folks that I've been working with on trying to  
3 make a better DRECP.

4 I want to echo the fact that having a DRECP where  
5 we can plan for the future of energy development in the  
6 desert is better than nothing at all. And so getting this  
7 right is really important because whether or not we like the  
8 renewable energy or not it's coming, and it will probably be  
9 built. So it's better that we put them in the right places  
10 and that we can conserve areas that we all love.

11 My foundation works with about 60 groups around  
12 the west that work to protect, restore and expand the Bureau  
13 of Land Management's conservation lands. These include  
14 monuments and national conservation areas, other protected  
15 areas. And if this plan is adopted we'll see a whole bunch  
16 of new lands added to this system. And so we are excited to  
17 work to make sure that citizens have a role in helping make  
18 sure that these places are protected. And now is the chance  
19 to make sure that the areas that we all love in the desert  
20 don't have energy or other development on them, places like  
21 the Trona Pinnacles, the Panamint Valley. I'd like to see  
22 the Chuckwalla Bench fully included, Silurian Valley  
23 included.

24 And I am grateful to the experts at -- that work  
25 with my -- the friends groups that we work with here,

1 Friends of the Desert Mountains, Mojave Desert Land Trust,  
2 Big Morongo Basin -- friends of Big Morongo Canyon Preserve,  
3 the Amargosa Conservancy, all weighing in about the places  
4 that they want to see protected for future generations.

5           And when we do set aside these places I'm excited  
6 to work with BLM to get people, veterans, youth and other  
7 folks on the ground to work on restoration and conservation  
8 projects in a community partnership, much like what we have  
9 going on at the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains  
10 National Monument with the great work of the friends there.

11           So I just encourage the audience to look at the  
12 plan in the areas they love in the desert and make sure they  
13 write comments to the DRECP, and that we can fully include  
14 places that we all -- that we all love.

15           And Danielle, I think, is going to talk next about  
16 how these places should be managed like the rest of the  
17 protected areas around the west. This is a unique issue  
18 because the monuments in the National Conservation areas  
19 that were designated and made permanent by Congress in 2009  
20 is part of a new BLM office called the National Conservation  
21 Lands. They didn't know what to do with the California  
22 Desert Conservation area, so they told BLM to figure that  
23 out later and that's what we're doing. And so it's really  
24 up to us to make sure that we include the best places.

25           And so not only when you're looking at this plan

1 to pay attention to the solar and wind and renewable energy  
2 piece, but make sure you check out the conservation side as  
3 well. Thanks.

4 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Danielle Murray, Cindy  
5 Thielman-Braun, and Stephanie Dashiell.

6 MS. MURRAY: Sam, thanks for that introduction and  
7 setup.

8 I am starting to feel like a DRECP groupie because  
9 this is my second meeting in a row. So thanks again for  
10 having me back and listening to my comments.

11 My name is Danielle Murray. And I want to thank  
12 you for allowing everyone to speak today. This is a huge  
13 document and undertaking. And there are a lot of experts in  
14 the room, local experts, people that really know specific --  
15 specific areas and resources and policy, and I think they  
16 provide such great substantive comments. So thank you for  
17 giving us the time.

18 I am not an expert, but I will talk about a  
19 specific issue, and that is mainly the BLM lands that are to  
20 be protected and added to the National Conservation Lands.  
21 And right now is proposed about 3 million acres, and we are  
22 so excited to see these added. The National Conservation  
23 Lands is a system nationwide, established recently, and  
24 there's 28 million acres, national monuments, national  
25 conservation areas, and they all have a similar conservation

1 standard and ethic for management. BLM has gone from a  
2 completely extractive use agency to one that manages for  
3 conservation. And it's great to see this agency turn and  
4 embrace this conservation ethic.

5           The lands that are proposed to be added, there are  
6 a couple of issues with the policy currently. And they  
7 don't actually meet the standards nationally as the other  
8 lands. And there's two main things I want to highlight.  
9 One of them is that they don't have a mineral withdrawal.  
10 That is something that we see in the rest of the National  
11 Conservation Lands that we think is really important to make  
12 sure that they are protected. The other is the concept of a  
13 disturbance cap. A disturbance cap is -- can be a  
14 subjective term. It's used mostly in ACECs but it's never  
15 seen in a conservation unit. And we think it's a too  
16 subjective standard to make sure that these lands will be  
17 managed for conservation and can be the offset to a lot of  
18 this development.

19           So we are very excited. We -- we think the DRECP  
20 plan is better than -- than, you know, the standard as is  
21 now, and we're excited to work with BLM and others on this.

22           And we really want to make sure that the lands added to  
23 this national system really rise to the standards set and  
24 are considered kind of light National Conservation Lands and  
25 thus able to be protected in different ways.

1           So thank you for your time on the second night in  
2 a row, and I appreciate it. Thanks.

3           MR. BEALE: Thank you. Cindy Thielman-Braun,  
4 Stephanie Dashiell, and then Mark Algazy.

5           MS. THIELMAN-BRAUN: Hi. Cindy Thielman-Braun  
6 from Riverside County Planning Department here. And I  
7 wanted to start just by thanking you all for this series of  
8 stations of the plan, traveling throughout California to  
9 meet with so many community members who are clearly very  
10 interested, which I appreciate seeing. Some of the county  
11 staff attended the one in Ontario last night. And I know --  
12 I do not know personally if anyone from our staff will be at  
13 the Blythe one. I won't. I'm here instead.

14           I wasn't planning to mention this, but since it  
15 did come up in some of the other comments and since we are  
16 technically in Riverside County as we speak, I wanted to  
17 kind of make note of the fact that the DRECP does not  
18 overlap the Coachella Valley Multi-Species Habitat  
19 Conservation Plan. The CVMSHCP that CBAG (phonetic)  
20 oversees, thankfully I think there's enough mixtures of BLM  
21 and state and federal and this and that and the other.  
22 Fortunately, we don't have that complication.

23           The county, however, is looking at the DRECP. We  
24 have some ongoing projects. If anyone is interested they  
25 can look at the county Planning Department's website. We

1 have a renewable energy project going on, being funded by a  
2 state CEC grant, where we'll be looking at the general plan  
3 for the county and how we address renewable energy, DRECP  
4 consistency, and a lot of issues dealing with the eastern  
5 third of the county which does fall under the DRECP, as most  
6 of you know by now.

7           Since the Salton Sea region in particular is not  
8 in the DRECP we are addressing it as a separate issue, but  
9 we are looking at it under the same renewable energy project  
10 to look at what can we do for the region, what's  
11 appropriate, what would help improve infrastructure and  
12 opportunity, economic, disadvantaged communities and all of  
13 those things. So I would -- if anyone is interested in  
14 areas outside of the DRECP, I'm putting in my little plug  
15 here for interested parties to look at that opportunity.

16           In the meantime the county, of course, will be  
17 submitting written comments during -- before the comment  
18 period ends, assuming we can get through all of the things.  
19 I appreciate the information you helped impart here to help  
20 to start understanding this. It is quite complex. So thank  
21 you.

22           MR. BEALE: Thank you. Stephanie Dashiell and  
23 Mark Algazy.

24           MS. DASHIELL: Hi everyone. Thank you for being  
25 here, and thank you for your work on this plan. I really

1 appreciate you all coming down to the desert communities and  
2 listening to public comment. It makes a big difference for  
3 people, I think, to talk to real people. And thank you also  
4 for adding an additional public meeting in Joshua Tree. I  
5 know the community there really appreciates that. So I just  
6 wanted to express my appreciation for that.

7 I am a resident of Joshua Tree. And I also work  
8 for Defenders of Wildlife. So I'm speaking on behalf of  
9 myself and Defenders of Wildlife right now.

10 I just want to second that -- or I agree with the  
11 previous comments that I do think a second round of public  
12 meetings would be very beneficial for people to have an  
13 opportunity to speak to more of the specifics after they  
14 have a chance to digest some of the complexities in the  
15 plan.

16 And I also wanted to suggest perhaps having an  
17 additional station where you can have someone who can  
18 address specific issues to a place. Most people who come to  
19 the public meetings in a region are very familiar with their  
20 area, and maybe not as much with a broader area. And so  
21 they want to be able to speak with someone who can tell them  
22 specifically what's going on in the areas that they're very  
23 familiar with and care -- care a lot about.

24 I also agree that we need more time. I work for  
25 an organization doing this kind of work, and there's a lot

1 of people out there who don't. And I feel like access is  
2 very limited to this document and understanding the  
3 complexities. So giving people more time to digest it and  
4 another opportunity to speak is -- is appreciated.

5 I want to speak more specifically now to some  
6 concerns that we have on the NCCP side of the plan. And  
7 just first of all, the terminology is very confusing between  
8 the different reserve design terms. And in the plan they're  
9 used interchangeably, and I don't think they mean the same  
10 thing.

11 So I would highly recommend coming out with a  
12 definitions worksheet or a document that explains these  
13 different terms, where they came from, and what they mean  
14 legally in terms of the national -- or Natural Communities  
15 Conservation Plan Act. And the terms I'm referring to are  
16 the NCCP reserve design envelope, the NCCP -- the conceptual  
17 NCCP reserve design, the DRECP NCCP reserve, those are very  
18 confusing for people to understand what they mean in regards  
19 to the law. So an additional worksheet explaining those  
20 would be greatly appreciated.

21 Also on the NCCP side, the step-down biological  
22 goals and objectives, I'm not exactly -- I'm unclear how  
23 that actually meets the standard of providing conservation  
24 and recovery for covered species. So I think that needs to  
25 be clarified.

1 I have so much more to say. I don't know, should  
2 I wait for the next round?

3 MR. BEALE: We should have some time at the end,  
4 yeah.

5 MS. DASHIELL: Okay. Well, I just -- one last  
6 thing on the NCCP. I think other people have mentioned the  
7 durability thing. But a definition of what is proportional  
8 conservation I think also needs to be clarified. Thank you.

9 MR. BEALE: Thank you. All right, the last  
10 speaker card. Now I just want to invite folks who haven't  
11 submitted a speaker card, if you'd like to we're still open  
12 for business up here. Please bring it down.

13 And, Mark, you're -- you're the last card.

14 MR. ALGAZY: Hi. My name is Mark Algazy. As some  
15 of you may already know, I'm one of the new members of the  
16 BLM's Desert Advisory Council, mostly referred to as the  
17 DAC. The DAC is charged with advising the California Desert  
18 District of the BLM on proposed management actions that  
19 affect the district. The DRECP obviously affects the  
20 district, and a subcommittee of the DAC is currently working  
21 on a list of concerns and suggestions to present to the  
22 district at our next meeting.

23 Because of this fact I was not planning on  
24 speaking to you tonight. In fact, I did not decide that I  
25 was going to do this until just last night. However, as

1 I've been mulling over my concerns with the way in which  
2 this plan has been presented I have had a growing sense that  
3 the way the document has been described in these public  
4 meetings and in the executive summary does not sufficiently  
5 match the document that will eventually lead to a record of  
6 decision. I'd like to explain.

7           The BLM's part in enabling the DRECP is to make  
8 certain land use plan amendments. This we understand is  
9 going to happen. What has not been made sufficiently clear  
10 in either the workshops or the executive summary is that the  
11 BLM is using the opportunity of having the vehicle of the  
12 DRECP to make wide-ranging overhaul of its master plan, the  
13 CDCA. These additional amendments go well beyond what is  
14 necessary to implement the DRECP.

15           I do not question the idea that the DRECP is a  
16 convenient platform to which to start a process like this;  
17 it may even be an appropriate one. I'm not here tonight to  
18 debate that. My issue is that these proposed amendments are  
19 of a nature that will fundamentally change core components  
20 of a plan that has been in place for 34 years. And the true  
21 scope of these proposed changes is not apparent from the way  
22 the plan has been represented.

23           Vicki Campbell sent me a convenient summary in an  
24 email three days ago. I'd like to quote this to you.

25           "The DRECP is proposing to amend substantial portions

1 of the CDCA plan consistent with the purposes of the  
2 CDCA. The six primary areas of the proposed amendment  
3 to the CDCA are the: Development focus areas,  
4 prioritizing areas for renewable energy development  
5 with incentives; proposed conservation designations,  
6 including National Conservation Lands and areas of  
7 critical environmental concern with disturbance caps,  
8 allowable and non-allowable uses, and conservation  
9 management actions; proposed special recreation  
10 management areas and extensive recreational management  
11 areas, including allowable and non-allowable uses and  
12 CMAs; proposed visual resource management designations;  
13 replacement of the multiple use classes and CMAs for 15  
14 resource areas."

15 That's the quotation.

16 While it may not be readily understood by the  
17 other agency partners, it's just that is -- that just one  
18 component of these six, the multiple use classifications has  
19 been the focus of a substantial amount of negotiation and  
20 litigation over the last 34 years. Something as substantive  
21 as the replacement of these MUCs, if properly identified,  
22 would draw a lot more interest from the parties that have  
23 traditionally engaged in the prior amendments to the CDCA on  
24 this issue.

25 Instead, the way the DRECP has been presented, the

1 public is of an understanding that only the BLM lands that  
2 are within the plan area are going to be affected by the  
3 final decision, not the multiple use classifications of the  
4 entire CDCA. This is a fatal flaw in due process.

5 Now that I've finally grasped just how serious  
6 this mistake is I did not want to spare any time in making  
7 you aware of it.

8 I know that the number one comment the public has  
9 made up to this point has been to request more time to  
10 evaluate the document and formalize their concerns. My  
11 instincts tell me that you are already giving this serious  
12 consideration. However, as opposed to simply granting an  
13 extension, tonight I am proposing to you that you consider  
14 another option to deal with these two issues at the same  
15 time.

16 That option is to consider amending the notice of  
17 availability itself to more accurately identify the true  
18 scope of this plan and to resubmit the notice, effectively  
19 restarting the clock on the comment period. This option  
20 will not only offer the REAT agencies the opportunity to  
21 cure a problem that exposes this plan to additional and  
22 unnecessary risk of litigation, but it will offer the public  
23 the much needed time it so desperately needs. It's a win-  
24 win. Thank you for your time.

25 MR. BEALE: Thank you.

1 MR. ALGAZY: Oh, and I have copies for everyone in  
2 case you didn't have good notes.

3 MR. BEALE: All right. So thank you, sir.

4 That completes our -- that's all the speaker cards  
5 we have. But as I said, I'm informed that we don't have  
6 anyone on the phone. So let's go straight to anyone here  
7 who would like to make any supplemental comments or any  
8 final comments or follow-up.

9 Stephanie, if you'd like to --

10 MS. DASHIELL: Yeah. Thank you for the  
11 opportunity to finish. I wanted to also make some comments  
12 on the biological goals and objectives. I've been reviewing  
13 those and it seems that they contain very few measurable and  
14 quantifiable acreage targets. And there's also no spatial  
15 representation for how those biological goals and objectives  
16 are met by the plan, so any translation to the actual maps  
17 showing where such and such species is going to actually  
18 have its acres reserved. So that's been a challenge in  
19 reviewing this and something that I hope we can work on  
20 fixing in the next round. There is also little explanation  
21 for how the targets that are in there were defined as  
22 mitigation.

23 Another point, I think the migratory birds issue  
24 is inadequately addressed in the plan. This has been a  
25 recent development where we're seeing a lot of migratory

1 birds being -- dying at solar facilities, and I think we  
2 need to address that more fully within the plan.

3           And then lastly, I just wanted to mention  
4 something about adaptive management. And when I talk about  
5 adaptive management I'm not just speaking about -- from the  
6 conservation side, but also from the renewable energy side.  
7 I mean, the market is changing rapidly and I think there  
8 needs to be a way for DRECP to track really what is the need  
9 for different types of technology coming out of the desert  
10 and a way to respond to that. And I don't exactly know what  
11 the way is, but I think having a plan that sets in stone a  
12 certain amount of this type of energy or that type of energy  
13 coming out of the desert is -- is not a very good approach  
14 that allows for changes that might occur in energy  
15 efficiency and in the built environment.

16           And then in terms of adaptive management regarding  
17 species, climate change is a big deal. It's happening  
18 already. And reserves very well might change, species need  
19 where they are might change. And I think you need to have  
20 mechanisms within the plan that allow for adjusting where  
21 those reserves are in response to where species and climate  
22 shifts are happening in the desert.           Okay. Thank  
23 you, very much for letting me finish.

24           MR. BEALE: Thank you. All right, any more public  
25 comment?

1 April, come on up.

2 MS. SALL: Vertically challenged here. Okay.

3 Thank you.

4 I'd like to support the comments Stephanie just  
5 made about the adaptive management for the development side  
6 as well, I think part of my concern with -- I think I didn't  
7 say my name and you didn't say it either, April Sall  
8 again -- is that this plan is so rigid in planning for the  
9 20,000 megawatt goal or whatever your terminology for that  
10 is that it's putting an unnecessary burden potentially on  
11 the DRECP boundary of the California Desert.

12 And there are changes in technology. There are  
13 changes in renewable energy models. And we're having  
14 members like David Crane, CEO of NRG, saying that, you know,  
15 distributed generation and rooftop solar is the future for  
16 renewable energy goals. And there needs to be a way to  
17 either phase in the development and create less impact on  
18 some of the sensitive resources by prioritizing areas of  
19 disturbed land and being able to keep the landscape  
20 connectivity and the conservation and cultural and  
21 recreational values intact and not assume up front that 2  
22 million acres of DFA, for example, needs to be developed.

23 So I think there needs to be more consideration  
24 brought into the future changes from a development  
25 standpoint, and thus how that could be built into either a



## 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 7th 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 7, 2014