

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND BUREAU  
OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (PEIS)  
PUBLIC MEETING  
February 8, 2011  
Indian Wells, California

PARTIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Prepared by Argonne National Laboratory  
with Assistance from Capital Reporting Company,  
Washington D.C.

Based on a videorecording by Mr. Antonio Gonzalez

## C O N T E N T S

APPEARANCES

LINDA J. RESSEGUIE, Bureau of Land Management; JANE SUMMERSON, U.S. Department of Energy, KAREN P. SMITH, Argonne National Laboratory

PUBLIC COMMENTSPAGE

Donna Charpied.....	4
Citizens for the Chuckwalla Valley	
Larry Charpied.....	8
Citizens for the Chuckwalla Valley	
Ruth Nolan.....	10
College of the Desert	
Seth Shtier.....	15
National Parks Conservation Association	
Joan Taylor.....	18
Sierra Club	
April Sall.....	22
The Wildlands Conservancy	
Helen O'Shea.....	25
Natural Resources Defense Council	
Pamela Flick.....	28
Defenders of Wildlife	
Claudia Sall.....	33
California Desert Coalition	
Frazier Haney. ....	36
The Wildlands Conservancy	
Robert Ross. . . . .	38
Self	
Paul Smith.....	39
29 Palms Inn/Innkeepers Association	

## C O N T E N T S (continued)

Bill Harper.....	43
Desert Survivors	
Ingrid Crickmore.....	45
Desert Survivors	
Bob Ellis.....	48
Desert Survivors	
Alfred Acosta Figueroa.....	52
La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle	
Patricia Piñon Figueroa .....	56
La Cuna de Aztlan Sacred Sites Protection Circle	
Rob Bernheimer.....	60
Self	
Timothy Anderson.....	62
Citizens for the Chuckwalla Valley	
Kevin Emmerich.....	62
Basin and Range Watch	
Ron Van Fleet.....	67
Protectors of the Ivanpah Valley	
Phillip Smith.....	70
Protectors of the Ivanpah Valley	
Renee Castor.....	75
Desert Center Area Chamber of Commerce	
John Beach.....	78
Self	
Michael Turner.....	80
Self	
Douglas Chinn.....	82
Self	

## P R O C E E D I N G S

MS. DONNA CHARPIED: My name is Donna Charpied. I am the executive director for the Citizens for the Chuckwalla Valley. I live in Desert Center, California --

COURT REPORTER: I didn't hear you. For who? The Desert Center, did you say?

MS. DONNA CHARPIED: I live in Desert Center, California. I am the executive director for the Citizens for the Chuckwalla Valley. Please don't take away my time for repeating that.

COURT REPORTER: Okay.

MS. DONNA CHARPIED: CCV was formed in 1992 in Desert Flats Café out in Desert Center and we specifically made our name Citizens of the Chuckwalla Valley until members said no we need to be for the Chuckwalla Valley so we could be all inclusive, and that was very intuitive of our friends to come up with that idea because we've had to face some very serious networking in the last 23 years to try to forge new policies that would protect our community, our desert environment in the Joshua Tree National Park.

Just a little background about me, just real quickly, I am a recipient of the Minerva Hoyt California Desert Conservation Award. (Applause) I have received letters of acknowledgement and certificates from the California State Assembly, Congresswoman Bono, Bono-Mack now, and various environmental organizations. Just the other day, I received a certificate and a letter signed by President Obama and this really cool, gold lapel pin, for the work that I had been doing for the environment, the volunteer work that I have been doing in my community. It is quite an irony that President Obama has acknowledged the work that I have done while with the other stroke of a pen he has increased exponentially our volunteer workload.

Of course, I didn't get this award all by myself. We have worked to (inaudible), which will be located just a stone's throw basically from Joshua Tree National Park and (inaudible). We have developed a plan to bring some new vision to Eagle Mountain that will result in an economic boom to our community and to the protection of Joshua Tree National Park.

So then there comes this solar PEIS.

The I-10 Chuckwalla SEZ must go. It's as simple as that. That is such a huge swath of land. There is close to 200,000 acres that you're looking at just there alone, and this brings up an issue of environmental justice. The town of Desert Center, we have Iron Mountain, there's the little tiny town of Rice, and then there is Blythe. We all are being so targeted unfairly by the projects that it is unconscionable. What's really interesting is that back in the 1980s the California EPA commissioned an organization a group called (Sorrell?) Associates, and the reason why they commissioned these guys is to see the path of least resistance for forwarding facilities. Not where is the best place to put these things for the environment that we find but where is the best place where there is the least path of resistance. When they did their study, they came out with this report for people with the areas of low population, people with low income, and, interestingly, predominantly Catholic. And to this day, this standard is still being held, and it's very clear when you see that the solar projects

that are proposed for our valley -- the lights will be out for the people who live in the Chuckwalla Valley when these solar zones come in. And - I just lost my thought, sorry -- I'm going to stick to alternatives.

The alternatives that you're talking about in your PEIS are way too limited. The only thing that your alternatives are doing is just to find a way to do the same places that are smaller or that are in better or different areas, and that's unacceptable. That's actually against NEPA to do that. That's against the law to do that. We don't hear anybody say anything about, "Well, we should study the rooftop solar to see if our great country could still meet our energy demands from that, much like what is happening in Germany quite successfully. All you're doing is one thing, and that is to promote corporate welfare, spending our tax dollars to do a very, very misguided energy policy, and I encourage you, at a minimum, to note that the alternative that is best for me is to get rid of that I-10 Chuckwalla SEZ. When I say me, I mean Citizens for the Chuckwalla Valley. Thank you.

MR. LARRY CHARPIED: I'm Larry Charpied. I'm a jojoba farmer in Desert Center. And I did look through your EIS, and I didn't see anywhere where you considered any of the energy production already being developed, alternative energy production. There is actually successful green energy, renewable energy sources like jojoba, and I think that you need to look at jojoba in the sense that let's put in 200,000 acres of jojoba. We're getting 150 gallons per acre. The best they do in soy is 100. You don't water from June till November. It doesn't compete with food crops. So let's look at something that's going to actually help our atmosphere because it's a green plant; it's going to convert CO<sub>2</sub>.

You clear off all this land for your solar panels, and you get rid of the creosote, and you get rid of the patina on the ground. Both are those are very good sources of CO<sub>2</sub> conversion, so you're going to remove this, the conversion of CO<sub>2</sub> to say you're going to help the atmosphere with solar panels when in fact then you're going to coat the lines with SF<sub>6</sub>, which one pound of SF<sub>6</sub> is like 10,000 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>. You are damaging the ozone. So we're not seeing any

positive effects on our atmosphere from these solar panels, 25 percent efficient at best plus another 8 to 12 percent lost in transmission. This is a joke.

The reality is you're going to give up our public land, give up our public land, you're going to give them our tax dollars; and in the case of First Solar, they're going to use that money to buy the panels from themselves and then sell it to foreign countries, to the highest bidder. As soon as they get their permits, all these people are going to be selling. So we're going to be buying our land from foreign people any -- I mean our energy from foreign people anyhow.

I don't understand how this is going to meet any of the goals of America. If the Government wants to make America energy independent, solar panels on every rooftop, the whole new economic engine for this country: You got to make them, you got to sell them, you got to install them, you got to repair them. Why not build this way? Oh, you keep telling me it takes too long. Now how much longer will we go to court over fighting you? Is all this time going to be wasted,

instead of the billions you're going to give these people, instead of giving it back to Americans so that we can be energy independent. I don't understand who's making these rules or where the guidelines are coming from.

You need to require the best available technology. When you look at the various sites, some guy will give you 5 megawatts an acre, some give you 10, some do -- why can't we squeeze the maximum megawatt out every acre? And we talked about this in El Centro I don't know how many years ago when we're seeing all of these proposals in the beginning, yet I haven't seen any requirement to make this more efficient, just to make them bigger.

So anyhow, I think the reality of the situation is this isn't for America. This isn't to make us energy independent. This is corporate welfare, and I don't understand how that's going to work because it hasn't worked in the past. Look where we are today.

MS. RUTH NOLAN: I'm Ruth Nolan, a professor of English at College of the Desert. I'm also a former

BLM California Desert District wildlife firefighter working through the entire California Desert District defending the desert from wildfires. Now I find myself defending the desert from what basically amounts to a solar land grab, and --

Excuse me. And is a horrific, I compare this to the Gold Rush of the 1850's and '60s in the Sierras, an ugly chapter in our country's history where land was grabbed, and this is a very sad notation in our country's history culturally and geographically. I'm very concerned about what I see as nothing short of prostitution of our public desert lands, my home, where I have lived my entire life, by corporate, for corporate gain.

I'd like to read just a little bit from a book that I did for a sabbatical project called "No Place for a Puritan." I'm using this for my students at the College of the Desert, and it's a literary overview and cultural and historical important book showcasing why the desert matters. "I was 10-years old in 1973 when my father first drove me in his old Volkswagen bus from my hometown of San Bernadino east of Los Angeles, up

the long, steep grade of Interstate 15 and over the 4,000 foot lift(inaudible) of Cajon Pass. I held my breath as we reach the top and saw, for the first time in my life, a land that was as vast and wide as the sea. There at the edge of the Mojave Desert, a long necklace of headlights stretched east for 40 miles. Toward the west, the sky was lit with rose and orange hues. We descended toward the small town of Victorville, racing past Joshua Trees, whose thick needles etched gracefully and fiercely against the sunset. I knew then and there that I'd found my place, my calling, my landscape, my home. I stuck my head out the window and looked up. There was an evening star, a slice of moon alongside it. I was instantly and forever smitten. This was an empty and imposing land, rife with danger and thrill. I sensed that an entirely new adventure lay in wait for my family for we intended to relocate to be near my father's job. My intuitions were confirmed when my mother opened a kitchen drawer to find a baby Mojave rattlesnake in it. When I went to bed serenaded by a symphony of coyotes. When my brother went to the hospital one day being dehydrated

after hiking a harsh rock peak near our house on an August day. The desert was as silent as a church during a funeral and as wide open and empty as a school yard on a Sunday, but it was never, ever boring."

Little did I know on that first drive through the high desert that this region, largely seen to that date as a waterless wasteland ready for the taking and wanton raping through widespread and reckless mining and military usage, was even in 1970 just beginning to be approached, investigated, researched and understood for the environmental, cultural, and archeological and internationally significant region that it was and is.

Million of visitors come to this area year after year from all over the world to visit our parks and also to enjoy the region, and they also come from the urban areas that are pressing on our boundaries. Just the fact that these areas are seldomly used by all of these different groups should give this area reason to have more attention and protection, not to be an area that's just seen as something that we can use.

The deserts are home to many endangered species, wildlife corridors, Native American resources

and spiritual, cultural sites such as those named in the Salt Song Trail ceremonial songs of the Chemeheuvi Indians, and this should only give us more importance to think that we really should consider before we see this as empty space to use up.

Let us not destroy our virgin desert lands what little of them remain and forever desiccate this very special area that's so largely unknown.

I'm also very concerned with -- as some of you may be -- the disaster of Owens Dry Lake comes to mind-- When you plow up the desert and disturb the topsoil, which Larry Charpiel mentioned, you create a dust bowl. I have suffered from Valley Fever, a virulent respiratory illness that is on the rise in the Southwest area regions, and it's not a picnic. It took me five years to get rid of it, and it forever corrupted my health, and our deserts cannot afford to have more land plowed up, further endangering human health.

In the desert, and my final statement, I'd like to say church is spelled out from the land itself and discarding it is in essence to tear down the world

of churches and tear down a vital part of our human heart, our cultural, and our global legacies. Thank you.

MR. SETH SHTIER: My name is Seth Shtier, and I'm with the National Parks Conservation Association. The mission of my organization is to preserve and enhance America's national parks for present and future generations.

This year is Joshua Tree National Park's 75th anniversary. In August 11, 1936, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared Joshua Tree National Monument a monument. Birthdays are a great time for celebration, a great time for looking back at our past, but they're also a great time to look forward to the future, and it's that future I have in mind as I make public comments.

We are concerned about some of the aspect of the Solar PEIS. Number one, there are right places and wrong places for renewable energy generation. We have committed time, money, and effort to protect some of the most spectacular places and imperiled species on

Earth. We should not compromise that legacy to rapidly site projects.

Two, it is counterintuitive to sacrifice pristine lands in order to save those same lands from the worst effects of global climate change.

Three, conservation tools like the 2011 California Desert Protection Act by Senator Diane Feinstein are some of the best ways of managing and ameliorating climate change because they protect the heart of the California desert and protect key sensitive lands while moving energy projects to less sensitive lands.

Many of our aquifers are overdrawn, and that is something I see repeatedly in cumulative impact sections of reports that I've been reading lately. There has not been an adequate examination, for example, of how the de facto urbanization of the south part of the park will really affect the resources of Joshua National Park and surrounding wild lands. What is missing from this discussion very many times is a look ahead about climate change.

The work by scientist Noah Diffenbaugh, who is an esteemed research scientist, has identified the Southwest as a climate change hotspot. It's a climate change hotspot not only because of increase in temperature but because of increasing variability and precipitation. That increase in variability and precipitation will no doubt affect aquifers. This must be addressed in cumulative impact reports because I believe that the numbers don't add up, to put it bluntly.

Secondly, the California adaptation strategies report by the State of California also states that there will be 12 to 35 percent less average annual precipitation, and that means more problems for already overdrawn aquifers.

I'd like to make the following comments related directly to solar development on adjacent lands next to national parks. Our national parks and wilderness areas are some of the most intact -- Our national parks are some of the most ecologically intact areas remaining on this planet, and we must do what we can to protect them. NPCA would like to

propose that solar development on adjacent lands be set back from national park boundaries by 15 miles.

Additionally -- Applause)-- there must be an adequate examination of wildlife corridors, and it must be clear that mitigation is not a solution to disrupt a wildlife corridors. It is only a solution for protecting them. Our plants and animals will increasingly depends on these wildlife corridors as our climate changes and animals seek food, water, shelter, and mates at higher elevations.

Finally, the Department of the Interior and the Department of Energy should develop criteria to empower decision makers at these agencies to prioritize renewable energy projects that cause the least environmental harm and have the best chances of success. Thank you very much.

MS. JOAN TAYLOR: I'm Joan Taylor -- Chair of the California/Nevada Desert Energy Committee for Sierra Club. The U.S. is transitioning from reliance on dirty fossil fuels to ones that will contain renewable energy. To make sure this is truly

sustainable energy the club believes that we must develop large scale renewable energy smart from the start. The Solar Energy EIS must focus solar development on places with the fewest effects on wildlife, natural resources, and endangered species. The best places will be where the land is already disturbed and has access to existing roads and transmission. The BLM's preferred alternative designates solar energy zones but also would permit solar development on 22 million more acres. This is simply unacceptable, thus defeating the purpose of the zone approach in the first place.

Further, the PEIS's proposal to develop hundreds of thousands of acres in California alone is based on flawed assumptions. It's clearly not sustainable and would if implemented far exceed the capacity of the state's power corridors to utilize peaking power such as solar. Acreage for zones for solar development should not be based on -

Acreage for zones for solar development should not be based on speculation or flawed assumptions. Only a limited amount of electrical demand fits within the

profiles of solar power output. Solar power plants proposed for the near- and mid-term future contain little or no energy storing for power blackout. This means that solar energy cannot supply more than daytime load, and the average distance between base load and peak power is around 10,000 megawatts. More power than is generated then that will be dumped. We draw the Bureau's attention to the fact that there are over 10,000 megawatts in large scale solar projects proposed for development on commercial rooftops or on non-BLM lands in California. These are real proposals.

We are seeing that developers are moving forward in droves on marginal and abandoned ag lands in the desert and in the Central Valley. Generating power closer to the point of use in places like the Central Valley is infinitely superior from a consumer standpoint because it reduces capital costs for transmission and reduces (weigh-in?) costs, all of which are borne by the taxpayer -- ratepayer.

In most of these non-BLM projects, the lands proposed for solar are previously disturbed and close to urban areas and local employment. So clearly, these

non-BLM projects have the potential to ramp up solar energy without the inherent environmental and societal impacts caused by developing our natural federal desert land and closing off and destroying its enormous biological and cultural, visual and recreational use entirely from the public. It will also generate about as much solar power as the grid can efficiently use. Therefore, it is flawed assumptions.

It is also foreseeable that opening up unnecessarily large BLM acreage for solar will not create significant change from what is happening now. We can predict that this approach will involve higher resource conflicts, more public opposition, continued uncertainty for both wildlife managers and developers and, unfortunately, more litigation. It will slow down rather than speed up our clean energy transition.

In California, we urge the Secretary to eliminate two of the proposed zones, the Iron Mountain and Pisgah zones. These areas have unacceptable impacts to desert tortoise, recommended wilderness, (inaudible) sensitive biological, cultural, and visual resources.

MS. APRIL SALL: My name is April Sall. I'm the conservation director for The Wildlands Conservancy and chair of the California Desert Coalition. The Wildlands Conservancy is a California nonprofit organization that manages and conserves landscapes and provides free outdoor education for kids. Beginning in 1999 the Wildlands Conservancy worked on the partnership deal to conserve over 630,000 acres in the Mojave Desert; \$45 million was raised in private funds to purchase these lands and gift them to the Department of the Interior for management, for conservation of natural resources and cultural resources.

Many of these same lands that were gifted to the Department of the Interior for conservation are now being proposed to be bladed and destroyed in renewable energy development. This is a violation of the trust and the partnership between The Wildlands Conservancy and Bureau of Land Management and the Department of the Interior. Some of these lands are now being proposed for protection under the California Desert Protection Act of 2010.

Currently, the process the Department of the Interior has proposed for renewable energy development creates more concerns in their assumptions in the beginning of this process than I can comment on today. For one, the assumption that 75 percent of solar development will be on BLM-administered lands. The Wildlands Conservancy has inventoried over 200,000 acres in Southern California of private, disturbed lands with willing sellers available for solar development near existing transmission corridors. These private lands are more appropriate for renewable energy development because of their previous disturbances, and the Department of the Interior should encourage a thorough look at alternatives beyond what is in the current draft PEIS.

Kern County alone is permitting the building of 10,000 megawatts of renewable energy, mostly solar, on exclusively private lands, many of those disturbed. The California Energy Commission estimates that California needs between 60 and 100,000 acres to meet our renewable energy portfolio goals if we rely only on solar development. Therefore, the alternative, called

now the Solar Energy Development Program alternative is a huge step backwards. Why should we even continue this process or spend time and money on evaluating the PEIS if it is now opening up 22 million acres to development beyond the already flawed solar energy study zones?

Our position is that the current solar energy zones need to be refined and that the focus should remain only on those areas identified as the solar energy zones. The Riverside East and the Pisgah Solar Energy Zones should be reduced significantly, and the Iron Mountain Solar Study Zone should be eliminated all together.

The PEIS fails to identify appropriately the cumulative effects of all of these projects and including where the current fast-track projects will affect wildlife corridors and conservation values.

We encourage the Department of the Interior to give the BLM the power to create the criteria and screening to reject projects that are in inappropriate places; i.e., sensitive ecological areas and in rich cultural areas, and those projects that are proposing

experimental technologies.

Please allow the field offices to do the planning with the information that they have, and only they have, on the resources that are sensitive and irreplaceable on our public lands. Private land has not been considered as a significant source of renewable energy in the PEIS nor has the ability to utilize midscale projects on checkerboarded BLM lands that are in disturbed areas on the fringe of the California desert. Midscale 5 to 25 megawatts project have not been considered as part of the solution, and I encourage you to consider that.

MS. HELEN O'SHEA: Good evening. My name is Helen O'Shea, and I'm speaking on behalf of the Natural Resources Defense Council, NRDC. We're an international nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists who are protecting public health and environmental issues across the globe and we have 1.3 million members and on-line activists.

We have a long history of protecting Federal lands including those managed by the BLM. We also have a long history advocating for energy efficiency and renewable energy to meet the nation's energy needs while responding to the challenge of climate change. We strongly support the direction the BLM and DOE are headed with development of the zone-based Solar Program. Identifying appropriate zones for development is a much better way to approach solar energy than on a project-by-project basis as we have seen in the last calendar year.

This approach can help us avoid the mistakes of oil and gas development on public land where we ended up with projects scattered across the landscapes often in areas that were severely damaging to wild lands and wildlife. We firmly believe to succeed with the guided development approach, it is critical that development be limited to the appropriate selected zones themselves and not available on other lands.

The current preferred alternative that other speakers have already referenced would allow for development in the zones and, in addition, it would

open up an additional 22 million acres for solar development. As was discussed earlier in the agency's presentation, the reasonably foreseeable development scenario in the PEIS projects we need a little over 200,000 acres westwide to meet the target for energy production. We do not believe that opening up an additional 22 million acres on top of that is justified under this scenario nor is it the right direction for solar energy development on our public lands. The proposed acreage that would be open under that alternative includes many lands that are completely inappropriate for solar development, that's defeating the purpose of the zone approach in the first place.

It's clear to us that the preferred alternative will lead to more uncertainty and more conflict like we have seen in the past year, and as Joan Taylor said earlier, it is almost certain to slow down rather than speed up our transition to a clean energy economy.

For these reasons we believe the BLM must select the solar energy zone alternative as the preferred alternative in the final document. We will

be submitting detailed comment on the proposed zones in California and in other states including recommendations for boundary adjustments to minimize resource conflicts. We urge the BLM to remove the Pisgah and Iron Mountain zones from consideration. We will also be recommending that the BLM consider lands that have been identified by the conservation community in the West Mojave and the Chocolate Mountains area for potential solar development. These plans to date have not been evaluated in the PEIS.

In closing, I'd like to thank the agencies for undertaking this Solar PEIS effort and to reiterate our strong belief that this program can only be successful and responsible if the solar energy zones alternative is selected as the preferred alternative in the final PEIS. And I thank you for the opportunity to comment.

MS. PAMELA FLICK: Good evening, my name is Pamela Flick, and I am representing Defenders of Wildlife, which is a nonprofit, national nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and restoration of wild animals and plants in their natural

communities. We have more than 1 million members nationwide and more than 200,000 of those are here in California.

Defenders supports the Administration's goal of a clean energy future. We understand that is in our best interest to reduce our global warming emissions and to bring online clean, renewable energy sources. With that in mind, it is imperative that we build a clean energy economy quickly, efficiently, and with significant public support. We understand that our public lands can and should play a role in this effort. However, we believe that we must learn from the mistakes made developing oil and gas on our public lands. Right now we have the opportunity to create a renewable energy program on our public lands that will result in clean energy sources and jobs but does not sacrifice our public lands and natural resources in doing so.

The Solar PEIS lays out three options. The no project alternative continues the status quo of projects strewn across our desert landscapes sometimes with little consideration for the significant impacts

to wildlife habitats and cultural resources. The Solar Energy Zones alternatives would allow projects resulting in more than enough solar potential to satisfy our needs.

Unfortunately, the preferred alternative would open up an additional 22 million acres outside the zones. This options seems to differ little from the current status quo and would result in significant loss of high-quality habitats supporting a rich assemblage of at-risk species, including desert tortoise, Mojave fringed-toed lizard, burrowing owl, Golden eagle, desert bighorn sheep, and dozens of rare plants.

Defenders strongly supports a solar energy zones-only approach that directs development in well-placed, well-analyzed zones. This approach if done correctly would avoid the uncertainty and conflict currently plaguing the recent approvals of solar projects on public lands.

We believe a zone approach would not only potentially avoid unnecessary and serious natural resources and cultural impacts but can produce the necessary level of energy identified by the BLM.

While we support the solar energy zones approach in concept, we do have some serious concerns with the current Draft PEIS, which we believe must be corrected if this effort is going to succeed and garner maximum public support. Currently, we do not believe that the preferred alternative outlined in the PEIS reflects the smart-from-the-start concept outlined by Secretary Salazar and BLM Director Abbey.

First, the PEIS currently lacks a reasonable range of alternatives. Additional alternatives must be proposed and analyzed. We believe that the current zone alternative needs to be revised to eliminate the Pisgah and Iron Mountain zones completely and include adjustment to the Riverside East zone to avoid impacts to important natural resources such as microphyl woodlands and sand transport areas.

We also believe that the zone alternative needs to be adjusted to reflect the siting criteria developed by the national and regional environmental organizations in 2009. Those criteria have been attached as an appendix to the Renewable Energy Action Team's best management practices manual adopted at the

end of 2010 by that team's agencies.

Second, the PEIS needs to be improved to address the current problem with inadequate information on habitats and species occurrences and uncertainty over which impact avoidance minimization measures would actually be applied to the effected lands under all alternatives.

Under the preferred alternative, which allows development on more than 22 million acres, the PEIS only analyzes the impacts on natural resources and wildlife for the proposed 677,000 acres in identified zones, and I'd like to point out that's only 3 percent of the total area of that alternative.

Lastly, the zone approach needs to lay out a process for adding new zones for development. For example, the west Mojave and Imperial Valley include other options to solar development on degraded lands, but those have not been considered for development, while other intact pristine areas such as Iron Mountain are under consideration for development. We urge the BLM to consider using the siting criteria developed by the environmental community as guidance for choosing

other zones in the future.

The Solar PEIS provides an important opportunity to establish a program that's truly smart-from-the-start. We hope that you listen to the concerns expressed here tonight and throughout the public hearings to come. Defenders will certainly be providing more extensive written comments on the PEIS before the close of the comment period. Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments. Thank you.

MS. CLAUDIA SALL: My name is Claudia Sall. I am director of the California Desert Coalition. It's a grassroots organization that took on the LADWP in the Green Path North transmission line. One of the things that we did as a coalition was we studied a lot of the documents out at the time to understand the bigger picture of renewable energy, and we studied the Energy Act of 2005 and the alliance and partnership that brought the Department of the Interior on that. And we think that probably some of the problems here in the partnership -- some of the things that the Department of Energy's tasked with and some of the things that the

Department of the Interior's tasked with, specifically BLM, really is not a great match up there.

That being the case, one of the things that the coalition did in the scoping comments in 2009 and some of the things that we talked about was that we did not believe that the SEZs will contribute to the Energy Policy Act, which is driving this whole conversation. The Department of the Interior was tasked with developing 10,000 megawatts of non-renewable power on public lands, and so we are now -- we're talking about solar energy. We're not including in this PEIS of course wind power and some of the other things that have really had a cumulative effect, so we think the process is rather incomplete.

We also believe that the SEZs don't really comply with the DOE goal number 2, which is to favor distributed energy. The Department of Energy believes that distributed energy is much more favorable to consumers and is more economic for them. And of course, having distributed energy puts the solar development closer to urban centers the most. And we see that when this 2005 Act was passed that some of the

things it started years ago, we have a different idea of where we should be going, and now we see that urban loads, as Joan Taylor has said, there's been a lot of renewable energy that's being done by Californians and the evil empire and (inaudible) Riverside and now the models are shifting and that maybe we can have this a different way where we won't have to have all this development on public lands. You could do it closer to home and use those fallow agricultural lands.

The other thing I want to point out is some of the way that these SEZs are operated in terms of mitigation. Eighty percent land of the lands in San Bernadino County are government owned. So I don't know exactly where you're going to get this mitigation land. San Bernadino County (inaudible) 100 percent are government owned, so what are they going to do with the other 20 percent that are already having problems funding their activities for the county there, so this model is not really appropriate for this landscape, trying to do this mitigation with the landscape, this utility sized development.

Finally, I just want to say that some of the same issues that we talked about, quality of life issues, wildlife linkages that are very important in the state of nature that we talked about in Green Path North are still applicable here. We don't really see some of the linkages studies being incorporated where these zones are. Ideally, you would like to see the Iron Mountain taken out, Pisgah taken out. We'd like to see Chuckwalla -- and I'm assuming (inaudible) -- clapping) -- development right next to our national parks. There's some influence all around these. So in conclusion, we'd like to see that SEZs have a refinement or that some of these come out but also that would consider that some of the development for solar energy can be closer to the zones alternative and that remember also the Department of Energy focused more on conservation rather than energy generation. Thank you.

(Applause)

(Pause in recording)

MR. FRAZIER HANEY: Whitewater Canyons as the land manager now, and mostly I guess I'm concerned that

the PEIS doesn't value our pristine public land enough. I think that areas that are developed for renewable energy should be close to load centers, and that would also avoid transmission cost, not just the cost monetarily but the cost in court and the cost to the local communities out there.

Disturbed lands near public -- I'm sorry. Disturbed lands near load centers should be first in line or should be given weight somehow over pristine public lands because the Mojave Desert is one of the last and greatest intact landscapes in the United States. The California Desert Protection Act of 2011 is a positive step, and it shows how important tourism, recreation, and our viewsheds are to the communities in the desert.

The Solar PEIS needs to do a better job at determining some of the indirect effects of the projects on wildlife corridors. The effects of these corridors --

(Pause in recording)

MR. ROBERT ROSS: ...most of what I wanted to ask about it has to do with the need for additional data, comparative data so that we can appropriately evaluate the proposal.

First of all, I think we will need some more historical perspective on this project including the type and size. Is this the largest proposed utility or other use of BLM's lands in its history or not? I ask specifically with regard to land area usage, secondarily lower cost to the taxpayer and megawatt generation. So I'd like to see that information. Also, is the proposed project based on additional projected demand for electric power? Or is it based on replacement of existing power-generating systems? That could effect how we go forward I think. Is DOE looking at smaller land use alternatives, smaller alternatives that is to this centralized solar power production, such as individual home and business solar systems?

My rationale here is -- I think others have expressed it -- is I hate to see so much public land taken away from the public's enjoyment and wildlife conservation purposes when solar energy use options are

individual homes and businesses. It's not apparently that specific -- at least I didn't see it. I was reading on the table here -- as some sort of an alternative.

And what percentage of the current national and especially regional energy consumption would the proposed solar development represent? I didn't see those figures in there. Maybe it's somewhere. And how does it compare to wind, fossil fuel, and atomic.

And regarding transmission line right-of-ways, if the development on BLM land proceeds would condemnation authority be needed to take -- to make connections through private lands to the grid?

And finally, I also do not understand why BLM expressly favors the solar development program over the Solar Energy Zone program alternative especially when the needed acreage and environmental impacts are in order of magnitude smaller for this SEZ than the SDL alternative? That's all I have. Thank you.

MR. PAUL SMITH: I'm Paul Smith. My wife and I have the 29 Palms Inn in Twenty-nine Palms. I'm

president of the Innkeepers Association, and of course, we're concerned about tourism as well as the long-term effects on the enjoyment and the appreciation of the desert and what might happen for the short term. I also teach law at Copper Mountain College.

I'd like to just draw the following points out. One, I think that the EIS needs to take into account the cumulative effects of non-solar projects. That would include potential residential and commercial development. It would include the Eagle Mountain pumped water storage generation facility that's planned. It would include the 200,000 identified private properties that could be used for this.

And I'd like to next consider Highway 62 and the Iron Mountain zone. I think we need to take care to avoid a very scenic highway and also an area that was a special wildlife habitat and wildlife corridor. I see all sorts of reasons why Iron Mountain shouldn't be used for this purpose, but I would hope that as a real alternative it's viewed as something that could be eliminated and what the effects of that elimination would be, particularly with the other alternatives.

I'd like to just comment on wilderness values. They include several things. One is the economic benefit from tourism when it comes to wilderness. Another one that isn't talked about much is the social and mental health aspects, and this should be considered in what you do as you disturb wilderness and the wilderness effect. I think those are strong arguments to do a lot of things to avoid the national park boundaries and also to have very significant setbacks from visual disturbance along highways. This would particularly concern me with respect to the tower, the solar tower projects.

I think that the report should consider the now changing and much discussed economics of solar power, particularly with respect to changing economics of rooftop solar so that we don't find ourselves in a situation where we've constructed antiquated plants that are much better operated with local production.

I'd like to make sure that the report seriously considers sacred sites.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Amen.

MR. PAUL SMITH (continued): This is both a socioeconomic effect. It's a lot more than just history. It's also cultural, and it should also be considered of significant religious importance.

I believe the report should consider the national security risks, which are much larger than local, smaller projects on rooftops, of having large utilities. This is a growing age of terrorist threats, and that's a very significant potential threat.

I like the zone approach. My instinct is to suggest that the Pisgah should be reduced, that eastern Riverside should be significantly reduced to avoid implications for Joshua Tree National Park, to have significant highway setback for the visual disturbance of the wilderness effect, and to stay away, a long ways away from the important cultural sites that the Native Americans have.

I believe that Iron Mountain, which has significant socioeconomic value as a tourism and wilderness area as well as in biological values in habitat, as well as corridors, should be eliminated.

I'd like to remind all of us of the seventh generation rule that the Iroquois philosophers talked about; namely, when we make decisions, you should make them with respect to the effect on the seventh generation from now so that they can enjoy the same things we enjoy today. Thank you.

MR. BILL HARPER: My name is Bill Harper. I'm with Desert Survivors. I'll start with the greenhouse gases. I was looking through chapter 3 of the technical report, and it doesn't seem to include the greenhouse gases from the transportation of workers and transport of materials to and from the site. And then the main thing I want to talk about was to dispel the myth of jobs. This is Harper Valley -- Harper dry lake solar site (Note: Photo is attached at end of transcript). There's two wet-cooled, I call them solar system gas-fired plants because they use gas at night and there's two of them there. You can see two very faint cooling plumes up there, and this is the old store. That's the old store on Harper Lake just behind the cultural community. This store is still belly up.

Nothing going on. They bought all the ranches around here for the water, so no hay, no food being grown there anymore.

Also I was -- back on the charts, you expressed the water use in some of the smallest units possible, that's acre-feet. There's 300,000 gallons in an acre foot. That means those numbers for wet cooled solar, they're talking over a gallon -- 14 -- I'm sorry -- from one and a half to 31 gallons per watt of water used for wet-cooled solar, which is totally out of place.

Appendix A on the health effects I did not see, I just scanned through it real quickly here. Did not even see Valley Fever mentioned there. The West has a history of boom and bust.

I was told that the possibility of having bonds placed on these businesses for if they go belly up and removing and decommissioning them. Unfortunately, if they're all built with public money that means that bond is bought with public money.

And also, at the appendix A2.2.22.2 --  
(Laughter) -- page 107, it talks about glare mitigation

and highly sensitive viewing locations. That would completely eliminate the Riverside East zone. That's all viewable from wilderness. It's all viewable from people's houses. It's all viewable from the highway, so -- oh, yes, one more thing about the labor. In chapter 1.3.2.3, in operations, your source of -- a hundred people employed at a solar trough site is from Bright Source Solar themselves. I'm not sure they have that many people working on any of their sites. So they don't have them. Alright. Thank you -- and so that's pure speculation from the industry itself in the report. Thank you.

MS. INGRID CRICKMORE: I am a teacher. I live in the Bay Area in northern California and I am not a desert resident. I belong to a group called Desert Survivors which is a conservation group based in Oakland, California. I have not read the PEIS document. I have looked at the maps and I am more familiar with the California desert areas but I want my remarks to apply to all the states that these maps, this proposal covers, the public lands in all these

states. It's quite horrifying to me that our government would consider sacrificing these last remaining wild areas of our country and possibly, according to some experts I've heard, of the world, outside of tundra areas. That specifically the Mojave is one of the last areas of this size of functioning ecosystems in the world. The idea that our government would consider opening up to all this area, of public lands, wild lands up to industrial speculation is horrifying. Especially when I do not believe that this process has investigated the very reasonable alternative of rooftop solar, and I do not mean just on individuals' homes, but on industry, on all areas of our urban landscapes that are available for solar development. If these areas -- if communities and corporations, as well as individuals, were provided the financial incentives that are being offered now to speculative, profit-driven corporations, to invest in our public land, thereby despoiling it -- if these opportunities were give to communities, corporations, and individuals in our urban environment that has already been despoiled from that perspective, is not a natural habitat anymore

-- I do not believe that that alternative has been considered and until it is considered, not one acre of our public, unspoiled lands should be opened up to industrialization...industrialized. )Applause) Looking at the maps for all these western -- these states that have BLM, amazing land that has not been developed yet, the huge percentage of it that would be opened to development is just horrifying, and none of the -- there have been no -- there have been no successful large scale solar industrial plants on public land yet. We don't have a cost effective -- a cost analysis of -- not just the dollars cost but what -- as Bill Harper pointed out -- what the actual energy cost, what the effect of both building these areas, the remote areas, accessing them, transportation cost, what all this will cost in energy and is there even going to be anything gained from the energy that is produced there and then sent over long distances by transmission lines where much of it will be lost just due to transmission. Is this even energy efficient? Whereas, I think the first recourse that the DOE and the Government should consider is developing resources where these

resources are needed.

MR. BOB ELLIS: I live in Berkeley, and I spent some time on the Desert District Advisory Council for a while. People would say, "Well, what do you get out of this?" And what I tell them is us urban people need the desert more than anyone. We need the open spaces, and we need a sense of, well, solitude, expanse, something that takes away from the sort of jammed-up life we're living in the cities. So I look at -- I'm overwhelmed by what's happening. I thought everything was pretty good. All we had to worry about was some off-roaders, you know, a few years ago, and now all of a sudden big chunks of lands are getting destroyed.

Well, so, I've been down to demonstrations in Ivanpah. I actually got photographed holding a big flag up in front of the bulldozer down there. I've run in Blythe trying to raise some of the consciousness of the impact to some of these cultural sites that we cannot replace. I've been on the freeway overpass in Chuckwalla raising a flag. (Applause) We had a great

day informing the public because people need to know they're not kidding. They're really going to wreck things. They're going to destroy people's lives in the community of Desert Center and in the community of Cibola (?).

Well, we thought in Berkeley, "What do we do?" "We demonstrate." So we went down, and guess what? Right in Berkeley there's Bright Sources headquarters. (Laughter) That's the Ivanpah project. Guess what? Solar Millennium is in Berkeley--no it's in Oakland. Oakland, Berkley...right there. So we went down to Bright Source, and we had five or six people put some signs out, and we started. We had some "Save the Desert" signs, but that wasn't going over so big in Oakland. Well, we started saying "Bright Source come home." Come home to Oakland. We need the jobs in Oakland. We've got rooftops in Oakland. We've got parking lots in Oakland. We need solar there. We don't need solar out in the desert. Our public lands are much more valuable.

Personally, I am hugely disappointed at the BLM for allowing this to happen. 1976 was 35 years

ago. FLPMA was passed. The California desert was made a conservation area specifically.

We've spent 35 years trying to figure out plans, how we we're going to keep this desert as good as we have. And most people argue, compared to what's about to happen, we've done a great job.

So 2009, Congress passed the Public Lands Act, and right in that act it said that the national conservation landscape system is going to include all lands that are conservation areas, all wilderness, all the wilderness study areas, and those lands are going to be managed for conservation. So there was a little exception because the Desert Conservation Area was so large, but it did say that those lands in the California desert managed for conservation shall not be intruded upon at least to the degree of a solar industrial project.

Now that's not been taken to court. As I interpret that language -- BLM so far has said, "Well, we're studying what that means." The law was passed in March 2009. I asked him a couple of days ago. He said "We're studying what that means. We don't know what

lands are managed for conservation in the desert anymore." And I can see that they don't, but how about starting out with limited use lands. The desert plans says we got three types of land use: Limited use, medium/moderate use, intensive use. Industrial solar is intensive use, but where are these projects being put? They're being put limited use. So I don't think that's legal myself. It's not been taken to court although maybe it passed one of the lawsuits there we was talking about.

But I think basically you guys are too late. The market has passed you by. You're working on a process that won't be really finalized for a year and a half or a year. It'll maybe go to court if it ever has any meaning. Two years from now, most of these projects will not even be thought about to be built the economics are changing so fast.

Meanwhile, everyone of us who cares about the desert are going to be waving our sign that says, "Solar in the city." "Solar on the rooftops." "Bring solar home." "We want jobs at home." "We don't want them way out in the desert." "Save our lands." Thank

you.

MR. ALFREDO ACOSTA FIGUEROA: ... Thank you very much (inaudible). Exactly what my friend said right now. This is what we are talking about here -- we want all of these stopped. I just want to - we're gonna have to be big partners because these sites... We're proposing to the United Nations to make it a World Heritage Site all the I-10 corridor and all the rest of these right here in Riverside County. We have the facts. That's why we're gonna sue you, and it's (inaudible), and we're anticipating a lot more suits from different tribes. We have members here from the different tribes here also with us because we're not going to tolerate this.

And we aren't going to be pushed (inaudible). We can make this -- let the world know the truth, the truth on these sacred sites and how we're determined to go all the way to Washington like we did with Ward Valley to make sure that none of these sacred sites are destroyed.

I know that we have a nice lady here

(inaudible) her name is Beverly. She's with the California Energy Commission and she wrote there - "this analyst estimates that more than 800 sites within the I-10 corridor and 17,000 sites within the seven counties bordering that desert region will potentially be destroyed. Maybe we can reduce the impact of this destruction, but not to less than significant levels." Amen brothers. So they want to mitigate? How can you mitigate with Mother Nature? There is no way you can do it. Okay, I think staff responses are kind of absurd here (inaudible).

Alright, the staff response (reading from another document) (inaudible) "However, staff has not considered a single response with sufficient information to complete an analysis." (inaudible). She never even contacted the tribe.

Oh, Lord, a single analysis. Here we have the Native American Heritage Commission, Mr. Dave Singleton. (Laughs) And you see (reading from another document) "No Native American tribes from the Colorado River area have significant numerous sites near and perhaps within the APE site (inaudible), and several

others that are documented in the nearby Colorado River Indian Reservation (inaudible) located right (inaudible). It's not just a (inaudible) sacred sites, definitely not. And we have taken our representative here from the BLM, but I know they're under constant pressure. Well, this time (inaudible) my personal representative, my nephew is the campaign chairman for the Spanish TV in the United States (inaudible) -- (Applause) --

You now have another letter from the Native American Heritage Commission, Mr. David Singleton, which reads "Dear Mr. Figueroa. Thank you for your information and announcement of your lawsuit. The recent letter we wrote supports your right to identify Native American cultural resources and recommend appropriate action to protect and preserve those resources. If we can assist you further with your efforts, do not hesitate to call us." And you bet we're calling you. We're calling you every day.

(Laughter)

And we want to make sure that this doesn't happen. Okay (inaudible), this whole controversy of how these sites were made in 1994 by Mr. Manulet (ph).

He made these sites over there. It says -- it's a letter from a representative from the BLM in Sacramento, James Abbott. So he sends two pictures, before and after. One in 1994 doesn't show Kokopilli, Kokopilli. 1996, it shows Kokopilli all of a sudden.

(inaudible) what have you been doing?

(Laughter - inaudible)

My land. So let me tell you what Kokopilli means. This is Kokopilli. The majority of people here in Palms Springs and everywhere else, you see this image. Koko means hurt -- anybody speaks Spanish knows that our Spanish is Nahuatl - means hurt. Pilli means (inaudible). Kokopilli means hurt, and we are very hurt especially today when we're seeing -- Thank you, maa'am. Okay. Well, thank you very much, and I'm glad we're having the TV camera here, and I'm glad we're having reporters. The last time we spoke they prohibited them from taking pictures from the movie camera. Thank you.

(Pause in recording)

MS. PATRICIA PIÑON FIGUEROA: ...you know that we have been working for years with the Bureau of Land Management to protect our sacred sites. Oh, now we got to protect the desert, to protect the fragile ecosystems and plants and animals, and it's a very rare and unique place, the California southern desert. As you have heard the wonderful statements made by the citizens who are willing to stand up and stay up late to make their comments here.

My name is Patricia Piñon Figueroa, and I was born and raised in California, I've known the BLM all my life because of my father's work. As a child, we were brought up to try to protect the desert from the local white residents who wanted to take the off-road vehicles all over the desert, so that was what our role, we were trying to protect from the vandals, protect the pictographs, and petroglyphs and geoglyphs. And now we are trying to protect the land from the BLM. So it's a little ironic, but here is the Kokopilli geoglyph that currently it stands to be intruded on by the construction of solar - Blythe solar power plant.

And if you could go on to the next slide, please (Note: Slides are attached at end of transcript). This is where the proposed solar power plant is to be, it's the yellow, and the map is the BLM's special edition surface area desert access map from 1999. You can where the Kokopilli geoglyph would be, and -- next please.

This is a general description for the Solar Energy Millennium. Next please.

The famous Kokopilli icon is throughout the southwest as you can see especially with the petroglyphs like up in the Utah and Arizona, northern Arizona. This is the only geoglyph of the Kokopilli you'll see ever, so it's represented from this geoglyph made on the surface to the rock and other images that are found in the cave dwellings and rock paintings. Next please.

This is another intaglio. It stands adjacent to the Kokopilli, and it's represented in the Aztec codices. It represents the sun, the great spirit. These are mountain images also that stand aligned -- in a line with the Kokopilli wherever it is situated on

the mesa. The mountain images are also taken from the air, aerial shots.

Here is the map of the Mule Mountains in the south (inaudible) and Topock Maze are aligned together. The Topock Maze is also one of the sacred sites up in the northern California area. It's more southwest of Needles, the Needle area. Next.

This is also another image. It's not an image but it's like a nine-level step mesa that leads down to the underworld. That's just what it means in the creation story, and this is also found there in the same area where the Kokopilli is at.

Other images. They are geoglyphs that are within the proposed Blythe solar power project. And this is just an example of how much thought is put in when these industrial plants are put in. This is a natural gas plant that is right in the route of the airstrip, the airport there in Blythe. So they may have some trouble with that as well. The airplanes that fly over also risk getting (inaudible) because the steam that's coming out of the power plant.

And this is the Kokopilli that stands to be destroyed by the proposed solar panels. And some people will say, "Well, the Blythe solar power plant project being made on the Kokopilli because the Kokopilli stands just beside of the road." But I've seen construction sites (inaudible) too, and they encompass a lot of right of way because in order to build their site, their power plant, or whatever it is that they're building, these developers don't care, they don't respect the land. And so I know that in some of the programmatic agreements it says that the construction workers, the laborers will be trained on how to respect the indigenous sacred sites if they run across it. And I'm sorry, but I think they will not respect it because if you've got a multimillion dollar project coming down your back and you're responsible for it and you gonna see something that maybe or maybe not could be considered a cultural resource, I do not think that you're gonna stop the business and halt all construction, especially if you've got a deadline.

So this is just food for thought. We thank you very much for participating in this process, and

hopfully we'll be continue to do so throughout the Southwest. Thank you.

(Pause in recording)

MR. ROB BERNHEIMER: ...and I certainly want to applaud the BLM for taking a broad look at how it can go through the process of maybe streamlining some of the work that's being done with looking at solar energy on BLM land.

I looked at the proposal for preferred alternative that is brought before us and I think if we a nation that's trying to get away fossil fuels why is it that a fossil fuel company could come to the BLM and apply for an application on any of your land around the country and yet the current alternative is to limit renewables, solar to just a really small amount, and I find that ironic and limiting because these projects when they go through the environmental approval process -- and I'm involved in some of this -- the EIS of these projects takes into account all of the environmental impacts and looks at that on a very hyper-local basis.

And so to sit here on a broad scope and look at basically the Southwest of the United States and beyond and say, "This zone is no good. We're just going to exclude that" without really looking at that because eastern Riverside County has a lot of land, and people that live here as I do can say, "Well, we got a lot of solar" but if you look at the map closely -- Imperial, there's only one tiny zone down near the Mexican border, yet all the land around the Salton Sea could be very prime for solar development especially when we're talking about solutions to save the Salton Sea. There could be some great opportunities for solar there, there's nothing in western Riverside County that's in a zone.

So I really believe that coming out and limiting the applications for this industry but no other industry has that type of limitation is really fundamentally unfair, and I think that needs to be looked at as let's not limit it to just these few acres but still continue with the goal of having some aspect of streamlining and taking a global look at this from the BLM's perspective because I know you have to manage

those applications, and that can be quite difficult.

So I'll submit further comments online, but I wanted to make those comments here tonight. Thank you.

MR. TIMOTHY ANDERSON: Hi, I'm Timothy Anderson. I live in Desert Center, California. We shouldn't allow private enterprise on public land. It's wrong. It's the people's land, and they're making money -- they'll make money on this land.

The other thing I'm concerned about is the desert and the life in the desert. There's so much life in the desert, and it's sacred. To have it torn up for somebody to make money is wrong.

MR. KEVIN EMMERICH: Thank you. Have you noticed nobody has gotten up and really supported solar all over public land. I did. My name is Kevin Emmerich. I'm the cofounder of Basin and Range Watch. We've a group from Nevada, and we're public landowners or private landowners of the desert, former rangers, by all of those who don't want to see desert plastered and our wildlife destroyed by this kind of activity.

First off, I wanted to say that we need to eliminate this East Riverside solar study zone. It's too big, it's gigantic. And because of all of the applications on this area, it's one of the most endangered areas in the desert, and it's full of wildlife. Development in this area is just going to destroy the connectivity, the functional ecosystems. This is a bad idea.

Number two, it's an 11,000 page document. Extend the comment period please by three months. It's just too much to read. I'm not going to read it all unless you extend it.

It looks like there's two things going on here. Number one, it's business as usual. There are maps and applications to develop massive areas in the desert. And yet we have this redundant PEIS coming out, I'm wondering why do we have two. And it seems to me that the reason for the PEIS is to speed up approval of these projects.

I've read four of these solar studies, three in Nevada and the east Riverside zone, and this document is badly written. It misses a lot. You have

to refer to different wildlife sections or different sections on impact. For example, for photovoltaics, I don't see any impact. They're talking about polarizing glare that would attract birds or aquatic insects. That's just one example of what's been missed, and it's been mentioned here that there's been lawsuits going on, there's eight of them actually. If you don't run this type of thing through, you're definitely going to get more lawsuits, and then it's more tax dollars being spent. It's just not a wise idea to do it this way, to try to streamline things and take shortcuts when you don't have the detail.

As far as alternatives go, obviously we don't want this 22 million acres, but I'd like to suggest the alternative that refers to purpose and need. The purpose and need says that we need to develop solar energy on public lands, and I don't think that's a good idea. I would like to see the purpose and need reflect the NEPA concept that says that offsite alternatives outside of the jurisdiction of the lead agency will be considered. That's why I want to request to put the distributed generation alternative in this document

because the need basically says we can put this energy on public land if it's environmental friendly, but is this environmental friendly? No, it is not. You guys know that.

You said that you were going to avoid critical habitat. That's interesting too, that Federally designated critical habitat for any species. For desert tortoise, that was designated about 20 years ago. Things have changed. On the Calico project, on the Ivanpah project, you have desert tortoise populations that are slated to be destroyed by this development that are actually a lot more abundant and more robust and healthy than anything that you have now in protected critical habitat. Because of that, that tells you that you need to reevaluate where all of these zones are.

Another thing that I'd like see in more BLM documents is recognition of socioeconomics, and not just how it's going to bring all these jobs to the local community. I want to see the negative. I want to see how it's going to impact property value and quality of life. I never see that in any of these

documents. I fine-tooth combed a few of them in the last three (inaudible), always avoid the impact it's gonna have on the private landowner. Let's start seeing something there.

Deferred mitigation. We're going to mitigate all these solar study zones. We're just going to approve them, right and we're going to mitigate later? That's really not gonna work. Bright Source Energy and Ivanpah. They're trying to do that.

As you know, they're destroying about 4,000 acres worth of desert tortoise habitat, almost done. They're going to try to mitigate it by actually buying the Castle Peak's mine in the Mojave Preserve. It sounds like a good idea, but that begins at 4,000 feet, and that's the high elevation cutoff point for the desert tortoise. The point is we cannot mitigate that ahead of time. It's ridiculous to destroy the Earth to save the climate. We need to save both of them. Don't give our public lands away to one use for Solar Millennium. It's not worth it. Thank you.

MR. RON VAN FLEET: Good evening. Ron Van Fleet, Protectors of the Ivanpah Valley (laughter - inaudible) and formerly president of Anti-Ward Valley Coalition Committee, president. I'm here representing our tribe this evening - the Fort Mojave Indian Tribe tribe, and all the children that are there, Native or non-Native, because of the Colorado River. You haven't assessed what effects the dust would do to the river. The river is already contaminated. The animals, again, protect our colleagues and our friends I haven't met you. I love you. (Laughter)

I had a dream years ago, when I was younger. We dreamed that (inaudible) and who we are. We're people of the river. The Creator put us on the river to protect the water, the land, and the animals, and that's what we do. We'll go to no extent. We may be saying, "Well, we used to live right there." No. The Bay of California over here in Los Angeles is shaped like this, like a belly, and right where Malibu Beach is is what we call Malipu (ph), which is a Mojave name, and there's sacred mountains right there by Point Gerp (ph), and that's still a Mojave name. Tahachapi is a

Mojave name. It's means the building of the a brick wall.

When I was a young boy, my grandfather was -- should've been the last chief of the -- he took over the tribal council. He took me to the river and put my right foot in the water; he said, "Now, son, you're a prince, you're a Mojave prince." He said, "From this river to the ocean, you're to protect. This land is yours." We went on the Arizona side. He put my left foot in the water, and he said, "Here is the Rio Grande That's what you are to protect. And from here to the ocean on both sides."

You know, I recently talked to the council, the tribal council, our council because we're like cramped on this little checkerboard reservation that the Government has given us, and I said, "We need to broaden our space. We need to reclaim at least a hundred miles to the California side from the river and a hundred miles on the Arizona side by the river. That should be our land, our reservation because our children are growing, and we want to -- we're not genociding as the Government proposed to intermarry.

We're not doing that."

Ward Valley, why did the Government want to put Ward Valley, low-level radiation when you knew Hiroshima, Nagasaki, you have tests that low-level radiation kills children. Why would you want to put that right near our reservation? The river, the aquifer flows right into our reservation. Genocide. The Government wants to genocide us. Why did you not come to us, government-to-government, and talk to our chairman, talk to our people? Why are not we part of the reassessment plan? And do you live on the river? Do you live in the desert? It's a beautiful place.

Our people live in cohesion (?) with the river, the water, and the animals. The animals -- we eat the animals. Even the insects right now today, when I was a little boy, there was what you called locust. They would just hum on the river. You couldn't -- they were just -- it was like a motor running when you came to the river. But now, you can't hear that because of the contamination of the water, the boats that have come in. Lake Mead, man, they have a great regulations, but on our river, we have some

regulations, and all of this is contaminated -- what is the reason for -- and you're killing your own self. The California aquaduct -- in Lake Havasu, they have fish with two genitals. They're male and female, and this contamination is found in northern California where there is a rocket fuel explosion or in Nevada in the contaminated -- it's in the desert, it's on the desert floor.

Now why you want to go and dig up that contamination? It's gonna contaminate the water. The Salt River project that goes through Arizona, millions of people, millions of people here, you depend on that water. The crops just last year in 2010 down in Yuma, Arizona, is contaminated from that same -- they had to not ship that crop of lettuce out of that area, it was totally contaminated. Thank you for your time.

MR. PHILLIP SMITH: My name is Phillip Smith. I'm also one of the Protectors of the Ivanpah (inaudible). This is where my people are from. I'm Chemehuevi Indian. My people lived all around the Chemehuevi Valley -- Ivanpah. Sorry about that. I'm

sorry. And I was one of the, well, one of the first ones to have went to the first meeting you ever had in Ivanpah on the solar project years ago and gave a talk -- well, they gave a talk, you could say the companies gave a talk, and they talked about -- they took us on a field trip where the proposed project would be, it was right underneath the power line coming from the dam, the Hoover Dam, going to the L.A. market. This is where they're going to get the project. They're gonna hook up to the power line for transmission with the power line from the Hoover Dam.

Now I hear and I read because of the expansion of what it takes to put forward a bigger project than they thought, now they're talking about their own transmission line, not using the power line from the dam, the old flow. And the thing I think about is that when there's projects in the desert, you can try -- there's always been a lot of (inaudible) Government to Government in the past. There was also a generating plant in Ivanpah proposed in 1981 by Edison. And they went to every tribe on the river, the five tribes of the lower Colorado River met government-to-government.

And I also been on a trip -- a project on the proposed airport for Clark County in Nevada at Primm, and I was out there helping the study.

We also had a study down here in Blythe proposed. Well, there was a gas line put in there. I was there because they came to us, and several other projects, but on the solar projects, they have never approached an Indian tribe government-to-government that I know of. And I think by law and I have read -- and I don't have it with me -- you're supposed to have also Native monitors in these areas doing the studies with the archaeologist. That has never been done.

And when they talk about a public meeting, we generally don't go to public meetings because we're the (inaudible), a sovereign nation, but some of us have. It does us no good, absolutely no good for public input from Native people because they don't honor anything we say. They don't honor -- (Applause) -- they don't respect anything -- they don't -- they just don't care about our culture it seems to me. I kind of felt like it was kind of a waste time coming here. But I got a lot of friends here, I decided I

would come.

The Ivanpah project that I saw out there, I knew about the area, from my dad, a pristine area. I just don't understand how that was chosen -- according to what I was reading and seeing out there, that says - - not the pristine areas, but it is. You know there's desert turtle out there, all kind of animals out there, all kind of -- nearby Clark (ph) Mountain has solar (?), and that means water and snow that means there could be animals out there. I just don't understand why they still can't gather -- why that was proposed or if.

They already restricted the area, removed turtles out the areas. And I used to hear from -- I've heard from the Paiute lady from Pahrump talk about the desert turtles what they ate - what they don't eat. And the ones they took out of Ivanpah and put them in a holding pen, I wonder what they feed them? Do they know what the turtles eat? This old lady did. That was with our input at Primm Valley about of what the desert tortoise ate.

It's just hurts me about the desert, how it's

changed since I was a kid and how my dad described it and after he had lived out there, born and raised out in the desert area there. It's sickening. I never did understand how -- I was reading about the Desert Protection Act. When I was young guy, I heard about that law. And why was gas lines going this way and that way? There are underground cables. The power lines, this way and that way.

So many things out in the desert. It's not -- it's not like it when I saw it when I was a kid. They never left it alone. It's not even protected. Either that or they're just not enforcing laws or amended laws -- or amending laws to override that. The desert tortoise, a protected species, is that true? Is that true at Ivanpah? Or the other areas? Is that really true? When they passed it as a law as a protected species, this was one of our staple foods, the Chemehuevi people, the Paiutes, the desert tortoise. We honored that law. We stopped that - stopped eating them. We honored that law to protect these little -- these animals. Why can't anybody else do that? Why couldn't the solar companies do that? Protect -- honor

this law. Why can't the BLM do that themselves? They made the law. And then there's still (inaudible) those laws.

But I really think about just the desert tortoise. I think about all the wildlife out in the desert like Ron was talking about, Ward Valley. I'm one of those warriors that was out there. I spent 113 days out there trying to stop this project, and we did. (Applause) Well, my time is up (inaudible).

MS. RENEE CASTOR: My name is Renee Castor, and I am chairman of the newly formed Desert Center Area Chamber of Commerce, so I am not an environmentalist. I'm here from a slightly different angle, and the Charpieds and I have actually been on opposing sides for a number of years, and you guys have actually managed to find the first topic we agree on.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hurrah! (Laughter)

MS. RENEE CASTOR (continued): Though, if maybe for some slightly different reasons. We formed the Chamber of Commerce this year because of the economic times, in order to find ways to fight our town

from dying and becoming a ghost town in this economy. While we fight to improve the economic growth and development of our community, your program guarantees it's extinction. There are millions of acres available with no towns within a hundred miles that are more suitable for this issue.

Our community is gaining no benefits from this project. All the energy that will be produced will be exported to metropolitan areas, yet your SEZ zones surround our town on all sides. If you could visualize that Indian Wells is Desert Center -- probably I should stay with Desert Center -- and every building from here to Palm Springs and from here to Coachella Valley is a solar panel, that's what we're going to look like. Our town sits in the middle of one of the largest zones along the I-10 corridor.

You will destroy our only natural resource, the unadulterated views and beauty of the Chuckwalla Valley, the beauty and majesty of our valley that bring snowbirds and nature lovers who hike and bike in the (inaudible) Valley every winter will be gone. And the economic boost it brings will be gone with them.

These solar arrays of such a monstrous scale will disrupt the habitat and migration of local wildlife. We will lose the birds that bring the bird watchers, the quail, dove, and deer that bring the hunters and the business that they bring with them. What few roads are still available to offer vehicles to frequent our valley will now be covered with solar panels. There will no longer be a beautiful rest stop for travelers to pause and spend their money at. We would look like one huge industrial complex, which will amount to a big sign that says, "Don't stop here."

The rural human population is an endangered species in itself. You are guaranteeing our extinction. This is a place where my mother was raised, where I was raised, and where I returned and raised my children. We're the last of the Mayberrys. And obviously, I will not be raising my grandchildren here if this continues in the direction that it's going.

I whole heartedly believe there is an alternative. You need to place these solar panels on the roofs of the very homes and businesses and

industries who are going to be benefitting from the energy they're producing. Instead of exporting it from our valley to them, put it right where it's at. I'm pretty sure that the cumulative acreage in all of the rooftops in all of these businesses and homes in all of these metropolitan areas are pretty equivalent to the acreage they're trying to steal from our desert.

Our desert ecosystem is just as important as the ecosystem that is preserved in Yosemite or Yellowstone. Our Ironwood tree forest is just as important as the Redwood Forest. (Applause)

For groups such as yourself who say their job is to protect the environment and ecology of an area, you seem to have been working successfully to totally disintegrate not only the entire ecosystem but also an entire town. Thank you.

(Pause in recording)

MR. JOHN BEACH: ...after the lawsuit was filed (inaudible) trying to fight Kokopelli and more information on the Blythe Giants. I did see the Giants, the Blythe Giants (inaudible) on Google, but I

could not find Kokopelli, but I appreciate the pictures. And the Charpieds may have been (inaudible). I am more worried for the process. I have personally seen the devastation that could come to an area -- the Charpieds may be aware of this, and other people may be too. I'm from Palo Alto, northern California, which about 40 or 50 years ago was the Santa Clara Valley, one of the prime hub, premier orchard fruit producing areas of the country. The Santa Clara Valley (inaudible) yes, the world.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: You're from Berkeley?

MR. JOHN BEACH: Berkeley.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I grew up in Mountain View.

MR. JOHN BEACH: Mountain View.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hey, we're not answering questions. (Laughter)

MR. JOHN BEACH (continued): All right. Okay. Back to business though. I did see over a period of 50 years an area that went from beautiful orchard country to wall-to-wall people, roads, businesses, and whatever. And that's not really why I'm here tonight to talk, but I did want to say that I can understand

personally what can happen when there is uncontrolled growth or development.

But speaking strictly about the process, that's what I'd like to restrict myself to. There've been a number of comments made about utility scale solar and rooftop solar would be preferable, and this is an ongoing and very, very intense debate in the country. My own feeling is that the meeting tonight is directed more toward the question of the BLM land. We addressed 99 million acres, we said there is another 22 million acres a subset of that, and then there's also 677,000 that could be Solar Energy Zone -

(Pause in recording)

MR. MICHAEL TURNER: ...my educational background is landscape architecture. I have experience in landscape construction and general construction. I now represent myself and the dying middle class. I represent my birth father. He was a leader in energy. His name was Robert Evans (ph). He owned the largest privately held energy companies in the country called Energy Fuels. I never met him, but

I hear many good stories. He worked closely with BLM. He also respected the land, and he knew how to work on developing things to respect the land. He never believed in the word no. He believed things could be done.

Ms. O'Shea -- if I pronounce her name properly -- made a comment about SEZs. They may -- I don't understand all of this and haven't had a chance to read, but I'd like to thank the Desert Center for posting, so I could be at this meeting tonight. I think with all the communication and people working together and not (inaudible) the corporations saying they're big profit centers or whether it be Native American people saying, "No." But the communication in tonight's meeting can lead to better things. California needs a leading energy, and how hard we educated people like myself get back to real work (Pause) -- I dig ditches and I (inaudible) cars, and I have a son with a 4.68 grade point average (inaudible) that dreams of going to UC-Berkeley where he can get a degree in environmental green energy. I hope his dream will be true. I know that we need to put people back

to work.

So I ask you tonight if you don't have a side and you don't have a side, well, please all work together. It's American middle class dying people like myself that we really need to save.

(Pause in recording)

MR. DOUGLAS CHINN: ...resident of Palm Desert, California. But just from what I've seen tonight, I'm here because I got an email from the National Wildlife Preservation, and just it saddens my heart that we'd even have to have this, and you hear from all these people, to tell the solar energy development draft PEIS public, this is not good.

I believe solar energy itself is good, but why put it somewhere where it's gonna affect other people, their sacred grounds. There are fifth graders in this country that are already doing a better benefit to our world and to our country with solar energy.

Ted.com, T-E-D, dot.com, ideas worth sharing. I would like to suggest to you all to investigate it that -- to help you find out better ideas on how to use

your solar energy in the metropolitan areas. It just seems to me -- of course, this is just my opinion -- that a fifth grader could see that putting solar panels out here in the desert is not a good idea, and it's not safe for the environment.

But I believe that maybe someday it could be safe for the environment, but not now. So maybe after doing more studies and everything maybe there'll be a day when you can put a solar panel out here in the desert and won't have no drastic effects to our land and our wildlife.

It just saddens me that why can't they just hear the people, you know. This is a wonderful land. I'm from Kansas, and I just -- I've been here in California 10 years, been out here in the desert five years. I was wanting to leave California, but when I moved out here to the desert, it just grew on me. This is a nice place, and I'd hate to see it get ruined. We've already done enough damage with what we already do, and it's just -- it's hard -- just like the natural causes of loss of wildlife and our land.

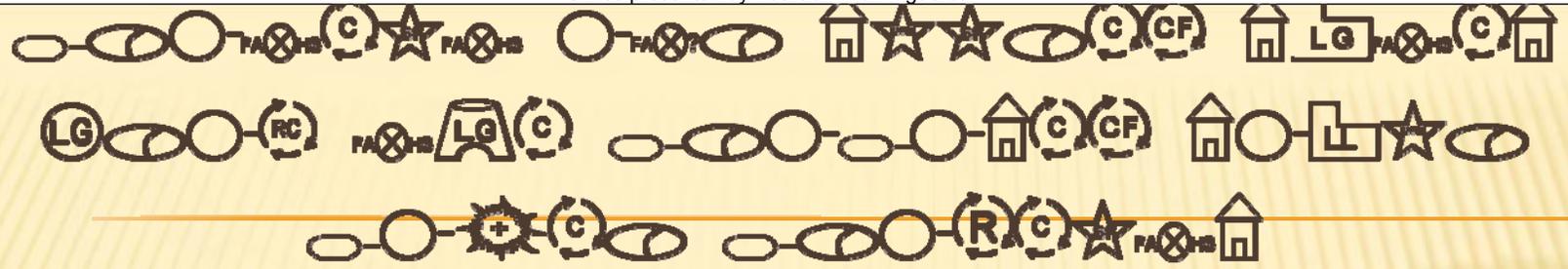
So, yeah, let's not fight over this. Let's

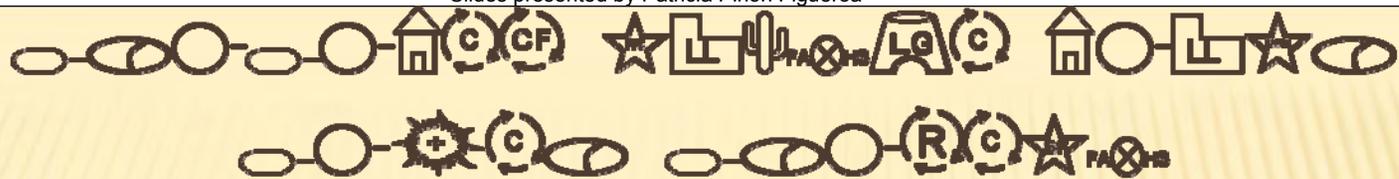
work together on working something out. But definitely, right now, I do not think that it's a good idea to have solar panels out here in the desert. And I mean that whole thing is just it shouldn't even be so many acres. It just really seems like common sense to me that if fifth graders in our country can -

(End of recording)

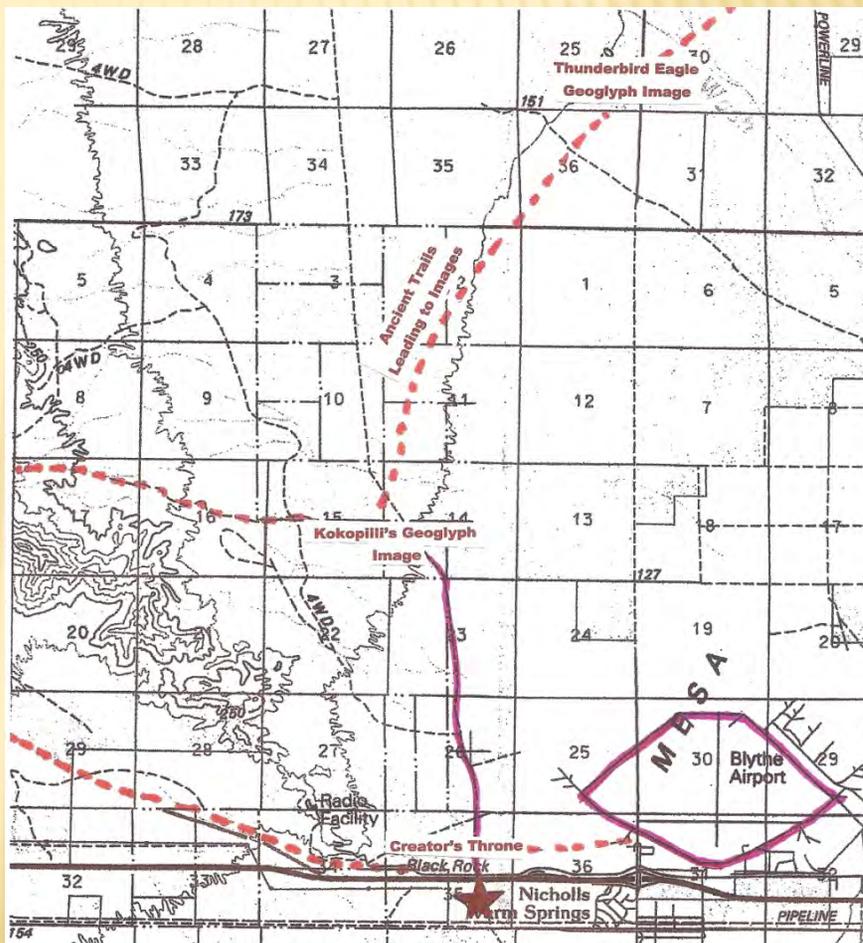
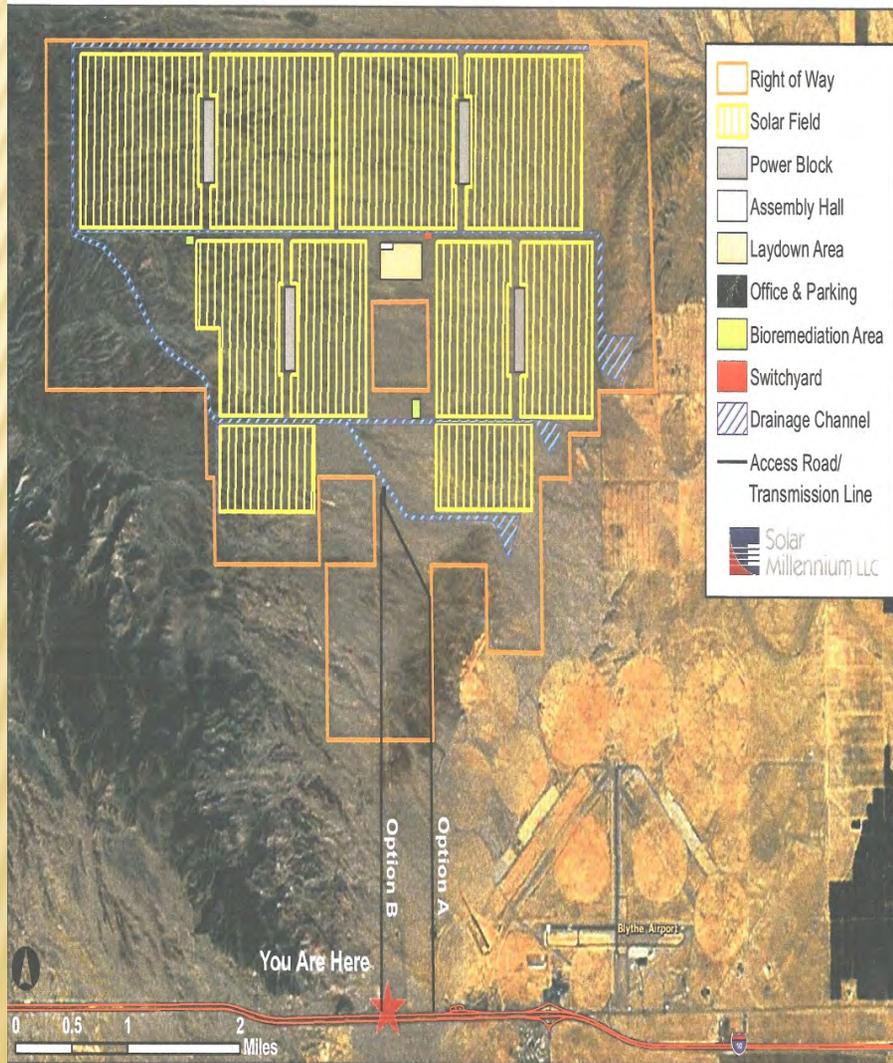
Photo Used in Presentation by Bill Harper







### Blythe Solar Power Project



**BLM Special Edition Surface Management Status Desert Access Map 1999.** Here we included the locations of the Sacred Sites of Kokopilli and the Thunderbird Eagle Geoglyphs along with the Sacred Trails that lead from the Blythe Giant Intaglios of the McCoy Springs Petroglyphs site which are directly situated in the proposed Blythe Solar Power project of the Solar Millennium LLC Company.

# **(Solar Millennium) Blythe Solar Power Project**

## **Docket Number:**

**09-AFC-6**

**(Application For Certification)**

## **Committee Overseeing This Case:**

**Karen Douglas, Chairman  
Presiding Member**

**Robert B. Weisenmiller, Commissioner  
Associate Member  
Hearing Officer: Raoul Renaud**

## **Key Dates**

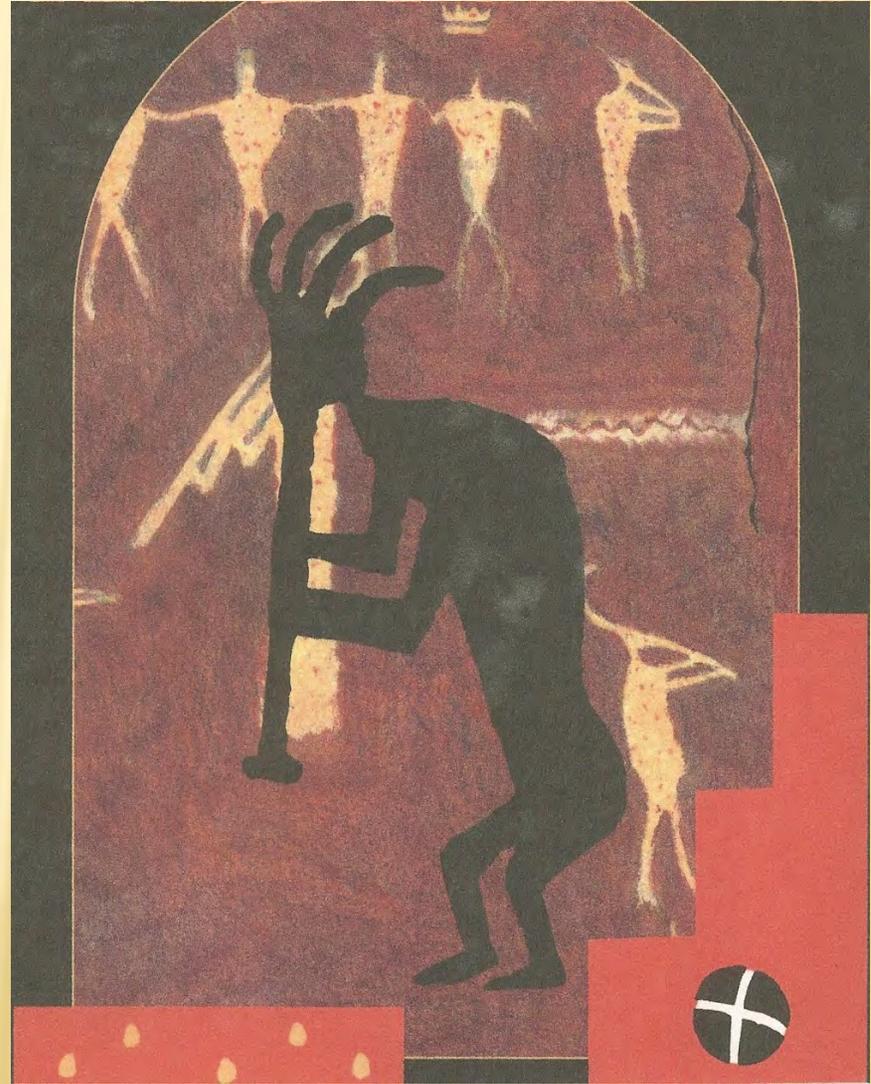
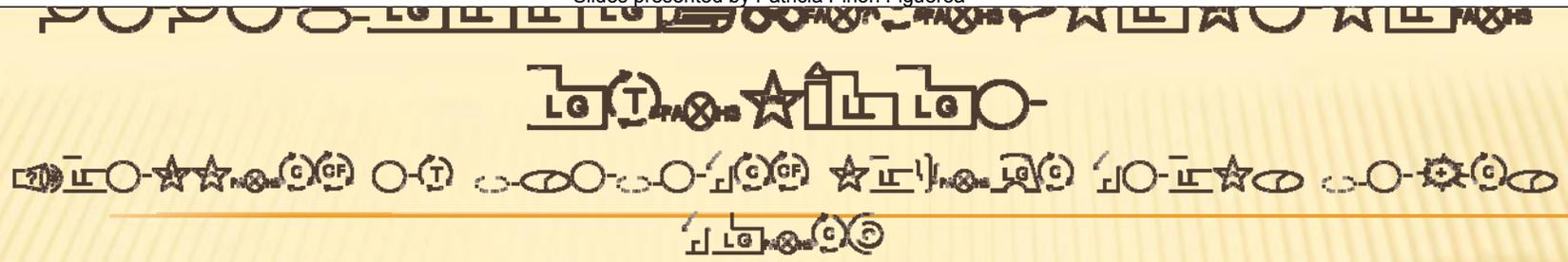
- 8/24/2009 - Application for Certification (AFC) filed
- 11/12/2009 - Commission accepts AFC as "data adequate."
- 3/11/2010 - Commission staff and BLM release

## **GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

Solar Millennium, LLC and Chevron Energy Solutions, the joint developers of this project, propose to construct, own, and operate the Blythe Solar Power Project. The project is a concentrated solar thermal electric generating facility with four adjacent, independent, and identical solar plants of 250 megawatt (MW) nominal capacity each for a total capacity of 1,000 MW nominal.

The project will utilize solar parabolic trough technology to generate electricity. With this technology, arrays of parabolic mirrors collect heat energy from the sun and refocus the radiation on a receiver tube located at the focal point of the parabola. A heat transfer fluid (HTF) is heated to high temperature (750°F) as it circulates through the receiver tubes. The heated HTF is then piped through a series of heat exchangers where it releases its stored heat to generate high pressure steam. The steam is then fed to a traditional steam turbine generator where electricity is produced.

The project site is located approximately two miles north of U.S. Interstate-10 (I-10) and eight miles west of the City of Blythe in an unincorporated area of Riverside County, California. The Blythe Airport is about one mile south of the site. The applicants have applied for a right-of-way (ROW) grant from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management for about 9,400 acres of flat desert terrain. The total area that will be disturbed by project construction and operation will be about 7,030 acres. The area inside the project's security fence, within which all project facilities will be located, will occupy approximately 5,950 acres.









THE MAZE COMPLEX IS TOO LARGE TO BE INCLUDED IN A SINGLE PHOTO, EXCEPT FROM A GREAT HEIGHT. SHOWN HERE IS THE NARROW PART AT THE SOUTH END, WHICH CONTAINS THE EYE FIGURE AND A SHORT STRETCH OF TRAIL. THE LARGE AERIAL PHOTO MAP WAS MADE IN 1963 FOR THE PACIFIC GAS AND ELECTRIC CO., APPARENTLY AS PART OF A PIPELINE PROJECT. A COPY WAS GIVEN TO THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, AND LOANED BY THE LATTER TO THE AUTHOR. PUBLISHED BY COURTESY OF P.G. & E.





# ★ L U P A C C T C O I P O L ★ T A X

© ★ ★ L U P A C C T C O I P O L ★ ★ T A X ©  
© L U P A C C T C O I P O L ★ ★ T A X ©  
★ O ( ) L U P A C C T C O I P O L ★



