

CALIFORNIA ENERGY COMMISSION

PUBLIC MEETING

on the

Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan and

Environmental Impact Report/
Environmental Impact Statement

held at the

California Energy Commission
Hearing Room A, First Floor
1516 Ninth Street
Sacramento, California 95814

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P R O C E E D I N G S

NOVEMBER 13, 2014 2:03 p.m.

MR. BEALE: Hi, everyone. It's a little after 2:00, so we'll go ahead and get started. Can you hear me in the back?

[MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE]: Yes.

MR. BEALE: Okay. Great.

On behalf of the California Energy Commission, the California Department Of Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service I'd like to welcome you to this meeting about the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conversation Plan, or DRECP as we call it.

I'm Chris Beale. I'm the Director of the DRECP. With me today are some of the representatives of the planning team that developed the Draft DRECP, including representatives from the state and federal agencies that are responsible for preparing the plan, and also members of the consulting team in support of the agencies in preparing the plan.

We want to thank you all for coming here today. We know it's not easy to take time off in the middle of a weekday to be present at a meeting like this. But we appreciate your time, we appreciate your interest. And we're grateful that you came.

I'm going to, in a minute, just go over the program for today. But I first want to make an announcement. We've received lots of requests to extend the public comment period. The agencies have considered the request and have

1 decided to extend the public comment period for the draft plan
2 by 45 days. So the public comment period was scheduled to
3 end on January 9th. It will now end on February 23rd, so an
4 additional 45 days of public comment.

5 The purpose of the meeting today is to help you get
6 to know the Draft DRECP. We have folks here who can answer
7 your general questions about what the DRECP is, what's in the
8 DRECP, what the -- why we're preparing the plan, and where
9 we are in the process. We can also help you locate more
10 specific information in the document. If you have specific
11 or more technical concerns or questions folks here today can
12 help you find where in the document you can find the
13 information that's relevant to your concern.

14 We're also providing you with an early opportunity
15 for public comment. The draft document was released at the
16 end of September. As you know it's a substantial document.
17 We don't expect you all to have fully read it. So we are --
18 but we still want to give you an opportunity to provide any
19 input you want to give to us based on your early impressions
20 on the document.

21 One of the things I want to stress before I go in
22 more specifically in the program today is the scope of the
23 DRECP. It is important to realize that the DRECP is a
24 planning document. It doesn't propose any specific
25 renewable energy project or any transmission project. It is
26 a plan that, if adopted, would guide the siting of renewable
27 energy projects in the future.

28 Another thing, an important thing to point out, is
29 it has been reported in some articles that the DRECP is

1 opening up the desert to renewable energy development. I
2 think it's important to note that, at least by our estimate,
3 there are a little bit less than ten million acres in the
4 desert now where renewable energy projects could potentially
5 be sited. You know, areas where renewable energy
6 development is not prohibited. One of the fundamental
7 purposes of the DRECP is to identify where within that ten
8 million acres is it most appropriate to site renewable energy
9 projects. And as you'll see today in the presentation and
10 answering questions later on the Preferred Alternative, for
11 example, for the DRECP identifies a little over two million
12 acres that are potentially appropriate for siting renewable
13 energy projects.

14 A little about the format of the meeting today.
15 It's up on the agenda. I'll say a bit more about it. We're
16 going to start with a brief presentation. It's about 30
17 minutes. Scott Flint from the California Energy Commission
18 is here to make the presentation today. The presentation
19 will be posted online as all the presentations we've made at
20 these meetings will be posted, so you will have these slides
21 available to you later if you want to review them.

22 After the presentation we are going to have an open
23 house. And you see the poster boards around the back of the
24 room. What we'll be doing is for about 45 minutes, beginning
25 at 2:45 approximately, we'll have folks from the planning
26 team stationed at the six information stations. They'll be
27 there to answer your questions. And I'll tell you more about
28 those later. But that's sort of your opportunity to ask
29 questions about the draft plan.

1 And then promptly at 3:30 we'll reconvene and we'll
2 have an open mic sort of opportunity for public comment. We
3 will also have -- I do want to identify -- we have a court
4 reporter here today, Susan, who's here. Susan will be
5 recording comments made during the public comment session.
6 Those comments will be on the record. They'll be formal
7 comments just as if you had submitted a written comment.
8 We'll also provide an opportunity during the information
9 station open house. If you'd rather make a public comment
10 then, either because you want to make comment early, because
11 you don't want to make your comment in front of the group in
12 the room. You can talk to Susan during that time and make
13 your comment then. Again, it will be a formal comment on the
14 record just as if you had submitted a written comment.

15 I do want to identify just some folks who are here
16 today representing agencies that didn't prepare the plan, but
17 with whom we've been collaborating in the development of the
18 plan. We have a couple folks at least here from the
19 Department of Defense. We have Steve Chung, who is always
20 the best-dressed guy at our meetings, and Scott Kiernan. If
21 you have any questions about the Department of Defense's
22 operations in the desert, their concern about renewable
23 energy, or anything else, please feel free to ask them
24 questions.

25 We also have Laura Rozzell here from National Park
26 Service also in the back sitting next to Steve. If you have
27 questions about the National Park Service's interest in the
28 DRECP in renewable energy development, and so forth, please
29 talk to Laura.

1 And then I thought I saw Connie -- yeah, Connie
2 Chung -- I mean Connie Latham. (Laughter.) Connie Latham
3 from the Department of Parks and Recreation, the State
4 Department of Parks and Recreation is here also to answer your
5 questions.

6 A quick thing for the public comment period we ask
7 that you fill out one of the blue speaker cards that was in
8 the front as you walked in. The public -- they're blue, they
9 -- you can put a lot of information on them. All we really
10 need is your name. We use them to determine how many people
11 want to speak, so we can give everyone a chance to speak. And
12 you can put your name -- you can put any other information
13 there that you want affiliated with your comment. But again
14 we just need your name.

15 And we also want to let folks know that this meeting
16 is also being broadcast by WebEx. So there are folks who are
17 participating from the phone and watching the presentation,
18 so forth, on their computers.

19 What we'll do in the public comment session is
20 after everyone here who wants to speak has had a chance to
21 speak, we'll open up the phones and let folks on the phone
22 who want to comment make a comment.

23 So that's the introduction. We are on schedule
24 now. I want to turn to Scott Flint and our presentation.

25 MR. FLINT: Thanks, Chris.

26 So how's the volume; is that good?

27 (No audible response.)

28 MR. FLINT: Great.

29 Well, again, on behalf of the California Energy

1 Commission, the Bureau of Land Management, California
2 Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and
3 Wildlife Service I'd like to welcome you to this public
4 meeting and the introductory presentation on the Draft Desert
5 Renewable Energy Conservation Plan or DRECP. I'll try not
6 to use a lot of acronyms, but I will use that one. So we'll
7 be referring to it as the DRECP through most of the
8 presentation.

9 The DRECP is the result of an intense and
10 collaborative interagency planning process. It is a
11 comprehensive plan that contains a great deal of information.
12 And we've organized the document to make it as accessible as
13 possible in a format similar to the environmental impact
14 statements and environmental impact reports that you are used
15 to seeing. The DRECP contains six main volumes and an
16 additional volume of technical appendices.

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

24 There are 24 appendices that provide additional
25 information on Covered Species, biological goals and
26 objectives, climate change, and many other topics.

27 The four agencies that were principally
28 responsible for preparing the DRECP are the California Energy
29 Commission, Bureau of Land Management, California Department

1 of Fish and Wildlife, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
2 and many federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, private
3 citizens provided helpful input into the development of the
4 draft plan.

5 The purpose and goals of the Draft DRECP are to
6 provide a long-term adaptable plan for renewable energy
7 development and resource conservation within twenty two and
8 a half million acres of the Mojave and Sonoran deserts of
9 Southern California. The DRECP has a 25-year planning
10 horizon and is intended to be implemented through 2040.

11 The DRECP is intended to streamline the
12 environmental review and permitting process for renewable
13 energy projects sited in appropriate areas. Streamlined
14 under the DRECP means that review and permitting processes
15 would be more efficient and predictable. Streamlined does
16 not mean that environmental analysis would be incomplete or
17 that steps would be skipped. The DRECP would not weaken
18 environmental review under state or federal law. It would
19 make them more efficient and more predictable.

20 The DRECP would cover and conserve 37 sensitive
21 species and their habitats, including species listed as
22 threatened and endangered under the Federal Endangered Act
23 or the California Endangered Species Act.

24 On BLM lands the DRECP would also conserve other
25 valuable resources such as recreation, cultural, visual, and
26 wilderness characteristics. A core element of the DRECP is
27 a significant increase in conservation and recreation
28 designations that BLM is proposing on BLM lands to protect
29 valuable resources and uses in the desert.

1 The DRECP would provide a framework for
2 considering renewable energy, conservation, and a range of
3 other resources and values in one land use and conservation
4 planning process.

5 The DRECP identifies appropriate areas for
6 renewable energy projects, creates incentives for developers
7 to site projects in those areas by streamlining environmental
8 review and permitting processes and would conserve sensitive
9 species, their habitats, and ecological processes. The
10 DRECP would also protect other desert resources and values
11 on BLM lands.

12 As it is now the siting of renewable energy
13 projects and the mitigation of environmental impacts are
14 considered on an individual project-by-project basis and not
15 on a comprehensive landscape scale as proposed under the
16 DRECP. The DRECP would also help to improve coordination of
17 federal, state, local, tribal, and private conservation
18 efforts in the desert by identifying high-priority landscape
19 scale goals and objectives that can be used to guide and
20 achieve greater conservation outcomes.

21 The DRECP plan area covers about twenty-two and a
22 half million acres across portions of seven counties in the
23 Mojave and Sonoran Deserts and includes federal and
24 nonfederal lands. The plan area includes only a small
25 portion of some counties like San Diego and a large portion
26 of others such as San Bernardino County. This map shows you
27 general land ownership in the DRECP plan area. The largest
28 landholdings are BLM lands shown in yellow, National Park
29 Service lands shown in green, military lands in dark gray,

1 and private lands in light gray.

2 The DRECP is a combination of three different types
3 of plans: a BLM Land Use Plan Amendment, a U.S. Fish and
4 Wildlife Service General Conservation Plan, and a California
5 Department of Fish and Wildlife Natural Community
6 Conservation Plan. The three plans are integrated and
7 together help achieve the DRECP's overall goals and
8 objectives.

9 Each of the agency's plan applies to a different
10 portion of the DRECP plan area. The BLM Land Use Plan
11 Amendment applies only to BLM lands which cover nearly ten
12 million acres of the plan area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife
13 Service General Conservation Plan covers approximately 5.4
14 million acres of nonfederal lands. And the GCP does not
15 apply to BLM or any federal lands. The Natural Community
16 Conservation Plan applies to both federal and nonfederal
17 lands and covers the entire plan area.

18 The renewable energy component -- sorry -- got a
19 little ahead of myself there.

20 The DRECP would provide a more efficient and
21 predictable environmental review and permitting process for
22 certain types of covered activities. Renewable energy
23 projects that would be sited within Development Focus Areas,
24 or DFAs, are the largest categories of covered activities and
25 includes solar, wind, and geothermal projects.

26 Transmission is also a covered activity and would be covered
27 both within and outside of Development Focus Areas so that
28 the energy produced can be delivered to where it's needed.

29 Covered activities include biological

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

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

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

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

25 The DRECP plans for up to 20,000 megawatts of new
26 renewable energy generation and transmission in the plan area
27 through the year 2040. It is important to note that 20,000
28 megawatts of new generation is not a development goal or
29 target. The DRECP is not intended to drive that level of

1 development. Instead an estimate of 20,000 megawatts of
2 renewable energy demand in the desert was used to estimate
3 the acres of ground disturbance that might occur. And we
4 used these estimates to conduct the environmental analysis.

5 The potential for 20,000 megawatts of renewable
6 energy development in the DRECP plan area is based on certain
7 assumptions about energy generation in California, including
8 an assumption that nearly 30,000 megawatts of distributed
9 generation would be built statewide.

10 The draft plan does assume there would be 20,000
11 megawatts of consumer-side distributed generation, like
12 rooftop solar. And that's about 10 times the amount of
13 customer-side distributed generation that's installed
14 today. Assumptions also include limited generation from
15 nuclear and fossil fuel resources and a continuation of state
16 policies that limited imports of renewable energy from
17 outside of the state.

18 Renewable energy in the DRECP plan area through
19 2040 would be lower than 20,000 megawatts if changes in
20 technology or public policy encourage or require different
21 resources for energy generation. We estimate that the
22 production of 20,000 megawatts from central station
23 renewable energy plants would result in about 177,000 acres
24 of ground disturbance in the plan area.

25 The DRECP analyzes the effects of all phases of
26 renewable energy development under a range of alternatives.
27 And one of the key differences amongst the alternatives is
28 the size and the location of the Development Focus Areas where
29 renewable energy projects would be sited.

1 The DRECP includes specific renewable energy
2 designations. The most important of these are the
3 Development Focus Areas where renewable energy projects
4 would benefit from a more efficient and streamlined
5 environmental review and permitting process. These areas
6 are suitable because they have renewable energy resources.
7 They are either windy, sunny, or have geothermal resources
8 and also because they are compatible with the conservation
9 of species and other resources, values, and uses.

10 In most of the alternatives the Development Focus
11 Areas are located where natural resource values are
12 relatively low to minimize conflicts between renewable
13 energy generation development and resource conservation.

14 Study areas are another type of renewable energy
15 designation. Study areas are lands that could be
16 appropriate for renewable energy development in the future
17 but require further study. Study areas are not regarded as
18 Development Focus Areas in the Draft DRECP.

19 The DRECP's biological conservation strategy was
20 used to develop the Land Use Plan Amendment, the General
21 Conservation Plan, and the National Community Conservation
22 Plan. The biological conservation strategy consider 37
23 species and 31 Natural Communities. It is designed to
24 protect species and their habitats, Natural Communities,
25 ecological processes and is based on a set of overarching
26 biological goals and objectives.

27 The biological conservation strategy includes
28 specific conservation and management actions to avoid,
29 minimize, and mitigate for impacts to Covered Species and

1 contribute to their recovery. The conservation strategy
2 also includes a monitoring and adaptive management program
3 to allow the DRECP to incorporate new information throughout
4 the 25-year term of the plan.

5 Six alternatives are presented and analyzed in the
6 Draft DRECP, five action alternatives and one no-action
7 alternative. The agencies have identified one of the five
8 action alternatives as the Preferred Alternative. The
9 no-action alternative describes what is expected to happen
10 if the DRECP is not completed or not approved.

11 The BLM Land Use Plan Amendment, the National
12 Community Conservation Plan, and the General Conservation
13 Plan are included in all of the action alternatives. Other
14 common elements of the action alternatives include the
15 conservation strategy, Development Focus Areas, recreation
16 designations on BLM land, and any monitoring and adaptive
17 management program.

18 Each of the action alternatives analyzes the
19 potential production of 20,000 megawatts of renewable
20 energy, which would result in about 177,000 acres of ground
21 disturbance. This acreage is dispersed and analyzed
22 differently in each action alternative, depending on the
23 configuration of the Development Focus Areas.

24 This is a map of the no-action alternative, which
25 assumes the DRECP would not be approved. The light pink
26 areas are where renewable energy projects could potentially
27 be built today, an area of about 9.8 million acres. The dark
28 pink hatched areas show where renewable energy projects would
29 occur under the DRECP's Preferred Alternative, an area of

1 about two million acres of Development Focus Area.

2 One of the most important differences among the
3 DRECP alternatives is the size and geographic distribution
4 of the Development Focus Areas. The slide shows you the
5 comparison of the DFAs in three of the action alternatives.
6 The DFAs are shown in pink on these maps. This slide also
7 shows where the Development Focus Areas differ among these
8 three alternatives. Alternative 1 is on the left. The
9 preferred alternative is in the middle and Alternative 2 is
10 on the right of the slide. Alternative 1 has less land
11 proposed as DFAs overall and as compared to the Preferred
12 Alternative or Alternative 2, especially in the West Mojave,
13 Imperial Valley, and Eastern Riverside County areas.

14 Alternative 2 has more land proposed as DFA than
15 the other two alternatives, especially in the West and
16 Central Mojave and the Owens Valley areas. Remember,
17 regardless of DFA's size and distribution, we are estimating
18 about 177,000 acres of ground disturbance impacts in each of
19 the five action alternatives.

20 Another important difference amongst the DRECP
21 alternatives is the amount of BLM lands proposed as additions
22 to National Landscape Conservation System, NLCS, or National
23 Conservation Lands. And these are shown in purple on the
24 maps.

25 Again Alternative 1 is on the left. And it has the
26 least amount of new national conservation lands proposed.
27 Alternative 2, on the right, has the most. The Preferred
28 Alternative, in the middle, has a moderate amount of proposed
29 National Conservation Lands. The amount of proposed

1 National Conservation Lands is related to the amount of
2 Development Focus Areas in each action alternative. Larger,
3 more geographically-dispersed DFAs would put more natural
4 resources at risk, so larger National Conservation Lands
5 designations are proposed to offset the increased impact.

6 Here are some basic highlights about the Preferred
7 Alternative. The overall biological conservation strategy
8 for the Preferred Alternative covers about 15 million acres,
9 including about 7.6 million acres of existing conservation
10 lands, such as national and state parks.

11 BLM conservation designations cover about four
12 million acres. Development Focus Areas cover about two
13 million acres. Study area lands about 183,000 acres. And
14 BLM recreation designations cover about 3.6 million acres.

15 This map gives you an overview of the Preferred
16 Alternative. Here you see the Development Focus Areas in
17 dark pink in relation to the DRECP's proposed conservation
18 lands, study area lands, recreation lands, military bases,
19 and existing conservation lands. You will be able to see
20 this map up closer later at the information stations in the
21 back.

22 For the Preferred Alternative, a little over two
23 million acres are proposed as Development Focus Areas.
24 However, even if 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy
25 generation were needed in the DRECP plan area, renewable
26 energy projects will be built on only about 177,000 acres or
27 nine percent of that total DFA acreage. The dark-striped
28 slice on the top of this pie chart represents the estimated
29 ground disturbance as a portion of the total DFA acreage.

1 The dark-striped slice -- I already said that.

2 If less than 20,000 megawatts of new generation is
3 actually needed in the DRECP plan area then the amount of
4 ground disturbance will be less than 177,000 acres. The
5 total proposed DFA acreage is much larger than the estimated
6 acres of impact to allow for flexibility in locating where
7 projects would be built even within the DFAs.

8 This map shows the Development Focus Areas in pink
9 and the amount of estimated ground disturbance expected to
10 occur in each county within the DRECP plan area. The little
11 gray boxes that you see to the right of each county gives you
12 an idea of how large the ground disturbance would be within
13 the DFAs in that county in comparison with the total area of
14 DFA which is shown in pink. For the counties in the plan area
15 the estimated ground disturbance that would occur ranges from
16 five percent to 16 percent of the total proposed DFA acreage.

17 Let's zoom into the Imperial and Eastern Riverside
18 portions of the plan area and look at the estimated ground
19 disturbance. In Imperial County there are 734,000 acres of
20 DFA identified. And if 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy
21 generation were built plan-wide the estimated ground
22 disturbance in Riverside -- in Imperial County would be up
23 to 69,000 acres or nine percent of the DFA area.

24 In Riverside County there are 260,000 acres of
25 Development Focus Area identified. And if 20,000 megawatts
26 of renewable energy generation were to be built plan-wide the
27 estimated ground disturbance would be up to 42,000 acres or
28 16 percent of the area in that particular Development Focus
29 Area.

1 The DRECP's environmental analysis includes a
2 description of the environmental setting in Volume III and
3 its environmental impact analysis in Volume IV. The
4 environmental analysis considers 23 resource categories.
5 And we identified these resource categories based on scoping
6 meetings, preliminary analysis, and input from tribes, the
7 public, and the agency experts.

8 In the environmental analysis for each of these
9 categories we compared the alternatives based on the proposed
10 level of renewable energy impacts; conservation and
11 management actions that avoid, minimize, and mitigate
12 impacts to Covered Species; conservation and management
13 actions for recreation, visual, cultural, and other
14 resources on BLM lands; and the types of acreage of land
15 allocations on BLM lands.

16 The draft analysis concludes that impacts to most
17 of the 23 resource categories would be less than significant.
18 For ten of the resource categories listed here on the slide
19 impacts would be significant in one or more of the
20 alternatives including the no-action alternative.

21 For implementation of the plan it is important to
22 note that no new government entity would be created by the
23 DRECP. All agencies will retain their current authority and
24 responsibilities. The purpose of identifying an
25 implementation structure for the DRECP is to improve agency
26 coordination and communication. Implementation would also
27 include participation and input from tribes, local
28 governments, the public, and the scientific community. The
29 DRECP also estimates the cost of implementing the plans'

1 biological conservation strategy and identifies sources of
2 funding.

3 Local governments may use the DRECP to inform their
4 land-use planning decisions. The DRECP would not restrict
5 or change local land-use planning or permitting authority for
6 renewable energy projects. With the DRECP, local
7 governments would have the option of applying for permits
8 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California
9 Department of Fish and Wildlife to cover renewable energy
10 projects within their local jurisdictions.

11 Now a little bit about public participation. The
12 agencies have completed their work for this draft plan. And
13 now we need your help and your input to shape the final DRECP.
14 We've created a website for the DRECP at www.drecp.org. To
15 help you understand the DRECP we've prepared a series of fact
16 sheets, a list of frequently-asked questions, and an
17 informational video all available on the website. The Draft
18 DRECP is on this website and also on the Bureau of Land
19 Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service websites.
20 We also have an innovative mapping tool called the DRECP
21 Gateway, which I'll talk about more in a moment.

22 You can review the DRECP at local libraries and
23 agency offices in the plan area. And DVDs are also available
24 upon request. You can also sign up for the DRECP list serve,
25 which will automatically send important notices about the
26 DRECP to your email address.

27 All the information on this slide is on a handout
28 available at the front table where you came in. So don't try
29 to write it down really fast. And it's also -- all of it is

1 also posted at the website.

2 Public review and comment is absolutely critical
3 to developing the final DRECP. You can give your comments
4 by mail, email, fax, in person, and at these public meetings.
5 Addresses for sending your comments are on the handout at the
6 front table and on the website at www.drecp.org. We want
7 your voice to be heard and we assure you all public comments
8 are welcome, valued, and will be considered. The public
9 comment period opened on September 26th and now closes on
10 February 23rd as Chris just announced at the beginning of the
11 meeting.

12 Public meetings are being held throughout the
13 DRECP planning area and surrounding population centers. We
14 have one more of those meetings next week in Joshua Tree,
15 California.

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

27 The DRECP Gateway is an innovative online data and
28 mapping tool. And it's free and user-friendly. And we
29 encourage folks to go in and explore. There is a sign-in

1 function, but you only have to use it if want to save
2 information and come back later to use that same information
3 again. Anyone with a computer, regardless of your
4 experience with GIS, can use the Gateway, to view, edit, and
5 analyze maps and data. You can create custom maps and put
6 your comments right on those maps and then save, print, or
7 export the maps for inclusion with your written comments.
8 The Gateway web address is at the bottom of this slide and
9 it's drecp.databasin.org.

10 The site is a really useful tool. But please note
11 that it is just a tool. It's not necessary to use the Gateway
12 to review, understand, or comment on the DRECP. It's an
13 optional resource available for your use.

14 That's the end of our presentation this afternoon.
15 And we thank you for your interest in the DRECP and look
16 forward to talking with you and hearing your comments in the
17 next two parts of the meeting.

18 Thank you.

19 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Scott. As Scott said, so
20 we're going to switch over to our open house now.

21 If I could ask our planning team folks to go to your
22 stations and set up. In a moment I'll orient everyone to
23 which stations we have and where they are.

24 Before we do, I do want to welcome a couple of
25 folks, who have joined me up here.

26 Commissioner Karen Douglas, from the California
27 Energy Commission to my immediate right.

28 And Jim Kenna, the California State Director for
29 the Bureau of Land Management.

1 So this is an opportunity for folks here to ask
2 questions about the development of the plan. We have six
3 information stations. We also remember that Susan, our
4 court reporter, is available to take your public comments
5 during any time during the open house. She will also be there
6 for the public comment session.

7 So our six stations are, starting to your left, we
8 have our overview station, our general station. If you have
9 just general questions about what the DRECP is, what's in it,
10 how the alternatives are different, or if you have questions
11 about the analysis in the draft DRECP about impacts,
12 environmental impacts on the human environment, please go to
13 Station 1.

14 Moving counterclockwise, to the back of the room
15 -- David, if you could raise your hand? -- is our energy
16 station. If you have questions about the renewable energy
17 planning assumptions in the DRECP or how transmission is
18 addressed, please go to that station.

19 Moving counterclockwise a bit more, we have our BLM
20 Land Use Plan Amendment Station. Vicki, and Liz, and Mike
21 are raising their hands, so if you have questions about the
22 LUPA, please go there.

23 Further counterclockwise, back to your right, we
24 have our General Conservation Plan Station, Fish and Wildlife
25 Service folks there can answer your questions.

26 Moving one over, we have our Natural Community
27 Conservation Plan Station, where we have Steve Ingram. And
28 we also want to thank Kevin Hunting, Chief Deputy Director
29 of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, for

1 joining us tonight, but also being available to help us answer
2 questions about the NCCP. So thank you very much, Kevin.

3 And then finally to the far right moving further
4 counterclockwise, we have a station for biological
5 conservation strategy with Scott and Mike. And that's where
6 you should go if you have questions about the biological
7 conservation strategy that was developed and used for all
8 three plan components: the Land Use Plan Amendment, the
9 General Conservation Plan, and the NCCP. And those are our
10 stations.

11 I do want to remind you that if you would like to
12 speak during the public comment session, which will start
13 promptly at 3:30, please fill out a blue card from the front
14 table. You can leave that with Valerie or Kristy, who's over
15 here, controlling the meeting. And also to ask folks on the
16 phone, if you would like to make a public comment, please use
17 the chat function and let Kristy know.

18 Kristy, we have a chat function, don't we?

19 KRISTY: Actually, no. I had to change the format
20 and so I'm just asking people to please send a chat to me.

21 MR. BEALE: Send a chat to you?

22 KRISTY: Um-hum.

23 MR. BEALE: Okay. And so we know that you want to
24 speak.

25 So anyway we'll reconvene at 3:30. And in the
26 meantime I hope you have lots of questions. Thanks very much
27 for coming.

28 (At 2:44 p.m. the meeting recessed for participants to
29 visit the agencies around the room.)

1 (Immediately below is the transcript of the one comment
2 taken by the court reporter during the recess, from 3:29 to
3 3:31 p.m.):)

4 MR. SMITH: My name is John Smith. It's a toughy.
5 I'm as plain-spoken as my name. I don't mean to be mean, but
6 sometimes maybe I sound a little bit rough.

7 Yes. The DRECP on its premise unfortunately is
8 fatally flawed. It is flawed because it presumes that AGW,
9 anthropogenic global warming, manmade global warming, is a
10 settled science. Until it is much more fully vetted, proven,
11 or disproven, then the DRECP is being developed on a premise
12 that is potentially completely incorrect. And, ultimately
13 when you read the DRECP, it has wonderful elements of it in
14 protecting the environment as far as the wildlife, the
15 habitat. It is short on protecting the natural human
16 habitat, however, and defers often to animals and plants as
17 having any superior place than the human being, which it will
18 require to protect the rest.

19 Now the flaw in the DRECP is that it attempts to
20 use obsolete technology --

21 MR. BEALE: Hi, everyone. It's about 3:30. So
22 if you could wrap up your conversations and find your seats,
23 please.

24 MR. SMITH: -- that goes back 1979. And there are
25 current technologies that are in the works and some already
26 proven that will generate electricity in far more efficient
27 manners.

28 The next thing that it does is it takes public land
29 that is owned by the citizens of the United States and it gives

1 it to private business to generate a product that it then
2 resells to the people who provided them the ability to do it
3 by tax incentives and by giving away their property. And on
4 that basis it forces the consumer into the hands of big
5 business rather than free them, as government should be
6 doing, from the grip of major, big business interests.

7 Thank you.

8 (Mr. Smith's comments conclude. The meeting resumes at
9 3:32 p.m.:)

10 MR. BEALE: All right. So the public comment
11 session in our meeting tonight is the chance for everyone here
12 who would like to make a comment to sort of have a last word
13 in the evening. This is not a Q-and-A session. That was
14 what the open house was for. This is really an opportunity
15 for you to make comments and for our agency folks here to
16 listen to your comments.

17 Even though you won't receive a response to your
18 comment today, again the comments that you make during the
19 public comment session will be recorded by the court
20 reporter. They'll become formal comments in this process.
21 The agencies will be reviewing all the public comments that
22 are submitted, considering them, and providing written
23 responses in the final document.

24 I'm going to go through just a few housekeeping
25 details on how we'll handle the public comment session. But
26 I first want to ask our agency folks to introduce themselves.

27 MR. DAVIS: Eric Davis, U.S. Fish and Wildlife
28 Service.

29 MS. DOUGLAS: Karen Douglas, California Energy

1 Commission.

2 MR. KENNA: And Jim Kenna, Bureau of Land
3 Management.

4 MS. STORA: Christine Stora, advisor to
5 Commissioner Douglas.

6 MR. HUNTING: Kevin Hunting, Department of Fish
7 and Wildlife.

8 MR. BEALE: Thank you all.

9 We have six speaker cards. We have plenty of time
10 for public comment. What we have been doing in public
11 meetings is giving everyone three minutes to speak in the
12 room. Then we'll open up the phones and see if anyone wants
13 to make comments on the phone. And then after that if you
14 want to comment again, or make a supplemental comment, or
15 anyone else wants to come up later, we have the plenty of time.
16 So I think everyone who wants to speak tonight can do that.

17 I have a timer here to help you keep track of your
18 time. It will be yellow for the first two minutes of your
19 comments, and then turns red the last minute, and then it
20 makes a beeping noise, which I'll turn off as soon as I can.

21 But I did just want to just reiterate to everyone
22 that we are grateful to you being here. We know it's not easy
23 to get here, it's not easy to stand up in front of a group
24 of people to make public comments. But we do appreciate it.

25 All right. So our first speaker tonight is Misty
26 Watson, second is Sam Goldman, and third is Carl Zichella.

27 So, Misty, are you here? Misty Watson?

28 (No audible response.)

29 MR. BEALE: All right, Sam Goldman. Sam, I do

1 want to say, has probably been our best repeat customer of
2 all our meetings. So thank you, Sam.

3 (Laughter.)

4 MR. GOLDMAN: I'm a DRECP groupie, I think,
5 officially. I'm learning a lot at each meeting, and I
6 appreciate being able to testify. And I want to first thank
7 the DRECP staffs with all the agencies who have done a
8 tremendous job, traveling all over the state, meeting with
9 citizen groups and people that are concerned about the
10 outcome. And you all have done a tremendous job in putting
11 together a very complicated plan.

12 I wanted to stress that planning for renewable
13 energy and conservation in the desert is very, very
14 important. And there's been a lot of concerns at all the
15 hearings and all the meetings about the future of the desert.
16 And I just wanted to stress that planning is probably the most
17 important thing that we can be doing. And by bringing people
18 together to hash this out, even though it's so complicated,
19 if we did nothing at all, we'd be in a far worse place, both
20 on acting on the climate crisis, as well as trying to figure
21 out how to protect special places in the desert.

22 I'm with the Conservation Lands Foundation. And
23 we are a group that works with 58 friends groups around the
24 Western United States. Here in California these are groups
25 like Friends of the Desert Mountains, Friends of Big Morongo
26 Canyon Preserve, Amargosa Conservancy. And these are all
27 citizen groups that had formed to make sure that the BLM's
28 National Conservation Lands are protected, restored, and
29 expanded. And this expansion project that we're doing here

1 in this plan is incredibly important. These areas are
2 important to people who love the desert, whether you're
3 somebody who likes to drive off-road, if you like to pick up
4 rocks, if you're hiker, recreationist. I spend a week a year
5 in the Panamint Valley, one of my favorite places in the
6 desert. It's protected in the Preferred Alternative, which
7 I'm grateful for. So identifying these important cultural,
8 historic, and scientific areas are truly important.

9 Some of the places that some of our citizen groups
10 care a lot about include the Silurian Valley, Chuckwalla
11 Bench, and Soda Mountains. And we would like to see those
12 included as part of the National Conservation Lands. And
13 when we add these areas to the National Conservation Lands,
14 our written comments will stress the importance of managing
15 these places like they are in the rest of the country. That
16 would mean to ensure that there is a mineral withdrawal, that
17 they're protected in perpetuity. And our written comments
18 will go into much more detail in how we see the national
19 management around the rest of the country being just as
20 important to managing the Desert National Conservation Lands
21 in the same way here in California.

22 We see the policy documents, such as the 15-year
23 Strategic Plan for the National Conservation Lands. And
24 California's very strong five-year step-down plan is
25 guidelines on how we can do that. And then when these lands
26 are designated, I look forward to working with our citizen
27 partners and BLM to work to ensure that we are taking care
28 of these places for future generations.

29 So thank you for all of your hard work and for all

1 of your time. Thanks, Chris.

2 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Sam.

3 Carl Zichella, Kim Delfino, and Sally Miller.

4 MR. ZICHELLA: Good afternoon. My name is Carl
5 Zichella. I'm a Senior Policy Analyst with the Western
6 Renewable Energy Project of the Natural Resource Defense
7 Council based in San Francisco.

8 I'd like to begin by thanking the agency staff and
9 consultants who have been working on the DRECP for years and
10 also all the stakeholders who have been commenting, attending
11 meetings and workshops for years as well.

12 The NRDC strongly supports landscape level
13 planning and guided development for such large-scale energy,
14 renewable energy. We believe it's the best approach for
15 finding low-impact places to site these facilities and to
16 identify special places that should be protected from
17 development. A well-crafted DRECP can help us achieve both
18 of these goals in the desert. This planning process gives
19 us the opportunity to proactively decide, not just where the
20 projects should be located, but also which lands should be
21 conserved. That balance is credibly important. This kind
22 of plan, if done right, will focus development in
23 lower-impact zones and help avoid the industrial sprawl that
24 would otherwise result from an ad hoc unplanned development
25 of renewable energy. This will protect habitat, cultural
26 and historic resources, recreation, and scenic vistas of the
27 California desert.

28 The draft plan is a good first step, but it does
29 need significant work on some key issues. NRDC would like

1 to flag some of these issues that require more work for the
2 DRECP to reach its full potential. The conservation
3 strategy needs additional detail and specificity. It must
4 conserve iconic desert species like the bighorn sheep, desert
5 tortoise, and golden eagle. In order to be sure that desert
6 wildlife are truly being protected, the plan needs specific
7 and measurable biological goals and objectives for each
8 Covered Species.

9 More detail is needed about the management of
10 public lands than have been identified for conservation.
11 The plan must explain how conservation lands will be
12 protected and managed for conservation over the long term.

13 More detail is also needed regarding
14 implementation for the plan. There is no funding plan. We
15 need a funding plan to show how any of the plan conservation
16 actions will be carried out. Without reliable sources of
17 funding we're not confident that federal and state agencies
18 will be able to live up to their commitments in the plan.

19 The Development Focus Areas need to be refined with
20 input from local communities. And county engagement is key
21 for the plan to work. Counties that include the DFAs and
22 identified conservation areas on private lands must continue
23 to be involved in the finalizing of this plan and their role
24 in implementing the plan must be clearly defined.

25 In closing, I'd like to reiterate our appreciation
26 for the work that's being done to date. I don't think it's
27 possible to understate just how important or overstate how
28 important this is for those of us working on regional
29 transmission planning across the rest of the West. The model

1 that we produce here will help guide development into
2 appropriate places and provide the right transmission for
3 them is absolutely crucial to accomplishing the climate goals
4 for California, the nation, and the rest of the world.

5 Thanks very much.

6 MR. BEALE: Thank you.

7 Kim Delfino, Sally Miller, and Erica Brand.

8 MS. DELFINO: Good afternoon. I'm Kim Delfino.
9 I'm the California Program Director with the Defenders of
10 Wildlife here in Sacramento. And I just want to start out
11 with similar comments to my colleagues who are very
12 supportive of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan
13 and concept. We do believe that the reason why we and our
14 friends have been involved in this for the last five years
15 because it would be, if done correctly, a vastly better way
16 than the way we've been doing it in the past. It will build
17 on the Solar PEIS. And we think it will lead to a lot of
18 conservation, hopefully, a lot of conservation out on the
19 desert and less impact from development.

20 So, you know, we've been very supportive of the
21 process. And we will be providing you with very detailed
22 comments. Thank you for the additional six weeks or 45 days.
23 We appreciate that. We will need every single one of those
24 minutes.

25 But I'm going to offer up a few comments that I
26 would urge you to see as constructive criticism. The first
27 is that we're looking at conservation strategy and we're
28 struggling with it. The lack of quantified biological goals
29 and objectives is a challenge for us. There's a lot of

1 question about what the step-down biological goals really
2 mean and how they actually relate to providing for
3 conservation species in the plan area. Our initial analysis
4 is showing that we may not be able to meet some of these
5 standards. And we will be putting that all in detail in our
6 comments.

7 One species in particular for us is Mohave ground
8 squirrel. We're not sure you guys have actually hit the
9 right strategy for ground squirrels at this point.

10 So the Development Focus Areas, I think you got
11 this loud and clear from the folks in the local meetings, you
12 need to refine the Development Focus Areas significantly.
13 People that live in Lucerne Valley, Antelope Valley, Imperial
14 Valley, and some of these other areas, they see giant pink
15 blobs and assume that they're going to be covered with solar
16 panels and solar projects and windfarms. And I strongly
17 urge, and I think you hopefully will be doing this already,
18 is work with the local communities to refine those DFAs so
19 that we have a clear idea about where these projects should
20 be going and to build support in buying in the local
21 communities.

22 Which kind of leads to my next point, which is: I
23 don't think that this plan is going to work unless you have
24 the counties bought in and some way, shape, or form ideally
25 by signing a plan -- getting on and implementing the permit.
26 Because you are counting on, particularly Kern and San
27 Bernardino and Imperial, for a fair amount of Development
28 Focus Areas on private land and also some key conservation
29 areas.

1 And the other point on the Development Focus Areas
2 that Defenders have been raising is we were pretty surprised
3 to see the Desert Tortoise Natural Area being suggested as
4 part of a Development Focus Area. We would assume that that
5 might be a mistake since the agencies have invested
6 incredible amounts of money and energy in establishing the
7 DTNA. And we would, you know, think that you're not actually
8 planning on developing the DTNA.

9 The Durability Agreement, we will be providing our
10 comments on the 21st. We'd love to get an extra week. But
11 we've got some issues with that. And, really quickly, mainly
12 we want to make sure that the commitments that the BLM will
13 be making last for the extent of the impact. And there's a
14 lot of lack of clarity in the MOU about that. And also that
15 the commitments are being applied to all BLM conservation
16 lands within the NCCP reserve and not just lands being counted
17 for compensatory mitigation.

18 And then I would echo what Carl said about
19 governance, structure, and funding plan, not just for us
20 being able to understand how conservation is going to be
21 funded, but honestly if I were a developer I'm not sure how
22 much this is going to ultimately cost at the end of the day
23 or a county, what it's going to cost. And I think there needs
24 to be a lot of work done on the financing and funding side
25 of the plan.

26 But, overall, you know, we appreciate the fact that
27 you got it out and we are able to provide the comments. And
28 we look forward to working with you as this plan moves
29 forward. And thank you.

1 MR. BEALE: Thank you.

2 Sally Miller, Erica Brand, and Bruce Brazil.

3 MS. MILLER: Hi, I'm Sally Miller with the
4 Wilderness Society. I live just north of the DRECP planning
5 area in Mono County. And this is my fifth or sixth meeting.
6 So I haven't -- I'm not quite a groupie like Sam, but sort
7 of a little bit behind him there.

8 I want to thank you guys for your incredibly hard
9 work. We met with Vicki Campbell and others at BLM this
10 morning. And, you know, if we think it seemed like forever
11 for the plan to come out, we know that for those who really
12 worked on it, it really was forever.

13 We really -- we need a DRECP. There are a lot of
14 concerns that we've heard in the communities. But we --
15 California must lead the way in trying to combat the impacts
16 of climate change. And so we're glad that we have a chance
17 to improve upon the DRECP now. And those impacts are being
18 felt everywhere, from my vegetable garden to the Mammoth
19 Mountain ski area to the Joshua trees that some of my
20 colleagues and I have noticed moving north into the northern
21 parts of the Cal desert.

22 We also need a DRECP to avoid the status quo and
23 the scatter-shot development that could result. And our
24 organization has been a very strong supporter of directed
25 development, starting with the solar PEIS. So we're moving
26 in the right direction. And also the communities, the
27 environment, of course, and the industry, having certainty
28 to the extent it's possible in a changing world is important.
29 I was a county planning commissioner for 16 years. Plans

1 should be adaptive, but it is good to have a plan.

2 I wanted to talk a little bit about the county stuff
3 as well. I have worked most closely with Inyo, which has been
4 terribly proactive in developing its own renewable energy
5 general plan amendment. Imperial I think is close behind,
6 and then San Bernardino and some of the other counties. And
7 the CEC has given around \$7 million to the counties to engage
8 in that planning. So I can't emphasize enough the importance
9 of your agencies working at that level to make things mesh,
10 to work out the differences, to really address unique county
11 problems. They are different in every county.

12 As Kim and others said, the DFAs -- and I had pink
13 blobs in my notes -- and we did not coordinate our comments,
14 but they have caused tremendous concern. And I think some
15 people's homes are in potential DFAs, so they really need to
16 be refined. And I assume that will happen through this
17 process.

18 And then I just wanted to mention that we are very
19 strong supporters of the National Conservation Lands. It's
20 a critical component. If DRECP gives -- it will help give
21 certainty to residents and visitors as to the lands that we
22 care about for recreation, for geology, for birds, for
23 history, for all kinds of things. And Silurian Valley is a
24 special analysis area in the DRECP. We'd like to see that
25 included in the conservation lands. And we hope that in the
26 record of decision that that change will be made.

27 So thank you. And thank you also for the
28 extension.

29 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Erica Brand, Bruce

1 Brazil, and Greg Suba.

2 MS. BRAND: Hi. My name is Erica Brand. And I am
3 a Renewable Energy Project Director for the Nature
4 Conservancy. Thank you for the tremendous work that you have
5 put into the DRECP. We appreciate the opportunity to provide
6 comments this afternoon.

7 And I will say personally I have a really good
8 milestone at home for the DRECP. I started working on it when
9 my daughter was an infant and she just started kindergarten.
10 And I know how much time and energy it has taken to get her
11 to this point. So I can relate in some way, and I really
12 appreciate it.

13 So I'd like to reiterate what some of my colleagues
14 said. Planning for renewable energy and conservation in the
15 desert is very important. And the Nature Conservancy
16 strongly supports landscape scale planning for energy and
17 conservation. Landscape scale planning allows for
18 implementation of the mitigation hierarchy, which is the
19 greatest opportunity for avoiding the adverse impacts of
20 energy. The use of the mitigation hierarchy ensures that
21 facilities are sited to avoid impacting natural systems.
22 Technology choices and facility operating protocols are made
23 to further minimize impacts when technically-feasible
24 restoration of impacts occurs and effective off-site
25 conservation measures are undertaken to mitigate for
26 remaining impacts.

27 My second point is that we are committed to working
28 to improve the draft plan. We've identified a number of
29 areas where there is room for improvement within the draft.

1 And our written comments will focus on a number of things.
2 But the ones I want to highlight today are durability,
3 biological goals and objectives, protection of groundwater
4 and groundwater-dependent resources, and the Development
5 Focus Areas. Like my colleague just mentioned, there's a
6 need to refine the Development Focus Areas. And the Nature
7 Conservancy will be submitting science-based comments on
8 this topic.

9 But there's one in particular I wanted to highlight
10 today. And I'm glad that Kim Delfino brought it up. The
11 Nature Conservancy actually helped purchase lands for the
12 Desert Tortoise Natural Area. And this includes investment
13 of donor funds. And within the draft DRECP and some
14 alternatives the DTNA is proposed for conservation which we
15 support, but in other alternatives the DTNA is proposed for
16 development, which we do not think is appropriate.

17 So I had a third point today, which was the plan
18 is complex and we need sufficient time for review, but I don't
19 need to make that point anymore. So thank you very much for
20 the extension.

21 And lastly I just want to thank you for the
22 opportunity to provide comments today. I really appreciate
23 it.

24 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Bruce Brazil and Greg
25 Suba. And then we'll go to the phones.

26 MR. BRAZIL: Good afternoon. Bruce Brazil, I'm
27 on the Board of Directors for CORVA, which is the California
28 Off-Road Vehicle Association. But my comments today will be
29 my own and may or may not reflect the stance of CORVA. The

1 general topic will or area of speech, anyway, will be in the
2 renewable energy portion of the plan.

3 First item: I have to disagree with the
4 electrical energy estimating process used in DRECP. All the
5 energy production figures in the DRECP have been in megawatts
6 of capacity. And capacity is the maximum amount of
7 electrical energy a project is expected to produce at its peak
8 output. The photovoltaic, solar thermal, and wind
9 generation plants do not produce energy at their full
10 capacity for 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They cannot
11 produce constant level during those times.

12 Megawatts, as measured, are designed -- are a
13 designation of how much electrical energy is being produced
14 at any instant of time. Therefore, energy capacity for these
15 methods of electrogeneration cannot be used to establish a
16 figure for use for determining how much renewable energy is
17 being produced. The correct method of stating energy
18 production in the DRECP would be to use megawatt hours or
19 gigawatt hours. This takes into account the wattage being
20 generated and how long it is being generated.

21 Electrical power is sold in kilowatt hours,
22 megawatt hours, and gigawatt-hour increments. In the year
23 2013 total system power for California was 296,000 gigawatt
24 hours. Therefore, in order to meet the 33 percent of retail
25 sales of renewable energy production requirements mandated
26 in California Senate Bill 1-2, I believe it was, actually,
27 for the year of 2011-2012, the renewal energy production
28 would have had to have been around 97,000 gigawatt hours
29 annually during the time period.

1 The method in the DRECP of reporting megawatt
2 capacity doesn't relate to this figure. It must be in
3 megawatt hours, otherwise the figures are rather deceptive.
4 And I did find a section in the plan, one point, three point,
5 five point, three point six, where it has the discussion of
6 using just plain capacity rather than watt-hour figures.

7 Second item: I have not read how the acres per
8 megawatt of renewable energy was estimated for the
9 photovoltaic, solar thermal, and wind methods of generation.
10 When estimating the land needed to fulfill the 28,000
11 megawatts capacity, the acres per megawatt in Table 1.3-4
12 were under half -- may I keep going?

13 MR. BEALE: Okay, please finish your thought.

14 MR. BRAZIL: Okay. Thank you. Well, kept
15 moving.

16 Anyway, the capacity for acres per megawatt were
17 under half of what was assumed in the BLM report where they
18 have the permit process for the applicants are saying they're
19 going to produce so many watts of capacity -- so how many acres
20 per megawatt of capacity. That difference was approximately
21 a factor of two. They are requesting twice the acreage for
22 the megawatt capacity. That compared to the figures that you
23 are using in the report, your report was using 7.1 acres per
24 megawatt each for the photovoltaic and solar thermal power.
25 And, let's see, 26 -- let's see. This has got here of wind
26 power, your -- the plan had 40 acres per megawatt, BLM permit
27 process at 86.6 acres per megawatt.

28 So it's quite a difference, folks. So you're
29 going to be looking at a whole lot more than land to generate

1 your capacity rating that is -- I would question use of that,
2 anyway.

3 Third item. I've not found any reference to a
4 nonrenewable energy that would be consumed on the
5 solar-thermal generating plants. Additional nonrenewable
6 energy is needed to heat the thermal conductors or thermal
7 mass during times of low or no solar influence.

8 Thank you for allowing myself and the other members
9 of the public to speak here. And hopefully I'll have more
10 comments to submit in the near future over the site. Thank
11 you.

12 MR. BEALE: Thank you.

13 All right. So we'll go to the phones and see if
14 we have comments on the phone, then I'll come back to the room
15 real quick.

16 Sorry. Sorry, Greg. We have Greg Suba.

17 MR. SUBA: I don't feel slighted.

18 My name is Greg Suba. I'm the Conservation
19 Program Director for the California Native Plant Society.
20 Do I get an extra minute?

21 (Laughter.)

22 MR. SUBA: CNPS has been protecting native plant
23 resources in California since 1965. And I want to echo the
24 thanks and appreciation for the agencies and especially the
25 agency staff that have gotten us to this important first step
26 with the DRECP, which has the potential to help us avoid the
27 ad hoc siting of energy projects in the desert that we've seen
28 so far, which can benefit both conservation in the desert and
29 development in the desert if done correctly and help us

1 protect places that CNPS and others really care about, like
2 Soda Mountain and the Cronese Lake area, Silurian Valley, and
3 Cadiz Valley.

4 I think I'll just focus on maybe some detailed
5 comments that build on what others have said today so far.
6 The plan is a good first step. It needs significant work,
7 though, still. And it will need the type of quantitative
8 BGOs, biological goals and objectives, for species like Mr.
9 Zichella referred to, but also for Natural Communities in the
10 plan especially under the NCCP part of the plan. We had that
11 earlier a few years ago. And we want to see that model
12 carried forward, the ones that were established through the
13 biological memos, the BGO driver memos in the spring of 2013
14 that had quantitative percent, areal extent of a community,
15 you know, the target for conservation. Without that line
16 it's going to be very difficult today. And then in 2040, up
17 to 2040, to determine how much impact is enough, is okay, and
18 how much impact is too much. So quantitative BGOs.

19 Redefining the DFAs is necessary. It's possible,
20 and I think it's something that's been intended all along.
21 In Western Antelope Valley -- I just want to, in my last
22 minute, give a shout out for how that can be done -- there
23 are building blocks already in place that point to where the
24 DFA can sort shrink away from to allow dispersal and migration
25 corridors through that Valley as we look to Los Angeles
26 County's significant ecological areas, local conservancy
27 acquisitions of thousands of acres of parcels in the Valley.
28 And then recently-mapped important plant communities and
29 wildlife corridors also point to additional building blocks

1 on how to redefine that DFA.

2 So we'll be submitting additional written
3 comments. There are some rare plants along the
4 California-Nevada border that are under the threat of covered
5 activities that aren't addressed in the plan, and we'd like
6 to see that revised.

7 And just another thank you for getting us to this
8 important first step and for having these meetings.

9 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Greg.

10 And so now we'll go to the phones. And then I'll
11 come back to whether the folks have any final comments. We
12 will get to those. I know we, at least, have one comment on
13 the phone, Nancy Rader. So let's start --

14 MS. RADER: Hello.

15 MR. BEALE: Okay. It's Nancy.

16 MS. RADER: Hi there. Yes, this is Nancy Rader
17 with the California Wind Energy Association. First, my
18 apologies for not being able to join you there in person. And
19 thank you very much for the opportunity of getting to comment
20 by phone.

21 I want to convey what CalWEA believes would be the
22 most productive path forward in the coming weeks and months
23 to address wind energy in the DRECP. From the beginning
24 CalWEA has devoted significant time and resources into this
25 planning process because we too believe that landscape level
26 planning can work both for conservation and renewable energy
27 development. We shared our ideas with the agencies and
28 stakeholders and revised our proposals along the way to
29 respond to the feedback that we were getting.

1 In response to concerns that CalWEA was initially
2 asking that too much land remain available for exploration
3 to find sites that work for wind projects, we pared back our
4 requested area by 60 percent so as to focus our requested
5 areas on those that have the best chance of supporting
6 commercial activity in the 2040 timeframe. And we explained
7 in detail why that amount land is necessary to be able to
8 support the amount of wind energy that may be necessary to
9 support achievement of the state's greenhouse gas reduction
10 goals.

11 So in reviewing the draft plan we were surprised
12 to discover that in Volume II.8 the draft plan considered the
13 CalWEA 2012 proposal and not the significantly revised
14 proposal that we put forward in February 2013 over a year and
15 a half before the draft plan was issued.

16 In reviewing our older proposal the draft states
17 that up to 57 percent of the areas proposed by CalWEA are
18 included in draft alternatives. But we had excluded the
19 majority of that area from our most recent proposal due to
20 near-term commercial infeasibility.

21 The draft plan's consideration for our proposal
22 also did not address any of the specific reasoning that we
23 provided to justify the amount of land that we proposed be
24 left on the table for exploration. So given the situation,
25 we don't believe that it would be productive for CalWEA to
26 file formal comments on the draft plan, and we hope instead
27 that we can work together with the agencies on a plan
28 alternative that considers our most recent proposal and more
29 thoroughly evaluates wind energy in a revised draft.

1 Over the last year, both Commissioner Douglas and
2 Director Kenna repeatedly stated that the draft was intended
3 to "start the conversation with stakeholders," that the --
4 you know, the conversation that really stopped in December
5 2012. We believe that for wind energy it's important we have
6 that conversation in the upcoming weeks and months rather
7 than commenting on a plan that will not nearly support the
8 amount of wind energy that the state very well may need to
9 achieve its clean energy goals.

10 Thank you very much.

11 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Nancy.

12 Is anyone else on the phone that would like to make
13 a comment?

14 Kristy, have you received any chats requesting a
15 comment?

16 MS. CHEW: There are no other chats, and I have
17 unmuted all the unidentified call-in users.

18 MR. BEALE: Okay. So if you're on the phone now
19 and you'd like to make a comment, please feel free.

20 (No audible response.)

21 MR. BEALE: All right. So let's come back to the
22 room.

23 Would anyone else here who has not submitted a card
24 like to make a comment?

25 Yes, sir. And please state your name for the court
26 reporter please.

27 MR. HENSON: Yes, I'm Ryan Henson with the
28 California Wilderness Coalition. I live in Shasta County.
29 And I wasn't going to speak, but I'll quickly note just a

1 couple things.

2 We'll be, like everyone else, submitting extensive
3 comments, but I wanted to make two site-specific points.
4 And, by the way, I'd like to thank you for the extension, I'd
5 like to thank the BLM and the other agencies for all the hard
6 work. I'm shocked at how excited Kathy is by the plan.
7 You'd think she'd be completely exhausted by now. I'm
8 exhausted just reading the Preferred Alternative.

9 And I echo all the things that the others have said,
10 but in terms of the site-specific issues, I spent a week in
11 January camping in the Cadiz Valley. And one of the things
12 I did was I backpacked from the railroad tracks east to the
13 Old Woman Mountains and then back across country to my car.
14 And not only did I see a lot of amazing reptiles and washes
15 and other things, a lot of bird life -- you know as a lifelong
16 Northern Californian, the desert's still very much amazing
17 to me and always new -- but I saw, I was surprised to see all
18 the spent shell casings and C-ration items and other things
19 from World War II. And, as a history buff, it was just a
20 double pleasure, and as a natural history buff, to see both
21 of those things.

22 So one of the comments on a site-specific nature
23 I'd like to make is that the Northern Cadiz Valley from the
24 Cadiz Dunes Wilderness North is both an ACEC in the Preferred
25 Alternative and National Conservation Lands. The Southern
26 side of the Cadiz Valley, which is spectacular by the way,
27 the Southern side of the Cadiz Valley is an ACEC, but it's
28 not in the National Conservation Lands. And I think both for
29 its scenery, recreation opportunities, and it's a great place

1 for rock-hounding, OHV use on designated routes, and
2 primitive experiences like what I was having, I think it does
3 deserve double coverage of both National Conservation Lands
4 and an ACEC.

5 And, secondly, the Sacramento Mountains are a
6 place where I had never been until earlier this year, and in
7 fact I hadn't even heard of them, to be honest, even though
8 I'm a lifelong Californian, and they are spectacular. The
9 western end of the Sacramentos are also double covered as an
10 ACEC and National Conservation Lands, but the eastern end of
11 the Sacramentos don't have any designation -- well, actually
12 I believe it's called an intensive recreation area. And I
13 would like to see them -- there is OHV use there on designated
14 routes, but it's fully consistent I think with National
15 Conservation Lands -- and I'd like to see the entirety of the
16 Sacramento Mountains covered by National Conservation Lands.

17 So thank you.

18 MR. BEALE: Thank you.

19 Any other comments tonight? Even if you commented
20 before, you can come up a second time.

21 (No audible response.)

22 MR. BEALE: Okay. Well, I'd like to on behalf of
23 the planning team and all the agencies here, I'd like to thank
24 you all for coming tonight. Again, we know it's not easy to
25 get here in the middle of the week. We appreciate your
26 interests, your time, and your willingness to stand up in
27 front of the group to make comments.

28 I do want to reiterate, in case you came in late,
29 that we have extended the public comment period to February

1 23rd. That's an additional 45 days.

2 Also we do have one more public meeting in Joshua
3 Tree on November 19th, -- that's next Wednesday, I
4 think -- 5:30 p.m. at the Joshua Tree Community Center. So
5 please join us if you are interested and able. We'd love to
6 see you again.

7 And thanks again for coming tonight.

8 (The meeting was adjourned at 4:09 o'clock p.m.)

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