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5 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND BUREAU

OF LAND MANAGEMENT

6 SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

7 PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(PEIS)

8

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

9

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2011

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ALAMOSA, COLORADO

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1 A P P E A R A N C E S

2 LINDA J. RESSEGUIE

3 and SUSAN SWIFT-MILLER

4

5 Bureau of Land Management

6

7 JANE SUMMERSON

8 U.S. Department of Energy

9

10 KAREN P. SMITH

11 and KIRK E. LaGORY, PH.D.

12 Argonne National Laboratory

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1 PROCEEDINGS

2 ALAMOSA, COLORADO, MONDAY, MARCH 7,

3 2011

4 7:42 P.M.

5 MS. KAREN SMITH: Well, we could be here a
6 while. I am going to guess there are about 20 people
7 on this list, and there are seats available in the
8 front, for those of you who haven't sat down yet. So
9 come on down if you want to. Let's see, I think I
10 have covered it.

11 And our first speaker, who signed up, is
12 Ceal Smith.

13 MS. CEAL SMITH: I am going to go a little
14 later. I am not quite ready.

15 MS. KAREN SMITH: Okay. What we'll do is
16 we'll go through everybody else, who signed up, and
17 then we'll come back and give you a chance to come
18 up.

19 The next person who signed up is Joy
20 Hughes.

21 MS. HUGHES: Oh, okay.

22 MS. KAREN SMITH: And my apologies if I
23 mispronounce anyone's name.

24 MS. HUGHES: Where do I comment from?

25 MS. KAREN SMITH: We'd like you to stand

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1 right up here.

2 MS. HUGHES: Okay.

3 MS. KAREN SMITH: So, please, you know,
4 without the microphone system, loud-voice projection
5 is important, because everybody back there wants to
6 hear you, and then Laurie wants to hear you, too.

7 MS. HUGHES: Okay, great. Can everybody
8 hear me all right? All right. Thanks for letting me
9 come up here first. My name is Joy Hughes. I am
10 with a group called the Solar Gardens Institute, and
11 I founded a company called the Solar Panel Hosting
12 Company. And those organizations I started when I
13 came up, and I saw they were about to put in a 1500-
14 acre solar project near Saguache, and I thought, you
15 know, 1500 acres isn't that big if you're a cloud.

16 So what I have done, since then, is I have
17 been working on a community-based solar project.
18 When you take all of these smaller facilities and put
19 them together, you get a virtual power plant. So I
20 have what we call a solar panel the size of Colorado.
21 By taking smaller distributed plants, moving them all
22 around the state, we actually can deal with much
23 larger clouds.

24 So I think this is very real. This is
25 something I have been talking with major solar

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1 companies about. This is a real alternative to

2 putting in more "distributed."

3 Specifically, I think the amount we have in

4 Colorado right now -- our renewable portfolio

5 standard is 30 percent. Our distributed cut-out is 3

6 percent. That means, you know, 80, 90 percent of the

7 solar, would be going into utility-scale projects.

8 And that's a problem, because right now we're running

9 out of our rooftop rebates. It's really obvious that

10 we need more weight towards the distributed side.

11 I understand Jerry Brown was saying, in

12 California, 12,000 megawatts of distributed, out of

13 20,000 megawatts, total. That's 60 percent

14 distributed, rather than 10 or 20 percent.

15 I should say that I live directly across

16 the Valley from the De Tilla Gulch site. It's

17 basically due west of me. And so, as I look out my

18 window or step out my door, I would be seeing that.

19 I think that the plan as it sets, the way

20 the criteria were set, would unduly impact the St.

21 Luis Valley. The impacts of solar are not as great

22 as fossil fuels but still all concentrated in one

23 area, the concentrated cumulative impact in EIS

24 terms.

25 So the plan, as set for Colorado, I think

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1 should include much more areas. BLM land in
2 southwest Colorado, even northwest Colorado, has a
3 big advantage, in terms of having the sun later into
4 the evening, giving Denver a few extra minutes of
5 power as the lights are going down.

6 So 75 percent of all of our solar is going
7 right to the BLM. I think that's way too much,
8 probably is going to need to be a lot less, to allow
9 for the mid-scale distributed market that is really,
10 I would say, exploding in the United States right
11 now.

12 Those are my comments. Thank you very
13 much.

14 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you. The next
15 individual signed up is Charles Tidd.

16 MR. TIDD: So my name is Charles Tidd. I
17 am with the St. Luis Valley Reliable Communities
18 Alliance, and I also live in Saguache County. My
19 house is totally off-grid, so I do have PV and solar
20 panels in my backyard. I am not opposed to that.

21 I would just like to state to the BLM that,
22 by putting forward a plan to stimulate large-scale
23 solar developments on BLM land, that, BLM is
24 implicitly endorsing an energy paradigm whose time
25 has come to an end. This is the paradigm of large

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1 power-generating facilities, that transmit the
2 electricity produced over thousands of miles of
3 transmission lines.
4 This paradigm makes sense when talking
5 about conventional forms of power generation, like
6 coal, natural gas, or nuclear, but when talking about
7 generating power from sunlight, this paradigm becomes
8 far less efficient. It will destroy any type of
9 ecosystems on tens, or even hundreds of thousands of
10 acres of land, and it fails us to use the built
11 community, or the built environment, for point-of-use
12 energy production. Not only will the lands on which
13 these projects occur be affected, but they will mandate the
14 construction of expensive new transmission lines not
15 addressed in the PEIS, further unnecessarily
16 degrading our open space.

17 And who will pay for these expensive
18 boondoggles? The electric ratepayers. Studies have
19 shown that constructing energy options at the point
20 of use, known as "distributed generation," is more
21 efficient because the distributed generation option
22 avoids the cost of transmission losses involved with
23 large-scale remote developments.

24 In Colorado alone, one study identified
25 35,000 acres of rooftops, capable of generating three

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1 and a half to four megawatts -- or a thousand
2 megawatts of power -- compared to the 2000-plus
3 estimated for Colorado under the PEIS.
4 Distributed generation will create more
5 jobs, and more long-term jobs, than costly mega-power
6 options. Distributed generation can be implemented
7 faster, without disturbing carbon-sequestering soils,
8 thus getting to the goal of reducing atmospheric CO2
9 faster.

10 Since distributed generation takes place in
11 the built environment, open lands are protected for
12 other valuable uses. What is preventing this
13 alternative paradigm from taking root? Well, first,
14 it's the policies of so-called public utilities, that
15 are designed to hold the ratepayers hostage to the
16 degree of shareholders. They maintain rate
17 structures that effectively prevent individuals and
18 businesses from investing in their own power
19 generation. They are resisting change, as we saw
20 last week when Xcel lobbied, and won rejection of
21 legislation, that would have done nothing more than
22 examine the possibility of distributed generation
23 alternatives.

24 The other trend, preventing a more serious
25 consideration of distributed generation, are studies

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1 from NREL, studies like this one, not to mention
2 short- sighted support from environmental groups that
3 all seek to identify, quote, unquote, the best land
4 there is for solar generation, while failing to
5 recognize that virtually the entire nation is
6 suitable for power generation.

7 (Audience member applauds)

8 MR. TIDD: These attitudes play to the
9 hands of power companies that are seeking to keep
10 power users enslaved to their development plans.

11 On the other hand, take the example of
12 Germany, where, insolation is approximately the same
13 as the state of Alaska, where distributed generation
14 has been enabled by legislation for over a decade.
15 Today PV panels can be seen on virtually every
16 building, and Germany will be energy independent by
17 the year 2020.

18 Meanwhile, we continue to think about how
19 we can most directly reduce our open lands. To the
20 public utilities president I would like to say, think
21 out of the box and change your business model. There
22 is lots of money to be made installing, maintaining,
23 financing, and distributing, the excess generation of
24 photovoltaic facilities placed on the buildings of
25 companies, and private individuals across the nation,

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1 while at the same time incentivizing them to use less
2 energy.

3 To the environmental groups that are
4 failing to recognize the effective distributed
5 generation alternatives that are vastly preferable to
6 sacrificing public lands, the imaginations of
7 powerful utilities, I say shame on you. You endorsed
8 a similar sacrifice once before, with a little dam
9 called Glen Canyon, and we will forever be paying the
10 consequences. Do your homework. Get behind the
11 solar-done-right program that will heal, and not harm
12 ratepayers, our economy, and our environment.

13 Finally, to the BLM representatives
14 gathered here, I want to say that, while the mandate
15 is for the PEIS, PB analysis, and BLM's for solar
16 development, in a comprehensive programmatic EIS, it
17 is irresponsible to the BLM not to include --

18 (Beeping sound)

19 DR. LaGORY: Sorry about that.

20 MR. TIDD: -- one second --

21 DR. LaGORY: Still startling.

22 MR. TIDD: -- not to include the
23 possibility of more effective alternatives for solar
24 development that do not involve the destruction of
25 public lands. I encourage you to include a study of

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1 distributed power generation, including the
2 legislative and financial steps that would be
3 necessary to make building in the U.S. a power --
4 that make every building in the U.S. a power-
5 generating station. If you do that, I think you'll
6 come to the conclusion that the preferred alternative
7 is to fully utilize the built environment before we
8 begin to build on open land, land that has many other
9 valuable uses.

10 Thank you.

11 (Audience applauds)

12 MS. KAREN SMITH: My apologies for that
13 alarm.

14 DR. LaGORY: I thought I had it silent.

15 MS. KAREN SMITH: I used to have a
16 stopwatch, and I have lost it, multiple times, and
17 finally I seem to have lost it for good. So we're
18 working with Kirk's phone.

19 Our next speaker is David Kenvin.

20 MR. KENVIN: I have a very specific
21 subject, and I am very loosely affiliated with
22 Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Group, and I got a
23 call two days ago to make a little presentation.
24 What this is about is the loss of public lands.
25 We're looking at 20,000 acres, approximately, in the

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1 St. Luis Valley. That's just from general
2 recreation. Then, from a hunting standpoint -- that
3 also takes that out of public-land hunting. From a
4 wildlife standpoint, a lot of these, just looking at
5 them from my perspective, are on critical winter
6 range for elk, a season-long habitat for antelope,
7 and it looks like some migration routes for antelope,
8 deer, and elk, will be affected. These are, from
9 what I understand, industrial complexes, so, they'll
10 probably have a pretty big buffer zone around them,
11 where the animals won't be able to use it.

12 20,000 acres on critical winter range is
13 very important. I mean, that's the most stressful
14 time for any of the animals, when they come out of
15 the mountains in the winter. Some really hard
16 winters, they're on 10 percent of the whole range
17 that they use. So that's how important that is.

18 And that's basically our concern on this
19 effort.

20 (Audience applauds)

21 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you. Next speaker
22 signed up is Cameron Miller.

23 MR. MILLER: Okay, five minutes. All
24 right. One page. Hopefully, I'll get through it. My
25 name is Cameron Miller. I'm with Adams State College

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1 Earth Organization & Environmental Action For
2 Resources, Transportation, and Health.

3 As a resident of the Valley, I have got
4 some concerns about industrial-scale solar
5 developments here. I am an information technology
6 guy, so I am data-driven.

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Louder.

8 MR. MILLER: I have been looking at a lot
9 of data on this subject, and I have come to the
10 conclusion that the St. Luis Valley is not
11 necessarily such a great location for large-scale
12 solar siting in Colorado.

13 Better solar insolation in the Valley is
14 significantly offset by transmission line losses.
15 Better solar insolation is a red herring for solar
16 development in the United States and in Colorado, of
17 course, as well. Further, there is no cost benefit
18 for the residents of the Valley or the residents of
19 Colorado, as far as I can tell.

20 Transmission line losses: According to the
21 Department of Energy, average transmission line
22 losses in the country are around 6 and a half
23 percent. According to the Department of Energy,
24 Energy Information Administration, line losses in
25 Colorado are 7 and a half percent. A recent article

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1 in National Geographic puts that in some perspective.

2 A year of United States transmission line losses is

3 enough energy to power 14 cities the size of New

4 York.

5 Solar insolation: According to third-year

6 average solar insolation data, gathered by the NREL,

7 Alamosa gets about 8.8 kilowatt hours per year,

8 squared, based on two-axis tracking, up and down,

9 back and forth, of the sun. Pueblo gathers 8 percent

10 less sun than Alamosa, Colorado Springs 12 and a half

11 percent less, the Denver-Boulder area 16 percent

12 less. Put those percentages in light of a 7 and a

13 half percent transmission line loss, what have we

14 gained here?

15 Germany has 88 percent less sunshine than

16 the St. Luis Valley. They also have the largest

17 installed photovoltaic base in the world, on a

18 country-by-country basis, at 17 gigawatts. They

19 produce their power at 69 percent efficiency. They

20 have about a dozen solar plants, larger

21 installations. They range from 20 to 80 megawatts in

22 size only. Most of those are 50 megawatts or less.

23 The rest is all rooftop point-of-use generation. So

24 lower-quality solar works just fine, in terms of

25 insolation.

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1 Solutions have been proposed for
2 transmission line losses. I am not sure if those are
3 in the PEIS report -- I haven't made it through the
4 entire 11,000 pages -- but they're unproven and
5 expensive.

6 A recent National Geographic article puts
7 the cost at superconducting high-power transmission
8 lines at around \$10 million per mile, which is in
9 line with new transmission line installation for
10 standard lines; however, the superconducting lines
11 include a housing, that places the line in liquid
12 nitrogen-filled tubes, which requires power to keep
13 the fluid at negative 350 degrees Fahrenheit.

14 So cost benefits: The costs for new
15 transmission line losses, through new transmission
16 lines and line losses, are passed on to the
17 ratepayer. They're in every one of our electric
18 bills. Xcel and large-scale solar developers are
19 out-of-state for-profit companies, in general, as
20 far as I have seen in all of the proposals. Some
21 money may go to local counties in the form of more
22 tax revenues, but I have yet to hear that there has
23 been a mention of reducing local residential tax
24 burdens.

25 So, in short, Colorado residents will get

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1 fleeced and lose some pristine public lands. St. Luis
2 Valley residents face a direct assault on our lands
3 and our chosen way of life.

4 And that is my perspective. Thank you.

5 (Audience applauds)

6 MS. KAREN SMITH: The next speaker signed
7 up is Juan Altamirano. (Brief pause) Sorry for
8 that, Juan. My apologizes.

9 MR. ALTAMIRANO: Hi, my name is Juan
10 Altamirano. I am representing Alamosa County. My
11 comments are concerning the impacts for local
12 communities to both essential and non-essential
13 services.

14 After reviewing the potential impacts
15 associated with the development within the solar
16 energy zones, we cannot help but notice that a
17 significant increase in in-migration within all the
18 proposed SEZs during construction -- such increases,
19 we believe, are a concern to us, as a local
20 government, because of any significant increase in
21 population, temporary or permanent. Means that we
22 could potentially see our local resources and
23 services be constrained.

24 Additionally, we understand that
25 development is not likely to undergo a sequential

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1 construction phase, where one project is built, one
2 at a time, and instead, we hold that any development
3 in this region will happen simultaneously. And as a
4 consequence, it means that our host community will be
5 faced with the challenge of adjusting infrastructure
6 impacts without additional revenues, and such
7 infrastructure impacts are of great concern to us, as
8 the local community.

9 We believe that, if we are to afford such
10 impacts, we will need to address for the additional
11 revenue, to help offset such burdens that we will
12 take essentially as our own.

13 One way to obtain such revenue, we believe,
14 would be to have the Department of Interior, or more
15 specifically the BLM, develop a fund where moneys are
16 directly distributed to the counties that are most
17 economically and socially impacted by such
18 development.

19 Thus far, a formal discussion on this issue
20 has not been addressed, and we hope that the BLM
21 moves forward with this process, as the discussions
22 move forward, and we hope that this becomes a central
23 part of the dialogue in addressing such impacts on a
24 cumulative basis. Thank you.

25 (Audience applauds)

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1 MS. KAREN SMITH: All right. We had a
2 request from one of the next speakers, Mr. Johnson,
3 that he would like Ms. Smith to speak. Are you ready
4 to speak now?

5 MS. CEAL SMITH: I am not ready.

6 MS. KAREN SMITH: She is not ready. But
7 you had asked --

8 MR. JOHNSON: Yeah.

9 MS. KAREN SMITH: -- and your wife had
10 asked, if you could go next, because you have a long
11 drive.

12 MR. JOHNSON: That's true.

13 MS. KAREN SMITH: So I had asked other
14 people, who signed up in front of you, and they
15 agreed to allow you to speak. So if you want to come
16 up.

17 MR. JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.

18 MS. KAREN SMITH: Uh-huh. And can you
19 spell your first name, please?

20 MR. JOHNSON: Yes.

21 MS. KAREN SMITH: Go ahead.

22 MR. JOHNSON: My name is Parvin Johnson.

23 That's "Marvin" with a "P," P-a-r-v-i-n.

24 MS. KAREN SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

25 MR. JOHNSON: And I am a citizen of

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1 Saguache County, and a lot of what I wanted to
2 address has been addressed by the earlier speakers,
3 who have done an excellent job in presenting my view.

4 I think that part of the EIS is to provide
5 alternate systems or methods, and I think distributed
6 systems are an important part of that. That should be
7 considered in the EIS.

8 Should this system, you know, proceed as it
9 has been proposed, then I believe that the areas of
10 wetlands, the areas where our animals who -- elk,
11 deer, and the pronghorn -- travel and exist in the
12 community, should be restricted from being considered
13 at all, in relation to the lands that are being
14 considered.

15 But, principally, I think that a
16 distributed system needs to be studied as a part of
17 the EIS and to be included in it in a thorough
18 manner.

19 I thank you for your time.

20 (Audience applauds)

21 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you.

22 MRS. JOHNSON: I don't need to say anything
23 further.

24 MS. KAREN SMITH: Okay. Mrs. Johnson is
25 not coming up. Olive Valdez.

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1 MS. VALDEZ: Good evening. My name is
2 Olive Valdez, and I live just south of Antonito in
3 Conejos County. My husband and I are enthusiastic
4 about the proposed solar zone due southeast of us.
5 That's why I am speaking specifically to this
6 location, because I know what I am talking about,
7 just as the previous speakers have.

8 This location is ideal because it is barren
9 land. It's non-productive land. It produces nothing
10 except a few rocks, maybe occasionally a stray
11 rattlesnake, nothing that you would really care to
12 live next to and be a neighbor to. Nothing that goes
13 on, in that area of land, would negatively impact any
14 of the folks traveling to our county, and it
15 certainly would not negatively impact our lives.

16 I am a very protective neighbor. As a
17 former wildlife commissioner for the State of
18 Colorado, wildlife has always been my deepest
19 concern. If there were to be any impact on wildlife
20 in that area, I would be the first to cry wolf,
21 "wolf" in that we want to protect what we have. We
22 would call to our neighbors and friends and say, this
23 project really presents an endangerment to us.

24 It doesn't. It's something that, as a
25 designation of public lands, we, the public, will

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1 realize benefits from the public land. Right now, it
2 benefits no one. Not even the passing antelope or
3 deer stays long. They are moving on because there is
4 nothing there to sustain anything or anyone.

5 As a wildlife commissioner, it was always
6 my intent to protect the Valley and surrounding areas
7 and to protect the wildlife. This is our heritage.
8 This is our legacy that we will leave to our
9 children. I believe the solar zones will give us a
10 means of gaining some independence from foreign oil. I
11 am sick to death of watching that gas rate climb and
12 climb. There has to be a better way of doing it, and
13 this is a better way of doing it.

14 We, in the Valley, are so fortunate to have
15 Ken Salazar as our Secretary of the Interior. Ken
16 knows this area, that I am speaking of, as well as my
17 husband and I do. We're grateful that he designated
18 this southeast area as a solar zone. Ken lives just
19 due east of this area. I know he is never, never
20 going to promote anything that would be detrimental
21 to our homes and families. And thank you, Ken
22 Salazar, wherever you are. We are grateful.

23 Anyway, you know what it boils down to is
24 that we're either going forward or we're going
25 backward. This is a step forward, and it's a right

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1 step in the right direction. We can use our clean,
2 cool sunshine. And I think it's going to the extreme
3 tonight, but anyway it exists. We can use our clean,
4 cool sunshine for our good and to help others. Let's
5 get started.

6 (Audience applauds)

7 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you. The next
8 speaker signed up is Demetrio Valdez.

9 MS. VALDEZ: My better half.

10 MR. VALDEZ: Hello, and thank you for
11 coming down. My name is Demetrio Valdez, and I live
12 at 4489 State Highway 285, about a mile from the
13 southeast solar zone, southeast of Antonito, and I
14 would like to have a solar farm in my backyard. I
15 favor the proposed solar zone southeast of Antonito
16 because I know the area very well. I have lived here
17 all my life. I am a fifth-generation resident of
18 this area.

19 This property is a lava flow from the San
20 Antonio mountain Lu Pello (phonetic), so a lot of
21 bedrock is almost right on the surface. Most of the
22 area has little topsoil, so this area produces very
23 little pasture. On a dry year, a jackrabbit has to
24 pack a lunch to cross that prairie.

25 (Laughter from audience)

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1 MR. VALDEZ: So there is close to a 0
2 percent chance of a prairie fire on that property. I
3 wonder if, when the solar collector burns, if it
4 produces toxic smoke. If it does, it would not be a
5 good idea to have them in groups in a heavily
6 populated area.

7 Another good plus for this property is it
8 has a highway, power line, and the old right-of-way
9 of the old Chili Line railroad on the west boundary.
10 With the lava bedrock right close to the surface,
11 there is close to a 0 percent chance of any spill
12 getting to the bedrock to contaminate the
13 groundwater. Also, there is very little topsoil
14 there. There is no alkali, so there wouldn't be
15 alkali dust flowing onto the solar collectors.
16 Without the corrosive effects of alkali and solar
17 collectors, they will last a lot longer.

18 Since this property produces so little
19 vegetation, putting these solar collectors on it
20 wouldn't be much of a loss to wildlife in this area.
21 And this productive land is owned by the BLM. It
22 wasn't worth homesteading, so the BLM managed it.

23 (Laughter from audience)

24 MR. VALDEZ: It would be a huge benefit for
25 human life in Conejos County.

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1 Thank you.

2 (Audience applauds)

3 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you. I especially
4 am never going to forget that "jackrabbit packing a
5 lunch." I really appreciate that.

6 Ron Brink is our next speaker.

7 MR. BRINK: Well, Valdezes are a tough act
8 to follow. My name is Ron Brink. I am a rancher
9 here in the Valley. I have done some other things,
10 too, a lot of you know. I have some different things
11 to wonder about here.

12 Is the BLM going to honor the taxes to the
13 counties if this happens? You know, these solar
14 farms; you know, they have a tax on them from the
15 counties, and we want to know where it goes. Is it
16 going to be like built money, that we have to fight
17 for to get, you know, our payment and little taxes,
18 like all the other land that the BLM has in the
19 Valley?

20 Are they going to cut the prices, for the
21 utilities to build these solar farms for other
22 people? You know, maybe a landowner wants to get in
23 on the bidding, but the BLM may say, just go ahead
24 and use our land. You know, we need to know about
25 that. I want these answered.

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1 I am not against solar. Put it on good
2 land that's good for solar, like Demetrio and Olive
3 portray there; that, you know, that's the only place
4 it's good for. We have got to do something to take
5 care of our renewable energy and promote our
6 renewable energy, no matter what it is.

7 So I just think that these are public
8 lands. We have got to be real careful what we ask
9 for. Thanks.

10 (Audience applauds)

11 MS. KAREN SMITH: The next individual
12 signed up is Geoff Elliot.

13 MR. ELLIOT: A couple of tough acts to
14 follow. My name is Geoff Elliot. I am an earth
15 scientist and a NEPA analyst interested in the
16 process here. I have actually been on part of the
17 roadshow. This is my fourth meeting, visiting a
18 couple states.

19 See, not knowing a lot about the local
20 community, let me take things to a larger scale, like
21 some of the past people were talking about. This is
22 obviously a strategically, very important project,
23 that BLM and DOE are a part of. They have got a huge
24 area to cover, enormous amount of data to deal with,
25 and I would say doing a good job in what is really a

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1 Herculean effort.

2 You have three good alternatives when you
3 look at the six-state area -- no action, and then the
4 solar zones make a very viable green alternative with
5 minimum impacts, again at a six-state level, and the
6 zones-plus option offers more development. So it's
7 more of a compromise, and that makes a lot of sense.
8 The design features of mitigations will also be very
9 valuable to developers. And that's at a six-state
10 level.

11 I will say, from what I have seen through
12 Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, and now Colorado, the
13 impacts are much more focused in this one area, and I
14 think that's a great concern.

15 The size of the document is also quite a
16 concern. It's very hard to feel like one is
17 discussing things, intelligently, when it's just so
18 massive. I do have some comments on the editorial,
19 that I'll pass along, on paper.

20 I have been visiting with a couple of the
21 folks here -- Charles at dinner and Joy yesterday --
22 and did have a chance to walk all four of the SEZs in
23 the area, and they do seem to fit the sort of habitat
24 that we're talking about. It has all been heavily
25 grazed, all fairly flat. They all seem to fit.

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1 They're not particularly visible from any particular
2 place. So they do seem to fit in that sense.

3 One of the disappointments in the document
4 is that there is a lot of information laid out but
5 there is not a lot put together, especially here in
6 the St. Luis Valley, where everything is really going
7 to be concentrated.

8 So we're talking about four SEZs, promoting
9 industrial-scale development for solar energy, okay?

10 That's a lot of development right there. I
11 understand that a lot of the other 127,000 acres, the
12 zones-plus, is also in this Valley, as well. You're
13 stacking up a lot of industrial development there.

14 You add to that, that, there is already a
15 lot of ongoing solar here. This is one of the most
16 solar- friendly communities in the country here.

17 There are already mid to large-scale industrial
18 projects going on. There are already these very
19 interesting co- operative ideas, distributed
20 generation, everything from rooftops and solar
21 gardens to irrigation corner- type operations. So
22 there are a lot of very interesting things going on
23 here.

24 We also know that, even though things are
25 very supportive of solar here, there are projects

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1 that are being held up due to a lack of support.
2 There is at least one transmission line, that's held
3 up, because there is no real consensus on how to
4 transmit power in and out of the Valley. So it's not
5 a slam dunk in any way.

6 When you add all of this together in one
7 valley, and then you start to look at a pending oil
8 crisis and probably -- well, definitely spiking fuel
9 costs -- you look like you have got all of the pieces
10 for one big cumulative mess right here, if it's not
11 handled in an intelligent, well-planned effort. And
12 it can't just be BLM on its own. It really needs to
13 be valley-wide. And I presume that would be a place
14 where BLM could be of assistance there.

15 I did find some discussion of transmission,
16 things like walk-out transmission, which is open to
17 interconnections, other projects -- we know that the
18 SEZs are all close to transmission -- but there is no
19 sense of where we are in terms of a cumulative
20 transmission capacity right now. Are we maxed out
21 right now? Is there a lot to do? Could this be
22 optimized? Do we need more transmission? And at
23 what point do these projects trigger additional
24 transmission needs?

25 Finally, I would like to suggest that the

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1 DOE solar energy alternative is remarkably loose. It
2 just sort of says, we're going to have this program
3 developed. I would like to suggest that a conceptual
4 outline would be a very great value to the reader;
5 what is DOE really thinking about.

6 For instance, would DOE help balance the
7 industrial-scale SEZ projects with the more local and
8 mid-scale projects? A good question there. How
9 would DOE and "walk-out" promote more efficient and
10 expanded transmission? How much solar could
11 reasonably be utilized right here before needing to
12 transmit elsewhere, offsetting costs? Will DOE
13 require specific cooling and water efficiencies in
14 the projects? What about land use efficiency? And
15 could DOE offer examples, of solar developments, that
16 are greener than some of the very sterile-looking
17 projects we see around here? Very industrial,
18 basically dead, except for some weeds. And what are
19 some of the compatible uses of some of these solar
20 sites?

21 So I think this would help us all
22 understand the projects better and help proponents
23 move ahead, as well. Thank you very much for giving
24 me a chance to speak.

25 (Audience applauds)

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1 MS. KAREN SMITH: Our next speaker is --
2 and I am not going to try the last name -- Guillermo?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Eddie Guerrero? Is
4 that him?

5 MS. KAREN SMITH: Yes.

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: He just left.

7 MS. KAREN SMITH: Oh, dear. Well, if he
8 comes back in --

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I'll let him know.

10 MS. KAREN SMITH: Helen Martin?

11 MS. MARTIN: My name is Helen Martin. I am
12 a resident of Villa Grove, a concerned citizen, and I
13 didn't come with a prepared statement. I came to
14 listen to the comments to be made. I did review the
15 website, and I found the comments that had been made
16 prior to now. I have been so impressed. Bravo to
17 those of you who have put in so much research and
18 energy to make your statements, that propose
19 alternatives to large-scale production of solar
20 energy in the St. Luis Valley, to be exported out of
21 the St. Luis Valley.

22 I wholeheartedly, agree with those
23 alternatives that have been proposed, by the Valley-
24 wide residents, to look for alternatives in energy
25 that allow people to provide energy for themselves.

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1 I am on St. Luis Valley Rural Electric Co-operative
2 power, a co-operative that was supposed to provide
3 electricity for its members. We could provide
4 electricity for ourselves by using photovoltaics on
5 housetops, like many countries do.

6 It's very unfortunate -- I actually was
7 thrilled to be coming down here this evening to see
8 Steven Chu and Ken Salazar. I read that in the
9 paper, that they were going to be here, and I was
10 really excited, because we have our Valley resident,
11 and we have this energy genius, Steven Chu.

12 It's really unfortunate, because I think
13 that they would be educated by the comments made
14 tonight. And even though they're not here, I just
15 really hope that they'll read and review the
16 intelligent, the thoughtful, the viable comments, in
17 alternatives that were laid out this evening, and I
18 hope they will read and review those prior to trying
19 to tackle the 11,000- page EIS. Thank you.

20 (Audience applauds)

21 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you. The next
22 individual signed up is Matt Clark.

23 MR. CLARK: Hello. My name is Matt Clark,
24 and I am a Southwest Representative with the
25 Defenders of Wildlife. Defenders of Wildlife is a

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1 non-profit organization, founded in 1947, with more
2 than 1 million members and supporters across the
3 nation. Defenders is dedicated to the protection and
4 restoration of wild animals and plants in their
5 natural communities. Thank you for this opportunity
6 to present our thoughts regarding the BLM and DOE
7 solar PEIS.

8 To reach an 80 percent reduction in
9 greenhouse gas emissions by the year 2050 and avoid
10 the worst effects of climate change that are
11 predicted, we will need to tap into the enormous
12 renewable energy resources in the U.S., and our
13 public lands can help us to reach this goal; but,
14 because of the large size and nature of many of the
15 renewable energy projects nowadays, care must be
16 taken in order to ensure that the places chosen for
17 development will result in the least impact to wild
18 places, important habitat, ecosystems, cultural
19 sites, scarce water resources, and other important
20 recreational opportunities that our public lands
21 provide. That is why Defenders, and other leading
22 national and regional conservation organizations,
23 support the zoned approach for BLM's new solar energy
24 development program and will be submitting detailed
25 joint-written comments on the draft, along with our

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1 partner organization.

2 We believe that a guided development
3 approach will not only avoid unnecessary impact to
4 sensitive resources and wildlife but, if well-
5 screened, solar zones will also create greater
6 certainty, for the development community, that the
7 proposed projects will not meet with unexpected and
8 undesirable opposition, from local communities, that
9 result in costly delays.

10 Taking lessons learned from the past, such
11 as the fast-track projects in California and Nevada,
12 which were pushed through in a matter of a year or
13 less -- we can see that better screening and more
14 guidance to the development community, upfront, could
15 have saved many dollars and headaches, that resulted
16 from trying to make lemonade out of lemons. As the
17 old adage goes, it's all about location, location,
18 location. And that's true anywhere that we look in
19 the West. We know how special the West is and how
20 important it is that we site these industrial things
21 intelligently.

22 America needs a national "Smart from the
23 Start" renewable energy program, that guides
24 development to areas with the greatest potential for
25 power generation and the fewest impacts. We can't

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1 afford to make the same mistakes, with wind and solar
2 power, that were made when our public lands were open
3 to mining and oil/gas drilling, which have polluted
4 our rivers and streams, cost taxpayers untold
5 dollars, and caused tremendous damage to our natural
6 heritage.

7 Of the two options that BLM has put forth
8 in the draft, it has chosen in the draft to select
9 the solar development program which would open up
10 nearly 22 million acres, across the West, to solar
11 proposals, and we believe that this will have greater
12 impacts to our environment while creating more of the
13 uncertainty, conflict, and delays, that have plagued
14 some of the past fast-track projects.

15 The solar energy zones alternative could be
16 a quicker, more efficient way to tap solar power, if
17 the zones are properly identified. If the Obama
18 administration is serious about creating a clean
19 energy future, a solar energy zones alternative, that
20 provides assurances for the public, the conservation
21 community, other users of the forests, or I mean of
22 the BLM lands, and also a certainty for developers,
23 is the way to go if we want to accelerate our
24 renewable energy production.

25 With the solar energy zones alternative,

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1 less is truly more. It makes more sense to focus on
2 areas that will produce more solar, with the least
3 conflicts, rather than wasting time and resources
4 trying to fix poorly sited projects. In going
5 forward, the BLM should also develop a process for
6 designating new zones as appropriate, so we can
7 continue to responsibly build a clean energy future.

8 I live in Arizona, in Tucson, where the
9 Arizona BLM is undertaking a really great pilot
10 project, looking across the state not only at BLM
11 lands but other lands across the state, that are
12 generally disturbed -- brown fields, abandoned mine
13 sites, abandoned quarries -- other places that could
14 be potentially redeveloped and used for renewable
15 energy production. And so, we think this is the type
16 of model that we should be applying, West-wide.

17 I know I am over my time on this, so I am
18 going to skip some of my comments and cut to some of
19 the more local important things.

20 In Colorado, the solar development
21 alternative could impact many special places,
22 including over 2500 acres of Citizens' Wilderness
23 proposed lands in the Rio Grande and St. Luis Hills
24 Unit, the Hot Creek State Wildlife Area, occupied
25 habitat for species that are candidates, that are

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1 listed under the Endangered Species Act, including
2 the Gunnison sage- grouse and Gunnison's prairie dog
3 habitat, earlier corridors mentioned, and winter-
4 range habitat for pronghorn and others, numerous
5 potential conservation areas that are identified by
6 the Colorado Natural Heritage Program -- that's in
7 the Great Sand Dunes, Rio Grande, and Alamosa
8 National Wildlife Refuge -- and Gunnison Basin,
9 potential conservation areas.

10 So just because renewable energy is clean
11 does not mean it's green. Let's make sure we do it
12 right this time around, if not for our own conscience
13 then for future generations, who are depending on us
14 to make the right choices for our shared public
15 lands.

16 I'd like to close with a quote from Robert
17 Marshall, one of the architects of the Wilderness
18 Act. In an issue of a 1937 edition of
19 Nature Magazine, he was quoted, saying:
20 Yet, the universe of the wilderness all over the
21 United States is vanishing with appalling rapidity.
22 It is melting away like the last snowbank on some
23 south- facing mountainside during a hot afternoon in
24 June. I hope in our race, in our facing climate
25 change and our race to harness the energy and heat

00039

1 from the sun, to help meet our energy needs and
2 transition away from fossil fuels, that decision-
3 makers of the BLM, the development community, and the
4 public at large, take great care that we do not
5 despoil what remains of our wild natural heritage in
6 the process.

7 Thank you.

8 (Audience applauds)

9 (Discussion off the record)

10 MS. KAREN SMITH: All right, sorry about
11 that. We'll keep moving. Terry Smith is our next
12 speaker.

13 MR. TERRY SMITH: Well, just a couple of
14 comments. Number one, I don't know how these public
15 lands are going to be competing with private property
16 owners -- Terry Smith --

17 MS. KAREN SMITH: Yeah, thank you.

18 MR. TERRY SMITH: I am representing myself.

19 MS. KAREN SMITH: Okay. Thank you.

20 MR. TERRY SMITH: -- how they're going to
21 be competing with private property owners as far as
22 land being obtained to place solar farms on.

23 I would hope that as I look at a few
24 million dollars that has been spent here this
25 evening, by BLM and the Department of Interior -- I'd

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1 hope that's going to be recouped from people building
2 solar farms. If not, it should be put on the list.

3 (Audience member applauds)

4 MR. TERRY SMITH: They should be paying for
5 it, not us. They are the ones making all the money.

6 One of the questions, or the other thing I
7 have with the large solar farms in the St. Luis
8 Valley -- I see no benefit to the St. Luis Valley,
9 whatsoever, with solar farms here. The first farm
10 that was built up here at Mosca -- we have one-and-a-
11 half jobs created for the St. Luis Valley. That's a
12 waste of time for us.

13 If they're going to come in here and mine
14 solar, we here in the Valley should be compensated
15 for it. And there is ways, of course, that could be
16 done. One is an energy tax, just like they put on oil
17 and gas and everything else. If it's shipped out of
18 here, we should be compensated for it here in the
19 Valley. If we're not, we're wasting our time,
20 providing all of this for somebody else.

21 And so, the way it's set up right now, all
22 of the profits from our solar farms here, in the
23 Valley, are going out of the Valley, back to New York
24 or somewhere; that, there is not a dime of it here,
25 other than the one-and-a-half employees that they

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1 have created.

2 So, if we're going to do this here in the
3 Valley, we need to figure out some way that Valley
4 people can benefit from this. It's not helping our
5 energy costs one dime. My utilities keep going up,
6 even though we have got solar farms here. So we need
7 to figure out a way where it's going to benefit us,
8 as well as the nation, if we're going to take our
9 beautiful St. Luis Valley and put solar panels all
10 over it.

11 I would support the solar energy zones, if
12 that comes to that, to the Valley. It needs to be
13 restricted. Demetrio stole my thunder, but there are
14 areas, where, they probably would not have a lot of
15 environmental impact. But unless there is going to
16 be an economic benefit for us, I see no reason to
17 allow it to happen here in the St. Luis Valley. Thank
18 you.

19 (Audience applauds)

20 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you. The next
21 speaker is Ben Sanchez.

22 MR. SANCHEZ: No comment.

23 MS. KAREN SMITH: All right, thank you.

24 Claire Baker?

25 MS. BARKER: "Barker"?

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1 MS. KAREN SMITH: "Barker." I'm sorry. I
2 apologize.

3 MS. BARKER: That's okay. I am either
4 "Barker" or "Parker." I really am blond.

5 I'll try not to be too long. I am Claire
6 Barker, I am from Mosca, Colorado, and I guess you
7 can tack me on to the transmission line coalition, if
8 you want something to put me with.

9 I have a whole list, but I'll turn those in
10 via computer. There are a few things I wanted to
11 bring up. In particular, I do want to support the
12 people that are being very judicious and cautious
13 about this. I think it's a huge thing.

14 If we're talking about energy safety and
15 homeland security, why are we putting it all in one
16 spot? I am very concerned about our birds. We may
17 not have, let's say, wildlife going across things or
18 on a regular basis, but this is a huge national
19 flyway. It's a historic flyway of millions and
20 millions of birds. And when you start to take large
21 plots of land with reflective panels, and darkening
22 the soil underneath it, we may see some local climate
23 change -- if you're looking at the amount of acreage
24 that you're talking about. So I think that these are
25 things that need to be addressed.

00043

1 My friend, Mary Carhartt, did say that the
2 soot on the snow in Tibet has changed the climate
3 there. The soot, or the dirt on our snow, has created
4 faster snowmelt.

5 So, to quote the other person, green is not
6 always green. And if we're looking at destroying
7 more land, before we start this process on land
8 that's already destroyed, we're going at this back-
9 asswards. I want to be very concerned about the
10 precedent of 20 years, or 30 years or 40 years or 50
11 years, of permanent structures and denying
12 accessibility on large plots of public land, and I
13 want to know about water and substations.

14 It has been my understanding, through all
15 of these, several meetings, that one of the reasons
16 that they can't put solar here and they can't put
17 solar there is because, well, it's not near a
18 substation and it's not near transmission. So,
19 basically, by putting it on BLM land, that means that
20 you're going to be building that infrastructure, in
21 addition to the solar plant.

22 So that kind of unlevels the playing field,
23 in particular to private individuals, who may want 20
24 acres in solar, and may be close to a transmission
25 line, but they're not close to a substation. So that

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1 is something else.

2 The interception of a lot of solar
3 radiation could have a lot of impact on the climate
4 here. There are no social benefits; the tax
5 structure. So I am kind of repeating a lot of what
6 other people have said.

7 So I want to thank you very much, also, for
8 having a public meeting. It's very much appreciated,
9 and it's very nice to hear everybody's comment. A
10 lot of you have done a lot more studying than I have,
11 so I appreciate that, too. Thank you.

12 (Audience applauds)

13 MS. KAREN SMITH: Christine Crowley, if you
14 -- no?

15 MS. CANALY: "Canaly"?

16 MS. KAREN SMITH: "Canaly"?

17 MS. CANALY: "Canaly."

18 MS. KAREN SMITH: It could be.

19 MS. CANALY: "Canaly."

20 MS. KAREN SMITH: I am looking at --

21 MS. CANALY: My handwriting, you're
22 probably right.

23 MS. KAREN SMITH: Yeah, and I am reading
24 somebody else's handwriting, that has interpreted
25 your handwriting.

00045

1 MS. CANALY: Yeah, that's --

2 MS. KAREN SMITH: Can you --

3 MS. CANALY: I am sure it is.

4 MS. KAREN SMITH: Can you spell it for us?

5 MS. CANALY: Sure. It's C-a-n-a-l-y.

6 MS. KAREN SMITH: That has got to be you.

7 MS. CANALY: Yeah.

8 MS. KAREN SMITH: All right, thank you.

9 MS. CANALY: Thank you.

10 Are we okay?

11 THE COURT REPORTER: (Nods head)

12 MS. KAREN SMITH: All right.

13 MS. CANALY: My name is Chris Canaly, and I

14 am a director of the St. Luis Valley Ecosystem

15 Council. We're a public lands advocacy organization

16 in the Valley.

17 First of all, I want to thank BLM for the

18 tremendous amount of work that you have done over the

19 last couple years to pull this together. I can't

20 even imagine what you have been through, for the last

21 couple years, throughout the whole Southwest, but we

22 really appreciate that.

23 I also want to thank the public here

24 tonight for taking the time to come, and for

25 everybody to come educate themselves about this

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1 issue, because I think it really is something that's
2 going to be very important for the Valley.

3 I want to present a map, that the Ecosystem
4 Council Solar Working Group developed over about a
5 year and a half. I want to present this to the BLM
6 solar staff, which had requested this about six
7 months ago, when we met. But I just want to -- and,
8 also, if people want to take a look at it -- by the
9 way, all the counties in the Valley have gotten a
10 copy of this, this size.

11 But what it is, is we basically mapped all
12 the sensitive resources in the Valley. By the way,
13 this is also on our website, slvec.org. If you go to
14 Projects on the left, Renewables, then it will take
15 you to the page, and you can look at this map. And
16 there is an 11 by 17, that you can download if you
17 want. It's a PDF file.

18 But, anyway, this is a map that we created
19 because of all the issues that we're dealing with,
20 and I just want to highlight, you know, where the
21 transmission line is coming into the Valley now,
22 NREL's kind of maximum radiation zone, which is
23 inside this yellow portion, the proposed transmission
24 line that is coming in here through La Veta Pass.
25 Obviously, all the substations in the Valley -- Xcel,

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1 I believe -- are a triangle, and a rural electric co-
2 op are square.

3 But there is a lot of things to look at on
4 this map. It's the most comprehensive map, I think,
5 that has ever been developed for the Valley regarding
6 sensitive resources and where our energy grid is now.

7 I also want to highlight -- you know, there
8 is the substations and all of that, but I also want
9 to highlight these center-pivot irrigation systems,
10 which are this kind of golden color. These are
11 center-pivot irrigation systems that have groundwater
12 rights and no surface rights. So it's a subdistrict
13 that's happening in the Valley. These are the
14 private lands that are most likely going to go
15 through some kind of transition. May or may not but
16 something to think about.

17 There are also a lot of other things on this
18 map, and it takes awhile to kind of really absorb it,
19 but I just want to make sure that -- people may want
20 to consider kind of working from the same map, or at
21 least looking at this map, to kind of make decisions,
22 so everyone is kind of coming from the same page.

23 MS. BARKER: Here, I'll get it.

24 MS. CANALY: I think they're back here, the
25 solar team. I see them. They keep hovering back

00048

1 there. The Ecosystem Council has commented
2 throughout this process, and we will be submitting
3 separate written comments. I just wanted to
4 summarize tonight.

5 From our previous comments, we recommended
6 a no-action alternative -- because, from our
7 estimation, basically the no-action alternative, I
8 believe you said, was going to mean that about 6
9 million acres of BLM lands would be open for solar
10 development. Basically, for us, that seems more than
11 ample acreage to study, in order to come to the
12 conclusion of whether or not these lands need to be
13 developed. We have encouraged development on private
14 lands.

15 MS. KAREN SMITH: (Indicating)

16 MS. CANALY: Oh, really? That fast?

17 MS. KAREN SMITH: Yeah.

18 MS. CANALY: Oh, man. BLM --

19 MS. RESSEGUIE: Chris, if you wrap up in
20 five minutes, and you're not done and everybody is
21 done, you can come --

22 MS. CANALY: Okay. Thank you.

23 MS. RESSEGUIE: Anybody will have that
24 opportunity.

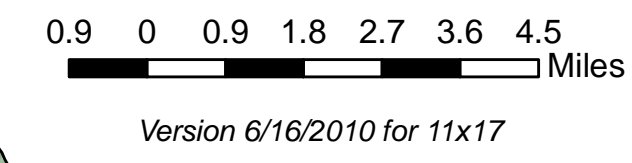
25 MS. CANALY: I think actually we'll be able

Sensitive SLV Resources

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Alamosa, CO 81101
719-589-1518 Website: slvec.org
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(719) 852-4557 www.agro.com



Version 6/16/2010 for 11x17

LEGEND

Solar Resources / Infrastructure

- Maximum Solar Potential Area
- Solar Energy Projects
- Current Transmission Lines (thick-voltage)
- Substations - Excel
- Substations - SLV REC
- SLV REC Service Area
- Tri-state/Excel Recommended New Line Alts.
- BLM Solar Study Areas

Source

- Agro Engineering
- SLV REC
- Tri-State / Excel
- US BLM

Sensitive Resources

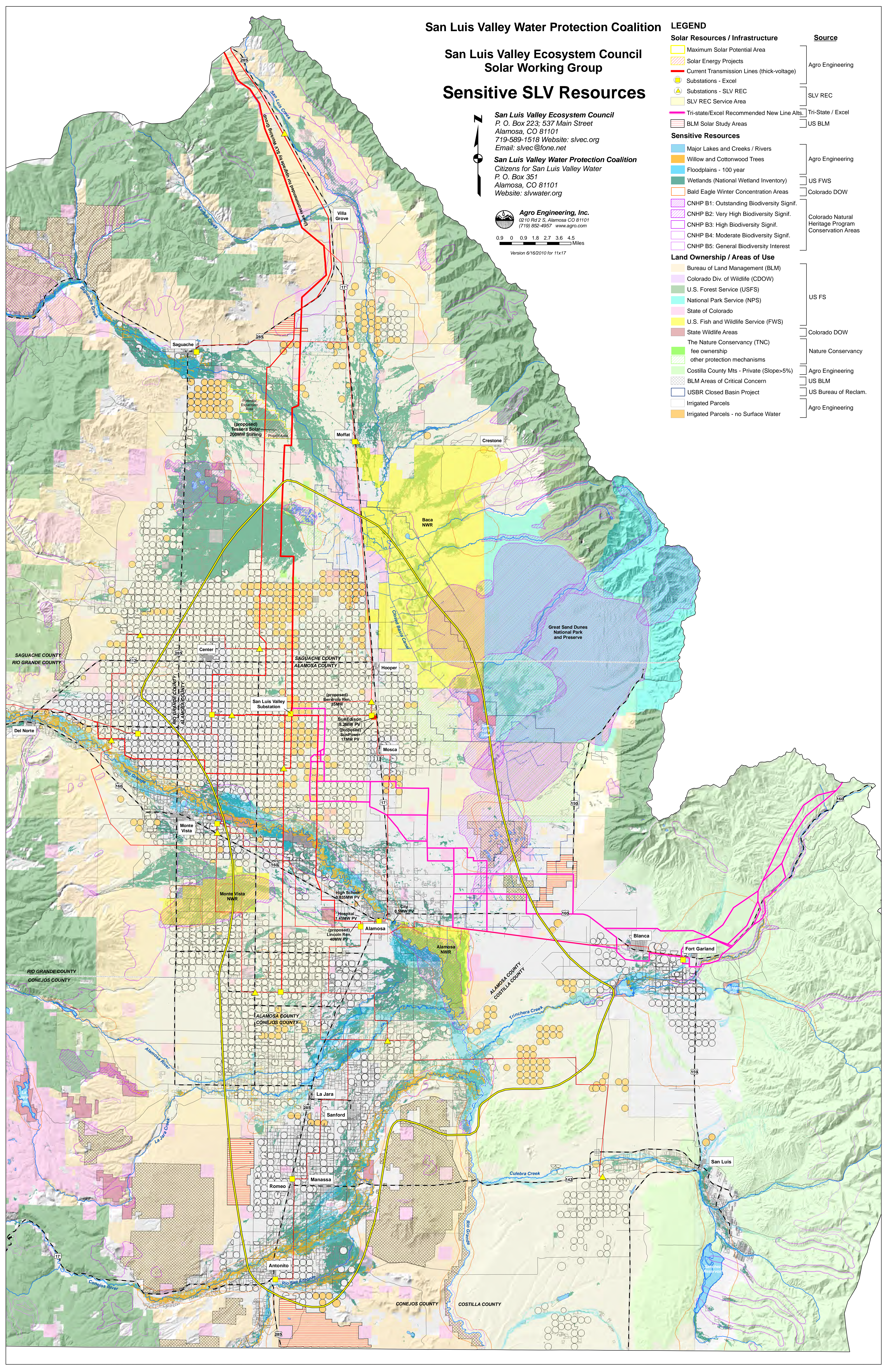
- Major Lakes and Creeks / Rivers
- Willow and Cottonwood Trees
- Floodplains - 100 year
- Wetlands (National Wetland Inventory)
- Bald Eagle Winter Concentration Areas
- CNHP B1: Outstanding Biodiversity Signif.
- CNHP B2: Very High Biodiversity Signif.
- CNHP B3: High Biodiversity Signif.
- CNHP B4: Moderate Biodiversity Signif.
- CNHP B5: General Biodiversity Interest

- Agro Engineering
- US FWS
- Colorado DOW
- Colorado Natural Heritage Program Conservation Areas

Land Ownership / Areas of Use

- Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Colorado Div. of Wildlife (CDOW)
- U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- State of Colorado
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)
- State Wildlife Areas
- The Nature Conservancy (TNC)
- fee ownership
- other protection mechanisms
- Costilla County Mts - Private (Slopes-5%)
- BLM Areas of Critical Concern
- USBR Closed Basin Project
- Irrigated Parcels
- Irrigated Parcels - no Surface Water

- US FS
- Colorado DOW
- Nature Conservancy
- Agro Engineering
- US BLM
- US Bureau of Reclam.
- Agro Engineering



00049

1 to zip through this, pretty quickly. I want to ask
2 one question, though: Has BLM used, as a layer, the
3 oil and gas leases that have already occurred on BLM
4 lands? Have you used that as a layer -- in other
5 words, going to those areas, first, to develop,
6 before -- you know, develop the lands that have
7 already been --

8 MS. BARKER: Compromised?

9 MS. CANALY: Compromised. I suggest that
10 that data layer be analyzed in this process, because,
11 you know, if it has already been focused for energy
12 development, I just think that that would be an
13 appropriate place, before you're going to go on lands
14 that haven't been developed.

15 The SLV Solar Working Group
16 recommendations, which are also on our website, same
17 place with a map -- we really tried to focus on
18 coming up with recommendations that dealt with the
19 reliability and redundancy, which is an issue in this
20 Valley. And the reason that we did that is because
21 there is a proposal for a new transmission line. I
22 highly recommend that this study makes, and it shares
23 information, with the R-US study, that's also
24 happening simultaneously with this -- and you all try
25 and coordinate this -- because, obviously, it's going

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1 to have impacts.

2 We think that reliability and redundancy
3 can occur in this Valley without having to build a
4 new transmission line, and we believe that an upgrade
5 of the existing system in the Valley, and using a
6 phased approach, is really going to benefit all of us
7 in the long-term.

8 So I want to thank you for your comments.
9 The Ecosystem Council has also been sponsoring the
10 transmission line coalition, and we really appreciate
11 the time that you're spending tonight to listen to
12 our comments. Thank you.

13 MS. KAREN SMITH: The next speaker is
14 Kathryn Van Note.

15 MS. VAN NOTE: Hi. I am Kathryn Van Note.
16 I live in Crestone. I also came not prepared to
17 speak tonight. After Chuck spoke early on, I
18 thought, well, I don't have to speak now, he said
19 everything I would say. But I wanted to give -- I
20 realize there is kind of a context, that is missing
21 from these, that nobody has actually spoken to. And
22 so, I'll speak to that.

23 The development of renewable energy gives
24 us a paradigm-shift opportunity to do it differently
25 than it has been done in the past, and I think this

00051

1 is the key thing. The great benefit of things like
2 solar and wind is that nobody can own it. The sun
3 shines on all of us, the wind blows across all of our
4 property. The current model of development, that is
5 being proposed and supported in this recommendation,
6 concentrates the power, the ownership, the control,
7 and the profit, in exactly the same hands as it has
8 always been in, in the development of coal and oil
9 and nuclear. And in those cases, in some ways it
10 makes more sense, because it costs a lot to develop
11 those resources, to drill an oil well, to build a
12 nuclear plant. You can hang a black plastic bag from
13 your eaves, and you have got a solar hot water
14 shower. You know, you can do this in no time, and it
15 gives you ownership and control of energy in your own
16 home and on your own property.

17 Claire alluded to this, also, but
18 concentrated energy development, regardless of the
19 methodology, the type of energy development, creates
20 significant risk of power interruption, national
21 security, environmental risk, economic risk. I mean,
22 if you want to invite a terrorist attack, just do all
23 your energy development in one place and paint a big
24 red bull's eye on it and say, it's all up here.
25 It'll wipe everything out. I mean, it's stupid,

00052

1 actually. It doesn't make any sense to develop this
2 kind of energy in that way.

3 The proposed model of development benefits
4 exactly the same people at the expense of everybody
5 else, and it's the most expensive, because the more
6 the infrastructure costs, the bigger the profit for
7 the industry. The rules of the game are written that
8 way; that, the more that the infrastructure costs,
9 the more profit the investors are allowed to reap.
10 That's how the rules of the game are written by
11 those, like the PUCs, is what I am saying, whose
12 charge is actually to protect the public interest.
13 And what do they actually protect? They protect
14 private investment interests, and that's all they
15 actually protect.

16 So I am more speaking to you guys, actually
17 (indicating to the audience), because we allow this.
18 This keeps happening because we allow it to keep
19 happening.

20 Let's see, what are some other points?
21 Decentralized renewable energy development creates
22 greater benefits across the board -- economic,
23 environmental, cost efficiency, jobs, national
24 security. In every way you can look at it,
25 decentralized renewable energy development is better.

00053

1 So when -- what's your name --

2 MS. KAREN SMITH: Karen.

3 MS. VAN NOTE: -- Karen says, if you make
4 comments, you have to address the interest and the
5 need that was expressed, I think that's exactly what
6 I am doing, and I think you're going about it exactly
7 the wrong way to meet your own stated goals and
8 interests. I think it's time that our government
9 supported us, our local communities, we the people,
10 individual citizens. It's time to empower people at a
11 local level. The most beneficial in renewable energy
12 development is at the community level. That's where
13 it makes the most sense to do it. It's the most
14 benefit for the most people.

15 So I think it's time that we took our power
16 back, from the corporations, and that we ask our
17 government to help us do that. Thank you.

18 (Audience applauds)

19 MS. KAREN SMITH: So I get to ask Ceal
20 Smith if she is --

21 MS. CEAL SMITH: Yeah, I guess I could do
22 that now.

23 MS. KAREN SMITH: Are you ready now, Ceal?

24 MS. BARKER: May I ask, are all of these
25 comments going to be available for public viewing?

00054

1 MS. KAREN SMITH: We are making a
2 transcript of the comments, and the entire transcript
3 will be available, for this meeting and all the other
4 meetings

5 --

6 MS. BARKER: Oh, terrific. Thank you.

7 MS. KAREN SMITH: -- on that public
8 website.

9 MS. BARKER: Thank you.

10 MS. SUMMERSON: But it does take a little
11 time.

12 MS. KAREN SMITH: It does take a little
13 time.

14 MS. BARKER: Yes.

15 MS. KAREN SMITH: So we're hoping to start
16 getting --

17 MS. SUMMERSON: Not tomorrow.

18 MS. KAREN SMITH: -- the first meeting's
19 transcript up, shortly. But that has been, how many,
20 five weeks ago --

21 MS. RESSEGUIE: Yeah.

22 MS. KAREN SMITH: -- since you went home?

23 MS. RESSEGUIE: Yeah.

24 MS. KAREN SMITH: All right. Ceal, thank
25 you.

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1 MS. CEAL SMITH: I'll get this over. Sure
2 thing.

3 Well, it has been really great to hear
4 everybody's comments -- I am sure that it has been --
5 for what people are thinking -- and I am probably
6 going to repeat some, also, what you have already
7 heard.

8 I am Ceal Smith, and I am with the St. Luis
9 Valley Renewable Communities Alliance, and our
10 mission is to promote local energy through the
11 community self- reliance, lots of things in a sense
12 of place and the rural way of life here in the St.
13 Luis Valley. We popped up about a year ago, kind of
14 actually somewhat in response to the scoping the year
15 before that, and so we sort of, not all together,
16 willingly have been very buried with energy policy
17 the last three years.

18 So we have sort of been at the, you know,
19 "Energy 101," really studied all the issues, looked
20 at all the alternatives, and I think we had some --
21 as Chuck really conveyed earlier, we have a lot of
22 things, that we have learned, that we would like to
23 share and pass on.

24 One thing is that we were really quite
25 shocked to discover -- we had been watching this

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1 process all along, were expecting the solar zone plan
2 to come out, so, we were very shocked to see the
3 preferred alternative was a much bigger energy
4 picture than we were expecting. So we feel like that
5 that was kind of -- we would like the CBL, go back to
6 the original solar zone framework that the public has
7 been sort of watching, all along, and expecting to
8 happen. This larger piece feels like it was out of
9 the blue, to some degree.

10 Most of us started out as solar energy
11 advocates, and still are, who are very excited about
12 solar development, and a lot of our members have been
13 involved with solar development for many years. But,
14 gradually, we have learned how unimaginably huge the
15 footprint of these industrial solar plants really was
16 going to be. We have seen projects in California 12
17 square miles. It's huge. It's hard for us to even
18 imagine.

19 So the model that is being imposed here,
20 you know, as we have gone through -- and we had some
21 projects proposed in Saguache County, which have led
22 us to learn a lot about the technology. For example,
23 we had a 200-megawatt project -- dish/Stirling, as
24 their solar project -- that was proposed about a year
25 ago. So we have been kind of in an intensive learning

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1 process about that particular technology. What we
2 have learned is that the Stirling engine-powered
3 SunCatcher, which was a big 40-foot disc -- anything
4 over 27 megawatts -- they were proposing a 200-
5 megawatt plant, which would have been about 1500
6 acres. A lot of back- and-forth went around the
7 community, with the noise issue, because believe it
8 or not, Stirling Systems have a six-cylinder engine,
9 and they make a lot of noise. And so, we figured out
10 that -- we have a couple different studies, done by
11 the county -- anything over 27 megawatts is going to
12 exceed state and local noise limits. So we don't
13 think that's a good technology for the St. Luis
14 Valley.

15 Also, in addition to that, the noise
16 actually poses a health risk and a safety risk to
17 neighboring ranches, and for all we know for the
18 livestock themselves.

19 And according to Catcher's own
20 specifications, SunCatchers cannot operate over the
21 7,000-foot elevation. The Valley, on average, is
22 probably out here --

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Seventy-five here.
24 Seventy-five.

25 MS. CEAL SMITH: Seventy-five. And I think

00058

1 Cameron actually has some information on why that is.

2 Okay. I am going to go way over. Anybody

3 want to give me their five minutes? Can I take

4 somebody else's five minutes?

5 (No response)

6 MS. CEAL SMITH: Anyway, so over 7,000 feet

7 doesn't work. Below 14,000 degrees (sic), or over 35

8 miles an hour, they don't work. So we really think

9 this technology is not appropriate for the St. Luis

10 Valley. Similarly, the parabolic trough technologies

11 have run into the same problems.

12 We also learned that the power-tower solar

13 towers, 650-foot tall -- possibly, as big as 4 square

14 miles -- there is almost nothing known about the

15 field of energy, that's created by such a large array -

16 - and that impact on the Valley's birds, as Claire

17 talked to. There have been no studies. I think much

18 more research needs to happen before -- does that add

19 the extra five minutes on --

20 MS. KAREN SMITH: Well, what we'll do is

21 we'll let other people --

22 MS. CEAL SMITH: Okay.

23 MS. KAREN SMITH: -- have an opportunity to

24 speak.

25 MS. CEAL SMITH: Okay. So, basically, I'll

00059

1 just jump here. We have seen the solar fast-track
2 projects in California. To quote the staff there:
3 These projects have significant, unmitigatable direct
4 and cumulative impact to biological, soil, water,
5 visual, and cultural resources. That's agency-speak.
6 To approve the project, staff had to invoke an
7 obscure override and consideration clause that said
8 big solar will provide critical environmental
9 benefits by helping the state reduce greenhouse gas
10 emissions; therefore, we can waive all these
11 unmitigatable impacts.

12 But how do we know this? The truth, asked
13 by University of Riverside researchers -- have been
14 asking those questions, and have discovered, that
15 desert soils and ancient caliche beds are natural
16 carbon sinks. And if you disrupt those, you're going
17 to change the carbon balance.

18 So we really can't say that these big
19 industrial projects will help us, in the end, make
20 CO2 emission reductions.

21 I think that large-scale concentrated solar
22 cannot be done in an environmentally responsible way.
23 It's an oxymoron. The scale is just too big.

24 And I guess for now I'll stop there.

25 MS. KAREN SMITH: Okay. We want to give

00060

1 everyone a chance.

2 (Audience applauds)

3 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you, Ceal.

4 (Discussion off the record)

5 MS. KAREN SMITH: But we had a couple more
6 people, that had question marks, indicated they might
7 want to speak. I know you'd like to come up and
8 speak. So, we'll give everyone a chance, who might
9 still want to come up, that didn't sign up.

10 MR. McNEILSMITH: Thank you. My name is
11 Ted McNeilsmith. Thank you all for coming and
12 especially the people from out of the Valley. On May
13 15th, I retired, after 41 years of the best job in
14 the world, teaching sociology, criminology, criminal
15 justice, and for the last three years rural
16 sociology, which started out as the traditional rural
17 "soc" class that morphed into an environmental "soc"
18 class.

19 A few years ago, I was privileged to have
20 as a neighbor, two houses away, Bryan Hammond, who
21 worked for SunEdison, who built that stuff up in
22 Mosca, and at that time creating a lot of jobs.

23 I like to brag that the St. Luis Valley is
24 the renewable energy capital of the world -- solar,
25 wind, thermal -- but, hey, let's get some of that

00061

1 stuff from other places, too. I'd like to have a
2 solar farm in my backyard, too, with the squirrels
3 and sparrows and crows, but I don't think they would
4 be bothered by that.

5 I am very concerned about the transmission
6 line issue here and, after listening to everybody
7 tonight, this professor needs to have lunch, to learn
8 more from my esteemed colleague Cameron, from my
9 esteemed friends Ron Brink and Chris Canaly and Ceal
10 Smith, and my esteemed neighbor Juan -- and the
11 wonderful Valdezes, who I just met tonight. I sort
12 of tapped them on the shoulder and said, good job.

13 So, for a college professor, I cut it
14 short.

15 (Audience applauds)

16 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you. Clearly, a
17 nice small-town community.

18 MR. McNEILSMITH: Yes, it is.

19 MS. KAREN SMITH: Everybody knows
20 everybody. Anybody else interested?

21 (Audience members indicating)

22 MS. KAREN SMITH: Okay. We'll take the
23 woman in the blue vest and then the gentleman in
24 front of her, in the plaid shirt. And since I don't
25 have your name written down, I want to be sure we get

00062

1 names and spelling.

2 MS. LAKISH: Actually, I think I have a

3 "maybe" by my name.

4 MS. KAREN SMITH: Okay. All right.

5 MR. ABEYTA: I have a question mark by my

6 name.

7 MS. KAREN SMITH: Please, we want to be

8 sure we catch your name and the spelling.

9 MS. LAKISH: My name is Matie Belle Lakish,

10 M- a-t-i-e, last name is L-a-k-i-s-h. I am somewhat

11 affiliated with the St. Luis Valley Ecosystem

12 Council, and I am a Crestone resident. I don't have

13 a lot of prepared remarks here, but there were a few

14 things that I have. I was able to visit all of these

15 four sites, that had been suggested, and I think that

16 I want to reiterate, or at least affirm, some of the

17 things that have been said.

18 There has been a lot of good material

19 presented tonight, I am very pleased, but I

20 particularly want to affirm what Kathryn said about

21 the security issues, of putting all of our eggs in

22 one valley, so to speak, and tying that to one power

23 line -- which, some people hope that we would build

24 -- and, to me, that looks like it puts us in a very

25 insecure position.

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1 I also want to recommend that the no-action
2 alternative be selected, because I think it's very
3 important that each project be thoroughly analyzed on
4 its own. I think, to try to analyze projects all
5 across the western part of the United States, and put
6 all of that into one analysis, it's not suitable for
7 our landscape.

8 I was disappointed to hear that with the
9 solar energy zones alternative, in order to meet the
10 desirable level of development, they would have to
11 develop 94 percent.

12 Did I get that right?

13 MS. RESSEGUIE: (Nods head)

14 MS. LAKISH: 94 percent of all the proposed
15 sites would have to be developed? I know that, of
16 the four sites that have been suggested for the
17 Valley, only one would I consider suitable, and that
18 would be the site down by Antonito. I think that the
19 couple that was in here earlier, speaking about that,
20 made some good points about that particular site;
21 but, the other three have serious issues.

22 I think it's also questionable whether we
23 should be putting these big huge projects on public
24 land. If we were talking about a 10 or 20-megawatt
25 project, that we could easily route wildlife around,

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1 then that might be suitable for public land, but
2 these large-scale projects, that are being proposed,
3 are simply too big to accommodate the real needs that
4 should be happening on public land. Our public land
5 needs to remain accessible not only to humans but
6 especially to the wildlife. This Valley is
7 particularly rich in wildlife, both, around the
8 edges, where all of these BLM lands are -- and there
9 were references to the birds by a previous speaker.
10 Those birds don't tend to hang out in one spot, and
11 the flyway, that we have here in the Valley, is
12 extremely important, not only to the wildlife as it
13 is here but the migration patterns, that we have
14 through the Valley, are very important to the
15 continued existence and health of those populations
16 of migrating birds. These large-scale projects would
17 be -- very likely to impact, especially when you look
18 at some of the types of projects that have been
19 proposed.

20 Ceal was describing a couple of the ones
21 that had been proposed for Saguache County. Those
22 are both on private lands. If we also have these big
23 projects on the edges, on public lands, where are the
24 birds to go? Even if we could tell them, okay, here
25 is a map for you, you go -- if you just go right

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1 through here, you might make it -- but, of course,
2 they're not going to get that.

3 But the kinds of impact, that some of these
4 types of technologies have, are very significant or
5 could be very significant. If we were talking about
6 solar panels, PV panels, like we have on the projects
7 that are in existence at present, that's one thing,
8 and if we're talking about the size and scale of some
9 of the projects that have been built already, I have
10 no problem with those. But when we're talking 1500
11 acres, and when we're talking a concentration of heat
12 and concentration of light onto say a tower that's
13 taller than anything else that exists in our state,
14 then we're talking about some impacts that need much
15 more thorough study than has been given at this
16 point.

17 I think the BLM on the national level said,
18 give us some sites, and our BLM managers did the best
19 they could, but I don't think it was an adequate
20 analysis, to say that we should have all four of
21 these sites right here, in our valley, with the
22 limited amount of analysis that was given. It's just
23 rushing things. We need a much more studied process.

24 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you very much.

25 (Audience applauds)

00066

1 MR. MARTINEZ: Folks, I guess I am just
2 representing myself. I own Rio Vega Ranch out here
3 in south Alamosa, next to the Wildlife --

4 MS. KAREN SMITH: And your name, please?

5 MR. MARTINEZ: Leroy Martinez.

6 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you.

7 MR. MARTINEZ: -- and also Esperanza Farms
8 -- and nobody has ever brought up the subject about
9 being hungry here. All we know is we want to turn
10 down whatever wants to come to this Valley. Now, one
11 of two things are going to happen. We are either
12 going to have a lot of people here or it's a heck of
13 a lot easier to put up with transmission lines.

14 Now, I think they have done a good,
15 remarkable job, as far as trying to set it out in the
16 BLM land, because that ground is not good for
17 anything else. I'd rather have it there than I would
18 on my own ranch or my own farm, and I don't think
19 anybody has really looked at it.

20 I don't know anything about electricity. I
21 know you turn the switch on, you pay the bill. But I
22 know one thing, if I don't raise food for you people,
23 you are going to get real cranky, and so is the rest
24 of the world. And that has to be number one. I
25 don't think anybody is really looking at it in

00067

1 reality.

2 Now, I don't know about the people from
3 Crestone, and I don't want to step on your toes, but
4 we still own some homesteaded land in this Valley. I
5 have been here my entire life, and it was our
6 grandfathers that homesteaded it. I don't know how
7 many people in Crestone can say that. I'd like to
8 see one. No hands? I guess I am the only native.

9 But I really think that we're on the right
10 track by trying to utilize some of this ground. Now,
11 I don't like the fact that it competes with private,
12 I never have, but I think it needs to be taxed, as
13 such, for our schools and our education in this
14 Valley. And they have to pay that type of tax, and I
15 don't mean that like agricultural tax. And I think
16 they would do that. I don't know that, but I am
17 thinking they would.

18 But that's all I have got to say. Thank
19 you.

20 (Audience applauds)

21 MS. KAREN SMITH: Did I hear you say you
22 would like to speak? You said you had a question
23 mark.

24 MR. ABEYTA: My name is Alfonso Abeyta. I
25 am also a native, born and raised here in the Valley.

00068

1 I live in Antonito, Colorado. We have wonderful land
2 there, and the solar farm would be bordering a lot of
3 where we have our sprinklers, and the only concern
4 that I have is the cooling portion of this. It hasn't
5 really been addressed. Where are we going to get our
6 water? How are we going to supply the water? It's
7 stuff like that. But the main thing is we need to do
8 something to improve the economics of this Valley,
9 and I think this is part of it. I heard a gentleman
10 say that it only created one job, two jobs, whatever.
11 I believe that we can structure this, where, we could
12 benefit from it, as a county, as a valley itself.

13 Then I think it would be worth having in our Valley.

14 I believe it's a good project. I believe
15 it's -- like Mr. Martinez just said, it's BLM land. I
16 will be grazing my cattle and sheep right around
17 those same solar panels, that everybody is talking
18 about, and it doesn't scare me any. I don't believe
19 it's going to take anything away from our grazing. I
20 believe it's nothing but a plus for our Valley. But
21 like I said before, the only concern I have is, how
22 are we going to get our water?

23 Right now, we're in a big water litigation,
24 of how the wells of surface-water users, and all of
25 that, and how -- I am sure everybody is aware of that

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1 -- and how is the BLM, or how is our government,
2 going to compensate for that water? How is it going
3 to be disposed of, the cleaning portion of it? And
4 we need to know that.

5 Thank you for your time, and I believe it's
6 a very good project. Thank you.

7 (Audience applauds)

8 MS. KAREN SMITH: Has anybody else decided
9 they would like to provide comments tonight?

10 MR. PORTER: (Indicating)

11 MS. KAREN SMITH: I'm sorry. We'll go with
12 the gentleman in the plaid shirt and then --

13 MR. PORTER: I had a question mark next to
14 my name and emblazoned on my forehead.

15 MS. KAREN SMITH: Okay.

16 MR. PORTER: My name is Will Porter, I was
17 born and raised up around Golden, and I have been
18 living in the Valley for about 25 years. I moved
19 down to the Crestone area, and I have a degree in
20 environmental conservation, that I got at the
21 University of Colorado about 40 years ago. I met
22 Demetrio, a couple years ago, talking about doing an
23 adobe I really like, building adobe homes, and so
24 forth.

25 So I have been looking at, you know, how

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1 can we have a sustainable way of living? That's the
2 big question. You know, burning fossil fuels seems
3 to be ruining the environment. You know, we have got
4 acid rain. We have got carbon dioxide in the
5 atmosphere, that's way more than we should be having.
6 Ice caps seem to be melting. Water levels are
7 rising. We don't know what's going to happen. We
8 haven't talked about population control since Carter
9 left office. That seems to be a taboo subject. But
10 I think what we're facing, what all of us are facing,
11 is whether we have a sustainable way of making a
12 living, a living with nature. Obviously, can't
13 destroy nature in the process of our living.

14 It's like you talk to any rancher or farmer
15 where I grew up, the neighbor had 1200 acres in hay.
16 Brown's Farm, they homesteaded. I didn't homestead,
17 but I know that most farmers can only put so many
18 cattle on their acreage or they have got too many,
19 and they'll ruin what their cattle are on. I think
20 the same question holds true when we're looking at
21 what kind of solar development we can put in the
22 Valley here. How much of it will affect our life-
23 style?

24 I think there is a lot of us here who love
25 this life-style, love being able to see the stars at

00071

1 night, love clean air, love to breathe clean air,
2 love seeing wildlife roam free, come into your yard
3 and so forth. What can we do that won't destroy
4 that? How can we modify our own life-styles? Can we
5 get by on less? Do we need to put in great big huge
6 solar projects or can we do a distribution? I think
7 some people can afford distribution and some people
8 can't. It's a complex issues. I don't think there is
9 any real straightforward, easy answer to any of it,
10 but I think the more that we can work together on it
11 -- I appreciate what everybody has said here tonight.
12 I think it's all valid. How do we put it all
13 together? How do we make a good chili, or good soup
14 out of it, and we can all enjoy it?
15 So, hopefully, we'll have more meetings,
16 we'll have more discussions. I think you have got to
17 be careful you don't rush into something and create
18 even more problems. I think NREL, they're doing some
19 good work. I think there are some valid questions
20 that need to be asked, of what conclusions they are
21 coming to, you know? Is Tessera a good project?
22 Maybe it's totally inefficient. Maybe that's a bad
23 idea. Maybe some of the other solar projects are
24 good ideas. How do we evaluate it? Who is qualified
25 to do it, you know?

00072

1 So, anyway, I hope we can figure this all
2 out, because if we don't, we're in a bigger mess. So
3 I wish everybody well, and I thank everybody for what
4 they're doing here. So, hopefully, I'll see you all
5 around.

6 (Audience applauds)

7 MS. KAREN SMITH: Mr. Porter (sic), you
8 signed up earlier, so I'll let you speak now. Would
9 you like to speak now? And then we'll get to you.
10 (indicating). Okay. Thank you.

11 MR. YOUNG: My name is Irwin Young --

12 MS. KAREN SMITH: I'm sorry.

13 MR. YOUNG: -- of Colorado Gators --

14 MS. KAREN SMITH: I called you by the wrong
15 name.

16 MR. YOUNG: -- up by Mosca, and I had put
17 down that I'd speak, and then I thought, no, I won't
18 speak. But since I have heard so many different
19 comments, I wanted to make two or three comments.

20 I am right across the street, downwind,
21 from the two biggest solar units in the Valley. One
22 is 80 acres. One is two or 300 acres. And I have
23 noticed a few changes, and I want to bring those up.
24 One thing that hasn't been mentioned, that I haven't
25 heard tonight, is the fact that SunEdison pays about

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1 over 40,000 a year in taxes, and there is not a farm
2 in the Valley, that I know of, that pays that much
3 taxes, per 80 acres. I can just imagine, if we had a
4 lot of the solar, how much income would be coming
5 into the county. So it's not that one job, one-and-a-
6 half jobs. It's the hundreds of jobs that was
7 created when it was being built. But it's the fact
8 that \$40,000, per 80 acres, is a lot of tax money.

9 The other thing I have noticed is -- I am
10 downwind from the Sand Dune Farms up above, and there
11 is times that you can't see our place from the
12 highway. And I have noticed a real change with all of
13 the solar to the southwest. The sand doesn't blow
14 nearly as bad at our place anymore. The solar is
15 really knocking this ground-level sand down, and
16 that's helping the environment around the alligator
17 farm.

18 I haven't noticed any decrease in -- we
19 have spotted over 125 birds, different kinds of
20 birds, on our 80 acres of farm. I haven't noticed
21 any decrease in that. I used to have some land where
22 the endangered-fish hatchery is, that's now west of
23 town, and one of the wildlife managers told me one
24 time; he said, Irwin, you have really messed up our
25 theory on people and wildlife. He said, you (sic)

00074

1 try to drive the wildlife off and, he said, all the
2 wildlife is coming from the wildlife refuges to your
3 place. We were right in between them. And I said,
4 yeah, that's because I feed them.

5 And you know, we ended up working with the
6 refuges, of supporting even more wildlife on our
7 place. But wildlife and people can work together, and
8 I think it's not nearly as serious an issue, of
9 damaging wildlife, as people indicate.

10 With the power lines, I see a lot more
11 birds on the highway, from cars running over them,
12 than I do around the power lines. We have got power
13 lines on both sides of our 80 acres, and I have only
14 seen, in 20-something years, one or two birds that
15 has been killed by the power lines. The geese are in
16 by the thousands into our property. We have quite a
17 bit of water on our property.

18 So I think it's really positive that we put
19 in solar, and I don't care if it's on housetops or in
20 the big areas. We have tried to promote solar here
21 for 30 years. I have put in thousands of solar
22 units, probably at least a thousand in the Valley. At
23 one time, the St. Luis Valley had more solar per
24 capita than anywhere in the world. And we put in a
25 lot of those units. They were low-tech, keeping your

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1 house warm; but, a lot of those units, that were
2 built 30 years ago, are still working and paid for
3 themselves in three or four years.

4 And so, I think it's about time the world
5 recognized that we're a good place for solar. There
6 is people here in the Valley trying to stop solar. I
7 don't understand it.

8 The thing I would like to mention with BLM,
9 though, is the fact that we still need the tax money,
10 the county still needs the tax income, from these
11 projects.

12 The other thing, that I think is important
13 -- SunEdison was fixing to put the big units up close
14 to the highway, and there was people protesting that.
15 They resolved the issue by putting the taller units
16 back, away from the highway. I think there needs to
17 be some sort of a range of height, in proportion to
18 the distance from public highways, because, if
19 they're far enough away -- in other words, the
20 farther you go back, the higher it can be and not
21 destroy the landscape.

22 I think that's all I have got to say.

23 Thank you.

24 MS. KAREN SMITH: Do you want to speak?

25 MS. MITSON: My name is Loretta Mitson, and

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1 I live in Conejos County, and I have lived there for
2 over 30 years. I actually have a photovoltaic system
3 installed in my house. And I thought it was the
4 best, it works great. I think that a lot of this
5 large-scale generation really boils down to an
6 individual responsibility. We no longer live in a
7 world where the government should be doing things for
8 us. We need to take responsibility for doing it,
9 ourselves. So I put my own personal remedy into
10 that, and I find it works very effectively.

11 I agree with a lot of things that have been
12 said tonight. Chuck talked about a summary. I also
13 agree that there is private property rights being
14 violated, by making public land available for
15 investment lenders, private landowners that might
16 want to do that. One of the things that has been
17 pointed out, I think it's really important to
18 consider, is we have got the cart pushing the horse
19 here; that, this is all moot if we don't have a
20 transmission line. So, if the transmission line
21 doesn't happen, this is all a waste of time.

22 But one thing that hasn't been pointed out
23 tonight, that I think is relevant -- and because I
24 live in Conejos County, I know this area fairly well
25 and have tromped around quite a bit -- is that, I

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1 really believe that, if we're going east, is an area
2 of great pre-historic cultural resources, that are
3 probably not being respected in this plan. I don't
4 know if BLM has done a survey out there. Naturally,
5 they have done some. My experience is that whole
6 ridge from Mogotes, the town of Mogotes all the way
7 to San Antonio -- there is a ridge, and a bench out
8 there, that are ripe with cultural resources,
9 archeological sites. Hence, there is still a lot of
10 hunting going on in that area, because it's still a
11 transition, between the high forest and the bottom of
12 the valley, where hunters like to go, as it was 2000
13 years ago.

14 So I don't know that the cultural resources
15 are being protected in that particular site if this
16 plan goes through. I think it's something to re-
17 evaluate. Because I have walked many of those hills
18 over there and found rock shelter, and all kinds of
19 archeological evidence, that is important. Conejos
20 County is a national heritage area that we need to
21 consider, because there has been a discussion, by the
22 Department of Interior, about making the whole thing
23 a part of the Valley, including the Sangre de Cristo
24 corridor down, through, all the way to Santa Fe, to
25 Ted Turner's ranch, a national park place. At least

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1 that's the goal that I understand. So it would be
2 a shame to be carving that up with solar panels when
3 we're trying to create a heritage area from that
4 site.

5 So, irrespective of whether it passes or
6 doesn't pass, I think you need to research that.

7 Okay?

8 (Audience applauds)

9 MS. KAREN SMITH: Would anybody else like
10 to provide comment?

11 (No response)

12 MS. KAREN SMITH: Ceal, are you done? Do
13 you want to come back up?

14 MS. CEAL SMITH: Well, the only other thing
15 is I didn't get to speak to you.

16 MS. KAREN SMITH: I can give you just a
17 couple of minutes, if you'd like.

18 MS. CEAL SMITH: Okay. Well, the only
19 thing I didn't get to speak to, which a lot of people
20 alluded to -- and I didn't want to leave the
21 impression -- is that we're against solar, because
22 we're not at all. Our whole group is about promoting
23 appropriate and responsible --

24 MS. KAREN SMITH: Can you just -- sorry,
25 Ceal. Can you turn a little bit because Laurie can't

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1 hear you well enough.

2 MS. CEAL SMITH: Oh.

3 (Discussion off the record)

4 MS. CEAL SMITH: So just to reiterate,

5 we're very much about promoting appropriate and

6 responsible solar development here in the Valley, and

7 our concern is that the PEIS rejected distributed

8 generation as an alternative, and we think the

9 reasons for doing that were all incorrect.

10 There is an interesting article that just

11 came out in Renewable Energy World. It's called

12 "Busting 4 Myths About Solar PV Versus Concentrated

13 Solar." And they lay out, in there, that the data

14 supports the fact that distributed generation is

15 cheaper. I can give you lots of facts, but it would

16 take more time. Distributed generation is easier to

17 integrate into the grid. Distributed generation is

18 much faster. Germany put 8 gigawatts online in one

19 year. I don't think we even have that nationally yet,

20 in all the years we have done solar.

21 So I just wanted to reiterate that, yes, we

22 want to see solar. We want to see solar in our

23 backyards, in your backyards, in everybody's

24 backyards. SunEdison we think is a model. It's 8.2

25 megawatts. It's a very appropriate size for

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1 development in the right place. What's being
2 proposed here for an industry is unimaginably bigger
3 than that, and the footprint is much bigger. There
4 are impacts that we don't see with the smaller
5 projects, like some of them. So just want to put that
6 out here.

7 The economic benefits; if anybody can see
8 this, this is concentrated solar (indicating). This
9 is distributed generation. We get 20 times more jobs
10 from distributed generation; the economic benefits
11 stay in the community, they stay in our pockets,
12 instead of increasing our rates and taking more money
13 away from communities.

14 Is that my ten minutes?

15 MS. KAREN SMITH: (Nods head)

16 MS. CEAL SMITH: I just want to end with
17 one last thing. The Environmental Protection Agency
18 filed a letter, in the scoping period, asking BLM and
19 the Department of Interior to consider the
20 distributed generation as an alternative. We think
21 they should take the EPA's recommendation seriously.

22 They also proposed a report, that they have
23 been working on with the Environmental Protection
24 Agency, which created a study called "Repowering
25 America," where, they identified 17,000 suitable

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1 sites for solar, on lands that are already disturbed,
2 degraded, and contaminated. We think BLM should take
3 that study, seriously, and make it an alternative in
4 the PEIS. There is no reason we should be
5 sacrificing any carbon, in part sequestering public
6 land, when we have many other, better, cheaper,
7 faster, alternatives. We can do solar right.
8 Sacrificing the St. Luis Valley is not the way to do
9 it.

10 So that's it.

11 (Audience applauds)

12 MS. KAREN SMITH: Thank you. Anyone else?

13 (No response)

14 MS. KAREN SMITH: I want to compliment you
15 because you have applauded everyone who spoke
16 tonight, and I think that is wonderful. That doesn't
17 happen. That doesn't happen everywhere. So I thank
18 you all for coming and sticking it out.

19 Oh --

20 MS. CRISCO: Yeah, could I just make an
21 announcement?

22 MS. KAREN SMITH: I think so.

23 MS. CRISCO: Okay. I have a website called
24 slvjunction.com, and there is a large section, in
25 Community, called Solar Transmission Issues. So, if

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1 any of you want to share your opinions, you're
2 welcome to post. It's like craigslist, you do your
3 own posting.

4 Ceal has been just tireless -- and Claire --
5 in posting articles and information about what's
6 going on in the St. Luis Valley as far as solar. So
7 I hope you all check it out, and you're all welcome.

8 And you're welcome to post, too, the links
9 to your site.

10 MS. KAREN SMITH: And your name is?

11 MS. CRISCO: Judy Crisco.

12 MS. KAREN SMITH: Judy, thank you. All
13 right. Linda and Jane, do you have any -- or Susan --
14 any comment?

15 MS. SUMMERSON: Thank you very much. It
16 was a good meeting.

17 (The proceedings were concluded at
18 9:31 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE STATE OF

2 COLORADO)

3) ss.

4 COUNTY OF EL PASO)

5 I, Laura K. McMahon, Registered Professional

6 Reporter and Notary Public of the State of Colorado,

7 duly appointed to the above proceedings, do hereby

8 certify that previous to the commencement of the

9 proceedings, no deponents were duly sworn or affirmed

10 to testify to the truth, touching and concerning the

11 matters in controversy between the parties hereto, so

12 far as the deponents would be interrogated concerning

13 the same.

14 Then reduced to typewritten form, by means of

15 computer-aided transcription, that the foregoing is a

16 true transcript of the questions asked, testimony

17 given, and proceedings had.

18 I further certify that I am not related to any

19 party herein, nor their counsel, and have no interest

20 in the result of this litigation.

21 My commission expires May 12, 2012.

22

23

24 _____
Laura K. McMahon, RPR

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