

APPEARANCES

AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Vicki Campbell, Bureau of Land Management

Ken Corey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Palm Springs Office

Katrina Symons, Bureau of Land Management

Scott Flint, California Energy Commission

Shankar Sharma, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

STAFF

Chris Beale, DRECP Director

Kristy Chew, California Energy Commission

ALSO PRESENT

Sophia Merk

Chris Clarke

Jim Kainz

Greg Herring, First Class Miners, Inc.

Eva Soltes, Harrison House Music, Arts, and Ecology

Ruth Rieman

David Butterfield

Meg Foley

David Lamfrom

Tony Malone

Robin Kobaly

Steve Bardwell

APPEARANCES (CONT.)

ALSO PRESENT

Travis Publizi

Stephanie Dashiell, Defenders of Wildlife

Patrick Donnelly, Amargosa Conservancy

Richard Haney

Ed LaRue

Steve Scamman

Claudia Sall, California Desert Coalition

Chris Carraher

Neville Slade, Mojave Community Conservation Collaborative

Sarah Kennington

Gregory Glenn

Constance Walsh

Shari Elf

Neil Nadler

John Miller

Peggy Lee Kennedy

Bobbie Flint

Pat Flanagan

Celeste Doyle

Buck Buckley

John Smith

George Ollen

Frazier Haney

APPEARANCES (CONT.)

ALSO PRESENT

April Sall

Bobby Furst

Almut Fleck

Tom O'Key

Lorrie Steely, Mojave Communities Conservation Collaborative

AGENDA

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P R O C E E D I N G S

5:42 p.m.

JOSHUA TREE, CALIFORNIA, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2014

(The meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.)

(Whereupon additional public comment was received.)

MR. BEALE: On behalf of the California Energy Commission, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Bureau of Land Management, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I'd like to welcome you to this meeting about the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan, or DRECP. I want to thank you all for coming out tonight. I know it's hard to get out on a weeknight and come to meetings like this. So I want you all to know that we really appreciate your time and interest.

I'm Chris Beale. I'm the Director of the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. And with me tonight are several members of the planning team that prepared the draft plan, including representatives of the state and federal agencies that are responsible for preparing the draft plan, and the consultant team that supported the agencies in preparing the plan.

I'm going to talk a bit about the purpose of the meeting tonight and the format, but I want to start with an announcement. Some of you may have heard this already, but we have extended the public comment period. Initially the

1 public comment period was scheduled to end on January 9th.
2 It's being extended by 45 days and will -- is now going
3 until February 23rd. We've received a lot of requests for
4 the extension, and the agencies got together and agreed that
5 extension was a good idea. So February 23rd is now the --
6 the deadline for -- for public comments.

7 The draft plan was posted on the internet the end
8 of September. It is a substantial document. There's a lot
9 of information there. We don't expect you all to have fully
10 read the document by tonight. The purpose of the meeting
11 tonight is to help -- help you get to know the draft DRECP,
12 what's in it, why we're preparing it, where we are in the
13 process. If you have more specific questions, more
14 technical questions, the folks here can help you identify
15 where in the document you can find information that's
16 relevant to your question or concern. And also we're
17 providing a couple of opportunities tonight for you to
18 submit formal public comments into the record, and I'll say
19 more about those in a minute.

20 And again, these are -- there's no limit on the
21 number of times you can make a comment on the draft DRECP.
22 You can comment tonight. You can comment next week. You
23 can comment as many times as you like up until the February
24 23rd deadline.

25 One thing -- one thing I wanted to do to kind of

1 provide some context for tonight is talk a bit about the
2 scope of the Draft Desert Renewable Energy Conservation
3 Plan, the scope of what we're here to talk about. One thing
4 to stress is that the Draft DRECP does not include any
5 specific project proposals or no specific renewable energy
6 project or transmission projects. It's a planning document
7 that's intended to plan for renewable energy projects in the
8 future.

9 Sir, I can answer your question maybe as soon as I
10 introduce this.

11 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We should start with the flag
12 sir.

13 MR. BEALE: A flag salute?

14 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I believe we should start with
15 the pledge of allegiance.

16 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'll second that.

17 MR. BEALE: Okay. Sure.

18 (The Pledge of Allegiance is made.)

19 MR. BEALE: Thank you, sir.

20 MS. CAMPBELL: That was a nice suggestion.

21 MR. BEALE: All right. So again, back to the
22 scope of the DRECP, no specific -- no energy projects or
23 transmission projects are proposed.

24 The other thing I want to stress is that the --
25 there is --

1 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It's very hard to hear you
2 back here.

3 MR. BEALE: Oh, I'm sorry, I thought it -- is this
4 better?

5 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes.

6 MR. BEALE: Okay. Too -- not too loud in the
7 front?

8 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: No.

9 MR. BEALE: Okay.

10 MS. CAMPBELL: Just wait until I go.

11 MR. BEALE: Wait until Vicki. You might want to
12 turn your mike down a little bit. Okay.

13 So again, no -- no specific projects are proposed.

14 The other thing to stress is, you know, there have
15 been, I think, some reports in some articles that the
16 purpose of the DRECP is to open up the desert to renewable
17 energy. By our estimate, currently there are nearly 10
18 million acres in the desert where renewable energy projects
19 could potentially be located, renewable energy projects are
20 not prohibited.

21 One of the main things that we're trying to do
22 with this plan is to identify where within that roughly 10
23 million acres is it most appropriate to actual site
24 projects. And as you'll hear more about our presentation
25 and later on tonight, in our preferred alternative we've

1 identified roughly 2 million acres where we think siting
2 renewable energy projects is potentially appropriate. So
3 that's a key point about the scope and purpose of the plan.

4 For the format for the meeting tonight, it's
5 listed up in the agenda, I'll say a little bit more about
6 it, we'll start with a brief presentation; it's about 30
7 minutes. It's intended to give you kind of an overview of
8 the plan and to talk about opportunities for public comment,
9 and also to tell you a little bit about an online GIS
10 mapping tool that you may use if you want to -- if you want
11 to look at some of the maps that were prepared for the plan.

12 After that 30 minutes, you know, starting probably
13 about 6:15 or so, we will have an open house. And you see
14 the posterboards in the back of the room -- the back of the
15 room. But the purpose of the open house is to give you a
16 chance to visit one of our information stations and ask
17 members of the planning team any questions you have about
18 the plan. This is the chance for you to ask questions, ask
19 for information on the document.

20 We'll also have an opportunity during the open
21 house for you to make public comments on the record. We
22 have Marlee here, our friendly Court Reporter, will be here
23 at her station. So if you prefer -- we're going to have a
24 public -- an opportunity for public comment later, but if
25 you'd like to make it early during the open house, you're

1 free to do that. If you have to leave early, if you prefer
2 to make your comments during that time as opposed to in
3 front of the group, you're welcome to do that.

4 Let's see, another thing, I do want to -- I forgot
5 to mention, the presentation you'll see from Vicki Campbell
6 from BLM today will be posted online, so all the slides will
7 be available to you.

8 After the public -- after the open house session,
9 we'll make sure we start right at 7:00 p.m., we'll have an
10 opportunity for public comment. And this will be -- we'll
11 move the podium up to the front of the room. It's an
12 opportunity for you to make comments. We'll have agency
13 folks up here to listen to the comments. It's not a Q and A
14 session; it's a chance for you to speak and for the agencies
15 to listen to your comments.

16 If you would like to make a comment during our
17 public comment period we ask you fill out one of the blue
18 speaker cards in front. That helps us have a sense of how
19 many people -- I'm sorry, I'll try to remember that, speak
20 up to the folks in the back -- how many people will be
21 speaking. It also allows me to let you know ahead of time
22 where you are in the queue to come up and speak. You can
23 provide just your name, if you want to. If you want your
24 affiliation associated with your comment, you can add that
25 too. What happens with your public comments either during

1 the public comment period or during the open house is they
2 go into the record as if you had submitted a written
3 comment. And the agencies will consider all of the formal
4 comments that are submitted, and there will be written
5 responses along with the final document.

6 So that's -- that's it for the format.

7 So what we're going to do now -- we got a little
8 bit of a late start, so I want to move over to the public
9 presentation. And Vicki Campbell will make the
10 presentation.

11 MS. CAMPBELL: Thanks, Chris.

12 Hi, I'm Vicki Campbell. I am the DRECP Program
13 Manager for the Bureau of Land Management. And this
14 normally is not an issue for me as far as voice volume. But
15 if I do get quiet in the back, if someone could just stand
16 up in the back, I'll see you and I'll know that I need to
17 speak up again. So all you need to do is stand up and that
18 will be your signal to me that I've gotten too quiet for
19 you. And I do apologize to those in the front because I
20 might blast you with volume. So -- and away we go.

21 So on behalf of the California Energy Commission,
22 Bureau of Land Management, California Department of Fish and
23 Wildlife, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we welcome you
24 to this, our last, public meeting and introductory
25 presentation on the Draft Desert Renewable Energy

1 Conservation Plan, also known as the DRECP.

2 The DRECP is the result of an intense
3 collaboration, interagency planning process. It's a
4 comprehensive plan that contains a great deal of
5 information. For anyone that has opened it, you realize
6 that. We've organized the plan to make it as accessible as
7 possible. The DRECP is organized in a format that is
8 similar to environmental impact statements or environmental
9 impact reports that you are used to seeing.

10 The DRECP contains six main volumes and an
11 additional volume of technical appendices. The volumes in
12 the DRECP correspond to chapters that you're used to seeing
13 in a traditional environmental impact statement or
14 environmental impact reports.

15 Volume I contains the background of the DRECP,
16 including its purpose and need. Volume II describes all the
17 alternatives, including the no-action and alternatives that
18 were considered but not carried forward. Volume III
19 describes the environmental setting and existing conditions.

20 Volume IV contains the draft environmental analysis and
21 environmental consequences. Volume V describes scoping and
22 public participation. And Volume VI includes details about
23 the implementation of mitigation measures.

24 There are 24 technical appendices, including
25 appendices that detail covered species, biological goals and

1 objectives, and climate change. There are also appendices
2 that are very specific to three of the four agencies,
3 including additional detail on the BLM Land Use Plan
4 Amendments, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service General
5 Conservation Plan, and the California Natural Communities
6 Conservation Plan.

7 Volume I provides that general description of the
8 DRECP. Many federal, state, local agencies, tribes, and
9 private citizens have provided very helpful information into
10 the development of the Draft DRECP. The four agencies that
11 were principally responsible for -- for preparing the
12 document are the four that we've listed before, the
13 California Energy Commission, the Bureau of Land Management,
14 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California
15 Department of Fish and Wildlife.

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

22 The Draft DRECP is intended to streamline the
23 environmental review and permitting process for renewable
24 energy projects sited in appropriate areas. "Streamlined"
25 under the DRECP means does not mean that we will be skipping

1 laws or have incomplete steps. The DRECP will not weaken
2 any environmental review or environmental laws under the
3 state and federal government. It just makes the processes
4 more efficient and more predictable.

5 The DRECP will conserve sensitive species and
6 their habitat, including species listed as threatened or
7 endangered under the Endangered Species Act and California
8 Endangered Species Act.

9 On BLM administered lands the DRECP will also
10 conserve other valuable resources, including recreation,
11 cultural, visual, and wilderness characteristics, to name a
12 few. A core element of the DRECP is the significant
13 increase in conservation and recreation designations
14 proposed in the BLM Land Use Plan Amendment and that are
15 designed to protect those valuable resources and uses on BLM
16 land.

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

21 The DRECP identifies appropriate areas for
22 renewable energy projects, creates incentives for developers
23 to site projects in those areas by streamlining the
24 environmental review and permitting process and will
25 conserve sensitive species, their habitats, and the

1 ecological processes that would support them. The DRECP
2 would also protect other desert resources, uses, and values
3 on BLM administered lands.

4 As it is currently, the siting of renewable energy
5 projects and the mitigation of impacts are considered on an
6 individual project-by-project basis, not on a comprehensive
7 landscape scale. The DRECP considers development,
8 mitigation, and conservation at a comprehensive landscape
9 scale. The DRECP would also improve the coordination of
10 federal, state, local, tribal, and private conservation
11 efforts in the desert by identifying high priority landscape
12 goals that can be used to achieve better and greater
13 conservation. Consideration of renewable energy development
14 with transmission and conservation of a range of values and
15 uses together in one land use and resource planning process
16 is considered smart from the start.

17 The plan area encompasses approximately 22-and-a-
18 half million acres across portions of seven counties in the
19 Mojave and Sonoran Deserts of Southern California. It
20 includes federal and non-federal lands. The plan area
21 includes only small portions of some counties, like San
22 Diego, and large portions of others, like San Bernardino
23 County.

24 This map shows you the general ownership within
25 the plan area. The largest holdings are BLM, Bureau of Land

1 Management, in yellow, National Park Service lands in green,
2 Department of Defense lands in dark gray, and private lands
3 or non-federal lands in light gray color.

4 The DRECP is a combination of three different
5 types of plans, a Bureau of Land Management Land Use Plan
6 Amendment, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service General
7 Conservation Plan, and a California Department of Fish and
8 Wildlife Natural Communities Conservation Plan. The three
9 plans are integrated and work together to help achieve the
10 DRECP's overall goals.

11 Each of the different plans applies to a different
12 portion of the DRECP plan area. The BLM Land Use Plan
13 Amendment applies only to BLM lands, covering nearly 10
14 million acres of the plan area. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife
15 Service General Conservation Plan applies to about 5.4
16 million acres of non-federal lands. It does not apply to
17 BLM or any other federal lands. And the California Natural
18 Communities Conservation Plan applies to both federal and
19 non-federal lands, covering nearly 19 million acres.

20 The DRECP's covered activities are categories of
21 actions for which the DRECP could provide a more efficient
22 and predictable environmental review and permitting process.
23 Renewable energy development projects that are sited within
24 the DRECP's development focus areas, also known as DFAs, are
25 the largest category of covered activities and include

1 solar, wind and geothermal. Transmission needed to support
2 renewable energy generation is also another category of
3 covered activity. Transmission projects would be covered
4 both within and outside of development focus areas and in
5 order to deliver energy to where it is needed.

6 Biological conservation and compensation actions
7 on federal and non-federal conservation areas are also
8 covered activities. On BLM land, conservation and
9 compensation actions for a variety of resources and uses are
10 also covered activities, including but not limited to
11 cultural, recreation, and visual.

12 The DRECP would cover all phases of renewable
13 energy projects, including preconstruction, construction,
14 operation and maintenance, and ultimately decommissioning
15 when the project reaches the end of its operational life.

16 The renewable energy component of the DRECP is one
17 part of California and the federal government strategy for
18 addressing climate change and meeting the energy needs for
19 residents and businesses. The comprehensive California
20 statewide strategy includes utility-scale renewable energy
21 development and associated transmission, distributed
22 generation, energy conservation, demand response, strong
23 energy efficiency standards, and investment in research and
24 development.

25 The DRECP plans for up to 20,000 megawatts of new

1 energy generation and transmission in the plan area through
2 the year 2040. It is important to note that the 20,000
3 megawatts of new generation is not a goal or a target. The
4 DRECP is not, I repeat, not intended to drive or sanction
5 any specific level of megawatt development in the desert.
6 Instead, the 20,000 megawatt estimate for renewable energy
7 demand was used to estimate the amount of acres of ground
8 disturbance that might occur as a result of that 20,000
9 megawatt level of development. And we used these estimates
10 to conduct the environmental analysis.

11 The potential for 20,000 megawatts of renewable
12 development in the DRECP plan area is based on certain
13 specific assumptions about energy generation in the entire
14 state of California, including an assumption that nearly
15 30,000 megawatts of distributed generation would be built
16 statewide. The draft plan does assume there will be 20,000
17 megawatts of distributed generation, such as rooftop solar,
18 which is about 10 times the amount of distributed generation
19 currently installed. Limited generation from nuclear and
20 fossil fuel resources and state policies that limit imports
21 of renewable energy from coming in outside the state also
22 control what happens with a renewable energy plan.

23 Renewable energy production in the DRECP plan area
24 through the year 2040 would be lower than 20,000 megawatts
25 if changes in technology of public policy encourage or

1 require different resources for energy generation. We
2 estimate that the production of 20,000 megawatts from
3 utility-scale renewable energy plants would result in about
4 177,000 acres of ground disturbance in the plan area.

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

10 The DRECP includes specific renewable energy
11 designations, as I spoke before. The most important of
12 these are the development focus areas, also known as DFAs.
13 This is where renewable energy projects would benefit from a
14 more efficient and predictable environmental review and
15 permitting process. These DFAs are suitable because of
16 their renewable energy resources; they're sunny, windy, or
17 have geothermal resources on them, or under them as the case
18 may be. They are also compatible with the conservation of
19 species and other resource values and uses that are valued
20 in the desert.

21 In most of the alternatives the DFAs are located
22 where resources values are relatively low to minimize
23 conflicts between renewable energy development and resource
24 conservation. BLM would also be offering incentives to
25 renewable energy projects sited in development focus areas

1 on BLM land.

2 It is important to remember that the DRECP with
3 these development focus areas is not permitting specific
4 projects, nor it is driving utility-scale renewable energy
5 development into the desert. As discussed previously, the
6 DRECP is being developed in response to state and federal
7 policies, and the fact that the desert has very valuable
8 renewable energy resources. The goal of the DRECP is to
9 comprehensively plan for renewable energy development,
10 conservation, recreation, and other valuable resources and
11 uses in the desert in a landscape-scale process, not on a
12 project-by-project process.

13 Study Area lands are another type of renewable
14 energy designation. Study Areas are lands that could be
15 appropriate for development in the future, but require
16 additional analysis and are not currently regarded as
17 development focus areas for the purposes of analysis in the
18 draft DRECP.

19 The DRECP's biological conservation strategy was
20 used to develop the BLM Land Use Plan Amendment, the U.S.
21 Fish and Wildlife Service General Conservation Plan, and
22 California Department of Fish and Wildlife Natural
23 Communities Conservation Plan. The biological conservation
24 strategy considers 37 sensitive species and 31 natural
25 communities. It's designed to protect species, their

1 habitats, natural communities, and ecological processes, and
2 is based on a set of overarching biological goals and
3 objectives.

4 The biological strategy includes specific
5 conservation and management actions, known as CMAs, to
6 avoid, minimize and mitigate for impacts to covered species
7 and contribute to their recovery. The conservation strategy
8 also includes a monitoring and adaptive management program
9 to allow the DRECP to incorporate new information throughout
10 its 25-year life.

11 Now we go into Volume II, the alternatives. Six
12 alternatives are presented and analyzed in the draft DRECP;
13 five action alternatives and one no-action alternative. The
14 agencies have identified a preferred alternative from the
15 five action alternatives. The no-action alternative
16 describes what is expected to happen if the DRECP is not
17 completed and approved.

18 The BLM Land Use Plan Amendment, the Natural
19 Community Conservation Plan, and the General Conservation
20 Plan are included in all five of the action alternatives.
21 Other common elements of the five action alternatives
22 include a conservation strategy, development focus areas,
23 recreation designations, and a monitoring and adaptive
24 management program.

25 Each of the five action alternatives analyzes the

1 potential for the production of 20,000 megawatts of
2 renewable energy, which would result in about 177,000 acres
3 of ground disturbance. The acreage is dispersed and
4 analyzed differently in each of the action alternatives
5 depending on the configuration and the location of the
6 development focus areas.

7 This is a map of the no-action alternative which
8 assumes the DRECP would not be completed or approved. The
9 light pink areas you see on the map are where renewable
10 energy projects could potentially be built today. This is
11 an area of about 9.8 million acres. The dark pink hatched
12 areas show where renewable energy projects would occur under
13 the DRECP's preferred alternative. An area of about 2
14 million acres of development focus are in the preferred.

15 One of the most important differences among the
16 DRECP alternatives is the size and geographic distribution
17 of these development focus areas. This slide shows you a
18 comparison of three of the five action alternatives, the
19 DFAs, development focus areas, are shown in pink, dark pink
20 this time.

21 Alternative 1 is on the left, the preferred
22 alternative in the middle, Alternative 2 on the far right.
23 Alternative 1 has the smallest extent of development focus
24 areas. The preferred alternative in the middle has somewhat
25 larger development focus areas than Alternative 1, and would

1 provide moderate siting flexibility and moderately dispersed
2 development impacts throughout the desert. Alternative 2,
3 on the right, has the largest acreage of development focus
4 areas and would provide the most siting flexibility and the
5 most geographically dispersed impacts of all five action
6 alternatives.

7 This slide also shows you where the development
8 focus areas are among the three alternatives. For example,
9 Alternative 1 has less land proposed in DFAs than the
10 preferred or Alternative 2, especially in the West Mojave,
11 Imperial Valley, and East Riverside areas. Alternative 2,
12 which is the one on the right, has more land proposed as
13 DFAs than the other two alternatives, especially in the
14 Owens Valley area, West Mojave and Central Mojave, and
15 Imperial area. Remember, regardless of the size of the
16 DFAs, we are estimating about 177,000 acres of ground
17 disturbance impacts in each of the five action alternatives.

18 Another important difference among the DRECP
19 alternatives is the extent of BLM lands added to the
20 National Landscape Conservation System. This slide shows
21 the same three alternatives as the previous slide. The
22 proposed National Conservation Lands are shown in purple.

23 Alternative 1, on the left, has the least amount
24 of proposed new National Conservation Lands. The preferred
25 alternative in the middle has a moderate amount of proposed

1 National Conservation Lands. And Alternative 2, on the
2 right, has the greatest amount proposed. The amount of
3 proposed National Conservation Lands relates to the amount
4 of development focus -- development focus areas in each
5 action alternative. The larger and more dispersed the
6 development focus areas means that more natural resources
7 are put at risk of being impacted, so larger amounts of land
8 must be conserved to offset those impacts. It also means,
9 we went through the five alternatives, that through each of
10 the alternatives the Bureau of Land Management took a
11 different emphasis on the National Conservation Lands and
12 looked at the law narrowly, starting in Alternative 1, and
13 very broadly in Alternative 2, and moderately in the
14 preferred alternative and Alternatives 3 and 4.

15 Here's a little bit of a deep dive into the West
16 Mojave and Lucerne Valley region of the DRECP. This map
17 orients you to this piece of the plan area for the
18 preferred. Proposed development focus areas are shown in
19 pink, and non-federal conservation planning areas are in
20 light green. On BLM land you see DFAs, also in pink, you
21 see proposed areas of critical environmental concern in
22 blue, proposed National Landscape Conservation System Lands
23 in yellow.

24 The combination of areas of critical environmental
25 concern overlaid with National Conservation Lands in yellow

1 actually create a hatching more -- that looks more like it's
2 green. So we had an unfortunate color layering issue.
3 Green and yellow make -- or blue and yellow makes green. We
4 all learned that in kindergarten. And it works when you
5 hatch it also in GIS. So you can see a close up of this map
6 during the open house session in the back. Mike and I will
7 be in the map -- in the back to talk about this with you.

8 On this map you will also see special recreation
9 management areas in a light slashed brown. Again, in the
10 back we have more detailed maps to show you.

11 The next dive is a deep dive into the Imperial and
12 East Riverside regions of the plan. Again, the same color
13 schemes apply. Development focus areas are shown in pink,
14 and non-federal conservation planning areas are shown in
15 light green. And then on BLM land that combination of Areas
16 of Critical Environmental Concern with National Conservation
17 Lands are shown in kind of a slashed -- slashed light green.
18 And Special Recreation Management areas are shown in a
19 slashed brown.

20 Dark gray areas on these maps that you're seeing
21 are the military lands, Department of Defense. And the very
22 dark green, the darkest of the greens, are existing
23 conservation lands such as wilderness or national park. And
24 that is the same throughout all the mapping.

25 Here are some basic details and highlights about

1 the preferred alternative. The overall biological
2 conservation strategy for the preferred alternative covers
3 approximately 15 million acres, including existing
4 conservation such as wilderness areas. The BLM conservation
5 designations cover about 4 million acres. The development
6 focus areas cover about 2 million. The study area lands
7 about 183,000 acres. And BLM recreation designations cover
8 about 3.6 million acres.

9 This map gives you a general picture of the
10 preferred alternative. It's quite busy, lots of colors. In
11 this map what we really want you to see are the development
12 focus areas, in -- which are in pink, in relationship to the
13 DRECP proposed conservation lands, study area lands,
14 recreation lands, military bases, and existing conservation.

15 So this is one of those maps where we want you to see in
16 totality the different land allocations in juxtaposition
17 with one another. You'll be able to see this map up close
18 later at the information stations in Station 1. You can
19 also blow them up on your screen on your computer. And then
20 you can also deep dive into them on the DRECP Gateway, which
21 we'll talk about later.

22 For the preferred alternative a little over 2
23 million acres are proposed for development focus area.
24 However, to meet this DRECP planning assumption of 20,000
25 megawatts of new renewable energy generation, renewable

1 energy projects would actually only be built on about
2 177,000 acres, about nine percent of the development focus
3 area. This graphic shows you that the dark striped slice at
4 the top of this pie represents this estimated amount of
5 ground disturbance in proportion to the total amount of
6 development focus area. So the slice is 177,000 acres. The
7 total pie is 2 million acres.

8 If less than 20,000 megawatts of new generation is
9 actually needed in the DRECP plan area then the actual
10 amount of ground disturbance would be less than 177,000
11 acres. The total proposed DFA acreage is much larger than
12 the estimated amount of impacts to allow for flexibility in
13 locating where projects can be built. We can't actually
14 design around project specifics at this scale because there
15 are issues such as cultural resources and other sensitive
16 resources which even inside a development focus area a
17 project has to work around or work with.

18 This map shows the development focus areas, again
19 in pink, and the estimated ground disturbance in acreages
20 and percentages expected to occur in each county within the
21 DRECP plan area. The little gray box that you see to the
22 map of the map legend for each county gives you an idea of
23 how large the percent of ground disturbance would be within
24 the DFA, in comparison with the total acre of DFAs in pink.
25 So it's a little bit of a visual difference. The estimated

1 ground disturbance that would occur within each of the DFAs
2 ranges from 5 to 16 percent of the total DFA areas.

3 We're going to deep dive again into the West
4 Mohave and Lucerne area of the plan. This is the preferred
5 alternative. And again, to give you context of how much
6 development we're talking about, for the development focus
7 areas in Kern County we estimate that about six percent of
8 the development focus areas in Kern County would actually be
9 developed. In San Bernardino County that percent is about
10 eight percent. And in Los Angeles County it's about five
11 percent of the development focus areas.

12 Zooming in to Imperial and the East Riverside
13 area, again, you're looking at the preferred. And in
14 Imperial County it's about nine percent of the development
15 focus areas would be developed. And in Riverside County it
16 would be about 16 percent of the development focus areas.

17 Our next section, which is Volumes III and IV.
18 Volume III, remember, is the environmental setting. Volume
19 IV is the environmental analysis and environmental
20 consequences. Twenty-three resource areas, resource
21 categories, were considered in the environmental analysis.
22 These resource categories were identified based on public
23 scoping meetings, preliminary analysis, and input from
24 tribes, the public, and agency experts.

25 In the environmental analysis we compared the

1 alternatives based on renewable energy development impacts,
2 proposed conservation and management actions for covered
3 species, and proposed management actions for recreation,
4 visual, cultural, water quality, and other resources and
5 uses on BLM lands, and the acreages and land allocations
6 proposed on BLM land.

7 The draft analysis concluded that impacts to most
8 of the 23 resource categories would be less than
9 significant. For ten of the resource areas impacts would be
10 significant in one more of the alternatives, including the
11 no-action alternative. Below is a list of those ten
12 resource categories. And they are also on a handout on the
13 side of the room where you came in.

14 Now we move into, briefly, how the DRECP is
15 intended to be implemented.

16 It's important to note that no new government
17 entity will be created by the DRECP. All existing agencies
18 retain their current authorities and responsibilities. The
19 purpose of identifying an implementation structure for the
20 DRECP is to improve agency coordination and communication.
21 Implementation will also include the public, tribal, local
22 governments, scientific participation, and a multitude of
23 other groups and stakeholders. The DRECP also includes an
24 estimated cost for implementation of the DRECP's biological
25 conservation strategy and sources of that funding.

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

9 This section explains some options for public
10 participation. We at the agencies have completed our work
11 for the draft plan, and now we need you to help and input to
12 shape the final.

13 We created a dedicated website for the DRECP,
14 www.drecp.org. I imagine many of you have already been
15 playing around on that website. If not, we encourage you to
16 do so. The draft DRECP and GIS shape files for the
17 alternatives are available on this website. To help you
18 understand the DRECP we also prepared a series of fact
19 sheets, frequently asked questions, and informational video.
20 The fact sheets and frequently asked questions are also on
21 the side table. They are also on the website. The draft
22 plan is also available on the Bureau of Land Management and
23 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service websites so that there is no
24 slowdown in servers and that sort of things. So we have
25 the -- the plan available in -- on three different websites

1 for your use.

2 We also have an innovative mapping tool called the
3 DRECP Gateway, which I'll talk about in a minute.

4 The DRECP is also available for review at local
5 libraries and agency offices in the plan area. DVDs are
6 also available for request. All the information on this
7 slide is available on a handout that is at the side table.
8 You can also sign up on the DRECP Listserv so that you get
9 notices of when things happen, such as an extension of the
10 public comment period. So that information is also
11 available on that handout.

12 And at the request of the county we actually
13 brought a box of DVDs here with us. So if you would like a
14 DVD, we have some available for you tonight so you don't
15 have to actually request one through the website or through
16 the toll free number. We can actually give you one here
17 tonight. But if we do run out, again, they are available at
18 your request through the toll free number and
19 the website and they arrive fairly -- they arrive pretty
20 quickly.

21 Public comment and review of this draft plan is
22 absolutely critical to developing the final DRECP. You can
23 give us your comments by email, fax, U.S. Mail, in person,
24 and at this public meeting, verbally or in writing.
25 Addresses for sending your comments are on a handout at the

1 side table, and also at DRECP.org. We do want your voice to
2 be heard, and we want to assure you that all public comments
3 are welcomed, valued and will be considered.

4 We opened the public comment opened on September
5 26th, 2014. It was originally supposed to close on January
6 9th. But based on the public input that our executives
7 heard from all of you, the public comment period has been
8 extended by 45 days, as Chris said at the start of the
9 meeting. The public comment period now closes on February
10 23rd, 2015. So the public comment period will be open for a
11 total of 151 days.

12 Public meetings were held throughout the DRECP
13 planning area and in surrounding population centers. And
14 this is the last of our public meetings.

15 So we have some tips for you when preparing your
16 written comments. To help us develop a final plan we really
17 need to know what you want us to change. Substantive
18 comments, and that's a key word for us in the state and
19 federal government, substantive comments have the greatest
20 effect on the final DRECP because they tell us specifically
21 what you want added, removed or modified, and why.

22 Examples of specific types of comments that have
23 the greatest effect on the final DRECP include comments that
24 raise significant unaddressed environmental issues, issues
25 that require clarification or modification to one or more of

1 the alternatives, information on a new or different
2 alternative that you want us to analyze, addition of new or
3 missing information that could substantially change the
4 conclusion in the analysis, or corrections of our
5 information that could substantially change the conclusions
6 in the environmental analysis.

7 Now on to the DRECP Gateway. This is our
8 innovative online data and mapping tool. It's free and user
9 friendly. There is a sign-in function, but you only have to
10 use it if you want to make maps, import data or make
11 comments in maps, save it and come back later. If you are
12 doing everything at one time then you don't have to worry
13 about signing in.

14 In this tool you can import your own data, view,
15 edit and analyze maps and data, and overlay your own data
16 with our data. The Gateway does contain data sets, so
17 anyone with a computer, regardless of your experience or
18 inexperience with GIS, can use the data because it is in
19 data sets. We encourage everyone to go in and explore. And
20 you can create custom maps, as I said before, and you can
21 put comments right into your maps, print them out, include
22 them with your written comments, so it actually gives us
23 very specific detailed information from you at a very
24 detailed pinpoint location, if that's the kind of
25 information you would like us to use.

1 You can see the website at the bottom of this
2 screen, drecp.databasin.org. You can also find this address
3 on the handouts at the side of the room, and also at our
4 dedicated website www.drecp.org; we also have a link there.

5 It is important to note that this is an innovative
6 tool, but it is only a tool. It is not necessary for you to
7 use this tool in order to review, understand or comment on
8 the DRECP. It is an optional resource that we made
9 available for your use.

10 So that's the end of our presentation this
11 evening. We thank you for your interest in the DRECP, and
12 we look forward to talking with you back at the stations and
13 to hearing your comments if you come forward and comment
14 now, or we look forward to reading them if you decide to
15 submit them in writing.

16 MR. BEALE: Thank you, Vicki.

17 Just a reminder that the PowerPoint presentation,
18 as well as a transcription of Vicki's presentation, will be
19 posted online, as well as the introduction. So we're
20 transcribing -- recording and transcribing the first and
21 third segments of the meeting.

22 We're now on to the open house. And I'd like to
23 just orient you to the information stations we have in the
24 back.

25 Before I do, a reminder, Marlee, our friendly

1 Court Reporter, is open for business. If you would like to
2 come up and make a comment now, you're welcome to do that.
3 Your comment will be recorded and entered into the record.

4 And if I can ask our agency folks to go to your
5 stations please.

6 So we have six information stations. Starting in
7 the back of the room to your left, the folks raising their
8 hands back there, that's our general station. So if you
9 have just general questions about what the DRECP is, how the
10 alternatives are different, and so forth, what the
11 environmental analysis of the human environment is, that's
12 at Station 1. We have lots of posterboards there.

13 Moving counterclockwise we have -- Eileen, if you
14 could raise your hand, a station for renewable energy. If
15 you have questions about renewable energy assumptions or
16 transmission planning assumptions behind the plan, please go
17 there.

18 Moving further counterclockwise we have our BLM
19 LUPA station. Questions about the LUPA, go there, the Land
20 Use Plan Amendment.

21 Moving one more counterclockwise, the General
22 Conservation Planning station, the GCP.

23 Next to that is the Natural Community Conservation
24 Plan station.

25 And then finally, all the way around to your right

1 is our biological conservation strategy station. And that's
2 where if you want to learn about the biological conservation
3 strategy that was used to develop the Land Use Plan
4 Amendment, the General Conservation Plan, and the Natural
5 Community Conservation Plan, please go there.

6 We're a little behind schedule today. Just a
7 couple of things. We will start public comments right at
8 7:00. I see a big stack of blue cards over there. That's
9 good. We will also -- we're scheduled to go until 8:00, but
10 we will go later to accommodate everybody who wants to speak
11 today, so don't worry about that.

12 So now for the next 30 minutes please feel free to
13 go back and ask whatever questions you have about the plan.

14 (Off the record at 6:33 p.m.)

15 (Breakout Session Public Comment begins at 6:36 p.m.)

16 MS. MERK: Tonight I'm speaking about the
17 groundwater basins. There are 113 groundwater basins, and
18 of those basins 62 percent have no information; 11 have gone
19 through adjudication processes or are in the middle of it.

20 The 62 percent of these water basins are not
21 really listed under CASGEM designation because they use
22 population as a priority. However, under the EPA guidelines
23 and designations on federal lands there are special rules on
24 single-source aquifers, which this document does not have
25 any information on.

1 The material that the DRECP has, has not been
2 consistent with at each meeting. Their documents at the
3 first meeting are not the same as at this last meeting. And
4 neither is the explanations on the designation for the
5 LUPAs.

6 The DRECP does not end in 2040. However, in the
7 presentations they list it three times as ending in 2040.

8 Okay, I can't read my writing. Just a second. I
9 was just slamming things together.

10 Permanent changes to the California Desert
11 Conservation Act cannot be amended in this magnitude. The
12 scope of this amendment process is not clear. The CDCA plan
13 was written and passed by both sides of Congress, the
14 President of the United States, and signed off by the
15 Interior Secretary. This does not fall under the
16 jurisdiction of the plan amendment process as depicted in
17 the Federal Land Policy Act of 1976, 94-579. Thanks.

18 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I'm not going to read my
19 comments because some of the things were addressed tonight,
20 some of the things I thought.

21 But one of the things I would like or I hope is
22 going to happen is you did a scientific review in 2012. And
23 to me it's very, very important that any plant that actually
24 begins to be built is the best technology, the latest
25 technology, the technology that -- that is the most

1 conservation minded. And 2012 is a long time ago.

2 So is there any effort on the DRECP Planning
3 Committee to go back and make sure that the science review
4 is as updated as it needs to be?

5 The other question I have was about energy
6 development that's happened since you started this plan.
7 Was there any effort to look at that, and what has happened
8 in the -- you know, in the interim. That would seem to be
9 really important.

10 And then finally, I didn't hear anything about the
11 mechanism for communicating, especially with counties and
12 county officials about the plan itself and about working
13 with them. That I think is really important. I've listened
14 to county officials say they've never heard of the DRECP
15 until very recently.

16 And finally, I definitely think that the Soda
17 Mountains the Silurian Valley should be excluded from any of
18 these alternatives. There's so many critical resources
19 there, and they should be out of any planning area.

20 And finally, I wanted to thank you for doing this.
21 I mean, I think it's very, very important that there is a
22 plan, and I'm so glad that there is a planning process. And
23 you know, we support it, even though we come out with
24 critical comments. In general, the fact that there is a
25 plan is a wonderful thing.

1 (On the record at 7:06 p.m.)

2 MR. BEALE: So we have 42 comment cards. If you
3 would like to speak and you have not yet submitted a blue
4 card, please fill one out and give it to Valerie at the side
5 desk. Also, if you lost an earring at our Court Reporter
6 table, Valerie has it. Please ask her about that.

7 Folks, please take your seats. We do have quite a
8 few comments to -- to hear tonight.

9 So I want to, again, thank you for coming and for
10 your interest in speaking tonight. As I mentioned earlier,
11 this is the portion of the meeting where essentially you
12 have the last word tonight. We have folks here from the
13 agencies that I'll ask to introduce themselves here in a
14 minute, but they're here to listen.

15 This is not a Q and A session. That's what the
16 last section was for. This is a chance for you to provide
17 comments, for them to hear them. Even though we will not
18 have a response tonight I do want to reiterate that your
19 comments will be recorded, they'll be added to the record as
20 formal comments, and the agencies will consider -- will
21 consider the comments and provide written responses in the
22 final document.

23 So before I go on I would like to ask our agency
24 representatives to introduce themselves.

25 DR. SHARMA: Good evening, all. Thank you for

1 coming. My name is Dr. Shankar Sharma. I am a Senior
2 Environmental Scientist for the Renewable Energy --

3 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We can't hear.

4 MR. BEALE: Speak directly --

5 DR. SHARMA: Oh.

6 MR. BEALE: -- like right into the --

7 DR. SHARMA: Can you hear me, sir?

8 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Now better.

9 DR. SHARMA: Better?

10 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yeah. Better.

11 DR. SHARMA: Okay. Can you see me, please?

12 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yeah.

13 DR. SHARMA: Good. Good evening, all. My name is
14 Dr. Shankar Sharma. I am a Senior Environmental Scientist
15 for Renewable Energy Program and specialist, and also a
16 Scientific Development Adviser for the California Department
17 of Fish and Wildlife. Thank you for coming. Good evening.

18 MS. SYMONS: Good evening. I'm Katrina Symons.
19 I'm the Barstow Field Manager, California Desert District,
20 BLM.

21 MR. COREY: Good evening. I'm Ken Corey. I'm
22 with the Fish and Wildlife Service out of the Palm Springs
23 Office.

24 MR. FLINT: Good evening. I'm Scott Flint. I'm
25 the DRECP Program Manager with the California Energy

1 Commission.

2 MR. BEALE: All right. Thank you.

3 So as I mentioned, we have 42 comments -- comment
4 cards. If you would like to submit one it's not too late.
5 We, as I mentioned before, we're willing to go past eight
6 o'clock. We want to make sure everybody who submitted a
7 card can talk.

8 I think because of the number of the cards I'm
9 going to ask you to limit your comments to two minutes. I
10 have a timer up here to help you keep -- stay on track. It
11 will be yellow for the first minute of your comment. And
12 then for the second minute it will turn red. So when it
13 turns red you still have a minute. At the end it will make
14 a beeping sound. I'll turn that off when that happens.

15 Once the -- let - I think we can get started. Our
16 first speaker is Chris Clarke, followed by Jim Kainz, and
17 Greg Herring.

18 So, Mr. Clarke?

19 MR. CLARKE: Good evening. Chris Clarke. I work
20 with KCET reporting on renewable energy in the desert. I'm
21 here tonight speaking on my own behalf, rather than
22 representing KCET, and speaking as a resident of the desert,
23 of Joshua Tree, and as someone who is impassioned about the
24 California desert.

25 I want to thank you for this meeting. I know it

1 wasn't on the original schedule. I would like to suggest
2 that one more meeting, at least, is needed to serve
3 residents of southern Inyo and northeastern San Bernardino
4 Counties. I would suggest Baker or Tecopa.

5 California law and federal law have very, very
6 strict requirements for plain language in environmental
7 assessments. I do not feel that the DRECP meets the
8 standard of those laws. I think that it's essentially an
9 impenetrable document. To some degree that's going to be
10 necessary or inevitable with a document of this scope. But
11 as someone that reads these things for a living it's very,
12 very difficult to maneuver through this document and to
13 understand what it's saying. And I would like to suggest
14 that more attention be paid in the final to actual plain
15 English so someone who isn't paid to understand these things
16 has a chance of understanding.

17 One last point. As of two weeks ago it became a
18 matter of public record that the process by which
19 development focus areas were selected was politically
20 tainted. And I'm speaking of the Office of the Inspector
21 General's report out of the Interior Department concerning
22 former special counsel to the Interior Secretary Salazar,
23 Steve Black, who was, while this document was being
24 prepared, putting pressure on agency staff to include areas
25 that those agency staff thought were not suitable for use or

1 inclusion as development focus areas for various reasons,
2 including biological resources. And at the time not only
3 was Mr. Black romantically involved with -- two more
4 sentences -- romantically involved with a representative of
5 NextEra Energy Resources, Manal Yamout, a lobbyist, but was
6 also applying for a job as executive director of the
7 American Wind Energy Association.

8 It is crucial, I think, that we found out which
9 areas were included at his urging and over the reservations
10 or objections of agency staff so that we in the public can
11 actually have an idea of just how badly tainted the process
12 is.

13 I want to thank you for the opportunity to
14 comment.

15 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Jim Kainz, Greg Herring,
16 and Sophia Merk.

17 UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Can the mike be raised a
18 little bit because it's a little hard to hear.

19 MR. KAINZ: I can just talk into it. Jim Kainz.

20 You have it within your power to set an example
21 for the rest of the United States, and then the rest of the
22 world, to reduce the greenhouse gases in the air very
23 dramatically, very quickly. I'm not talking about 30 years
24 or 40 years or 50 years, I'm saying in under 10 years.
25 There's a simple one-word answer: photosynthesis. We all

1 learned in elementary school, if you want to take carbon
2 dioxide out of the air you need to grow plants.

3 I understand that biomass was originally
4 considered as being one of the focus areas, and for some
5 reason it was eliminated. I don't understand why. You have
6 20 million acres that you're looking at. The Amazon
7 rainforest is less than 2 million acres. You have ten times
8 the land of the Amazon rainforest just in California. What
9 if we got nine other states to do the same thing? We'd now
10 have 100 Amazon rainforests in the United States taking
11 carbon dioxide out of the air and replacing it with oxygen.

12 I don't know why biomass was thrown out as being
13 one of the focus areas, but to me there's a simple and
14 inexpensive solution used to restore that as one of the
15 focus areas and get the farmers to get leases from the
16 federal government at little or no cost. The farmers will
17 absorb the expense. It will be very profitable to grow
18 switchgrass, which is a weed, on government land and turn it
19 into ethanol for flex fuel vehicles.

20 I'm over my time. Thank you very much.

21 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Greg Herring, Sophia Merk,
22 and Eva Soltes.

23 MR. HERRING: I appreciate the opportunity to make
24 a comment. I'm Greg Herring and I'm associated with the
25 First Class Miners, Inc. It's a local casual-use mining

1 organization, and we're one of probably more than a dozen
2 casual-use mining organizations that have claims within the
3 plan area.

4 Our concern is preserving the rights, our rights,
5 to casual-use mining under the Mining Laws of 1872. And
6 we're worried that the DRECP might vacate those rights in
7 some manner. It is a large document. I just started going
8 through it and it's a little concerning with what I'm
9 reading.

10 Our group alone has over 300 men, women and
11 children in it. Some of the other groups have more than 500
12 folks in it. So there's quite a large number of folks that
13 like to get out and look for the elusive yellow metal, gold.
14 We like to get out there, do the casual-use mining. We're
15 really good stewards of the land. We know the importance of
16 taking care of our public lands. We don't want to see
17 these -- our rights and -- and our liberties in recreational
18 aspects such as camping, hiking, off-roading, shooting, the
19 other things that we can do on public lands, we don't want
20 to see those be disturbed in any way.

21 So we desire to keep these public lands open and
22 available for casual-use mining, as well as the recreational
23 opportunities. And we will oppose any alternative or plan
24 that proposes to deny these rights and liberties.
25 Alternatively, we will support wholeheartedly any plan or

1 alternative that protects these rights.

2 What I'd like to see personally, as I'd like to
3 recommend, that additional verbiage be put in your plan that
4 specifies protection of casual-use mining under the Mining
5 Laws of 1872. Thank you.

6 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Sophia Merk, Eva Soltes,
7 and Ruth Rieman.

8 MS. MERK: I already submitted my comments. Let
9 somebody else take my spot.

10 MR. BEALE: Okay. Thank you.

11 MS. SOLTES: Good evening. I'm Eva Soltes and I
12 live in Joshua Tree. I run a music, arts and ecology
13 program. And I want to thank you for the opportunity. I
14 think it's really important that you have emphasized the
15 fact that community comments and community input will be an
16 important part of this project, of, you know, the whole
17 plan. I think the planning is important to do.

18 And on that point I'd like to say that there are
19 communities that have not had an opportunity to speak up,
20 and I would like to see additional meetings. And I think
21 the fact that the language is difficult I think, you know,
22 once you simplify the plan I would like to see it come back
23 to us for another round. I know that you've had about six
24 years -- and it's an enormous, enormous project, and I
25 applaud all the work that's been done. But I would like to,

1 you know, really make sure that the community understands
2 and is able to give proper input, and that all of the
3 communities affected can speak their mind and give you
4 information that will be really valuable.

5 Another point that I have is I'm very concerned
6 that SF6, sulfur hexafluoride is not spoken about in terms
7 of how much greenhouse gases it produces at substations in
8 terms of the transmission lines. I would like to see very
9 specific regulations about the fact that that not be used in
10 the rules. I would think that that should absolutely not be
11 permitted because if it leaks it produces mass amounts of
12 greenhouse gas which this whole project is trying to
13 prevent.

14 I would also like to say, in terms of the species
15 that are talked about in the plan, I would like to see
16 people considered. The fact that disturbed lands can
17 produce Valley Fever, the fact that people's -- you know,
18 when you think of habitat, where people live and how people
19 live is being, you know, very adversely affected by solar
20 installations and what lands are being suggested that we
21 use. So I would very much like to see people, humans,
22 considered in the plan.

23 And I guess I know my time is up here, but I say
24 viewsheds and the fact that we have a whole economy in the
25 desert and the whole world depends on the desert and the

1 large views of the desert, that that is a very important
2 thing to the whole world. People come here to experience
3 tourism and beauty and spiritual moments. Thank you.

4 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Ruth Rieman, David
5 Butterfield, and Meg Foley.

6 MS. RIEMAN: Good evening. I'm Ruth Rieman, a
7 member of the -- 35-year member of the San Bernardino
8 community, and I thank you for coming this evening to hear
9 our comments.

10 The current DRECP draft alternatives all represent
11 outdated six-year-old thinking and technology. To
12 illustrate I'll share with you a paragraph that NRG Energy
13 CEO David Crane in his letter to his shareholders in March
14 of this year, quote,

15 "Just a few years ago the prevailing wisdom was
16 that the path to a clean energy economy depended on our
17 collective willingness to build a nationwide high-voltage
18 transmission system in order to transport electricity in
19 vast quantities from the relentlessly windy and brutally
20 sunny parts of the country where people generally don't live
21 to the more moderate places where Americans tend to
22 congregate.

23 "The following of that idea thankfully was
24 realized before anyone actually began to build such an
25 expensive and pointless white elephant. Now we are headed

1 for the same goal but in the opposite direction, down the
2 path towards a distributed generation centric clean energy
3 future featuring individual choice and the empowerment of
4 the American energy consumer."

5 I hope you all know who David Crane is at NRG.
6 He's also a principal in Ivanpah, the big Ivanpah. So he
7 sounds like he understands that maybe we're on the wrong
8 path at this time.

9 So what would I like to see happen? I'd like to
10 see the discarded DRECP distributed generation alternative
11 be revisited, and elements of it should be forward into the
12 current preferred alternative to shrink DFAs. I'd like to
13 identify areas of disturbed lands all over the state close
14 to existing transmission and substations, to expand the
15 geographical opportunities for utility-scale renewable that
16 will contribute to the DRECP's total megawatt computations.
17 I'd like to see the DFAs refined to avoid critical wildlife
18 linkages and ecological issues.

19 I respectfully submit their comments. Thank you.

20 MR. BEALE: Thank you. David Butterfield, Meg
21 Foley, and Steven Jones

22 MR. BUTTERFIELD: I'm David Butterfield. I live
23 in Pipes Canyon. And the people who live in the Pipes
24 Canyon area have endured major assaults by the power
25 industry over the past seven years. First there was the

1 green path with their scheme to put 200-foot tall power
2 towers across the entire Morongo Basin. We defeated that
3 plan, the California Desert Coalition, among others. And
4 then it was Goldman Sachs speculators with their plan to
5 desecrate Flat Top Mesa, which is where I live, this -- this
6 is where I live, and Black Lava Butte with hundreds of 400-
7 foot tall wind power generators. BLM handed them a permit
8 to explore. And even with the government incentives hanging
9 in the balance Goldman Sachs abandoned the plan. There
10 wasn't enough wind.

11 Residents of the community were left to ponder an
12 uncertain future, slashed property values, these spoiled
13 views, pollution, destruction of the pristine natural
14 resources and native sacred sites. Personally, I would have
15 never built my little off-the-grid dream house in this
16 pristine place if I thought for one second that the U.S.
17 Government would trash the whole area for a \$6.00 per acre
18 lease.

19 I'm here today, along with my neighbors, to tell
20 you, BLM, enough is a enough. No more permits. No more
21 energy scams in Pipes Canyon. Thank you.

22 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Meg Foley, Steven Jones,
23 and David Lamfrom.

24 MS. FOLEY: Hi. I'm Meg Foley and I've lived in
25 the Morongo Basin for over 30 years. And thank you for

1 scheduling this meeting and for also extending the deadline
2 for commenting.

3 I work full time but I've been trying like crazy
4 to read the -- read through the plan, and it's been pretty
5 difficult because of the length. I see many, many
6 references to adaptive management in describing mitigation,
7 and also the resource conservation. I looked up the
8 definition of adaptive management and it says it's also
9 known as adaptive resource management. It's a structured
10 iterative process of robust decision making in the face of
11 uncertainty with an aim of reducing uncertainty over time
12 via system monitoring.

13 That principle of adaptive management in regards
14 to habitat management and mitigation is a pretty scary
15 prospect. The process to define baselines, to monitor
16 development, and to calculate the cumulative impacts should
17 be spelled out in the plan. More importantly, the funding
18 mechanism should be defined in the plan, and I haven't come
19 across that.

20 The soils, the flora and the fauna will not
21 recover from utility-scale development. At the very least
22 mitigation should be for the life of the impact and not for
23 the life of the program.

24 I would like to propose that the DRECP be
25 adaptively managed. Adaptive management in the plan could

1 be rolled out in phases and could allow projects to take
2 advantage of the new and evolving technologies and to allow
3 a mechanism to address variables. And as I said, if we do
4 this in phases we could take advantage of that.

5 The DG alternative was rejected because, quote,
6 "Local governments cite lack of funds and time to update
7 codes to address the renewable technology." Right now the
8 San Bernardino County is in the process of updating their
9 general plan and renewable code updates.

10 So just in closing I just would like to ask that
11 you look at the discarded DG model and refine the DFAs and
12 come up with a plan that clearly defines implementation,
13 governance, and how it will be continually funded. Thank
14 you.

15 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Steven Jones, David
16 Lamfrom and Tony Malone.

17 MR. LAMFROM: Thank you. The DRECP is 22 million
18 acres, which basically is a little bit smaller than the
19 State of Virginia. So we are essentially doing planning for
20 the State of Virginia. And but in a world where the State
21 of Virginia was by and large pristine.

22 And the reason I'm making this point is
23 because as we think about this 22 million acres we
24 understand that within five hours drive there are 22 million
25 people who desperately need the solitude, the wildness, the

1 quiet, the deep night sky that is found in this, what is the
2 wildest heart of the southern United States.

3 This is also an existing spiritual homeland for
4 Native American people who still live and reside in this
5 California desert. And we should also be considering this
6 planning process on their behalf.

7 Since this is the third time I'm giving public
8 comment during these meetings, I'll go quickly through my
9 points.

10 I think there's a need for another round of --
11 another round of meetings, possibly shorter than the
12 original round, but in order to provide the opportunity for
13 people to -- to give substantive comments we should give
14 them, I think, an appropriate venue for participation. Many
15 people believe that providing public comments verbally and
16 attending public comment meeting are their preferred method
17 of participation, and we should honor that by another round
18 of meetings so that folks have the time to review the
19 document and to provide the comments that are substantive
20 that you guys have asked for.

21 We also ask that the worst of the worst projects,
22 such as Soda Mountain, Silurian Valley, Eagle Crest Pump
23 Storage, they be protected as conservation lands due to
24 their known value for covered species and connectivity.
25 Allowing projects that harm these values to move forward

1 undermines the credibility of the landscape-level planning
2 and undermines the public's faith that this process is
3 founded in science versus politics.

4 Is it okay if I -- I just have two more points to
5 make, if I just -- thank you so much.

6 Core concepts such as durability, mitigation,
7 implementation, acreage calculations, and assumptions of
8 need should be updated to reflect current realities and
9 needs. And problematic DFAs such as Charleston View, the
10 Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area, and Lucerne should be
11 eliminated.

12 But finally, and thank you for your time, we -- we
13 ask that DG assumptions be significantly upped to 25 percent
14 or higher. Thank you very much.

15 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Tony Malone, Sandra Birdie
16 (phonetic), and Robin Kobaly.

17 MR. MALONE: I'm Tony Malone. I taught at the
18 college, Victor Valley College, for nine years, renewable
19 energy. And I find it very frustrating that you're dealing
20 with things like 20 megawatt -- 20,000 megawatts. That
21 doesn't mean anything. 20,000 megawatt hours would.

22 Now when I talked to the CEC I found out that they
23 have the same numbers, basically the same factors for one
24 type of solar as they do for another type of solar.

25 The Victor Valley College, for instance, has a

1 five megawatt cadmium tower (phonetic) -- I'm sorry, not
2 cadmium tower, gallium arsenide system. Well, that's not
3 even in -- you know, he doesn't know the -- the function of
4 that, or that there's more percentage of gain from that than
5 you can from say a silicon-based system. That should be --
6 you know, we should have megawatt hours as far as what you
7 are actually measuring or what you're looking at putting
8 down, megawatt hours per year.

9 Now, you know, I'm -- I think we should put a lot
10 of solar panels in the desert, especially where, you know,
11 we have homes and, you know, on top of our homes. My system
12 is completely off grid.

13 But I do -- I don't see the function of trying to
14 plaster the desert with, you know, with these things in
15 places that they don't belong. They just put a 20 megawatt
16 system in one mile from my house, and that particular system
17 has upset the, you know, the fauna like crazy. I -- now I
18 have rabbits fighting in my front yard for, you know, a
19 little space, and I've never seen that before in the 35
20 years that I've lived there. You know, and I think that,
21 you know, we should -- we should consider the desert and
22 consider the people, and consider where we live and how we
23 live there, because there are places that are good for it
24 and there's places that are horrible for it. And the place
25 that they just put 20 megawatts, that's horrible.

1 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Sandra Birdie, Robin
2 Kobaly, and Steve Bardwell.

3 Sandra? Okay.

4 Robin Kobaly?

5 MS. KOBALY: Thank you for having this meeting
6 tonight.

7 I served on my first independent science panel in
8 2010 to provide early scientific guidance for this plan. I
9 served as a botanist on that panel. I was also on the staff
10 that wrote the original California Desert Plan. So
11 naturally, I'm very focused on the science of the plan.

12 Let's see, I scribbled here.

13 The -- one of the things I'm very concerned about
14 is that we retain senior science leadership on this plan
15 throughout the whole process. I'm very concerned about the
16 monitoring, the conservation plans, and enforcement is
17 actually pursued and funded. We can say all we want to
18 about what we should do, but if this is not funded everybody
19 knows it won't happen. This is critical.

20 The success of desert organisms and desert
21 systems, from tortoises to ancient plants to very ancient
22 soil communities, is predicated on a deliberate slowness, an
23 extremely judicious use of available resources and life
24 spans of both lower and higher organisms that are amazingly
25 long. We recognize that tortoises live very long lives and

1 that individual desert plants can grow hundreds to thousands
2 of years old, but less is known about the incredible age of
3 desert soils and the organisms that make up those living --
4 that living component.

5 When we disturb our desert soils we break the soil
6 system that has taken hundreds to sometimes thousands of
7 years to develop. We are destroying a biological community
8 of cyanobacteria, lichens, fungus, mosses, and other
9 organisms that together prevent soil erosion, fix
10 atmospheric nitrogen out of the air to make it available to
11 higher plants as a critical nutrient to growth, and which
12 suppresses carbon to actual reduce carbon levels in our
13 atmosphere. These biotic soil crusts are extremely
14 important, taking hundreds to thousands of years to form,
15 and living for hundreds of thousands of years, but they can
16 be destroyed in minutes by soil disturbance.

17 So whatever amount of soil we collectively decide
18 to disturb for a utility-scale project whose life span is at
19 best 20 to 30 years must be weighed as a loss of living soil
20 that will last for hundreds to thousands of years, long
21 after we have already reached our goal for renewable energy
22 from rooftop solar alone. Thank you.

23 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Steve Bardwell, Travis
24 Puglizi, and Stephanie Dashiell.

25 MR. BARDWELL: Thank you for the opportunity to

1 make this presentation tonight. I'm a resident of Pipes
2 Canyon and a member of the board of the Morongo Basin
3 Conservation Association, as well as a member of the board
4 of the Joshua Tree Highlands Artisan Residency.

5 I'd like to encourage an additional meeting, given
6 the fact that this is a 10,000 page document, very dense,
7 hard to read. And I believe it should be out in the
8 eastern, northeastern Mojave area because that area is going
9 to be affected quite substantially potentially.

10 The development focus areas are very coarsely
11 defined as -- in looking at the presentation earlier I
12 understand that only certain percentages of the development
13 focus areas are going to be actually developed according to
14 this plan. However, if those small percentages, as it looks
15 like, of the areas are developed they could have really
16 radical impacts. And so they need to be much more finely
17 and carefully defined to make sure that wildlife
18 connectivity is maintained and to -- that critical wildlife
19 habitats are considered and preserved if they are -- and
20 some of them are within these areas.

21 The question of mitigation, and as Meg Foley
22 mentioned, this adaptive management, it really should be
23 considered over the course of the impact of the project.
24 And as the previous speaker just mentioned, that is over an
25 extremely long timeframe. So it really needs to be

1 considered in that way. And the funding for that needs to
2 be established. How is this going to be funded to be sure
3 that this thing does happen over a period of time.

4 The whole question of the statement of purpose for
5 this whole DRECP is predicated on -- the basis of it was
6 that 20,000 megawatts -- we're going to assume what happens
7 if we do 20,000 megawatts. Well, that's changing
8 tremendously with the advent and the amount of rooftop solar
9 that's happening.

10 Just last night the Morongo Unified School
11 District considered putting solar on all of their schools
12 here. Was that considered at the time that the DRECP was
13 first started? No, it wasn't. So it really -- I think DG
14 really needs to be considered in whole.

15 And lastly I wanted to express how important I
16 think it is to have the county involved in this. They need
17 to fund the planning department to be able to get their
18 teeth into the DRECP and really understand the impacts that
19 this would have.

20 And lastly, just the value of the desert, as was
21 mentioned by other people, really needs to be considered.
22 It's a worldwide resource and that's what brings artists to
23 our residency program. Thanks for your consideration.

24 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Travis Puglizi, Stephanie
25 Dashiell, and Patrick Donnelly.

1 MR. PUBLIZI: Thank you very much for the
2 opportunity to speak, and thank you for coming. And I hope
3 everyone forgives me if my comments aren't substantive
4 enough and lacks numbers and contains mostly my heart.

5 What does it mean to be an advanced civilization?
6 To some it means building massive centralized
7 infrastructure, the sort of thing that occupies someone's
8 idea of nowhere, employ a handful of laborers for a short
9 burst and carries the power, as if by magic, to people many
10 miles away. To others being advanced means empowering
11 humans one rooftop at a time. It means not disturbing lands
12 that are the living and breathing surface of a planet that
13 has its own metabolism. It means empowerment and security
14 in the industries that go along with fabrication,
15 installation, maintenance, and basic human relations.

16 To be advanced means to be on the sharpest edge of
17 what is new. And the centralization of power is a concept
18 that has been around since day one of civilization. What is
19 cutting edge is that which empowers diverse systems to
20 operate independently while letting systems such as the
21 environment which operate without flaw to go on being
22 flawless. That which is large is prone to fall. That which
23 is centralized is vulnerable. When great resources assemble
24 in one spot it is subject to failures from wherever they may
25 come, simple glitches, natural disaster, attack, and all

1 those down the line who siphon off the magic tubes which
2 bring the power suffer. The living and breathing earth
3 suffers as it is scraped and washed of soil, flora and
4 fauna.

5 It is nearly impossible for me to imagine that my
6 words will amount to any reckoning of sensible approaches to
7 industry or policy. But in my estimation, building these
8 solar fields is the low road for high culture. It is my
9 suggestion that if makers of policy wish to be a part of the
10 advanced civilization that solar power is supposed to embody
11 that they focus not on nowhere but instead on rooftops that
12 are everywhere.

13 I urge you as a citizen of the desert and the
14 world to consider the obvious, to leave what is not just
15 good enough but actually the best there is alone. When it
16 comes to Southern California communities, rooftops are the
17 answer.

18 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Stephanie Dashiell,
19 Patrick Donnelly, and Richard Haney.

20 MS. DASHIELL: Hello. Thanks for being here.
21 Stephanie Dashiell, Defenders of Wildlife and resident of
22 Joshua Tree. Thanks for adding the additional meeting here
23 in Joshua Tree, the extension on the comment deadline, and
24 for working so hard to get a draft out across state and
25 federal agency boundaries. I know it's not easy and it's

1 been a lot of work. So thanks for giving us a draft to
2 finally look at and review and comment on.

3 My organization supports landscape-scale planning
4 for conservation, believe it's essential for the future of
5 species under climate change conditions, and for finding the
6 best places for regional mitigation for some of these
7 projects as well. I'd like to offer some improvements in
8 these comments.

9 The DFA refinement issue has been mentioned by
10 many. And I just wanted to mention specifically the Desert
11 Tortoise Research Natural Area in some of the alternatives.
12 This area has been designated as a development focus area,
13 or parts of it have. We think that's very inappropriate
14 considering that this area has been set aside for desert
15 conservation for an extremely long time in partnership with
16 the BLM.

17 Also refinements need to occur within the Lucerne
18 Valley area and within the western Antelope Valley. We're
19 finding that the climate change modeling is showing where
20 there's many stable ranges for species in the western
21 Antelope Valley that need to be considered.

22 The development disturbance estimates, I've heard
23 the number 177,000 thrown around a lot. And I'm not sure if
24 that fully accounts for the terrestrial impacts of wind
25 energy considering all the roads that need to be built to go

1 between the pads. It doesn't -- wind energy impacts on the
2 land is not just the pad. It actually greatly disrupts
3 landscape integrity and it should be considered much bigger
4 than how the current disturbance estimate is being
5 calculated.

6 Additionally, it's not just terrestrial impacts.
7 I think we also need to mention that there are aerial
8 impacts to avian species, as well, from these projects.

9 We need county engagement. Eighty percent of the
10 DFAs are on private land. And I think you have about close
11 to 1.7 million acres of conservation planning areas in
12 private lands. So the county really needs to take a lead
13 role on this and the DRECP needs to continue to engage with
14 the counties.

15 I'll just end by saying that -- echoing the
16 comments of my peers here and colleagues, that I think there
17 needs to be more detail on the funding and implementation
18 structure of the plan and the governing structure, as well,
19 in order that we can be sure that we're actually able to
20 implement this.

21 Thank you for your time. Thanks for being here.

22 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Patrick Donnelly, Richard
23 Haney, and Ed LaRue.

24 MR. DONNELLY: Hello. My name is Patrick
25 Donnelly. I live in Shoshone, California, and I'm the

1 Executive Director of the Amargosa Conservancy. We're a
2 small nonprofit that advocates for the protection of the
3 land, water, and beauty of the Amargosa Basin.

4 The Amargosa Basin is a scenic and remote area
5 east of Death Valley, and it's been called one of the most
6 heavily protected areas in the world. Between a national
7 park, nine BLM wildernesses, four wilderness study areas,
8 and multiple ACECs, this area is extremely highly protected.
9 And flowing through it all is one of the most unique aquatic
10 ecosystems in the United States, the wild and scenic
11 Amargosa River.

12 As such, it is our stance that the northeast
13 portion of the California desert is simply an inappropriate
14 place for all utility-scale solar development of any kind.
15 This area is simply too protected to have these facilities
16 within the landscape. This landscape is largely
17 unindustrialized. And what few impacts there are from
18 humans are scattered and in general harmony with the
19 landscape.

20 The local economy since the decline of the mining
21 area is 100 percent tourism based. Tourists who visit are
22 seeking open empty desert spaces. And enormous industrial
23 developments in those spaces would detract from the appeal
24 of the area, devastating the local economy.

25 The hydrological system of the Amargosa Basin is

1 in very delicate balance. Even minor water withdrawals such
2 as those required for utility-scale solar facilities would
3 have disastrous effects on critically important habitat in
4 the Amargosa Basin. The basin is home to over 30 endemic
5 species and many endangered and threatened species, as well
6 as countless species of birds who wander astray on the
7 Pacific Flyway and find our generous springs. These
8 aquifers will not fill back up. Utilizing these water
9 resources is an irrevocable commitment of those resources
10 and would be a disaster for these sensitive areas.

11 Thus, the Silurian Valley, a clearly inappropriate
12 area for solar energy development. It should not be a
13 special analysis area. It should be added to the NLCS.

14 Charleston View should not be a DFA. It can't be
15 emphasized enough, Hidden Hills is dead. The water
16 withdrawals were too large and the community was not in
17 support. This area will not be an appropriate area for
18 solar development.

19 As a final note, there are many residents of the
20 northeastern portion of the California desert who have not
21 been able to be a part of the DRECP planning process, which
22 is a violation of NEPA. Tecopa is a four-hour drive from
23 here. Baker is three hours. Between Baker, Tecopa,
24 Shoshone, Charleston View, Sandy Valley, Death Valley
25 Junction, and Furnace Creek there are almost 1,000 full-time

1 residents whose lives will be directly affected by the
2 DRECP.

3 It is essential that you schedule further public
4 meetings in the northeastern Mojave so that people there
5 have a chance to participate in this process and have their
6 say. These are economically disadvantaged communities. And
7 the lack of capacity for public participation in these areas
8 simply perpetuates a paradigm of disenfranchisement and
9 bureaucratic neglect. Thank you very much.

10 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Richard Haney, Ed LaRue,
11 and Steve Scamman.

12 MR. R. HANEY: Hello. My name is Richard Haney.
13 I live right here in Joshua Tree. And I just have a few
14 comments.

15 First of all I'd like to ask that the comment
16 deadline be extended another 90 days. The document is
17 horrendously huge. There's no way that most people can do
18 an adequate job of studying it by February 23rd. And in
19 fact, I have serious doubts that even a person who
20 undertakes full time -- a full-time effort to review the
21 document and who is already well versed on the subject
22 matter could do an adequate job of review. So I definitely
23 think we need more -- much more time. It's really a huge
24 document. Okay.

25 And the other thing is distributed generation, in

1 particular on rooftop solar in cities is an extremely viable
2 option. It needs to be -- there needs -- but there needs to
3 be more incentive and encouragement for it. So distributed
4 generation should be in the action alternatives. The
5 federal agencies are required under the National
6 Environmental Policy Act to consider alternatives outside of
7 their normal jurisdiction. And the fact that most the
8 partner agencies don't normally conduct business in cities
9 is not a valid excuse under NEPA. Every single action
10 alternative should include distributed energy generation as
11 some part of the alternative.

12 The next item is there seems to be major problems
13 with the 20,000 megawatts planning basis for DRECP. And it
14 will take more time than what is already allocated for
15 comments, that is, you know, the comment period, to
16 thoroughly examine these problems. However, there are
17 some -- there's one such problem that can be identified
18 right now and that is that it seems to be that the DFAs
19 don't need to be as large as they are suggested to be. But
20 there should be a hierarchy of sizes and a phasing of the
21 process of defining the size of DFAs depending upon the
22 actual amount of power that -- that is going to be
23 developed. So if there's -- you know, so the DFAs could be
24 defined in terms of 5,000 megawatts to begin with and then
25 could -- then if that is -- becomes inadequate, then the

1 DFAs could be enlarged. But it seems not a good idea to
2 make the DFAs large to begin with in order to sacrifice more
3 areas of the desert. There are plenty of sensitive areas
4 that people consider to be within many of the DFAs, and so
5 they don't really need to be that large.

6 And also just three more points that I'll quickly
7 review, and that is energy projects and development focus
8 areas should not be streamlined. Full reviews should be
9 provided for any development.

10 The next concerns transmission lines. It seems
11 like transmission lines will be a major impact. But they --
12 but it -- from what I have seen already of the document it
13 seems like it's kind of an afterthought, you know, that
14 it's -- that there's no way to regulate that. In
15 particular, it looks like transmission lines are going to be
16 going through conservation areas, and that's going to be a
17 problem.

18 Streamlining endangers species protection. In the
19 DFA it should not be permitted, in particular, no Golden
20 Eagle take permit should be allowed.

21 I also have other comments but I'll put that in
22 writing. Thank you.

23 MR. BEALE: Thank you, sir.

24 Ed LaRue, Steve Scamman, and Claudia Saul.

25 MR. LARUE: Ed LaRue. I'd like the record to show

1 that I'm unaffiliated.

2 I'm concerned that we've been told that 9 million
3 acres would be affected in a no-action alternative but, in
4 fact, only 24,000 acres have been developed on 5 BLM parcels
5 to date. The current management actually shows that the no-
6 action alternative would result in less development than the
7 DRECP.

8 I'm also concerned, and no one has talked about
9 it, is the disposal of public lands. If you're only going
10 to develop 177,000 acres, why are you going to dispose of 2
11 million acres of public land within the DFAs.

12 I'm also concerned about this thing called
13 extensive recreational management areas. There are 552,000
14 acres of that. How are you going to call something
15 extensive recreational management and not expect people to
16 come out and use it. I think these are de facto open areas.

17 With the Fish and Wildlife Service you've selected
18 two places for your GCP. And with the Fish and Game you've
19 selected a place in the NCCP where these areas were
20 abandoned under the West Mojave Plan because they're so
21 heavily impacted by sheep and OHV. So the areas south of
22 Edwards Air Force Base and the areas east of California City
23 do not serve to offset the impacts that you're talking about
24 under your GCP and your NCCP.

25 And I'm concerned that two of -- or three of the

1 five alternatives either eliminate the Desert Tortoise
2 Natural Area, and even the preferred alternative would
3 reduce it, and I don't see that as conservation.

4 You also undermine current management. Currently
5 on BLM lands and DWMAs the mitigation ratio is five-to-one.
6 And I don't know if it was an accident but your table
7 indicates that five-to-one would only be applied to critical
8 habitat, and that's smaller than DWMAs. So I'm not sure if
9 that was a mistake or you need to readdress that.

10 I'm concerned that the Fish and Wildlife Service
11 wrote this plan and then is responsible to independently
12 issue a biological opinion on it. I'd like to know how you
13 plan on doing that.

14 Again, I'm unaffiliated.

15 I'm amazed to see that one of your -- one of your
16 foreseeable circumstances is continued declines of the
17 Desert Tortoise and the Mojave Ground Squirrel, and that the
18 plan would not be affected by that foreseeable event. If
19 you foresee in the DRECP that these two species are going to
20 extinction, how can you develop 2 million more acres of land
21 in spite of that. So again, I don't know that that's --
22 that's a foreseeable thing, but is it a good thing?

23 One of the things that I'm really concerned about
24 is that you indicate in your plan that critical habitat is
25 one of the bases for forming NCL lands. Yet the (inaudible)

1 in DWMA is the only one is that you've indicated as NCL.
2 What about all the other critical habitat for the tortoise?
3 The DRECP doesn't indicate why you've abandoned all the
4 other critical habitat. Currently in critical habitat
5 competitive OHV events are not allowed. But on page 318 you
6 said they will entertain competitive events within these NCL
7 areas. That's going backwards in my mind.

8 Fish and Wildlife Service has given us a 254 page
9 appendix for its GCP, whereas Fish and Game has given us
10 three tables. In my mind there's no NCCP in this plan. In
11 your appendix we have three tables. My understanding is
12 that Fish and Game did not have the money that it was
13 promised to fund this and consequently there is not NCCP
14 plan in this DRECP.

15 Every one of the alternatives opens up critical
16 habitat to development between 1,000 and 6,000 acres.
17 Currently with only five projects on BLM land there's been
18 no critical habitat developed. For the first time the DRECP
19 is proposing that.

20 And then my final concern is what you're doing is
21 you're changing the entire face of the desert to accommodate
22 one technology. If you dispose of these lands what's to say
23 that miners or whoever else doesn't come in and use these
24 lands. So you know, I understand what you're trying to do,
25 but if you start changing the California Desert Conservation

1 Act plan the way you're proposing you're only going to sink
2 the species that are already sinking. Thank you.

3 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Steve Scamman, Claudia
4 Sall, and Chris Carraher.

5 MR. SCAMMAN: Good evening. I appreciate the
6 opportunity to speak tonight. This is one of the great
7 things about America. However, if you sic the IRS on me,
8 I'll retract that statement. No, I do appreciate it.

9 I do think it's important that -- as a
10 recreational miner I think it's -- it's important that you
11 articulate in your plan how your plans are going to affect
12 what we do. And I just want to clarify to the people here
13 tonight, we're recreational miners. We produce next to no
14 gold. We do no damage to the -- to the earth. We scratch
15 around in hopes that we'll find a giant nugget that we never
16 do.

17 And I will tell you that my time with our club, we
18 have about 160 members, there is no -- no other people that
19 you'll find that love and respect the desert the way we do.
20 And I just think it's absolutely imperative that we leave
21 these public lands open for people to go out there and do
22 the things that they love to do.

23 In order to have the correct appreciation and love
24 for this desert you have to be out there, not from the
25 comfort of your vehicle, but you got to get out there. You

1 got to let the land beat you up because it's an unforgiving
2 desert. You need to break and ankle. You need to skin your
3 knees. You need to fall out of a tree, fall off a cliff,
4 get chased by bear, stung by bees, these are the things that
5 will cause you to have a deep, deep understanding of the
6 desert and respect for the land.

7 I can't tell you how much it means to me to be
8 able to bring my kids out to these areas, scratch around the
9 dirt for gold, teach my kid how to shoot a Winchester rifle.
10 Yeah, my two daughters, they know how to shoot a rifle. We
11 love the wildlife. We view the wildlife. We look at the
12 birds. We explore, hopefully canyons, maybe, that no one
13 has ever been up before.

14 And I just think that it's -- it's just
15 unbelievable that we would taint this land by putting up
16 these massive, massive fields to produce energy when, like
17 the gentleman over here said, we have all these rooftops.
18 Heck, put it on my rooftop. Put enough on there to cover
19 me, and I'll even cover my neighbor because I've got plenty
20 of roof.

21 I hope that you take our comments seriously and
22 that you take what we say into effect, and that you're not
23 just doing this to check a box. Thank you for your time. I
24 appreciate it.

25 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Claudia Sall, Chris

1 Carraher, and Neville Slade.

2 MS. C. SALL: Hi, good evening. I'm Claudia Sall.
3 I've lived in this area for more than 50 years and have
4 followed many land use issues. This was probably the most
5 concerning for me.

6 One of the things that everyone has asked for is
7 another round of -- or many people -- another round of
8 meetings. And the reason I feel that's really important is
9 when this plan was announced at the end of September, so was
10 the meetings, within 30 days. And that just doesn't give
11 enough time to go through this. We're fortunate that you
12 granted the 45 days, and that would give us opportunity for
13 another round and to cover some of those areas in the
14 northeast Mojave and out by Needles, possibly Barstow that
15 didn't get meetings. And you can leave Sacramento and
16 Ontario off that list, again, by the way.

17 You know, that 20,000 megawatts that we call a
18 goal or a target or whatever, whatever the description of it
19 is, it's already been fiddled with once; it was 23,000. And
20 Sierra Club was able to whittle that one down. So I think
21 that that really is a precedent that we can maybe reduce
22 that. And we're concerned about that because it is -- it
23 equates directly to the size of those DFAs. And when we
24 talk about 30,000 acres of distributed -- or disturbed lands
25 in San Bernardino County, we're not counting the things that

1 have already happened. For instance, Ivanpah, add another
2 3,200 acres to that, and that's just one of them.

3 So we might be developing a pretty good footprint
4 of disturbance here in San Bernardino County. And if that
5 footprint stays we're not going to be able to water it to,
6 you know, affect the changes that, you know, disturbing that
7 desert floor will -- or desert soils will do like they can
8 do in Owens Valley. They can -- when that was dewatered
9 they were able to get water to put it back on, but they
10 still had a lot of Valley Fever up in Owens Valley, and that
11 could be something that would really be hanging over our
12 heads. We would be getting those impacts and really no
13 monies to offset some of that public health issues.

14 We've talked about adaptive management in the plan
15 in regards to conservation, but we want to see it actually
16 in the plan for the renewable energy development. And we
17 see things like the, you know, the national -- the
18 laboratory to do future studies for what we're going to need
19 for electricity. We see things happening, like Lancaster
20 becoming net-zero. The Morongo basis is almost net-zero.
21 That's not factored into what is going to be needed in the
22 state. And so we'd like to see that adaptive management
23 where we can shrink those DFAs if we don't need them, if the
24 market does then go toward the trends that seem to be
25 distributed energy. And we want to see distributed

1 generation a little more heavily seen in this plan.

2 We want to see the protected wildlife and
3 ecological corridors. There's six big pinch points in the
4 California desert for wildlife crossings, and one of the --
5 a couple of those at Soda Mountain and Silurian Valley, and
6 DRECP just sort of obliterates those. So we need to do a
7 better job on those ecological and -- and wildlife.

8 Well, the funding is a really big deal. We
9 learned here that there really is no funding. You're going
10 to have to take in mitigation monies. And we need to see
11 some funding for these durable conservation. And there's a
12 big investment here in conservation, the Mojave National
13 Preserve, which a lot of the nonprofits that have donated
14 money to the BLM to buy these lands, we want to see that
15 protected. So maybe some ideas of taking that sales tax,
16 instead of giving it all to the State of California, reserve
17 it for conservation or some of the impacts here. And how
18 about the other counties chipping in for the other seven
19 counties that are taking all the impacts we're generating
20 all this energy for the State of California. There's two
21 funding ideas.

22 Various lands we want to see off the -- off the
23 table. Again, it's our conservation investments. And if we
24 have -- if you already planned that those 177,000 acres are
25 going to be, you know, more than enough to generate your

1 target, why are they on there? They were sort of done in-
2 house, and we'd like to see those off of those.

3 So I think that kind of wraps me up. Thank you.

4 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Chris Carraher --

5 MS. CARRAHER: Hi there.

6 MR. BEALE: -- Neville Slade, and Sarah
7 Kennington.

8 MS. CARRAHER: Hi there. Yeah, I'm Christine
9 Carraher. I live in Wonder Valley which is east of Twenty-
10 Nine Palms. And it's really nice to be able to have you
11 guys here and not have to drive two, three, four hours to a
12 meeting. So thank you for coming.

13 I do live in Wonder Valley which is one of the
14 most intact of the communities originating out of the Small
15 Tract Homestead Act of 1938. And I would like to see that
16 the historical and cultural value of the homestead
17 communities is considered in the analysis.

18 One of the -- the economy out where we live, and
19 I've been out there for 22 years, is very dependent upon
20 tourism. And the tourism really, especially when you get
21 out to those far areas there, is really -- it's dependent on
22 visitors that seek uninterrupted expanses of non-
23 industrialized and non-domesticated space, a breathtaking
24 wilderness that is a resource that does not survive
25 division. So parceling parts of the desert out essentially

1 destroys that aspect of what the desert is and is why a lot
2 of people come out to where we are and rent, vacation
3 rentals where we are, and travel through areas where we are.
4 And that is at risk and needs to be considered in the
5 analysis.

6 And just -- I'm going to be, you know, submitting
7 more comments. But I do want to -- did want to make those
8 points. And I also want to say that I really support there
9 being hearings up in the northeastern Mojave area, those
10 communities which depend on the same sorts of values that we
11 do in -- in the eastern basin here. Thank you.

12 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Neville Slade, Sarah
13 Kennington, and Gregory Glenn.

14 MR. SLADE: Good evening. My -- my substantive
15 comment is to comment on the process. And I asked Katrina
16 at the break, "What is substantive comment?" And I'm
17 supposed to be a professorial type. But you know, I wasn't
18 quite sure what that meant.

19 I guess I'm representing quite a few different
20 groups here that I work with, but mostly the Mojave
21 Conservation -- Community Conservation Collaborative that
22 was formed because we're very concerned that the local
23 people were not being heard, and -- and that the local
24 solutions were not being heard. And that you were
25 disempowering the local people that are the people on the

1 land to do the work, to clean up the graffiti, to make the
2 trails. We have some of the people here tonight. We're
3 being pushed out of the scene and they're not empowered
4 to -- to do their work.

5 We have an amazing history in this area of working
6 together with Bureau of Land Management, with Forest
7 Service, and with local community conservation
8 organizations. I was to serve as a director on the Mojave
9 Desert Resource Conservation District that has done some
10 amazing projects, including removing large areas of invasive
11 weeds in the Mojave River. And that involves working with
12 the Mojave Water Agency and many, many, many agencies to
13 make these things happen. And so I'm very concerned when
14 you don't apparently listen to the local people.

15 And, Chris, we've spoken about this. When Levita
16 makes a local plan, a community -- what I would call a
17 community conservation plan which they have the basis of,
18 and then it doesn't even show up in the plan, I mean, it's a
19 large area of a dry lakebed that isn't even in as one of the
20 solutions, that is extremely concerning. Because it points
21 back to my substantive comment on the comment process: Are
22 we being heard? And this is really, really, really,
23 important because, as you probably know, I teach sustainable
24 development. And in sustainable development it's the social
25 sphere that needs to work. We need to get these people

1 working together. And we've seen from these folks, there's
2 a lot of local experience here, a lot of local solutions.
3 And when you put down a blanket plan without listening to
4 those solutions, it's really important.

5 One more -- a couple more things is -- on my
6 substantive comments, I'm also very concerned about some of
7 the science. I have had a chance to work on Surface Mining
8 Reclamation Act projects with Department of Conservation.
9 And I noticed they are not even in your group. And they, in
10 my opinion, have a real role to play because they've
11 introduced -- they have applied the Surface Mining
12 Reclamation Act very successfully in Lucerne Valley, by the
13 way. There's an amazing example of that working in the
14 Lucerne Valley to minimize the destruction, which Ivanpah
15 was -- was a catastrophic example of that not happening. I
16 visited it when it was being built and I can show you the
17 pictures. And then making sure that the water resources,
18 the air resources, the wildlife resources all apply the best
19 practices.

20 And the folks sitting right up there in
21 Sacramento, and I'll give you their names, took -- they will
22 tell you, they took 15 years for them to figure out how to
23 do what you guys are wanting to do or the developers are
24 wanting to do is huge habitat destruction, catastrophic.
25 And then if you knew this in the first place, which -- which

1 is a whole other comment that I made last time, but then how
2 do you do that in such a way that we're applying the
3 proportionate principle, that we're not destroying land that
4 we didn't need to restore and we could have -- we -- they
5 didn't need to be destroyed and we could have restored as we
6 went along?

7 So those are my comments. I will be reading the
8 plan as much as possible. It's written for policy people,
9 lots of big words. And juxtaposition was one that's not in
10 there, but I particularly like that one that we heard
11 tonight. And looking forward to -- to really seeing that
12 when we see something that -- these local solutions and
13 the -- comes through in what you do produce, because I'm
14 really seriously worried. We went to a lot of meetings and
15 we don't seem to see much action. So I just really implore
16 you to look at that.

17 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Sarah Kennington, Gregory
18 Glenn, and Constance Walsh.

19 MS. KENNINGTON: Hello. I'm Sarah Kennington. I
20 have a 25-year relationship with this area and live in the
21 Pipes Canyon area. Thank you for this opportunity to
22 comment, scheduling this additional meeting in the Morongo
23 Basin, and providing an extended comment period.

24 An additional round of meetings would assure
25 residents are adequately informed and able to comment on

1 these critical issues. Location should be include places
2 not included in this first round of meetings such as, and as
3 others have mentioned, the northeast Mojave.

4 San Bernardino County has the greatest amount of
5 territory at stake in the DRECP. I strongly advocate that
6 the county planning agency continue to work with communities
7 impacted to protect the public's interest. With county
8 leadership, conflict can be minimized and, hopefully,
9 avoided. This is to the county people out there.

10 My remaining comments focus on the need for
11 greater attention to durability, accountability, and
12 implementation of the plan. How will the DRECP be managed?
13 By whom? And how will this be funded? The plan -- the
14 draft lacks specifics about agency responsibility and
15 authority. The mechanisms for implementation are not
16 adequately spelled out.

17 How will the plan be monitored? And what are the
18 mechanisms for reliable funding for ongoing evaluation,
19 compliance and enforcement? There must be assurances that
20 conservation lands that are set aside are durable and held
21 in perpetuity. Mitigation measures for projects must be
22 long-lasting, enforced for the life of the impact, not
23 simply the life of the project or the life of the -- of the
24 DRECP. Mitigation on public lands must be more clearly
25 defined.

1 The DRECP is intended to be science based.
2 However, the fact that science has taken a backseat in the
3 draft is evident in issues of wildlife connectivity. DFAs
4 located in reserve design and in crucial pieces -- are
5 located in reserve designs and in crucial pieces of
6 connectivity. For example, on top of a tortoise corridor in
7 the Lucerne Valley, as well as in the Desert Tortoise
8 Research Natural Area. This doesn't make sense and
9 diminishes the -- our faith that the DRECP is science based.
10 DFAs need refining, particularly in areas connecting already
11 protected lands. Landscape-level conservation is important
12 to ensure projects are located in low-impact areas.

13 Finally, I advocate for an independent panel
14 assigned to review the plan. Thank you.

15 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Gregory Glenn, Constance
16 Walsh, and Shari Elf.

17 MR. GLENN: Good evening. My name is Gregory
18 Glenn. I'm a resident of Joshua Tree, a stakeholder in the
19 San Bernardino County. My background is in community
20 planning and large-scale water management projects. I'd
21 like to thank all of you for being here and taking this time
22 with this meeting. And we realize it's a huge plan, just
23 we're in the draft stage, but we appreciate you having the
24 chance to work on this. I have a couple of comments and
25 concerns.

1 At this point there is no funding plan in the
2 DRECP to show how any of the plan conservation actions will
3 be carried out. Without any reliable sources of funding we
4 are not confident that the federal and state agencies will
5 revoke to their conservation commitments in this plan.
6 Funding for implementation of the plan is critical. The
7 success of the DRECP depends heavily on adaptive management
8 and monitoring. BLM and other REAT agencies must provide
9 staff to collect, manage, evaluate and analyze monitoring
10 data. Monitoring data must be made available to the public
11 and must not be considered the agencies' and project
12 proponents' proprietary information.

13 Conservation actions and designations must be
14 long-lasting and meet the state's standards for
15 conservation. The goal of the DRECP should be to create a
16 reserve design for conservation purposes that will not allow
17 development in critical habitats and protect species,
18 ecosystems and processes in perpetuity, reaching beyond the
19 life of the DRECP. Mitigation on public lands must be more
20 clearly defined and should extend beyond just the
21 operational life of the projects to encompass the life of
22 the project's impact.

23 The reserve design should be revised to include
24 areas with known critical resources such as the Soda
25 Mountains and the Silurian Valley. Development in these

1 sensitive areas would undermine credibility in the DRECP
2 process. And it will reinforce the public's belief that the
3 DRECP agencies care more about politics than about science
4 and conservation.

5 There is a need to protect critical wildlife
6 linkages. The DRECP conservation reserve design must
7 include the most important linkages as proposed by the many
8 connectivity projects in development and must not occur in
9 places like the Soda Mountains, Silurian Valley, or the
10 Eagle Mountain area where connectivity would be lost if
11 development proceeds. Thank you.

12 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Constance Walsh, Sheri
13 Elf, Neil Nadler.

14 MS. WALSH: My name is Constance Walsh and I'm a
15 Joshua Tree resident. I'm really proud to be part of this
16 community. Everyone who has spoken is -- has been just
17 wonderful.

18 There's an old saying, what resists persists. And
19 99 percent of the words this evening are in resistance to
20 this plan that is so inappropriate. It saddens me to see
21 that all this energy needs to be given to this insanity.

22 A few speakers have mentioned rooftop solar.
23 And I didn't hear any rooftop solar in meetings like this
24 for the past three decades. If we gave one fraction of our
25 time and energy to speaking here about rooftop solar, the

1 room would be buzzing with excitement. I don't believe that
2 any of our words are going to change your agenda, gentlemen,
3 but get to hear each other in our own solidarity, and I hope
4 that that is where the power is. But thank you for
5 listening to us.

6 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Shari Elf, Neil Nadler,
7 and John Miller.

8 MS. ELF: Hello everyone. Thank you for letting
9 us speak. I really want to thank everyone for coming out,
10 and to all the speakers tonight. I agree with everyone.
11 And I am a resident of Morongo Valley. I am an -- I'm an
12 artist. I own Art Queen Gallery in Joshua Tree, down the
13 street here. And I represent the future.

14 I have had solar panels on my cabin for a year,
15 and I agree with what everyone is saying about rooftop
16 solar. This -- the presentation that we sat through for 45
17 minutes, when I wasn't falling asleep I was able to absorb
18 five percent of it. It was -- it was confusing.

19 And what I want to propose is the Golden Book
20 version of the DRECP plan that school kids can understand,
21 because they're the ones paying the price for the decisions
22 you're making for us.

23 There's -- there's a group of people that are
24 called highly sensitive people on the planet. And each -- I
25 believe each species has a highly sensitive member in its

1 group. Say a group of chimpanzees has one that's extra
2 sensitive. And he will sit on the branches and he'll look
3 after any dangers that might be approaching while the rest
4 could just do their business and not worry. We tree huggers
5 here, and earth lovers, we are the highly sensitive people.
6 We are that chimpanzee on the tree limb, and you are the
7 predators and the danger, I'm sorry to say. And I want you
8 to look after us. I want us to come together. I want you
9 to hear me and I want you to hear all of us when you're
10 making your decisions. I want you to search your hearts and
11 think about the future of our children and your children.

12 I think the old model of business that the power
13 companies are -- are doing, that's old school. Let's talk
14 about the grassroots' models that are happening these days.
15 And when I was looking back there in the station I was
16 wondering, where's the station for following the money?

17 So thank you for listening.

18 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Neil Nadler, John Miller,
19 and Peggy Lee Kennedy.

20 MR. NADLER: Good evening. I'm Neil Nadler. On
21 November 15th in the Victor Valley Daily Press CEC
22 Commissioner Karen Douglas and Jim Kanna (phonetic), State
23 BLM Director said, and I quote, "Another misconception is
24 that rooftop solar could provide California with all of its
25 energy needs," end quote. "We hear that at every meeting,"

1 end quote. "We ought to do it all on rooftop," Douglas
2 said.

3 That is not what we are saying. We are saying
4 that the DG alternative which includes rooftop solar is a
5 viable alternative and needs to be addressed in order to be
6 in full compliance with NEPA. How can the CEC even do an
7 analysis and comparison when they don't want to show good DG
8 data? The DEIS/EIR must objectively analyze all
9 alternatives, not simply minor adjustments to the same
10 project -- project, which is what the DRECP alternatives do.

11 I've got to cut this quite a bit short.

12 Lucerne Valley and other communities will become
13 de facto renewable energy ghettos with the DRECP plan. We
14 all need the DG alternative to be fairly evaluated with good
15 and reliable data within the DRECP. And if necessary, the
16 DG can be supplemented by natural gas for a few more years
17 until the storage and reliability is perfected. That is the
18 smart from the start in conservation plan, not the preferred
19 plan that you have up there.

20 Currently the large generator, solar, and wind
21 projects are adding supplemental natural gas generation
22 plants to their generation, and this is not discussed or
23 reflected in the NEPA or CEQA analysis. And it needs to be
24 adjusted to reflect that almost 50 percent of the -- of the
25 generation that's occurring in these large generator

1 renewable energy facilities comes from natural gas burning
2 in those plants, in those facilities, and they're getting
3 credit as if it was renewable energy and it's not. Thank
4 you.

5 MR. BEALE: Thank you. John Miller, Peggy Lee
6 Kennedy, and Bobbie Flint.

7 MR. MILLER: Good evening. My name is John
8 Miller. I'm going to focus a little bit different direction
9 than what some of you have spoken of tonight.

10 My focus, I work as a real estate appraiser. I
11 specialize in land. I spoke at the last meeting and I noted
12 that you guys had stated that the impact on values of homes
13 in the impacted areas would be minimal. I'm going to tell
14 you, because I've done the study, that's BS, and prove it.
15 Show me the data. Because I'll show you the data that
16 proves you wrong.

17 I interviewed over 20 brokers. I interviewed five
18 appraisers. There is not one that suggests that if you put
19 a solar power -- commercial solar power field in a
20 residential neighborhood it's going to increase the value of
21 homes or not decrease the value of homes. And as a matter
22 of fact, you will not find one developer who is willing to
23 build a home next to a solar field.

24 The primary concern is Valley Fever. And really
25 quickly on Valley Fever, the biggest concern is in 2013 an

1 environmental group who I won't mention who is involved with
2 this document stated that there would be no impact on health
3 for workers. And as a matter of fact, 28 of those solar
4 workers on that solar -- on that solar farm came down with
5 Valley Fever. They were fined by OSHA. That's a big deal.

6 The State of California was just ordered by a
7 federal judge to shut down one of its prisons because Valley
8 Fever transferred from a mental facility that was built next
9 door to it into the prison and they can't get it out. That
10 prison now has -- now has had to remove all the Hispanic,
11 African-American, Filipino, and inmates over the age of the
12 55 because they are way more susceptible to getting Valley
13 Fever. You're going to be putting that in the middle of
14 these residential neighborhoods with your plan.

15 I will tell you that Lucerne Valley's plan is a
16 very strong plan, and that plan is to isolate into an area
17 of about 4,000 acres. That makes sense. The area downwind,
18 it won't have that much of an impact, there's about three
19 residents in that area, but you wouldn't be destroying the
20 value of the homes in the area. That's my -- that's my
21 biggest concern is that you guys really are not looking, or
22 as far as I can see you guys aren't looking at any provable
23 data.

24 So I would strongly suggest that you put the data
25 out. If you guys are saying there's no impact on value,

1 then show me. Put it out there, because it's not true.

2 What you're saying is just blatantly a lie. So that's it.

3 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Peggy Lee Kennedy, Bobbie
4 Flint, and Pat Hanagan.

5 MS. FLANAGAN: Flanagan.

6 MR. BEALE: Flanagan. Sorry.

7 MS. KENNEDY: Peggy Lee Kennedy, Joshua Tree,
8 California.

9 I'm not a scientist. I used to live with one, but
10 I can see. And I moved into an area that doesn't have any
11 power poles. But funny thing happened is that both
12 directions that I would have to go to, to get to Highway 62,
13 solar -- little -- these solar farms got put in. And you
14 know what I saw? Dust; lots and lots of dust.

15 Before this whole thing gets off the ground on
16 these 2 million acres we need a base-level data on this
17 dust. PM10 and PM2.5; where is your base level findings?
18 That's -- I'm not a scientist so -- there's some flaws in
19 what's happening.

20 Another thing I'm really concerned about is, you
21 know, you have this 20,000 megawatt, and it's an estimate
22 and it's used to come up with some estimate of disturbed
23 land. Well, technology is changing right now. And what
24 in -- you know, it's a huge document. And I agree with
25 everybody, we need more time. And I've read like 50 pages.

1 I could barely get through it. I'm not -- this is not my
2 job. I do other things. So where -- so where in this DRECP
3 process is the ability to change that estimate and that
4 disturbed land with technology? It needs to be built in.
5 This has to be built in because technology is flying by.

6 And the DG is such a critical issue. You guys
7 have to put something in there, even if it's just for within
8 this range of as they develop more in Los Angeles. And I
9 want to say, what of this disturbed land estimate, does it
10 include transmission? Because I was doing some legal
11 research today with the City of L.A. and I just happened
12 upon that the city attorney is initiating with the city
13 council to do legal action, to do eminent domain in Kern
14 County to acquire transmission land.

15 So I mean, this is a big issue. Where is this
16 transmission line? Is it in the estimate of the disturbed
17 land? And it's of great concern to me because I don't even
18 want a power pole near me. And you guys are doing this huge
19 map with these -- where are the transmission lines going?
20 So you have these pink areas, and we know the big greedy gut
21 is L.A.; where are the transmission lines going for these
22 pink areas? It's really critical that you look into this.
23 Because there's 73 properties holding out that are now going
24 to -- they're going to try and action against them to take
25 this property. So I mean, this is a lot of issues. It's

1 somebody's property. They don't want to give it up.

2 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Bobbie Flint, Pat
3 Flanagan, and Celeste Doyle.

4 MS. FLINT: Hi. I'm Bobbie Flint and I live in
5 Yucca Mesa. I've been very active with the community, and
6 I've been active with the -- the Big MACs that's just
7 started, one out in Lucerne, and then the big Morongo Basin
8 MAC.

9 My concern here is I've also been involved in
10 the - in this area we have the BEAT, the Basin Energy
11 Assessment Group. We have the Mojave Land -- Land and -- I
12 can't -- excuse me, I can't remember the name. But then we
13 also have the -- the conservation group here that is very
14 involved. So all these organizations that protect -- and
15 the Desert Protection Act of California, all of these
16 various nonprofits that are protecting the desert, I think
17 you really need to listen to them, and listen to all of us.

18 Because my concern is I can -- I once drove down
19 on Indian Canyon Road just south of the 10. I was there, it
20 was 35 miles an hour. I was one of the last cars coming
21 through. It was total whiteout. I thought I was back in
22 Colorado in the middle of a snowstorm, but it was sand and
23 dust. And that was 35 miles an hour. That area was very
24 disturbed. I pulled off the 10 Freeway and got out of my car
25 and took photos because it amazed me that, yes, that is a

1 desert wash that is natural and it would get a lot more sand
2 blowing through, and has been all my life.

3 You know, I've been going there since I was a kid,
4 maybe nine years old. So you know, you're talking 50,
5 actually 50 years. And that area, since they built towers,
6 I was amazed when I got out of the car and saw the dust in
7 the air. But prior to that dusted area where the land was
8 disturbed, it took up about 1,000-fold. Just a huge sand
9 dust, and it started right where the land was graded. And
10 how many miles does that travel and disturb the natural
11 flora of the desert? I'm very concerned with that. And it
12 can travel for miles and affects all the habitat. It
13 affects people.

14 One thing here, too, the BEAT group was -- they --
15 their report was submitted to San Bernardino County, the
16 County of San Bernardino. And they made change their
17 ordinances, took in a lot of their suggestions. So that is
18 one area. And I hope you become even more strict than what
19 San Bernardino County did. But look at their ordinance.
20 Look at what -- the documents they looked at. They did
21 approve 30 properties to be developed and they've been
22 grandfathered in. But they have since changed their --
23 their ordinances according to the BEAT requirement for the
24 energy conservation of the Morongo Basin. Thank you.

25 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Pat Hanagan, Celeste

1 Doyle, and Buck Buckley.

2 MS. FLANAGAN: Good evening. And I, like many
3 others, thank you very much for coming. And I'm going to
4 learn to write better so you can pronounce my name. I'm Pat
5 Flanagan. I live in the area. And tonight I'm going to
6 talk about the Imperial Valley development focus area.
7 This is a unique place which has some resources that cannot
8 be duplicated. And it's also a lesson to us in what
9 degraded means when we talk about that as a good place to
10 put solar development.

11 Like all the DFAs, Imperial Valley has moderately
12 degraded and highly converted areas suitable for solar
13 development. Degraded and converted lands are hopeful
14 exchanges for pristine land and they, in this case, trump
15 consideration of community economic values and wellbeing.

16 My comments, by the way, are based on personal
17 experience as a science educator in the Imperial Valley,
18 many conversations with farmers, and the Imperial Valley
19 Farm Bureau website.

20 Imperial Valley agriculture production in 2011
21 generated an estimated \$1.175 million dollars in personal
22 income for California families, and an estimated \$5.3
23 billion dollars in total economic impact. More than two-
24 thirds of the winter vegetables consumed in the United
25 States are grown in the Imperial Valley. This is our

1 largest DFA. The loss of income and food resources will be
2 substantial.

3 As a byproduct of the agriculture industry the
4 lush fields of Imperial County provide habitat to hundreds
5 of thousands of birds for more -- for more than 400 species
6 every year and contains over 70 percent of the state's
7 burrowing owls, and there are probably more owls per square
8 miles there than anywhere else in the United States, and
9 possibly in the world. So the conversion of these avian
10 resources to solar farms will be a substantial loss.

11 At the end of the solar field's life the structure
12 will be removed and the soil reclaimed, or not. Farmland
13 productivity is based on sweet soils, yet every acre foot of
14 imported Colorado River water carries one ton of salt.
15 Using subsurface tile drainage systems farmers have kept
16 their soils fresh. There is not enough water anywhere to
17 clean those soils up, ever.

18 So the permanent degradation of prime agricultural
19 land is also immitigable, to say nothing of the fact that
20 this -- by putting all those solar farms down there we will
21 displace more than 100-plus years of solar -- excuse me, of
22 farm businesses and agricultural workers that support that.

23 We have heard everything tonight about putting
24 solar -- rooftop solar on our roofs. I want to suggest that
25 we actually implement and put into our analyses California's

1 Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan. This was --
2 this was adopted by the California Public Utilities
3 Commission in 2008. This is a real plan on target to compel
4 a market transformation and move California towards long-
5 term deeper energy savings. They have big, bold strategies.
6 All new residential construction will be zero-net energy by
7 2020. All new commercial construction will be zero-net
8 energy by 2030. The heating, venting, and air conditioning
9 industry will be reshaped to deliver maximum performance.
10 And all eligible low-income customers will have an
11 opportunity to participate in the program and will be
12 provided with cost-effective energy efficiency measures.
13 That's rooftop solar, if necessary, but also what about
14 double-pane windows?

15 So my guess is rooftop has a real place in this
16 plan. My question is: Why has nobody ever heard of this,
17 and why is it not mentioned in the plan? It's up there.
18 It's working. It's got goals and objectives, and it's got
19 strategies. So thank you very much.

20 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Celeste Doyle, Buck
21 Buckley, then George Stone.

22 MS. DOYLE: Good evening. Thank you for coming
23 here. My name is Celeste Doyle. I'm a Joshua Tree resident
24 and business owner. And I'd like to talk about the false
25 premise that remotely located industrial scale power plants

1 are necessary or even somehow a good idea anymore. The -- I
2 would like to propose an alternative that doesn't seem to be
3 on the table right now, and it's that none of these
4 facilities should be allowed far from where the power will
5 be used.

6 Before moving here to Joshua Tree, I worked as a
7 Senior Assistant Attorney General for the State of Oregon.
8 And among my clients was the Energy Facility Siting Council.
9 It was a super-siting one-stop permit agency for the energy
10 projects in the state. And among the facilities that it
11 permitted, besides the actual power plants, were the
12 transmission lines, euphemistically referred to as linear
13 facilities.

14 There are power conductors, there are
15 superconductors, but there's nothing out there that is a 100
16 percent power conduct. When you wheel power over a
17 transmission line, power is lost. The further you wheel it
18 the more you lose. There is no real excuse for building a
19 huge solar power plant far away from where the power is
20 needed when that kind of energy is lost.

21 And the other thing I want to say about this is
22 what other people have said, is these -- these transmission
23 lines are not shown or -- or where they might go are not
24 shown on any of these maps, and they're not shown on any of
25 these plans. And I guess you don't know where they're going

1 to go because you don't know where these plants are going to
2 go. And we do think that most of this power is going to go
3 to an urban place far away from where it's being generated.

4 Power transmission lines are one of the worst
5 things for habitat fragmentation. And we know that that is
6 one of the biggest reasons for the demise of the desert
7 tortoise, as well as other species. And I know my time is
8 up but I just want say, disturbed or not, desert lands
9 should not be sacrificed to serve the energy needs of urban
10 places when those needs can be served onsite where the
11 demand exists. Technologies exist where it can all be done
12 locally, it call can be done even onsite, and there's just
13 no reason for these big-scale facilities to be far away from
14 where the power needs to be. Thank you.

15 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Buck Buckley, George
16 Stone, and John Smith.

17 MR. BUCKLEY: Good evening. Thank you for the
18 opportunity to speak. I'm Buck Buckley, a Joshua Tree
19 resident.

20 I have to go back and review because sometimes I
21 don't understand when you put words like "conservation" into
22 a title of a large project like this, that it needs some
23 defining to me. So I looked up -- first I looked up
24 "conserve" and it says, "To keep from being damaged, lost or
25 wasted, to save." Then I looked up "conservation" and it

1 says, "The official care of protection of natural
2 resources." And that's kind of what the BLM and other
3 agencies here are in charge of doing for the public is
4 protecting those.

5 I don't see trading one piece of land for another
6 or mitigation or any, you know, impact zones or anything in
7 any of these definitions. You know, to conserve is to
8 conserve. You don't trade one pristine piece of land for
9 another, as we do in mitigation. It's kind of just a way to
10 do what you want and find another way to do it where, you
11 know, it makes somebody else happy. The whole process has
12 been kind of if no one speaks for this piece of land, it's
13 at risk.

14 I'm a distributed solar installer. I believe in
15 rooftop solar. I don't believe in utility-scale. I think
16 it's going to cost billions of dollars. I think at the end
17 of the project we'll still be paying for it, and the rooftop
18 will come online and it won't be necessary. All the
19 resources, and I'm talking about world resources, copper
20 wire, towers, concrete, all the things that we put into
21 these kinds of projects costs so much in carbon footprint.
22 When you put up a windmill, especially these really big
23 ones, the concrete going into the ground offsets what the
24 thing is going to generate over its life expectancy, which
25 is about 15 years. It's unbelievable what we think we can

1 accomplish by doing this.

2 Scraping the desert destroys one of the number one
3 carbon sequestering macrobiotic resources we have, and we're
4 doing 3,000 acre solar farms all the time now. They're
5 popping up. Every time I drive somewhere I see more.

6 I would just really think that we should rethink
7 this and maybe do distributed first, and then see where
8 we're at. Thank you.

9 MR. BEALE: Thank you. George Stone, John Smith,
10 an George Ollen. George Stone? John Smith?

11 MR. SMITH: Hello again, executive team, fellow
12 sensitive receptors of data elements, and endangered desert
13 rats, pick your layer. Maybe my remarks are not
14 substantive, but I think it's public information that needs
15 to be conveyed.

16 A friend of mine keeps telling me to look at this
17 whole project from 50,000. I finally took him at his word.
18 Let's see if I got the picture right. An edict from a
19 bureaucrat in a big city tells you folks to lease public
20 land that belongs to us to private businesses who are
21 subsidized by a taxpayer, that's us, so they can generate a
22 product that is conveyed on transmission lines by big
23 electrical companies that are paid for by us so that they
24 can sell the product back to us. I love this business
25 model. If I could get away with that I certainly would, but

1 I think I might end up in jail.

2 Now if you think DG if going to get you out of the
3 lurch, the CEC, the California Energy Commission is already
4 hearing complaints from the big power companies about what
5 they call disruptive competition. What that means is -- and
6 the CEC is considering it, and they already have done it
7 tried it in different places throughout the country -- is
8 they're going to charge you, if you go off the grid, they're
9 going to just tag a little bill to you every month and say
10 that's your fair share of paying for the infrastructure that
11 you already paid for, you know? Anyway, I just like that
12 thing. I just love it.

13 Some people think I try to make humorous
14 statements, but the newspaper beat me to it. An article
15 about the new production inefficiencies of the \$2.2 billion
16 Ivanpah Solar Facility has the owner operators, NGR,
17 BrightSource, and another outfit, you can Google it, they
18 want the taxpayers to cough up \$538 million to cover their
19 planning inefficiencies. They rolled the dice up in Primm,
20 I guess, counting on historic climate, historic -- historic
21 climate data to determine the production outfit of their --
22 their solar facility. I guess it's not working.

23 It points out the absurdity of using technology
24 based upon the reliance of weather stability to resolve the
25 supposed problem caused by weather change. Really, Mr.

1 President, am I facing the right way?

2 Anyway, God has a great sense of humor. Chem
3 trails and clouds, they forgot.

4 MR. BEALE: Thank you. George Ollen, Frazier
5 Haney, and April Sall.

6 MR. OLLEN: I'm George Ollen. I live in Los
7 Angeles, and I spend a lot of time in Morongo Valley where I
8 have a place, so I'm a property taxpayer and homeowner
9 there. And it was only by accident, on Saturday, that I
10 heard about this. That means there's a lot more people out
11 there who haven't heard about it. So you need to reopen the
12 public meetings and increase them so that everybody gets a
13 chance at this to hear what this is about, to hear what
14 their fellow citizens think. Because if you don't, as a
15 previous speaker said, those people who don't get a chance
16 to find out about this are disempowered, disenfranchised.
17 That's my biggest substantive comment tonight.

18 The next one is that I don't really want utility-
19 scale power generation at all in the desert. I don't think
20 it's going to be necessary. Los Angeles is birthing a
21 locally generated and distributed power movement. They're
22 not going to need the 20,000 megawatts. It's -- it's
23 ridiculous to even consider that as a baseline for a
24 national rationality for this whole plan. If you really
25 want to do something to help the people of Southern

1 California and California in general, just scrap utility-
2 scale and help the people of California get their own
3 generating stations in their communities and on their own
4 homes.

5 My last -- my last comment, substantive, I hope,
6 is that you really look at the mission that you all have and
7 say to yourselves, what about preserving the desert or about
8 understanding how the desert works and how people can live
9 in it? And when I heard that the Desert Tortoise Research
10 Natural Area had somehow been confused or overlaid with a
11 DFA boundary, I said to myself, there's a lot of un-clarity,
12 a lot of misinformation, confusion, maybe among the people
13 who have made this plan, because how can -- how can you
14 allow something like that to exist in the draft? That's
15 not -- that's not a minor detail, to mislay boundaries so
16 that existing, long-existing natural preserves are going to
17 be suddenly open to development for utility-scale
18 generation.

19 So back to the drawing board, that's my opinion
20 and I hope you take that as substantive and not too
21 critical, but I think that's what our country and our state
22 need. Thank you.

23 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Frazier Haney, April Sall,
24 and Andy Catlin.

25 MR. F. HANEY: Hi. My name is Frazier Haney, and

1 tonight I'm speaking as a resident of Joshua Tree rather
2 than in any professional way.

3 And I had the pleasure of participating in the
4 local movement to help form the Basin Energy Assessment Team
5 here in the basin, but also being one among hundreds of
6 people that contributed to San Bernardino County's planning
7 effort that culminated with their solar energy ordinance
8 that went into effect at the beginning of 2014.

9 And I can't overstate enough that I think as the
10 final pieces of the plan come together, and I know that
11 you've all done a lot of work in your respective agencies to
12 build the plan, that the counties be brought in and involved
13 in every layer of the planning. And I know they have
14 limited capacity, but at the same time as the counties have
15 limited capacity, San Bernardino County, at least where over
16 50 percent of the plan is, much of the plan covers the
17 private land in San Bernardino County. San Bernardino
18 County does have a solar ordinance that's been passed by the
19 board of supervisors that was crafted by a lot of the local
20 citizens. And I think that's going to help bring the plan
21 to some kind of fruitful completion.

22 The ordinance covers things that are deeply
23 important to local communities, like our wildlife corridors
24 that we're only just beginning to understand, local water
25 quality and water usage in solar facilities and being able

1 to measure the water usage in solar facilities, viewsapes
2 from our national parks and protected areas, and our sense
3 of community values. So if the solar ordinance hasn't been
4 considered it needs to be integrated in every step of the
5 plan because it's law in San Bernardino County.

6 And it's particularly important because one thing
7 that I've noticed as I've watched from 2008 when the solar
8 rush began until at present, this plan accommodates about 80
9 percent of the DFAs are planning renewable energy
10 development on private lands and 20 percent on public lands.
11 So we're pulling the emphasis off of public lands and
12 putting it onto private lands. The counties have to be
13 involved in all the permitting on those private lands. So
14 every effort needs to be taken to integrate the plan with
15 existing local planning efforts. Thank you.

16 MR. BEALE: Thank you. April Sall, Andy Catlin,
17 and Bobby Furst.

18 MS. A. SALL: Good evening. Thank you. April
19 Sall. I'm going to be speaking tonight as a resident,
20 desert resident in Pioneer Town, born and raised in the
21 desert. I wear many hats, but I've been working in land
22 management and on renewable energy siting for the last seven
23 to ten years and in various capacities have -- have learned
24 a lot about these topics.

25 I live in an off-grid solar house that was built

1 that way in the 90s. And you know, I support renewable
2 energy, but I support landscape-level conservation and a
3 renewable energy plan that focuses on an order of priorities
4 for getting to a responsible energy future that includes
5 siting on disturbed lands, increasing distributed
6 generation, energy conservation, utilizing tools that will
7 minimize the impacts on our conservation lands because we're
8 early in this renewable energy future of ours and there's no
9 need to arbitrarily destroy lands and valuable habitat and
10 sensitive habitat before we have realized the full impacts
11 of those decisions.

12 And I want to echo the support of comments made by
13 Ruth Rieman and Robin Kobaly and Frazier Haney tonight. The
14 DRECP has -- has some worthy goals and we support those
15 landscape-level conservation planning goals. We support the
16 concept for planning for renewable energy. But we're at a
17 different time than when this effort began, and we've
18 learned a lot. The impacts of the fast track projects are
19 being realized more every day. And although we have
20 opportunities to surpass the 33 percent goal we've had some
21 pressure release valves, so we can take some time to get it
22 right.

23 We've got 200,000 acres of disturbed lands open
24 for business in a full-page ad of Westland's Water District
25 in the L.A. Times. That's about 30,000 megawatts given

1 DRECP math. We've got Kern County, 15,000 megawatts online
2 by 2015 of renewable energy. We've got 200,000 acres of
3 disturbed lands mapped by the Wildlands Conservancy, many
4 more by the EPA. We've got the City of Los Angeles recently
5 called out a report by UCLA Sustainability Department for
6 20,000 megawatts of distributed generation rooftop potential
7 just within city limits.

8 We don't have the opportunity at this point to
9 consider developing utility-scale projects on pristine
10 public lands and damaging one of the most fragile ecosystems
11 on the planet.

12 The list goes on and on, but my point is we have
13 an opportunity to use some of these other tools to meet our
14 renewable energy goals while we incorporate more science
15 into planning efforts for the California desert. A phased
16 plan would give us the opportunity to incorporate adaptive
17 management on the renewable energy side and identify the
18 true winners and markets in the renewable energy industry
19 without taxpayer subsidies and without the loss of our
20 pristine public lands and resources in the desert.

21 In particular, the California desert and San
22 Bernardino County, being the largest county represented in
23 the DRECP, has a lot at stake. And our interests, the
24 residents, need to be reflected in the -- in the DRECP. The
25 current draft does not yet create an alternative that

1 prioritizes distributed generation, disturbed lands, and
2 fairly spreads the burden over the entire State of
3 California. Thank you very much.

4 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Andy Catlin, Bobby Furst,
5 and Hemet Fleck?

6 MS. FLECK: Almut.

7 MR. BEALE: Almut.

8 MS. FLECK: Close enough. I know it's difficult.

9 MR. BEALE: Thank you. Andy Catlin? All right.
10 Bobby Furst?

11 MR. FURST: My name is Bobby Furst. I'm just a
12 local Joshua Tree resident. I won't be as fact oriented as
13 a lot of the speakers here. But having you guys here kind
14 of reminds me of an issue we had a couple of years ago where
15 we had an East Coast housing developer deciding he was going
16 to buy a square mile at the border of Joshua Tree and Yucca.
17 And he was trying to convince us how it was going to be
18 great for our neighborhood, and they were going to build all
19 these environmentally conscious -- a square mile, originally
20 it was going to be 12,000 -- or 200 -- 2,800 homes. They
21 were all going to cost, starting cost \$350,000 each, and it
22 was going to be a really great environmentally conscious
23 neighborhood, besides the fact that they were going to
24 remove 12,000 Joshua Trees that have a survival, once
25 they're moved, a survival rate of less than ten percent.

1 And it sort of reminds me of what you guys are
2 doing coming here, trying to convince people who live in the
3 desert that we should be supporting people who don't live in
4 our environment, in Los Angeles or wherever it is, San
5 Francisco where they are using up all their power, that they
6 should be responsible for their own power.

7 I have nothing against renewable energy. I have
8 solar panels on my house. I'm upping that so I have less of
9 a carbon footprint. I eliminated, well, we don't have
10 natural gas where I have, but propane which is even more
11 expensive than natural gas. And a lot of these big
12 industrial utility companies are putting solar and natural
13 gas by fracking the land, destroying the water. And you
14 know, what's the point of having energy if nobody will be
15 able to survive in the environment that they're in at the
16 moment?

17 And I know you guys are all, you know, trying to
18 do a good job and find the right solutions. But I really
19 can't see generating electricity for big cities and
20 destroying the desert of our state really makes any kind of
21 sense when if people don't like, in Los Angeles, don't like
22 what they have to pay for electricity, they should be
23 putting rooftop solar, if they can live with wind power.
24 And it's like hearing -- you know, putting your head next to
25 a toaster all day long and hearing this buzz, I don't think

1 you're going to get a response from anybody in any of the
2 desert communities that you're going to hopefully go talk to
3 the other people who live there.

4 And my other question is of all these locations
5 that you've discussed how much of the energy created goes to
6 anybody who lives or resides in that location or anywhere
7 close to it? So you're trying to convince us to, you know,
8 be okay with having our natural environment destroyed while
9 corporate money is being used that taxpayers like us are
10 subsidizing to pay for it. How many jobs for anybody in
11 these locations is that going to create? Zero. Because all
12 these big companies bring in their own people from wherever,
13 you know, they are. So it does absolutely zero for the
14 whole desert community, absolutely nothing.

15 And you know, personally I think -- I'm glad you
16 guys came. I'm glad you can hear the community. But I
17 don't think you're going to get any positive response
18 anywhere you go to any locale of what you're discussing
19 putting these, you know, industrial solar plants, plus the
20 transmission lines, and how much energy is lost, and all
21 these wide corridors. You know, they tried to do this
22 again, you know, a couple of years ago, putting wind power
23 up on the top of all the mountains up here. And then they
24 were going to buy-out land, even though there are
25 transmission lines running alongside the 10 Freeway. But

1 that land is owned by the railroad company and the electric
2 company didn't want to pay the railroad company to lease
3 those lands.

4 And so you're asking, you know, people who live in
5 an area to sacrifice basically their whole lives and their
6 whole environment. And I think you should go back to
7 whoever hired you and set this whole thing and go what are
8 we thinking, you know? Why -- what are we thinking? And
9 the people who sent you here, what are they thinking? Who
10 paid enough money to create the group that you work for to
11 come here and try and --

12 MR. BEALE: Is this your last point?

13 MR. FURST: Yeah.

14 MR. BEALE: Okay.

15 MR. FURST: I don't think I need to say anymore.
16 I don't think anybody here -- now I don't think one person
17 that came here tonight really wants to have any kind of
18 industrial giant solar, wind power, geothermal or whatever
19 anywhere in the natural habitats. Put it on your roof. Put
20 it on every commercial building. Put it on every garage.
21 Spend it where it's going to be used.

22 MR. BEALE: Thank you. All right, we have two
23 more comments tonight, Almut Fleck and Tom O'Key.

24 MS. FLECK: Good evening. A lot of work has been
25 done and gone into this project that you are involved in

1 into this document. And I imagine it's not easy to listen
2 to this group here tonight, and particularly at this late
3 hour so I'll be very brief.

4 The concern in the DRECP about endangered species
5 is appreciated. I suggest that you expand that concern to
6 the species Homo sapiens. And please consider this quote.
7 Homo sapiens, for those -- human. "The environment can
8 survive without human beings as it has before we arrived,
9 but human beings cannot live without the environment."
10 We're totally dependent on it, what we eat, and for many
11 other issues that have been spoken to, spiritually,
12 etcetera, etcetera. It is -- it is shame to destroy it any
13 further.

14 In light of global warming we must make sure that
15 the solution does not supplant the destructive technology
16 and industry such as deep ocean drilling for oil and
17 fracking and so forth. And I think this is -- we're trying
18 to offset that technology with this technology, it's -- the
19 results are different but ultimately it is destruction.

20 We have to make sure that we get it right this
21 time because, as you have heard, the window of opportunity
22 is closing fast. And we cannot go in the wrong direction
23 and backtrack; we need to think clearly about it, not rush
24 into it, and have many more of these meetings. Thank you
25 very much.

1 MR. BEALE: Thank you. And our last comment for
2 tonight, Tom O'Key, you get the final word.

3 MR. O'KEY: Thank you very much. I wasn't going
4 to speak tonight. I didn't want to burden this meeting with
5 just another comment. But there was something that didn't
6 come up. First of all I do want to say, though, I want to
7 thank you for the extension. And I'm Tom O'Key from Joshua
8 Tree, and I'm pleased you're here because this is where I
9 live. All the meetings I've been to so far have been in
10 other people's neighborhoods.

11 And going back to -- to Ontario, and I stood in
12 that meeting, and there was quite a few people there. And I
13 asked at that meeting about the process and processors and
14 so on. And then I asked about the stakeholders and who in
15 the room, if they would raise their hands, who was at that
16 meeting representing stakeholders, and I think about 20
17 hands went up. And now you see, it turns out, there's a lot
18 more stakeholders than that and it really was a matter of
19 going to them.

20 I asked also at the last meeting in Victorville
21 about an extension, and you did give us an extension. I
22 asked for what your working committee asked for, 60 days.
23 The 16 names who signed on to your own document saying they
24 needed more time, and there was quite a few agencies, and I
25 just said I think that, you know, that was because of this

1 incredible document. So I wanted to start with that.

2 The next thing that I wanted to talk about that
3 hasn't been mentioned is the impacts on light pollution that
4 these projects are going to do. Basically, you know, the --
5 one of the best things the desert offers the world, our
6 desert, is a pristine night sky. And only a few places --
7 you know, little by little urbanization is encroaching and
8 we're losing the dark. And these areas you're talking about
9 doing these projects are going to bring light. They're
10 going to bring service lights. The windmills are going to
11 bring flashing lights. They are going to be impactful.

12 The IDSA, the International Dark Skies Association
13 through their science has done a tremendous job on being
14 able to document the impacts to the environment and on human
15 health with regards to light pollution. And you're
16 proposing projects that's going to disturb areas that
17 presently are very dark, and you're going to bring the first
18 lights. And the International Space Station will have new
19 pictures. They'll see new lights on the ground, new
20 development, and the spread of something that already has
21 been deemed harmful to humanity and the environment.

22 Then I want to go to another place, and it's
23 called eBay, and I'm on there right now. And eBay is a
24 great place because you can look up prices of stuff and you
25 can do market research and you can see real time. I can buy

1 it now. And right now I can buy it now, 5,000 watts, 5
2 kilowatts with 36 volt panels for \$3,599. I can buy a
3 complete system right now on eBay, 4,800 watt, complete
4 grid-solar panels on your home, \$8,199. Now when I was in
5 Ontario it was twice that and it's only been two years. In
6 Ontario I talked about technology and the dropping prices
7 and the fact that we were going to be within arm's reach of
8 this technology on all of our homes very shortly, and it's
9 happening. This is \$.72 a watt on a lot of panels, \$4.00 a
10 watt not long ago.

11 None of the DRECP ideas with regards to technology
12 have taken into consideration the swing in the economic
13 opportunities that everybody has. And unfortunately the
14 powers that be with the big industrial scale projects are
15 still locked in old price tags. With Chinese steel coming
16 from coal, being -- melting -- melting that steel to
17 building 8,000 parts to build a windmill, parts that are
18 made in Taiwan being marketed by a German conglomerate
19 running their companies here, these things that don't even
20 do anything for the American worker. You couldn't build
21 those machines here. You couldn't build them. If it wasn't
22 for the cheap Chinese workers and this foreign coal and oil
23 being used to process those materials, you couldn't do it.

24 And that's my -- my statements. Thank you very
25 much.

1 MR. BEALE: Thank you. I want to thank you all
2 for coming tonight. Again, I know it's not easy, we know
3 it's not easy for you to take time out of the week to be
4 here. It's not easy to stand up in front of a group of
5 people to speak your mind, even a friendly group like this.
6 We appreciate it. Your comments are going to help us
7 improve the draft plan. So anyway, thanks very much for
8 coming out tonight.

9 (Meeting adjourned at 9:14 p.m.)

10 (Additional public comment begins at 9:19 p.m.)

11 MR. LERUE: Okay. So in my -- in my original
12 comments I expressed concern about the public lands being
13 disposed of within the DFAs.

14 Another thing I notice in there is that they said
15 that -- that lands would be disposed of within non-
16 designated areas. And the DRECP, as I read it, doesn't
17 really indicate what those disposal levels are. So I'd like
18 to know what those are.

19 The other thing that's not clear is I understand
20 that if something is built on public lands that at the end
21 of certain periods they have to be decommissioned. And it's
22 not clear from the plan that decommissioning would happen on
23 projects that are on these private lands. So I just wanted
24 to make sure that decommissioning is still applicable to
25 private lands.

1 The one thing that I'm concerned about is that if
2 these enhanced recreational management areas are established
3 and we don't have a baseline of what current impacts are,
4 then we're not going to be able to do any kind of monitoring
5 to determine if there's increased uses that are damaging the
6 habitat from those areas. So we really need baseline in
7 those areas that are being designated.

8 Similarly, with the Fish and Wildlife Service and
9 Department of Fish and Wildlife, their proposal to establish
10 these conservation management areas south of Edwards Air
11 Force Base and east of California City, apparently the
12 document does not have any baseline for what the tortoise
13 species are in those areas or what human uses are. And I
14 know that human uses, especially sheep and OHV, are very
15 high in both of those areas. And so there's a concern that
16 if that's supposed to become the conservation area that it
17 may be of less value than the lands that are being
18 developed. So we really need more baseline data for those
19 areas.

20 The one thing I think that does a really good job
21 without talking about all the existing plans that only gives
22 a brief mention to the counties' general plans. So right
23 now it seems there's a deficient description of what the
24 general plans are for the different counties and cities that
25 may become signatory. So -- and it's not clear if that's

1 supposed to be something that comes in later or if it should
2 be there now.

3 The other thing that -- I looked through the plan
4 and there's no mention of incidental take under Section 2081
5 for the Department of Fish and Wildlife. And there's a lot
6 of talk about the NCCP process, but it's unclear as to if
7 incidental take would be authorized under Section 2081.
8 That's it. Thank you.

9 MR. O'KEY: Okay, I'm Tom O'Key from Joshua Tree.
10 I was the last speaker. I just wanted to add one more
11 comment and that is, is that I feel that we need to have
12 some additional meetings that are sponsored by the DRECP
13 because there's a lot of people that don't know about this.
14 I know I've been tuned in and I received the notifications
15 from the CEC with regards to all the processes and all of
16 the minutes and so on and comments, but I know there's a ton
17 of people that don't know.

18 And I think there should be an advertising
19 campaign put on because we're coming down to the closing
20 hours. And I think that the advertising campaign should
21 open the doors a bit wider for additional input from those
22 who are yet unaware of what's going to happen here that are
23 significant. And so more meetings at more locations.
24 You're in Joshua Tree this time. I think something in
25 Needles would be good, something in Blythe would be good.

1 Those neighborhoods are affected. Maybe something down in
2 Calexico or in -- in El Centro. I don't know that there was
3 meetings in any of those towns, and yet they're central to
4 communities where DRECP is going to have giant impacts.

5 Thank you very much.

6 MS. STEELY: My name is Lorrie Steely with the
7 Mojave Communities Conservation Collaborative. I'd like to
8 reiterate the comments this evening by Ruth Rieman, Robin
9 Kobaly, Dave Lamfrom, Stephanie Dashiell, Constance Walsh,
10 and Frazier Haney.

11 The November 15th Daily Press article actually
12 went further than just to comment regarding that distributed
13 generation isn't the only alternative and that it won't work
14 using just DG. It went further to say that the -- there is
15 a portfolio approach that will be used and it won't be using
16 only the desert; it will be using the north and south as
17 well. And I'd like to ask: Where are those other plans?

18 I'd like to request an independent science panel
19 to perform an arbitrary analysis. I don't believe that the
20 entities that are writing the DRECP should also be the
21 entities that are doing your own analysis of the -- on the
22 environmental impacts in the state and for NEPA and CEQA. I
23 believe that the DRECP in its current form will have social,
24 economic, and environmental impacts that will be enormous to
25 our wildlands, our wildlife, and one tenacious enigmatic

1 endangered species that's rarely mentioned that's rarely
2 mentioned which is the desert rat.

3 Public outreach has been poor. We'd like to
4 suggest going back to the drawing board. We would like
5 another public meeting before the end of the comment period.
6 And if at all possible we would like to extend the comment
7 period. Thank you.

8 (Off the record at 9:24 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

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

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

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 19th day of November, 2014.

/s/ Martha Nelson
MARTHA NELSON

CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

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

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

November 19, 2014