

APPEARANCES

AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Carl Symons, Bureau of Land Management, Ridgecrest

Scott Flint, California Energy Commission

Ken Corey, US Fish and Wildlife Service

Julie Vance, California Fish and Wildlife

STAFF

Chris Beale, DRECP Director

Vicki Campbell, Bureau of Land Management

Kristy Chew, California Energy Commission

ALSO PRESENT

William Liebscher

Ed Waldeheim, FOJ, FOEM and CTUC

Lorrie Steely, Defenders of Wildlife and MCCC

Ileene Anderson, Center for Biological Diversity

Kevin Emmerich

Earl Wilson, China Lake Astronomical Society

Sophia Merk

Mary Grimsley, Gear Grinders Four-Wheel Drive Club

John Smith

Randy Banis, Stakeholder Committee

Lou Peralta

AGENDA

	PAGE
I: Welcome and Introductions	1
II: Presentation on the Draft DRECP and EIR/EIS	5
III: Information Stations	26
IV: Public Comment	30
Adjourned	57

P R O C E E D I N G S

4:09 p.m.

RIDGECREST, CALIFORNIA, TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2014

MR. BEALE: On behalf to 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 or DRECP.

I'm Chris Beale. I'm the Director of the DRECP. And I want to thank you all for coming today. I know it's not easy to get here during the workweek. Some of you may have had to leave work early. I just want to thank you for your time and your interest. We really appreciate your -- your coming tonight.

And I'm joined here today by several members of the planning team from the state and federal agencies that prepared this plan, and also a consulting team. The purpose of the meeting tonight is to help you get to know the DRECP. It was first published or posted on the internet about a month ago. It's a substantial document. We don't expect you to have read it all, so -- or even most of it. So we're here to help you understand what the DRECP is, why we're preparing it, and where we are in the process.

What we're -- we'll be doing later today is also

1 helping you locate information in the document. So if you
2 have any questions or particular areas of interest we'll be
3 able to -- folks will be here to help you find where in the
4 DRECP your information or question could be answered.

5 We're also here to help provide you with an early
6 opportunity for public comment. Again, we know that you are
7 still probably reviewing the document but -- and you can
8 comment on it as many times as you like. So there's no --
9 you know, so you don't have to worry about using up your
10 comment today. And we're just hoping to get comments that
11 are based on your early impressions, based on what you know
12 about the DRECP so far.

13 I do want to stress that what we're here to talk
14 about is a planning document. The Desert Renewable Energy
15 Conservation Plan is a planning document. There are no
16 specific renewable energy projects or transmission lines
17 proposed. This is a document to plan for renewable energy
18 development in the future.

19 The format for tonight, just to let you know, is
20 sort of represented on the agenda. But to give you more of
21 a sense of what -- what we have planned tonight, we're going
22 to start with a brief presentation, it's about 30 minutes.
23 And if you've seen -- we have a video of a PowerPoint
24 presentation posted on the website. If you've seen that,
25 that's kind of a longer version of this. This is a shorter

1 version of that. And the PowerPoint presentation that we
2 show you tonight will be on the web, too, so you can see the
3 actual presentation later if you like. And that will take
4 about 30 minutes. And Vicki Campbell from BLM will be
5 making the presentation tonight.

6 After the presentation we will have a kind of open
7 house with our information stations. You see all the
8 information stations laid out. And the purpose -- the
9 purpose of that is to give you an opportunity to ask
10 questions of folks of the -- folks who worked on the
11 preparation of the plan.

12 There will also be -- during the open house there
13 will also be the first opportunity tonight for you to make
14 formal comments on the record. We'll have -- in addition to
15 our information stations we have a Court Reporter here,
16 Marlee. If you can see Marlee in the corner over here.
17 She'll also be available later in the evening. But she'll
18 be available, if you'd like to come over and make comments
19 during the information stations, if, for example, you'd
20 prefer to make comments then rather than in front of a group
21 of people, feel free to do that.

22 We also have other folks here in addition to the
23 agencies that prepared the plan. We have some
24 representatives of other agencies that are here to answer
25 questions. We have Scott Kiernan representing the

1 Department of Defense.

2 Scott, if you could raise your hand? Thank you.

3 And Connie Latham from the Department of Parks and
4 Recreation is here. So if you have questions of them you
5 should feel free to approach them during the information
6 station session.

7 Following that we will start promptly at 5:30 for
8 our formal public comment session. And that's an
9 opportunity for you to make public comments in the record in
10 front of the group. The comments that are -- that are made
11 orally tonight will be just like submitting written
12 comments. Marlee will be taking them down and they'll be
13 submitted in the record as formal comments.

14 If you'd like to speak during that -- that period,
15 please fill out one of the blue speaker cards there at the
16 front table. That -- the purpose of that is just for -- so
17 that I can get a sense of how many folks want to speak. I
18 think given the size of the crowd tonight, everyone who
19 wants to talk can talk. We hope you will. We look forward
20 to your comments. The blue speaker cards have -- there's
21 lots of information you can put on there, but all we really
22 need is your name just so I know to call you up. If you
23 want your affiliation included in the written record of the
24 comment, please include that. But again, all I really --
25 all I really need is your name.

1 MR. LIEBSCHER: So are you the public adviser? It
2 says hand to the public adviser. Is that you?

3 MR. BEALE: Well, you could give it to me or you
4 could give it to Valerie, either are fine. We'll make --
5 that's fine. You can give it to me if that's easier.
6 Valerie at the front desk will also take your card. Good
7 question. Thank you.

8 And then lastly, just a little housekeeping.
9 Depending on where you came in you might have noticed this,
10 but the bathrooms are out the halls and to the right.

11 All right, so that's -- that's just a bit about
12 the format today, and we'll get rolling here and get started
13 on our public presentation. And I'm going to hand the mike
14 over to Vicki.

15 MS. CAMPBELL: Good evening, early evening, late
16 afternoon-ish. I'm Vicki Campbell. I am the BLM DRECP
17 Program Manager. And on behalf of the California Energy
18 Commission, Bureau of Land Management, US Fish and Wildlife
19 Service, and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, I
20 welcome you to the presentation portion of this public
21 meeting.

22 The DRECP is the result of an intense
23 collaborative interagency planning process. It's a
24 comprehensive plan that contains a great deal of
25 information, as many of you have probably found out when

1 you've opened the document. We've organized the document to
2 make it as accessible as possible in a format similar to
3 environmental impact statements and environmental impact
4 reports that you're used to seeing.

5 The DRECP contains six main volumes and an
6 additional volume of technical appendices.

7 Volume I provides background on the development of
8 the DRECP, including the purpose and need. Volume II
9 describes the alternatives. Volume III describes the
10 environmental setting and existing conditions. In Volume IV
11 we have a draft environmental analysis, also known as
12 environmental consequences. Volume V describes the public
13 scoping and public participation process. Volume VI
14 includes details about implementation and mitigation
15 measures.

16 There are 24 appendices, including those on
17 covered species, biological goals and objectives, climate
18 change, and many other topics. There are also appendices
19 that provide additional detail specifically for the three
20 agency plans, including the BLM Land Use Plan Amendments,
21 the US Fish and Wildlife Service General Conservation Plan,
22 and California's Natural Community Conservation Plan.

23 So Volume I describes how the agencies developed
24 the DRECP. As I said this before, this was an unprecedented
25 collaboration of the state and federal agencies. Many

1 federal, state and local agencies, tribes, and private
2 citizens all provided helpful input into the development of
3 this draft plan. The four agencies, we've listed them
4 before, are the California Energy Commission, Bureau of Land
5 Management, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and California
6 Department of Fish and Wildlife.

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

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

23 The DRECP would conserve 37 sensitive species and
24 their habitats, including species listed as threatened or
25 endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act and/or

1 the California Endangered Species Act.

2 On BLM land the DRECP would also conserve other
3 valuable resources such as recreation, cultural, visual, and
4 wilderness characteristics. A core element of the DRECP is
5 the significant increase in conservation and recreation
6 designations that BLM is proposing to protect valuable
7 resources and uses on BLM land.

8 The DRECP would provide a framework for
9 considering renewable energy conservation and a range of
10 other resources and values and other land uses on
11 conservation planning.

12 The DRECP identifies appropriate areas for
13 renewable energy projects, creates incentives for developers
14 to site projects in those areas by streamlining
15 environmental review, and it would conserve sensitive
16 resources, their habitats and ecological processes. The
17 DRECP would also protect other desert resources and values
18 on BLM land, as I said before, such as recreation, visual,
19 cultural and wilderness characteristics, to name a few.

20 As it is now the siting of renewable projects and
21 the mitigation of environmental impacts are considered on an
22 individual project-by-project basis, some call that
23 piecemealing, and not on a landscape comprehensive scale as
24 proposed under the DRECP. The DRECP would help improve
25 coordination of federal, state, local, tribal and private

1 conservation efforts in the desert by identifying high
2 priority landscape-scale goals that can be used to guide and
3 achieve greater conservation outcomes. Consideration of
4 renewable energy development with transmission and
5 conservation of a range of values and uses together in one
6 land use and resource planning process is considered smart
7 from the start.

8 The DRECP plan area covers about 22-and-a-half
9 million acres across portions of seven counties in the
10 Mojave and Colorado/Sonoran Deserts. It includes federal
11 and non-federal lands. The plan includes small portions of
12 some counties, such as San Diego, and large portions of
13 others, such as San Bernardino County.

14 The map shows you the general ownership of the
15 DRECP plan area. The largest land holdings are BLM lands in
16 yellow, National Park Service lands in green, Department of
17 Defense lands in gray, and private lands in light gray.

18 The DRECP is a combination of three different
19 types of plans, a BLM Land Use Plan Amendment, but referred
20 to as the LUPA, that's its acronym, a US Fish and Wildlife
21 Service General Conservation Plan referred to as the GCP,
22 and a California Natural Community Conservation Plan
23 referred to as the NCCP. These three plans are integrated
24 and together help achieve the DRECP overall goals.

25 Each of the agency plan applies to a different

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

9 The DRECP's would provide a more efficient and
10 predictable environmental review and permitting process for
11 certain types of activities. Renewable energy development
12 projects that are sited within development focus areas, or
13 DFAs, you're going to hear that a lot from us, are the
14 largest category of covered activities. They include solar,
15 wind and geothermal projects. Transmission is also a
16 covered activity within development focus areas and outside
17 of development focus areas so that the energy produced in
18 the DFAs can be delivered to where it is needed.

19 Covered activities also include biological
20 conservation and compensation actions to avoid, minimize and
21 mitigate for the impacts of renewable energy and
22 transmission projects. On BLM land there is also
23 conservation and compensation actions for a variety of other
24 resources values recreational, cultural, visual, and
25 wilderness characteristics, to name a few.

1 The DRECP would cover all phases of covered
2 activities, including preconstruction and construction,
3 operation and maintenance, and decommissioning of renewable
4 energy projects when they're completed, at the end of their
5 operational life.

6 The DRECP plans for up to 20,000 megawatts of
7 renewable energy generation and transmission in the plan
8 through the year 2040. It's important to note that the
9 20,000 megawatt of new generation is not a goal or a target;
10 it's a planning tool. The DRECP is not intended to drive
11 this level of development. Instead, the 20,000 megawatt is
12 an estimate of what might occur as a result of that level of
13 development. And we used these estimates to conduct the
14 environmental analysis.

15 The potential for 20,000 megawatts of renewable
16 energy development in the DRECP plan area is based on
17 certain assumptions about energy generation in California,
18 including an assumption of nearly 30,000 megawatts of
19 distributed generation, such as rooftop solar, limited
20 generation from nuclear and fossil fuel sources, and state
21 policies that limit imports of renewable energy from outside
22 the state. Renewable energy in the DRECP plan area through
23 2040 would be lower than 20,000 megawatts if changes in
24 technology or public policy encourage or require different
25 resources for energy production.

1 We estimate that the production of 20,000
2 megawatts would result in about 177,000 acres of ground
3 disturbance from those renewable energy projects in the plan
4 area. However, the actual amount of ground disturbance of
5 development is driven by market conditions as it currently
6 is now.

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

13 The DRECP includes specific renewable energy
14 designations. The most important of these is the
15 development focus areas, again it's acronym is DFA. This is
16 where renewable energy projects would benefit from a more
17 efficient and predictable streamlined environmental review
18 and permitting process. These areas are suitable because
19 they have renewable energy resources, basically, they're
20 wind, sunny and/or have geothermal resources. And they're
21 compatible with the conservation of species and other
22 resource values in the desert.

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

1 resource conservation. BLM would also offer incentives to
2 renewable energy projects sited in DFAs on BLM land.

3 Study areas are the other type of renewable energy
4 designation. Study area lands could be appropriate for
5 development in the future, but require further analysis.
6 Study areas are not regarded as development focus areas, nor
7 are they analyzed as such, in the draft DRECP.

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

16 The biological conservation strategy includes
17 specific conservation and management actions, also known as
18 CMAs -- we have lots of acronyms for you -- to avoid,
19 minimize and mitigate for the impacts to these species and
20 their habitats from renewable energy and transmission
21 development. The conservation strategy also includes a
22 monitoring and adaptive management plan to incorporate new
23 information over the life of the plan.

24 Volume II. This is -- these are the alternatives.
25 There are six alternatives presented in the draft DRECP.

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

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

13 Each of the five action alternatives analyzes the
14 potential production of 20,000 megawatts of renewable
15 energy, again, that would result in about 177,000 acres of
16 ground disturbance. This acreage is dispersed and analyzed
17 differently in each alternative depending on the
18 configuration and location of the development focus areas.

19 This is a map of the no-action alternative which
20 assumes the DRECP would not be approved. The light pink
21 areas are where renewable energy projects could potentially
22 be built today. This is an area of about 9.8 million acres.
23 The dark pink hatched areas is where renewable energy
24 projects would occur under the DRECP's preferred
25 alternative. This is an area of about 2 million acres, of

1 again, which about 177,000 acres potentially would cover
2 ground disturbance.

3 One of the most important differences among the
4 DRECP are the size and geographic distribution of the
5 development focus areas, the DFAs. This slide shows you a
6 comparison of the DFAs in three of the five action
7 alternatives. 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 is in the middle and has a moderate amount of
11 development focus area with a moderate amount of siting
12 flexibility. Alternative 2 is on the far right and it has
13 the largest amount of development focus areas, providing the
14 most flexibility for siting of renewable energy projects and
15 the most geographically dispersed areas. Alternative 1
16 provides the least amount of flexibility, as you can see by
17 the pink on the map.

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

1 Valley/Inyo area.

2 Remember, regardless of the size of the
3 development focus areas we are estimating approximately
4 20,000 megawatts and 177,000 acres of ground disturbance.

5 Another important difference among the DRECP
6 alternatives is the amount of BLM land proposed for the
7 National Landscape Conservation System or National
8 Conservation Lands, as it's also known. These are shown in
9 purple on this map. These are the alternatives as you saw
10 before. Alternative 1, on the left, has the smallest amount
11 of new National Conservation Lands proposed. The preferred
12 alternative is in the middle and has a moderate amount. And
13 Alternative 2 is on the right and has the most National
14 Conservation Lands proposed.

15 The amount of proposed National Conservation Lands
16 is related to the amount of development focus areas in each
17 action alternative. The larger, more geographically
18 dispersed development focus areas would put more pressure on
19 the natural resources, so larger Natural Conservation Lands
20 are proposed to offset that increased impact.

21 This map orients you to the Owens Valley and Inyo
22 area of the plan area. Proposed development focus areas are
23 shown in pink, study area lands in brown, conservation
24 planning areas, which is private land, in light green. And
25 then on BLM land proposed areas of critical environmental

1 concern are shown in blue, not counting Owens Lake. Owens
2 lake, the blue is water. The proposed National Landscape
3 Conservation Lands are in yellow. And proposed special
4 recreation management areas are in a light slashed gray.
5 The dark gray areas are Department of Defense lands, and
6 dark green are existing conservation lands such as Death
7 Valley National Park.

8 Here are some of the basic highlights of the
9 preferred alternative. The overall biological conservation
10 strategy for the preferred alternative covers about 15
11 million acres, and that includes existing conservation. BLM
12 conservation designations cover about 4 million acres,
13 development focus areas about 2 million, study area lands
14 about 183,000, and BLM recreation designations about 3.6
15 million.

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

23 For the preferred alternative that's in the
24 document, and we have numerous different examples of that
25 map around the room. You'll see these maps again close up

1 later, but this gives you a very large picture of how each
2 of the land allocations fit in juxtaposition to each other.

3 For the preferred alternative, as I said before, a
4 little over 2 million acres are proposed as development
5 focus areas. However, to meet the DRECP's planning
6 assumption of 20,000 megawatts of renewable energy
7 generation, renewable energy projects would actually only be
8 built on 177,000 approximately, or about 9 percent of the
9 total DFA acreage. The dark striped slice at the top of the
10 pie represents the estimated amount of ground disturbance in
11 proportion to the total amount of development focus areas.
12 If less than 20,000 megawatts of new generation is actually
13 needed in the DRECP area, then the actual amount of ground
14 disturbance would be less.

15 The total proposed DFA acreage is much larger than
16 the estimated amount of ground disturbance. The reason for
17 this is to allow siting flexibility so that projects could
18 be located in the best and least impacting sites.

19 This map shows you the development focus areas,
20 again in pink, and the amount of estimated ground
21 disturbance expected to occur in each county within the
22 DRECP plan area. For example, in Inyo County we estimate
23 that renewable energy projects would be built on about 5,000
24 acres, or 11 percent of the proposed development focus areas
25 in Inyo County. The little gray box that you see to the

1 right of the map legend for Inyo County gives you an idea of
2 how large that 11 percent of ground disturbance within the
3 DFA in comparison with the total DFA in pink.

4 For the other counties in the plan area the ground
5 disturbance estimate would also occur within these DFA
6 ranges from about 5 to 16 percent of the total DFAs. And
7 you see them all presented here.

8 The DFA -- the DRECP's environmental analysis
9 includes a description of the environmental setting in
10 Volume III, and in the environmental analysis in Volume IV.
11 The environmental analysis considers 23 different resource
12 categories. And we identified these resource categories
13 based on scoping meetings, preliminary analysis, and input
14 from tribes, the public, and agency experts.

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

23 The draft analysis concluded that impacts to most
24 of the 23 resource categories would be less than
25 significant. For ten of the resource categories listed here

1 in the slide, impacts would be significant in one more of
2 the alternatives, including the no-action alternative.

3 Now I'll discuss briefly how the DRECP will be
4 implemented.

5 It's important to note that no new government
6 entity will be created by the DRECP. All agencies will
7 retain their current authorities and responsibilities. The
8 purpose of identifying an implementation structure for the
9 DRECP is to improve agency coordination and communication.
10 Implementation would also include public participation and
11 input from the tribes, local governments, public, and
12 scientific community. The DRECP also estimates the amount
13 that the biological conservation strategy will cost, and
14 identifies some specific sources of funding.

15 Local governments may use the DRECP to inform
16 their land use planning decisions. The DRECP would not
17 restrict or change any local land use planning or permitting
18 authorities for renewable energy projects. Within the
19 DRECP, local governments would have the option of applying
20 for a permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service under the
21 General Conservation Plan or with the California Department
22 of Fish and Wildlife under the Natural -- Natural
23 Communities Conservation Plan. For some reason that's
24 tongue tying me tonight.

25 Now I'll talk a little bit about the public

1 participation, so why you're all here with us.

2 We created a dedicated website for the DRECP,
3 www.drecp.org. I'm sure many of you have been there over
4 the several years that it's been in existence or you were
5 recently on it. To help you understand the DRECP we also
6 prepared a series of fact sheets, a list of frequently asked
7 questions, and an informational video that Chris talked
8 about before. All of these are available on the
9 www.drecp.org. The draft DRECP is also available on the BLM
10 website and the US Fish and Wildlife Service websites.
11 We also have an innovative mapping tool called the DRECP
12 Gateway, which I'll talk about in a moment.

13 You can review the DRECP at local libraries and in
14 agency offices in the plan area. DVDs are also available
15 upon request. We know that some of you have slow
16 downloading speeds or some people just don't like to
17 download and take up all the bandwidth. So you can request
18 a DVD. All the information on this slide to request that
19 DVD is also on handouts in the front of the room, and also
20 at www.drecp.org.

21 Public review and comment is absolutely critical
22 to developing the final DRECP. You can give your comments
23 by email, fax, US Mail, in person such as here with Marlee
24 during the station -- when we're at stations, or at the
25 microphone during the other public comments, and then also

1 at other public meetings. Addresses for where to send your
2 comments are available at drecp.org, and also at the handout
3 at the front of the room. We want your voice to be heard.
4 And we want to assure you that all public comments are
5 welcomed, valued, and will be considered.

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

8 Public meetings like this one are being held
9 throughout the plan area and in surrounding population
10 centers. All the information about the other public
11 meetings, other than this one, you can find at
12 www.drecp.org.

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

20 For example, comments that raise substantive
21 significant environmental concerns, issues that require
22 clarification or modification, new or different
23 alternatives, something that we didn't consider, new or
24 missing information, or corrections that could substantially
25 change the conclusions of the environmental analysis, these

1 are all considered substantive comments.

2 DRECP Gateway; this is our innovative online data
3 and mapping tool. It's free and user friendly, and we
4 encourage you to go in and explore. There is a sign-in
5 function, but you only have to use the sign-in function if
6 you want to save information and come back later. Anyone
7 with a computer, regardless of your experience or lack
8 thereof with GIS, can use this data because it's in data
9 sets. You can view, edit and analyze maps and data. You
10 can create custom maps. You can put comments into maps, and
11 then save them, print them, and include them with your
12 written comments.

13 The Gateway web address is at the bottom of the
14 slide, drecp.databasin.org. And it's also -- you can find a
15 link to it at www.drecp.org. This site a really useful, but
16 we want you to remember that it is just a tool. It is not
17 necessary for you to go into the Gateway to review,
18 understand or comment on the DRECP. It's an innovative
19 tool, but it's just that, an optional tool.

20 So this is the end of our presentation and we
21 thank you for your interest in the DRECP, and we look
22 forward to hearing from you at our stations with Marlee, and
23 then up at the microphone a bit later.

24 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Vicki.

25 If I could ask our agency folks to man their

1 stations. And I'll, for you all, kind of orient you to how
2 we have this set up. We have six separate information
3 stations. Starting from the very back of the room our
4 Station 1 is our general overview.

5 Folks back there, could you just raise your hand?

6 We have several -- lots of posterboards back
7 there. If you have a general question about what's in
8 the -- what's in the DRECP, how the alternatives are
9 different, how the environmental analysis works, Station 1
10 is where you should start.

11 Moving around the room to your -- behind you to
12 the left we have our renewable energy station. So if you
13 have questions about the renewable energy planning
14 assumptions, the 20,000 megawatts, if you have questions
15 about transmission, we have folks from the CEC, the
16 California Energy Commission there to answer your questions.

17

18 Moving further around we have the BLM's Land Use
19 Plan Amendment station. Folks -- Vicki and Mike are raising
20 their hand back there. If you have questions about the
21 BLM's Land Use Plan Amendment that's -- that's the place to
22 go.

23 One over we have the General Conservation Planning
24 station with Jenness and Chris raising their hands. If you
25 have questions about the Fish and Wildlife Services General

1 Conservation Plan, please go there.

2 Moving around further we have the Natural
3 Community Conservation Planning station. Julie is there
4 raising her hand.

5 And finally, on the far right we have the
6 biological conservation strategy station.

7 We also have, again, just to remind you, if you'd
8 like to make a public comment now, Marlee is available over
9 here on the side. And any comments you make she can record
10 and they become part of the formal written record. So you
11 can comment now or you can comment at 5:30 when we get to
12 our public comment session.

13 So anyway, thank you again for coming. And we
14 will reconvene here for public comments in about 40 minutes
15 at 5:30.

16 And also, just one more thing, Scott, if you could
17 raise your hand again?

18 If you have questions for the Department of
19 Defense about their interest in renewable energy and
20 operations in the desert, please talk to Scott. Here's here
21 for that.

22 And Connie Latham with State Parks, if you have
23 questions about State Parks for all the planning processes
24 and so forth, Connie is here to answer your questions.

25 So lots of people here to answer your questions.

1 And please, I encourage you to take advantage of that. And
2 we'll reconvene again at 5:30. So thank you.

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

4 **(Breakout Session Public Comment begins at 4:50 p.m.)**

5 MR. LIEBSCHER: My name is William Liebscher. I'm
6 from Red Mountain. Two things I wanted to ask. Could we
7 have more time to review this in general? I know we're
8 getting more time already, but I'd like to see us have more
9 time to review this. It's a big document.

10 And second of all, I've noticed that it doesn't
11 seem that there's any funding for the BLM. Those guys are
12 really feeling the pinch on economics. And there's a lot of
13 authority and work delegated to the BLM yet there's no
14 funding for them, and they need that badly. They're -- here
15 in Ridgecrest they're 50 percent understaffed and they're
16 way underfunded. They need help. And if they're going
17 to -- you guys are going to lean on them for this project,
18 for these projects, give them a little economic help. Thank
19 you. KB6TJE; my handle.

20 MR. WALDHEIM: My first issue is that the public
21 needs to have a very simple one- or two-page cheat sheet --
22 cheat sheet that shows login to drecp.org. Then by example
23 on the computer what the next link should be. It preferably
24 would be with a copy of the page that opens up. Then we
25 need to have how to go to the specific areas of interest,

1 and in my particular case it's recreation. And that has to
2 deal with the DFAs and has to do -- deal with the CMAs as it
3 relates to route designations.

4 We also need to have a clear way of showing the
5 public via the computer by example how to get into the
6 appendices. The appendices, I understand, show the
7 designations or the criteria of what each area can and can
8 not do, what is proposed, what is denied, what is changed.
9 Right now it is almost impossible for the public to
10 understand that these little areas that have criteria
11 designations are kind of hidden. You have to really hunt
12 for it. No one on this presentation or any presentation
13 I've been to has taken the time to show the public exactly
14 how the effects of DRECP in their criteria or designation or
15 limitations on the routes will be displayed or will be
16 affected by the public.

17 For example, I thought all our limited use trails
18 are okay to be used. Wrong. They have some restrictions
19 being placed on these little breakout sessions -- or
20 breakout areas in each region that is not clearly identified
21 for the public to find and see. This is a big, big mistake
22 and it could come to bite you. It's like the devil is in
23 the little details, and this one is -- this is a killer that
24 we're going to find out pretty soon.

25 The next issue, on the telephone conference call I

1 brought out, out of the DFAs 2 million acres, of which
2 177,000 acres they are going to use, I asked the question:
3 If we do not use all 2 million acres -- all 177,000 acres,
4 what mechanism is there in place for the DRECP's DFAs to be
5 released so that they could be turned into conservation
6 areas, they can be turned into limited use areas to protect
7 our trails? Right now they say that if a trail is affected
8 by what they use in the 177,000 acres a trail will be found
9 someplace else. That is well and said on 177,000 acres.
10 However, we have an encumbrance of over 2 million acres that
11 is out of our possible use. And so we need to make very
12 clear how that will take place.

13 The next issue between the cheat sheet I'm talking
14 about, we need to have one sheet that shows all the
15 descriptions. I go through the handouts that you provided
16 here at the tables and there's one, two, three, four, five
17 descriptions, yet that sheet doesn't show the DFAs, it
18 doesn't show the CMAs, and god knows what other designation
19 there is that is not identified. They need to go and
20 clearly put all their acronyms on the component of DRECP
21 sheet so the public can clearly see exactly what does each
22 of these acronyms mean and how does it affect them on the
23 particular area.

24 The last issue I have, as Ms. Campbell went
25 through the area there are so many issues that she talked

1 about, and she made absolutely no reference to how to find
2 any of this in the six volumes of the 14,000 pages. For
3 example, when we're talking about -- when we're talking
4 about specific areas, before she would say water issues, she
5 would say go see Volume 2.2. She did not do that today.
6 It's impossible for the public to try to figure out where am
7 I going to find this in the six volumes, again, to make it
8 easier for the public to go zero in on issues.

9 So specific issues, there should be a cheat sheet
10 or an index, real -- on one page. I have an interest in
11 conservation. I am interested in wildlife. I am interested
12 in designation, I'm interested in open areas, tell me what
13 page to go to so I don't have to waste my time looking for
14 it. So if they want to make it easy for the public to
15 review these documents they have to do a little bit more
16 work or help us to be able to find this easier.

17 I'm asking DRECP to put this out ASAP. Because if
18 I have to go and do that or I ask somebody else to do it,
19 it's really unfair to waste the time on doing a simple thing
20 that DRECP should have done in the first place if they
21 really want public participation. The key is to be able to
22 provide easy for us to read, easy for us to find, and that
23 way we can make meaningful comments. Right now it is very
24 difficult.

25 I personally have gone now through six of these

1 presentations. I know a little bit more than the average
2 Joe Blow who comes in here the first day. But trust me,
3 that first person coming in here, there's no way on earth
4 they can go through this and come up with any comments.

5 So we definitely need this a high, high priority
6 from staff. I've talked to the BLM and I've talked to
7 different people. They say, yes, we should be able to do
8 that. But I'm coming to DRECP, that you guys will be
9 probably the best suited to get that done soon. That's it.

10 (On the record at 5:31 p.m.)

11 MR. BEALE: Just a reminder, especially for folks
12 who have come in late, if you'd like to speak during our
13 public comment period here, please fill out a blue card, we
14 have blue cards at the front table, and then give them to
15 Valerie.

16 Valerie is -- if you can raise your hand again,
17 Valerie?

18 If you want to make a comment, please fill out a
19 blue card. We just need your name. If you would like your
20 affiliation to be associated with your comments, please add
21 that. So far just six speaker cards. We'll have plenty of
22 time for everyone to speak.

23 Now just a reminder, for this portion of the
24 meeting, this is for -- really for you to have the last word
25 tonight, to make formal comments into the record. We have a

1 microphone set up here for you. We will not respond. The
2 agencies won't be responding tonight. Your comments will be
3 made part of the formal written record, and we will provide
4 written responses to them later on.

5 But we want to assure you that, folks, we're very
6 interested in your comments. Whether you're here to support
7 the plan or to tell us how we can do better, your comments
8 are equally welcome. We know the comments we hear from you
9 tonight and from others during our public comment period are
10 going to help us make this a better plan in the final
11 version. So I want to thank you for coming.

12 So I have six -- six public comment cards. I'm
13 expecting maybe a couple of others. What we've been doing
14 is giving everyone three minutes to speak. If we have extra
15 time you can come back and speak as many times as you like.
16 We'll start with three minutes per speaker.

17 Before we get started I want to ask the senior
18 agency folks that are up here at the table to hear public
19 comment tonight to introduce themselves.

20 MR. SYMONS: Thank you. My name is Carl Symons.
21 I'm the Field Manager here at the BLM, Ridgecrest. And I
22 just wanted to take the time to thank everybody for coming
23 and all the questions that you've been asking. It gives us
24 a lot of things to think about. And I'm looking forward to
25 hearing your public comments. Thank you.

1 MR. FLINT: Hi. I'm Scott Flint with the
2 California Energy Commission.

3 MR. COREY: Hello. Ken Corey, Assistant Field
4 Supervisor, Fish and Wildlife Service out of Palm Springs.

5 MS. VANCE: Julie Vance from the California
6 Department of Fish and Wildlife out of Fresno.

7 MR. BEALE: Okay, great. Thank you. So the cards
8 I have for tonight are -- I'll just read the first three
9 speakers so you can be prepared. We have Lorrie Steely, Ed
10 Waldheim, and Ileene Anderson.

11 And I have this device up here to help you keep
12 track of the time. I'll set it to three minutes. It will
13 be yellow until it gets to one minute, and then it will turn
14 red. Again, we have plenty of time tonight so you can make
15 more than one comment. But just to make sure everybody gets
16 through their -- through their comments the first time in a
17 timely way, we'll use the three minutes.

18 Oh, good, we have a few more. All right.

19 So, Lorrie, would you like to come up?

20 MS. STEELY: Good evening, everyone. Thank you
21 very much for having us here and giving us the opportunity
22 to be heard. My name is Lorrie Steely and I'm with the
23 Defenders of Wildlife.

24 And the comments I'd like to make is that we
25 believe that this draft DRECP is a great first step in an

1 effort to craft a final plan that will balance the need to
2 protect our desert lands, our wildlife, and the need to
3 contribute to a clean energy future. But clearly this plan
4 needs significant improvements. We hope that the -- that
5 these comments will -- will contribute to a successful plan.

6 Because of the bulk and the size of the document
7 and the length of time it will take to comprehend and
8 digest, we ask that the comment period be extended. We
9 would strongly urge and request an additional round of
10 public meetings towards the end of these events so that once
11 people have had that opportunity they can come with more
12 educated comments and actually really be able to give you
13 feedback on things that we've read, comprehended and
14 understand.

15 We're concerned that the current DFAs are large
16 and they do include important and sensitive areas that
17 should not be developed, the Desert Tortoise natural area,
18 very nearby here. And there are key areas in the Southeast
19 Apple Valley and Lucerne Valley that -- that need to be
20 given significant consideration. Communities within the
21 DFAs need to have their voice heard in refining and setting
22 these DFA boundaries and the designations within the
23 boundaries and the uses.

24 We'd like to state that the target for the amount
25 of renewable energy, 20,000, I understand maybe that's

1 just -- from what I understand tonight that's -- my
2 understanding is that it's -- it's too high based on current
3 or future population and energy need projections.

4 And my final comment is the funding, we'd like to
5 find out the -- I don't see yet that the funding is in place
6 to show how the plan conservation actions will be carried
7 out. And we want to make sure that there are reliable
8 resources of funding so that we'll be confident that the
9 state and federal agencies will live up to the commitments
10 for the conservation. And the finalization, once these
11 projects are -- have met their life cycles, we want to make
12 sure that there are bonds in place so that these -- these
13 big projects are actually taken away and that the
14 environment is restored to its original condition it was in
15 before. So thank you.

16 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Lorrie.

17 Next we have Ed Waldheim, followed by Ileene
18 Anderson, and Kevin Emmerich.

19 MR. WALDHEIM: Ed Waldheim, Friends of Jawbone,
20 Friends of El Mirage, and California Trail Users Coalition.

21 After all these years I finally put a face to you.
22 We closed (inaudible). We opened it up for the tortoise.
23 Remember that many, many years ago? Glad to see you here.

24 I put down I oppose this because the option is
25 oppose, support, or neutral. I'm not going to be neutral,

1 and I'm not going to support it, and I'm not going to
2 totally oppose this. So I -- it's the wrong way to put it
3 in. There's a lot of issues you need to deal with.

4 Your public comment period to help people is
5 really bad. You are not providing the public the means in
6 which to comment on 14,000 pages. Let me explain very
7 clearly that you have acronyms. No place in the
8 presentation that Lisa [sic] made to determine where can I
9 find all these acronyms? Now Carl told me to go to the
10 executive summary and you can find them in the book. On
11 page 58 you have all the different lists of the acronyms.
12 There's no place on the table. You have all these pages in
13 here but they're useless. They don't tell me anything of
14 how to get on -- to get onto the web. It's useless, I can't
15 use it.

16 The public has no clue how to go and look at
17 14,000 pages. So I will suggest to you, ASAP, please have a
18 page out there that has the executive summary at the back.
19 Have the appendix from page 58 on the -- on the book, have
20 that out there in the back. Have -- on Volume Number II,
21 Volume Number II, I find out that you have more things
22 written in the book, but you have to go through the book to
23 be able to get to it. How am I going to get through the
24 book?

25 There's not enough information to help the people,

1 the public to go into the website. Give me a screen, DRECP,
2 their website. Then make a copy of the screen. Where am I
3 going to go next? Where am I going to go next? Where am I
4 going next? Kind of spoon feed them.

5 This is my fifth or sixth time now I've listened
6 to you guys, and I kind of get an idea of what's going on,
7 but you're not really helping me to go straight to it. For
8 example, I would love to have the page numbers on water.
9 Vicki, at the meeting when we were in Moreno Valley, Volume
10 2.2. Okay, compensation of trails, 2.3.1. The other topics
11 should be listed so I could just go look at the specific
12 topics and go to the volume without having to go hunt. We
13 can't -- we don't have the time to hunt.

14 We need to extend the comment period. We just
15 don't have enough time on the comment period. I talked
16 about a DFA for 2 million acres; you're going to use 170,000
17 acres. What system do you have in place to release some of
18 the 2 million acres if we're not going to use them? It's an
19 encumbrance on 2 million acres, a cloud on my head, that for
20 years I can't use it because maybe we'll use it. But I
21 doubt very much you're doing to use it because the people
22 aren't going to be able to use all of the 177,000. So --
23 and it's not fair that so much land is being kept away from
24 use.

25 The last thing is we need to have a very clear way

1 of showing the people how to go to the prescriptions of each
2 of the little parcels, of each of the little areas. And I
3 can't figure out for myself, what do I call those things?
4 You have very distinct prescription. And why am I
5 concerned? Designated trails, okay, we can use the
6 designated trails. But you have definition restrictions on
7 the designated trails, but you have to hunt for them, and
8 you have to go into the book and find where each one of
9 these are. That's a hidden detail. You're not letting the
10 public know about that. Not one single presentation brought
11 that up, and so we need to bring up that.

12 So my suggestion to you, please be more up front.
13 Help the public. Pretend you don't know nothing, and how
14 can you go and read this program so you can get some
15 comments from the public. Thank you.

16 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Ileene Anderson, then
17 Kevin Emmerich, and Earl Wilson.

18 Ileene?

19 MS. ANDERSON: Good evening. I'm Ileene Anderson.
20 I'm with the Center for Biological Diversity.

21 And the first thing I want to talk about tonight
22 is that all new conservation in the DRECP must truly be
23 additive to the existing conserved areas. The existing
24 conservation needs to be clearly identified in the document
25 and used as a baseline for additional conservation that

1 would be added by this plan. For example, in some
2 alternatives the Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area, a
3 long-term conservation reserve, through successful public
4 and private cooperation, is partially proposed for
5 development. In remaining alternatives the DFAs are allowed
6 literally on the boundary of the preserve where its effects
7 would degrade the values for which the preserve has been
8 established.

9 Other existing conservation on both public and
10 private lands is also targeted for development in some of
11 the alternatives. It makes no sense to propose rolling back
12 existing conservation as part of this plan and proposing
13 development in those areas -- in those areas. And it also
14 undermines the public's trust that the agencies will truly
15 be committed to preserving the proposed conservation in this
16 plan into the future.

17 We also urge the DRECP to take a second look at
18 that key linkage that's currently a part of the Mojave
19 Ground Squirrel conservation area that's west of the China
20 Lake Base. In the preferred alternative it's proposed as a
21 development focus area. And with the effects of climate
22 change, and as we've seen more and more documentation of
23 Mojave Ground Squirrel moving northwards, we think this is a
24 key linkage for that species.

25 We also are missing, very much missing the draft

1 implementing agreement. It hasn't been provided to the
2 public to date. And this is a key document for any HCP,
3 NCCP, or as the case is now a GCP, because it defines the
4 roles of the single terms to the agreement. We can't fully
5 evaluate many aspects of the proposed plan without seeing
6 the draft implementing agreement.

7 Finally, tonight I think I will talk about the --
8 basically, we believe in our review of the document to date
9 is that the necessary assurances required to meet the
10 conservation standards under the Natural Communities
11 Conservation Plan Act, particularly the commitment to
12 conservation in perpetuity, is lacking, and therefore would
13 fail to achieve the benefits of the act. For example, the
14 plan does not provide the required assurances that any
15 mitigation actions taken on public lands would be durable or
16 adequately protected into the future.

17 Indeed, while the draft signed agreement, the so-
18 called durability agreement, mainly asserts that BLM may use
19 various tools to provide some longer-term commitments,
20 nothing in the DRECP will change the BLM's multiple use
21 mandate under FLPMA or require additional monitoring and
22 enforcement of the new proposed rule sets under the plan.

23 I have additional comments, and if I am not able
24 to speak to them tonight I will write them. Thank you.

25 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Kevin, and then Earl

1 Wilson, and Sophia Merk.

2 Kevin Emmerich? Is Kevin here?

3 MR. EMMERICH: Kevin Emmerich.

4 MR. BEALE: Yeah, I'm sorry.

5 MR. EMMERICH: I'm sorry. I got confused there.

6 Not uncommon. I'll try to make this brief and I'll try to
7 fit this into your three minutes, I really will.

8 Well, first off, you know, thanks for allowing us
9 to come and comment here. This is interesting. It's very
10 important. And I'm encouraged to see a lot of the
11 conservation areas and the ACECs. But I'm really concerned
12 about the development focus areas. And I'm not really
13 clear, and I don't think you guys are either, on just how
14 you're going to streamline development in those areas. And
15 because of that I'd agree with the comment about extending
16 this comment deadline. And I'd like to ask another 90 days.
17 I just think it's just really a big plan.

18 But, for example, on this streamlining, I'm just
19 wondering, since there's maybe about 350,000 acres of public
20 land, for example, in DFAs, how are you going to do that?
21 And I would like to ask you to please, you know, not shorten
22 NEPA in that, or CEQA, as far as like Public Land Laws or
23 Wildlife Conservation Laws because I think that's dangerous.
24 That could set a precedent. And we really need to allow
25 people to get involved and have the full EIS process. And

1 I'm worried that if you shorten any of those review periods
2 by streamlining that's going to take that away from people.

3 I noticed that some of the conservation areas
4 proposed, I'm particularly interested in the one called
5 Hidden Hills because I don't live too far from there, have a
6 whole bunch of really nice proposed areas next to wilderness
7 areas but no real corridors for transmission.

8 And it's my understanding, and I could be wrong
9 about this, but the way I interpret it is if a solar company
10 in a DFA would like to develop something there, a
11 transmission project could be streamlined somewhere maybe
12 within a development focus area, possibly, to meet that
13 company's needs. And you've got to be very careful about
14 doing that. Because if we have something called a
15 conservation area and we see a new transmission project
16 going through there, it really is going to change the
17 landscape.

18 Do I have any time left?

19 MR. BEALE: Yes.

20 MR. EMMERICH: Oh, okay. And finally, I think
21 maybe this is a good idea, to use some better monitoring.
22 Birds are dying because of this polarizing glare. And
23 there's a lot of projects. And they're not really going to
24 be concentrated solar, that's too expensive. It's all going
25 to go photovoltaic. But maybe this opportunity could be

1 used for better monitoring. Often people working on these
2 projects are forced to sign possibly illegal disclosure
3 agreements. And we don't hear what's dying out there. And
4 I'm getting some anonymous messages, and we're concluding
5 that maybe thousands of birds are dying from new solar
6 projects, and close to 100 to 200 species of birds.

7 So how about using some mitigation money and
8 setting up a third party so people can feel comfortable
9 reporting wildlife kills, specifically avian kills on these
10 projects. It's really out of hand with existing projects
11 and it really needs to change. So thanks.

12 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Kevin.

13 Earl Wilson, then Sophia Merk, and William
14 Liebscher.

15 Thank you, sir.

16 MR. WILSON: My name is Earl Wilson. I'm a
17 resident of Lone Pine. I'm here representing China Lake
18 Astronomical Society, and I'm also on the Board of Directors
19 of Western Amateur Astronomers which is a regional umbrella
20 organization representing about 2,500 individual amateur
21 astronomers.

22 We hear a lot about visual impacts and most of
23 that ends up being during the daytime. Most amateur
24 astronomers are out at night, unless there's an eclipse like
25 we had last week. But the impacts of some of these mega-

1 industrial projects like the solar towers, windmills with
2 flashing little lights on the top, I don't know how many
3 people have been down to Mojave coming out of Red Rock and
4 looked down there to see what kind of a light show it is,
5 but it's a nightmare.

6 Long-term photography, up to ten minutes, is
7 common right now. We have light domes over every city in
8 the desert right now. Conservation is an important item,
9 and proper use of night lighting which I didn't see a lot of
10 in former documents, and that's why I made comments at the
11 CEC level, and with BLM. I also noticed that energy
12 conservation was mentioned once in the presentation.

13 I haven't gotten through the glossary yet, the 20
14 pages, trying to mesh and match, like what step-down BGOs
15 are and all this other kind of stuff, but I will succeed
16 eventually, I know. Anyway, conservation of energy, small
17 distributed without night lighting, other than when someone
18 is out there working. And we're already getting complaints
19 about solar down here at Beacon, at the DWP project, putting
20 up more night lighting. Not going to complain about that if
21 that's during the construction phase. But afterwards there
22 will be push-back.

23 Anyway, thank you for letting me speak here
24 tonight.

25 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Sophia, William Liebscher,

1 and Mary Grimsley.

2 MS. MERK: How are you tonight? My name is Sophia
3 Merk. And I started reading some of the aspects of the
4 groundwater, and there's over 100 pages. And what's really
5 interesting, it doesn't even talk about the Sustainable
6 Groundwater Management Act of 2014, plus the fact that most
7 of the data is before 2003. A lot of the water, especially
8 here in the desert, has been declining because we're using
9 water that's old, pleistocene, and a good look needs to be
10 done on it.

11 And I was looking at some of the -- some of the
12 charts. And what you -- what -- what has been written about
13 Indian Wells Valley, what has been written about a little
14 valley down the road, Fremont Valley, it's not true, you
15 know? And I don't know where this information came from,
16 but I would like to present the Sustainable Groundwater
17 Management Act of 2014 and hope that it is included in the
18 report.

19 We also -- I also have some concern about the fact
20 that distributed power was not really looked at, and that
21 should be looked at.

22 And the power needs that we have in this little
23 booklet of 14,000 pages, it's not current. I was on the
24 base today and I went for a tour. And right now they use
25 one-third of their -- of their power needs from solar.

1 However, that's not depicted anywhere in this -- in this
2 booklet that I found so far. And it's true, I haven't read
3 all 14,000 pages. I'm still trying to. Therefore, I'm
4 asking and begging for an extension of time so the public
5 can look at the documents.

6 And that's another thing, it's really, really hard
7 in some of these remote places to look at the documents and
8 to go online and try to find other places so you can look at
9 those things. And it's -- it's not -- it's not friendly.
10 It is not friendly. And under NEPA and CEQA, US Fish and
11 Wildlife, and BLM have to go under NEPA, and this is nowhere
12 close to it.

13 I also have some problems with the -- with the
14 purpose and need. The purpose and need is not clearly
15 defined. Now, I'm used to working with BLM. So the purpose
16 and need under FLPMA is a lot different than the purpose and
17 need in this little booklet. But I would love to give you
18 this Sustainable Groundwater Management Act of 2014 and hope
19 that it's included in your report.

20 MR. BEALE: Thank you. William Liebscher, and
21 then Mary Grimsley, and John Smith.

22 MR. LIEBSCHER: My name is William Liebscher. I'm
23 a resident of Red Mountain.

24 First of all, if you want this to be all it can be
25 we need more time. Everybody's really berating that. We

1 really need more time.

2 The BLM, we'd like to see them adequately funded.
3 They're hurting. I didn't see any mention of additional
4 funding.

5 I would also like to know if the -- if we could --
6 or do the alternatives reflect the different balances of
7 distributed generation versus concentrated generation? I've
8 seen in earlier meetings that a lot of people want to use
9 rooftop solar. And maybe we can prejudice and move this
10 around in different places so that more rooftop solar could
11 be used. And I don't know that the alternatives reflect
12 that or the plan reflects that. Can we prejudice in one
13 direction or another depending on, you know, local feelings
14 about that?

15 What are your criteria for approval of this plan?
16 Who approves it? Is it the same people as the authors? And
17 what leads to -- what that leads to is can we have a third
18 party, an independent party, to look at this, like a judge
19 or, I don't know, some independent party, besides just the
20 people who worked on this to have -- give a more, you know,
21 open opinion of this?

22 Also, please remove the DTRNA from the DFA
23 overlay. You're using the Desert Tortoise as a huge sales
24 tool on the front cover of this report, and yet they've
25 overlaid it with a DFA in one of the alternatives. I mean,

1 duh.

2 Anyway, let's see here, also I wanted to ask,
3 disturbance caps, do those relate to the visual disturbance
4 of the residents? I'd like to know that.

5 Thank you. Thanks for coming.

6 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Mary Grimsley, then John
7 Smith, and Lorrie Steely.

8 MS. GRIMSLEY: Hi. I'm Mary Grimsley and I'm
9 representing the Gear Grinders Four-Wheel Drive Club.

10 I've had -- I've seen one presentation at the
11 roundtable that we had last Thursday, and then this one. I
12 can't imagine delving into 14,000 pages. So I'm going to
13 pick just a little -- little tiny piece of it.

14 Anyway, our concern is a very small piece of this
15 in the whole -- of the whole plan, and it is of great
16 concern to us. It is the ACEC that is being declared for
17 the Panamint Valley. This year is the 28th of 29th year for
18 the Panamint Valley days. Where is the ACEC going to leave
19 this long-running event? It is not a competitive event. It
20 is not a race. However, a fee is charged as a fund raiser
21 for the Southern District of the California four-wheel --
22 California Association of Four-Wheel Drive Clubs. We limit
23 the number of vehicles and travel only existing roads and
24 trails, leaving them cleaner than we found them. Why is
25 this area being declared an ACEC when it is out of the area

1 being considered for renewable energy? I don't -- haven't a
2 clue.

3 Anyway, the one thing I would also like to ask for
4 is an extension because it is such a huge plan.

5 And looking into -- also, I still think rooftop
6 solar is the way to go, not going up into lands and tearing
7 them up. Thank you.

8 MR. BEALE: Thank you. John Smith, and then
9 Lorrie Steely.

10 MR. SMITH: If I may, this is the board that says
11 "Covered Species and Natural Communities." I see birds,
12 fish, plants, forest, woodlands, shrub, grasslands -- I
13 don't need to go through all of them, but that's -- that's
14 what I see.

15 What I want to know -- what was your name again?

16 MR. LIEBSCHER: Will.

17 MR. SMITH: Will? And your name?

18 MR. NADLER: Neil.

19 MR. SMITH: Earl? Will, Earl, everybody here has
20 a name. My name is John.

21 Where am I on this list? I don't see the Homo
22 sapiens' habitat addressed on this issue. Why is that? Who
23 is going to be responsible for protecting all of this? If
24 we're dismissed, how about we just dismiss the whole thing?
25 I mean, does that make sense maybe? Maybe not.

1 On the website where is it going to be that all of
2 the public comments are recorded and shown for public view,
3 and the answers to those comments? Because if I submit a
4 question or comment and I get an answer and no one can see
5 it, then they may find that they don't understand the answer
6 because of maybe just the choice of one word. Because a
7 word can have different weight to one person or another, and
8 they can take a completely different interpretation. And so
9 if those are not shown so the person can peruse the whole
10 realm of questioning and see the comments, how can they
11 properly address or determine whether their point of view is
12 addressed?

13 I noticed that it was said that if we need the
14 200,000 megawatts -- or the 20,000 megawatts of energy, I
15 think if you do a review of the way things come and go
16 through the CAISO you'll find that a lot of people make
17 application or decide or determine they'd like to do some,
18 just like I'd -- I'd like to re-carpet my house, you know,
19 at this particular point, but, you know, that's a good
20 thought now, but what happens when I say, meh, maybe next
21 year? You know, how is that run through the process as to
22 what really is the need that's -- that's being addressed
23 here?

24 One last thing, there was a board up here that you
25 had that had a comment on it about -- about the things that

1 you hadn't seriously -- or hadn't been actually considered.
2 And I think what hasn't completely been considered is the
3 fact that you're using old technology; you're addressing old
4 technology. If you will do some research on the Web,
5 anybody can do it, do some research, you will find that the
6 technology that this is addressing is obsolete.

7 And so rooftop solar is the way to go because it
8 takes the hand of the power companies off the throat of the
9 people. And your job, I think, would be to consider to free
10 the people of -- of the grip of business and free them to do
11 their -- you know, make their own choices. Thank you.

12 MR. BEALE: Thank you, sir. Last comment card I
13 have is for Lorrie Steely.

14 MS. STEELY: Thank you, Chris. I need practice
15 because I get nervous. So this is Lorrie Steely with the
16 Mojave Communities Conservation Collaborative. So I'm
17 wearing a different hat.

18 First of all, I think that the purpose and need is
19 misguided. We should not be about fast tracking and
20 expediting projects. We should be about investing in
21 research and development for the best, most cost-effective,
22 efficient renewable energy so that we don't end up with a
23 desert full of obsolete, oversized, under-producing
24 renewable energy that we aren't going to know what to do
25 with.

1 The economic, social and environmental
2 sustainability I think is under-addressed. We need to be
3 able to live in our environment and live in our desert. We
4 need to be able to build and to live and to grow and to
5 recreate and to pass our desert on to our future
6 generations. We have the -- we have the responsibility of
7 the stewards of the desert to pass it on to our generation
8 and the next generation and seven generations from here.
9 And what are you going to tell your grandkids when they look
10 at you in the eye and they ask you, you knew what was
11 coming, but you didn't do anything. Well, the government
12 didn't make us, or it wasn't economically feasible or, you
13 know, we just -- we didn't know.

14 Well, we have time to know. It's our
15 responsibility to invest in the science and the proper
16 decisions and using the right technology so that we do know,
17 so that we don't look back and say we made the same mistakes
18 that we've made and that's why we have greenhouse -- we've
19 got the greenhouse gas effect. Let's -- let's use proper
20 science, take the time now, before we make a step that we
21 can't correct.

22 So water consumption, I have a significant
23 concern. Every project that I've encountered to date with
24 renewable energy has grossly underestimated their water
25 consumption. There is one project in Lucerne Valley at this

1 time. It is -- it is not complete. During construction
2 right now it's up to 26 million gallons of water in an
3 adjudicated basin in overdraft in drought. And when I look
4 on the -- on the map that I have which has projected future
5 projects, which -- which are just projects in queue now
6 before we have everything in place, in our area there's 44
7 projects. One project at 26 million, okay. Two projects at
8 26 million, okay. Even half of 40, we can't sustain that.
9 Our aquifers will -- will be depleted.

10 I understand that the goal is to reduce greenhouse
11 gas emissions in California. What happens when the
12 companies in California sell their ownership for the -- for
13 the coal burning plants out of state, so no longer owned by
14 California so therefore, quote unquote, "we're not
15 responsible," but that doesn't solve the overall problem.
16 That's like telling your kid to go in the pool, in the
17 public pool, but try not to get into the zone where the
18 other kids are peeing in the pool. It's the same air. It
19 doesn't matter what -- the air doesn't stop at the State of
20 California. So just because we're offsetting the coal
21 burning, the plants, doesn't mean that we're solving the
22 long term problem. Thank you.

23 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Lorrie.

24 That's all the comment cards I have.

25 MR. BANIS: Do you have time for me?

1 MR. BEALE: Absolutely. Please.

2 MR. BANIS: Is it all right?

3 MR. BEALE: Please come up.

4 MR. BANIS: Thanks, Chris.

5 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Randy.

6 MR. BANIS: I appreciate it. I was -- as you
7 know, I was a member of the Stakeholder Committee. And it
8 was a real pleasure to work with you all on that committee.
9 It was a remarkable experience, and I learned a tremendous
10 amount of -- of things during that process.

11 During the stakeholder process I asked for an
12 assurance that OHV areas would be excluded from renewable
13 energy development. And I want to thank you for putting
14 that assurance into this plan.

15 I also asked that this not be a backdoor plan for
16 road closures in the reserve areas. And I'm very pleased,
17 and I thank you, for that assurance also coming to fruition.

18 I also asked for the first time ever a full
19 mitigation requirement for lost recreational opportunities
20 that -- that are lost from -- resulting from renewable
21 energy development. One of my mentors, the late Roy Denner
22 of the Off-road Business Association and a predecessor to me
23 and the Desert Advisory Council, called for mitigation for
24 lost recreational opportunities through the entire six years
25 of his yelling and screaming on the DAC meeting, quarter

1 after quarter. And if he knew today that we have that for
2 the first time I think he would be quite, quite pleased.

3 I do regret, though, my failure to emphasize the
4 importance of preserving and maintaining access to special
5 recreation permits across the planning area. I think that
6 special recreation permit events will be under pressure and
7 may suffer consequences from the ACEC and NLCS designations.

8 I also regret not insisting upon additional OHV
9 open-area lands. Since the Stakeholder Committee process
10 concluded we've lost 40,000 acres of OHV area to the Marine
11 Corps expansion. And this plan proposes to convert 3,000-
12 plus acres of OHV open land to non-OHV open land in the
13 Spangler area, and that's the Christmas Canyon area.

14 I think this is going to be our last opportunity
15 to find land and room for those kinds of activities going
16 forward because this plan of wall-to-wall ACECs brings great
17 protection to important threatened, endangered and other
18 species of concerns, but I don't see a whole lot of white
19 area left on the map for potential OHV open areas to
20 accommodate the future of population growth and the future
21 of potential growth and the need for OHV open areas.

22 Thank you again for coming to Ridgecrest and for
23 taking in my concerns. Thank you.

24 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Randy.

25 Sir? Please.

1 MR. PERALTA: My name is Lou Peralta. I live in
2 California City. And I got to tell you, this is my first
3 meeting of this kind, and I'm absolutely totally
4 overwhelmed.

5 I counted no less than 26 or 27 badges here
6 representing one form of government or the other. I
7 understand 14,000 pages have to be read to be really
8 knowledgeable of the situation. I understand that all of
9 you are on the payroll for the federal government or the
10 state government. And I'm just one person who happens to
11 think that we have lost so much land already.

12 Then I hear, somebody said, I think the young lady
13 that made the presentation, that somewhere along the line
14 when we're dedicating 177,000 acres out of the 2-point-
15 something million -- which, by the way, I didn't really
16 understand perfectly well, but I just caught one thing -- it
17 said compensation actions. Compensation actions means to
18 me, I don't know if it means the same to you, is if we take
19 177,000 acres for the use of energy, we're going to take a
20 whole bunch of land away from use.

21 Something about conservation lands that I wrote
22 down very quickly, but I couldn't keep up with her, National
23 Conservation Lands, we have lost so much. I've lived in
24 Southern California many years. I remember in 1966 riding
25 all the way from Tujunga Canyon in the San Fernando Valley

1 all the way to Las Vegas and never touching a highway.

2 Yeah, it used to be great. Now we've got to be careful to
3 take an attorney with us because it's conceivable that we
4 may have a lawsuit on our hands.

5 More importantly than that, managing our deserts
6 is the key word, manage, not close it, stay out of it, but
7 manage it, allowing people to participate in their favorite
8 activities outdoors, and still utilize the area for the
9 renewable resources. I'm a firm believer

10 And look what's happened today. Today I fill my
11 gas tank with \$3.17 a gallon, Ladies and Gentlemen. That
12 was just terrific. That allows me two more times to from
13 California City to Lancaster during the week, that I used to
14 just congregate and put it together so I can only spend one
15 gas tank a week. Now, how are we doing that is because we
16 are making our own energy and drilling for oil, and we're
17 doing the fracking and doing the potential oil from Canada,
18 and we're going to get away from the -- the out-of-the-
19 country oil reserves. We should be proud of that.

20 So I'm a firm believer that renewable energy has
21 to happen. It's great. It's great independence for this
22 country. But at what price? I don't want to give up the
23 open desert. I don't people to give up hiking and trailing
24 and herding cows and mineral searches and so forth. I want
25 you to consider to manage -- manage is the key word, not to

1 close it up, not to take away, but manage it. Thank you.

2 MR. BEALE: Thank you for your comment.

3 Are there any other comments tonight? Is there
4 anyone else who would like to make a comment? All right.

5 Well, I want to thank everyone for coming tonight.
6 We know it's not easy to get here. We know it's not easy to
7 stand up in front of a group of people and speak your mind,
8 but we appreciate it. Your comments are going to help us
9 make this a better plan, and we thank you for your time.

10 (The meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.)

11 --oOo--

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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

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

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 28th day of October, 2014.

/s/ Martha L. Nelson_
MARTHA L. NELSON

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I certify that the foregoing is a correct transcript, to the best of my ability, from the electronic sound recording of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter.

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

October 28, 2014