

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY AND BUREAU  
OF LAND MANAGEMENT

SOLAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAMMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
(PEIS)  
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2011

TUCSON, ARIZONA

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P R O C E E D I N G S

TUCSON, ARIZONA, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 2011

7:00 P.M.

MS. HARTMAN: The way that we do it is: I'm just calling the names in the order of the people who registered on the website and that will be the order that you registered tonight. And when you come up to speak, could you give me your name and your organization -- if you're affiliated with an organization -- and just speak so -- particularly so that the court reporter -- who we have here recording all our comments --- can understand you.

And, what we'd like to do -- we don't have too many people signed up tonight. We go by 5-minute comment lengths. And I will time you and just sort of flash -- I'm sitting right here in the front row. And when we get to 4 minutes, I'll show you a yellow card; and when you're at 5, I'll show you this red card. If you go a little bit over it, that's fine. But if you think that you still have a lot more that you'd like to say when your 5 minutes are up, we'd appreciate if you could say: Well, I'll continue my comments later. And then we'll let everyone who we have on the list go through once, and then people can come back again.

1           Finally, if you have not signed up to speak, you  
2 can just -- at the end I'll give anyone -- I'll let anyone  
3 speak who has been waiting to speak.

4           One more item: We do have Arizona Public Radio  
5 here. And if you do come up to speak, we request that you  
6 fill out a consent form, which are available on the  
7 registration table before you leave. That allows Arizona  
8 Public Radio to broadcast your statement.

9           So with that, our first speaker -- who I am not  
10 sure is here -- Kevin Dahl?

11           MR. DAHL: I'm here.

12           MS. HARTMAN: Okay.

13           MR. DAHL: Good evening. I'm Kevin Dahl. I'm  
14 the Arizona program manager for National Parks  
15 Conservation Association, another land-managing agency in  
16 the Department of Interior sister agencies who [inaudible]  
17 management. Kudos to Department of Energy and BLM for  
18 doing this much needed process.

19           Despite the Arizona Daily Star headline today, I  
20 think most of the environmentalists in this room want solar  
21 and would like to see it in appropriate places in public  
22 lands. And the solar energy zone alternative seems to be,  
23 gosh-darn, the best way to do it. To identify those areas  
24 that have the least conflict and the highest potential makes  
25 a lot of sense.

1           Now, there needs to be fine-tuning probably for  
2 both alternatives. In California, in particular, and  
3 Nevada, there's some minor problems with some of the  
4 boundaries of those solar energy zones that my colleagues  
5 have dealt with at earlier hearings and we will in your  
6 statements as well.

7           The solar development alternative is too broad.  
8 Too many acres. Too much free-for-all. The criteria have  
9 been too coarse. When I look at that map, I see, wow, all  
10 the BLM lands -- except in the Grand Canyon-Parashant  
11 Monument on the Arizona Strip -- and that's just -- we're  
12 not going put solar all over the Arizona Strip. There --  
13 adjacent to the Grand Canyon National Park there and  
14 Roundhouse Valley [sounds like], the same thing. In the  
15 checkerboard areas in your Petrified Forest National Park,  
16 there's problems. And there might be some ways of dealing  
17 with that with perhaps a 15-mile buffer from the special  
18 areas. Or maybe it needs to be on a case-by-case basis to  
19 be fine-tuned by the land managers that know that area.

20           A case in point: There's a little parcel in the  
21 solar energy -- it's in the blue next to Ironwood Forest  
22 National Monument. Now, you excluded the monument. But  
23 this little isolated piece on the other side of the monument  
24 from the rest of us, adjacent to the Tohono Nation [sounds  
25 like], it's just going to be problematic to get to the --

1 through the monument to that site. So if we have that 22  
2 million acres open, there's going to have to be a lot of  
3 fine-tuning.

4 Perhaps the solar energy zones don't provide  
5 enough land and there should be a mechanism for dealing with  
6 that. And I love the process the State of Arizona BLM is  
7 going through in looking at already degraded lands: retired  
8 farm lands, brownfields, old mining sites. And there may  
9 be some other things we need to fine tune. But in general,  
10 fantastic job.

11 Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak  
12 to this and "Go Solar."

13 MS. HARTMAN: Ian Black? Ian spoke last night  
14 in Phoenix. I don't think he's here now.

15 Matt Skroch?

16 MR. SKROCH: Good evening. I'm Matt Skroch. I'm  
17 the executive director of a group called the Arizona  
18 Wilderness Coalition. We're a statewide group dedicated to  
19 the protection of Arizona's last best wildlands and  
20 waters, as well as stewards of our existing wilderness  
21 areas -- working with the agencies to make sure we take  
22 care of what we have.

23 I'd like to echo comments from my friend and  
24 colleague, Mr. Dahl, about the solar PEIS. We really want  
25 to commend BLM for being proactive, deliberate, and

1 thoughtful, in thinking about the status quo and how you  
2 deal with solar development on public lands and how you  
3 could do it better. And it seems as though this PEIS is a  
4 very good step forward in being able to do that. And I'd  
5 like to provide our organization's further comment on the  
6 process.

7 I'm going to use the analogy of the shoe. And I'm  
8 going to start with the solar development alternative, which  
9 in Arizona identifies four and a half million acres of  
10 public lands here. And that represents roughly about a  
11 third of the service management responsibility of the BLM.  
12 It's a lot of land, four and a half million acres. Most of  
13 that's in the western deserts. Real classic, beautiful,  
14 Sonoran Desert.

15 And I compare that to the projections that we  
16 heard earlier, the foreseeable development projections in  
17 Arizona, which stands in Arizona at about 23,000 acres of  
18 what the BLM thinks between now and the year 2030 will be  
19 developed for solar on their lands. And I can't help but  
20 think of, wow, four and a half million acres of lands in the  
21 solar development alternative, but only 23,000 acres, or  
22 less than one-half of 1 percent, of lands that we think are  
23 actually going to be developed.

24 And I think about the -- one of the core goals of  
25 this PEIS is to minimize conflict. And with a third of BLM



1 service management responsibility identified in the solar  
2 development alternative, I have to say, while the current  
3 exclusions are certainly sound, there is a lot of conflict  
4 still.

5           Our organization -- and other organizations --  
6 have identified lands with wilderness character across the  
7 BLM. And we actually did an analysis and found that about  
8 500,000 acres of lands that we've brought forth as having  
9 wilderness character are within solar development  
10 alternatives. But I think that the shoe is too big with the  
11 solar development alternative. And it doesn't provide that  
12 much guidance. If I was a solar developer, telling me that  
13 a third of all of our twelve and a half million acres of  
14 land to consider -- that wouldn't give me a very good  
15 starting point.

16           Now, the solar energy zones alternative, I think,  
17 to go back to that metaphor, is a shoe that is too small.  
18 We know that as of now, the BLM is engaged in NEPA processes  
19 that would develop for outside of SEZs. And so it's almost  
20 as if we're already constrained from the beginning here in  
21 Arizona. And there's such a large discrepancy between the  
22 two alternatives that I'd like to think, especially given  
23 the commendable restoration and design process that is going  
24 on in Arizona, there's an in-between here. And that there's  
25 a way in which the BLM can find a really reasonable solution

1 that allows for significant solar development in our state,  
2 but, again, gets that true goal here of minimizing conflict  
3 with hunting and fishing and wilderness and other recreation  
4 values.

5           And I do want to touch, just lastly, on this  
6 restoration design process which we're very excited about.  
7 And I appreciated the comments that were made earlier about  
8 how these two concurrent processes may intersect. I do  
9 think -- I've heard a lot of colleagues and others talk  
10 about "Smart from the Start" when it comes to solar  
11 development on our public lands. And I do think that we  
12 need more clarity on how the restoration design process fits  
13 in with the SEZ alternative and how, at least in our state,  
14 we may have some unique flexibility to further integrate  
15 these two processes. And so with that I'd like to say:  
16 Thank you, again. And I appreciate the opportunity to be  
17 here.

18           Thank you.

19           MS. HARTMAN: Thank you.

20           Bob Hall?

21           MR. HALL: I'm still preparing my remarks.

22           MS. HARTMAN: Okay. I'll come back to you.

23           Leon Sierra?

24           MR. SIERRA: Good evening. How is everybody  
25 doing tonight? Glad to see so many out here participating

1 in this. I see here, across the audience -- and there's a  
2 lot of individuals here from different areas in the state  
3 and economic backgrounds -- and I'm coming from a  
4 blue-collar worker out there. And I have a little  
5 information on these two other projects that have already  
6 been commenced out there.

7           People are an integral part of this environment.  
8 And I understand that this is pertaining more to the lands  
9 than, say, the individuals. But people have a great  
10 impact -- as everybody knows here -- on the environment.  
11 That's why we're looking at solar, right?

12           The project west of Gila Bend was a closed bid.  
13 So only a certain amount of individuals, a certain amount of  
14 contractors were able to bid on this project. That right  
15 there, moneywise, is a smart sense someone got a sweet deal  
16 on that. For those of you who don't know what closed bid  
17 is: It's just a small amount of individuals that are  
18 allowed to bid on that certain project.

19           The next one, a little further west -- west of  
20 that site, went through and saw license plates there. And  
21 the majority of individuals that are working on that site  
22 are all out of Texas. Being solar, we would look at trying  
23 to be the less -- less impact on the environment. And  
24 trucking people in from Texas to work out here doesn't seem  
25 to make too much sense to me. We've got countless

1 individuals in this surrounding environment that need that  
2 work that are hurting. And bringing individuals from Texas  
3 and California is not a good idea. I don't appreciate it.

4           And the individuals that are out there that are  
5 looking for work -- that are standing out there trying to  
6 put in an application but are turned away because their  
7 buddies have already hired everybody out of Texas -- it just  
8 doesn't sit right with me.

9           And so I'm here to ask everyone on these future  
10 projects: How is it that we're going to ensure that these  
11 monies that are allocated for these projects can stay in the  
12 local economy and can contribute to the local economy there?  
13 We're here to try and leave less of a footprint, but it  
14 doesn't seem like we're doing so good so far. You know, the  
15 end result is to try and lead ourselves -- or pull ourselves  
16 away from fossil fuels -- from the deterioration of our  
17 environment. And it's got to start from square one. It's  
18 got to start from the actual breaking of ground and making  
19 sure that the monies stay where they're supposed to stay and  
20 they're contributing to that local economy and -- thank you  
21 very much -- and hopefully we can.

22           MS. HARTMAN: John Snopand? John?

23           Okay. Fred Highton?

24           MR. HIGHTON: I'm Fred Highton -- just a retired  
25 guy. No affiliation. And I think I'm coming a little bit

1 out of left field, but I hope someone takes notice of what  
2 I have to say. BLM-administered lands, 214,000 acres.  
3 Cotton in Arizona, almost 200,000 acres. Lots of water  
4 used to grow cotton. And we need all the water we can  
5 get. Taxpayer subsidies go to growing cotton. And when  
6 cotton prices are really high, they make about 35 cents  
7 per square meter.

8           Now, if they put solar collectors on that land, my  
9 calculations show they can make over 20 bucks a square  
10 meter. Now why don't someone tell the cotton growers, come  
11 on guys, you can stop taking the taxpayers' money, give us  
12 back our water and put solar collectors on your land, and  
13 maybe we'll give you 50 cents a square meter. Of course, we  
14 have to, you know, invest in the technology.

15           Then the other comment I want to make -- you're  
16 talking about 99 million acres. My calculations show  
17 3 million acres -- less than 5,000 square miles. We could  
18 supply the whole United States with concentrated [inaudible]  
19 so -- but you got to put it all together. You can't spot it  
20 out like you guys have it here. You got to have economy of  
21 scale. You got to have this stuff all together. So half of  
22 Pima County will do it. But, you know, if you -- if you  
23 want to shell out and give the people with the land a little  
24 bit of money, maybe some of the Indian tribes would step  
25 forward and donate some of their land. Okay. That's about

1 it.

2 Thank you.

3 MS. HARTMAN: Okay. I'm going to pronounce this  
4 wrong. Martin Karpiscak?

5 MR. KARPISCAK: Close. My name is Martin  
6 Karpiscak. I'm a semiretired research scientist from the  
7 University of Arizona and have spent over 30 years working  
8 in the deserts of Southern Arizona and a lot of that time  
9 looking on abused lands here in the state. I really do  
10 appreciate the fact that in this state, at least, we're  
11 looking at these options for solar development. And I  
12 think it's important that that study be extended to the  
13 other states as well. We should not limit that to  
14 Arizona. Because there is where we should build these  
15 facilities. Not on virgin desert.

16 It is virtually impossible to restore the desert  
17 once it's ablated. Because I just spent the decade doing  
18 that. Much of the land I've planted in the last decade will  
19 be bulldozed for solar. And I support that because it's on  
20 private land; it is connected to the grid; it's connected to  
21 power companies. There's where we should be focusing. And  
22 unless the BLM assessment looks outside the boundaries,  
23 we're limiting our view. We should not fractionalize the  
24 rest of our wildlands for immediate impact.

25 The companies out there that I work with are

1 anxious to put in more solar. Their problem is they need an  
2 end-buyer. Without that, they can't get the financing and  
3 they cannot get the construction to move along.

4           So they're sitting on thousands of acres of land,  
5 whether it's in private land or thousands of acres of  
6 city-owned land in Avra Valley that are former farmland --  
7 that the environmental impact on many of these acres will be  
8 very limited compared to new desert that's never been farmed  
9 or never been mined or never been cleared.

10           In addition to that, I think it's also important  
11 that in this process, we also understand what goes on when  
12 we put in these large-scale facilities. Do we really need  
13 to bulldoze the desert to put in solar? Or what are the  
14 trade-offs when you put in PV? PV works better when it's  
15 cooler than it does in a hotter environment. We need to  
16 have that assessment as part of a requirement so we're just  
17 not doing this with the construction of bulldozing the land,  
18 hard-scaping it, putting in whatever type of technology, and  
19 then having to deal with the run off that might cause  
20 flooding downstream. So it's important that we look at the  
21 big picture, not just the short picture.

22           I fully support the idea of solar development,  
23 whether it's in residential-scale or utility-scale. But we  
24 need to do this smart, not necessarily tonight. We need to  
25 do it in a very thought-out fashion. I appreciate the

1 efforts that has been going on for this evaluation. But  
2 unless we really look at the entire picture, we are not  
3 understanding the true environmental and economic trade-offs  
4 that we need to make.

5 Thank you for your time.

6 MS. HARTMAN: I'm gonna see if we could adjust  
7 the microphone a little bit. In the meantime, might want  
8 to just step a little farther back from it since it seems  
9 to be a little too loud.

10 Our next speaker is Rick Westfall.

11 MR. WESTFALL: My name is Rick Westfall. I own  
12 Westfall Industries and several other businesses here in  
13 Tucson.

14 As the gentlemen just previous spoke, I am one of  
15 the people that is being death sick by the only  
16 utility-scale solar project that is current planned in Avra  
17 Valley. If I could ask just for a show of hands: Is there  
18 anyone here from Tucson Water? Is there anyone here from  
19 Tucson Electric Power? Is there anyone here from FRV,  
20 Fotowatio Renewable Ventures? Pima County? There we go. I  
21 got it.

22 This is going to be kind of hard to see. And I  
23 didn't bring anything. If you would envision this as a  
24 300-acre piece of land. I'm this little corner piece right  
25 down here. I've owned this ranch for a little over 17



1 years. I've raised my children and I'm now raising some of  
2 my grandchildren there. I have a cow/calf operation, and  
3 we're in the trucking business.

4           The first utility-scale project that is planned  
5 here is this project that Tucson Water is using on the piece  
6 of their retired farm ground. It is less than 100 feet from  
7 my back door. It will absolutely devastate the value of my  
8 home. Tucson Water, in the current meetings that we've been  
9 having for just a little over a year, did not even attend  
10 the last public meeting that was held at my ranch. And they  
11 are the applicant. That is the type of response that we're  
12 getting on these solar issues.

13           There are -- the impacts to this neighborhood is  
14 just amazing. They originally wanted to put it up with a  
15 6-foot chain-link fence with razor wire around the top of  
16 it. I am the only adjacent property; however, directly  
17 across a street there's about 70 half-million-dollar homes.  
18 They used to be a half million dollars, now they're about  
19 seven hundred thousand. But the company is based out of  
20 Spain with an office in San Francisco. They have not  
21 provided us any information. They have not -- their  
22 meetings are very sketchy. Their presentations are very  
23 amateur. And we've just had a ton of problems.

24           I learned about this meeting this morning when I  
25 received notification at about 6:45. I had no idea this

1 meeting was going on even though there was somebody from the  
2 Department of Energy at my home less than two weeks ago. So  
3 we're here to gather information and to see where we're at.

4 I believe that solar can very well be the answer,  
5 but it's got to be done in such a way that it does not  
6 impact and destroy families and home value and does not have  
7 an adverse affect. In the Corporation Commission meeting  
8 that took place in April last year, Tucson Electric Power  
9 and their attorneys stood there -- I appeared before the  
10 Corporation Commission -- I was guaranteed by a court  
11 reporter as they took the transcript, that Tucson Electric  
12 Power would mitigate all issues to me and to my property.

13 They understood at the time that they were making  
14 the application that I was going to be adversely affected.  
15 They also understood that my property was going to be  
16 adversely affected. That's the last time I've had a  
17 meaningful conversation with Tucson Electrical Power.

18 If these solar projects are going to go forward,  
19 they have to work hand-in-hand with the community. They do  
20 need to be scattered out so that they supply the grid in a  
21 geographical area that supports the load. It can't be  
22 concentrated in one spot; it needs to be around. But if  
23 these utility-scale projects are going to happen in  
24 residential neighborhoods, they have to be done in  
25 good-neighbor fashion. And the only example that we have so

1 far, that's not happened. And it's just -- we're at our  
2 wit's end. We don't know what do. We're -- you know, it's  
3 just going to be an absolute devastation to our homes and  
4 our families.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. HARTMAN: Rick McKnight?

7 MR. MCKNIGHT: My name is Rick McKnight. I've  
8 got a big voice, so I'll stand a little back. I am also  
9 unaffiliated; however, I'm also much like Rick, being  
10 affected by the proposed photovoltaic solar array being  
11 planned for the Avra Valley area.

12 The topic that I wanted to talk about tonight is  
13 the categories of land to be excluded. We had someone up  
14 here earlier offer a comment about there being a 15-mile  
15 buffer from -- from monuments. I wanted to recommend that a  
16 15-mile buffer also be placed around residential  
17 communities. As Rick stated previously, we are being  
18 absolutely devastated. Not by only the plan to put in the  
19 photovoltaic arrays, but also by the total disregard that  
20 we're being treated -- as a result of the treatment from  
21 TEP, Tucson Water, and Fotowatio Renewable Ventures.

22 I would strongly encourage BLM -- I think BLM land  
23 is a perfect solution for these types of issues. I  
24 encourage you to look at what, for all intents and purposes,  
25 is desert wasteland with no other use. I think those areas

1 would be perfect for these type of ventures. If you can't  
2 put sol -- if you can't put solar farms in an area with  
3 nothing but dry desert -- no water -- I don't see anywhere  
4 else that you can put them.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. HARTMAN: Bob, are you ready now?

7 MR. HALL: I think everybody said it all, so I'm  
8 okay.

9 MS. HARTMAN: Okay. Is there anyone else who  
10 decided they'd like to make a statement?

11 MR. CLARK: I signed up earlier.

12 MS. HARTMAN: You were signed up? I'm sorry. I  
13 missed you.

14 MR. CLARK: It's okay. I signed up late.

15 MS. HARTMAN: Okay. And then we'll get to you.

16 MR. CLARK: Hello. My name is Matt Clark. And  
17 I'm the Southwest representative for Defenders of Wildlife  
18 in Tucson. Defenders of Wildlife is a nonprofit  
19 conservation organization that was founded in 1947, with  
20 more than one million members and supporters across the  
21 nation. 'Defenders' is dedicated to the protection and  
22 restoration of wild animals and plants in their natural  
23 communities. Thank you for this opportunity to present  
24 our thoughts regarding BLM and DOE's solar program  
25 environmental impact statement.

1           To reach an 80-percent reduction in greenhouse gas  
2 emissions by the year 2050 and avoid the worst of the  
3 predicted effects of climate change, we will need to tap  
4 into the enormous renewable energy resources in the U.S.  
5 Our public lands can help us to reach this goal. But  
6 because of the large size and nature of many renewable  
7 energy projects, care must be taken in order to ensure that  
8 the places chosen for development will result in the least  
9 impact to wild places: important habitat, hunting areas,  
10 ecosystems, scarce water resources, and cultural and  
11 historic sites.

12           And that's why the Defenders of Wildlife and other  
13 leading national nonprofit conservation organizations  
14 support the zone approach for BLM's new solar energy  
15 development program. We will be submitting detailed joint  
16 written comments on the draft PEIS, along with our partner  
17 organizations.

18           But I'm here tonight to tell you that we believe a  
19 guided development approach will not only avoid unnecessary  
20 impacts to sensitive resources and wildlife, but if well  
21 screened, solar zones will also create a greater certainty  
22 in the development community that their proposal -- that  
23 their proposed projects will not meet with unexpected and  
24 undesirable opposition from local communities that result in  
25 costly delays.

1           Taking lessons learned from the past, such as the  
2 Fast Track projects in California and Nevada, we can see  
3 that better screening and more guidance to the development  
4 community up front could have saved many dollars and many  
5 headaches, trying to make lemonade out of lemons.

6           As the old adage goes: It's all about location,  
7 location, location. This could not be more true in the  
8 ecologically diverse and sensitive Sonoran Desert.

9           While we support the zone approach, we want the  
10 BLM to ensure the identified zones are, in fact, the right  
11 places for industrial development. For example, two zones  
12 in California, the Pisgah and Iron Mountain solar energy  
13 zones in the draft, should be eliminated entirely due to  
14 high levels of conflict with wildlife and wilderness values.  
15 For the zones that are maintained, we think that the BLM  
16 should conduct a more thorough environmental review of the  
17 proposal's impact on wildlife, water, and other important  
18 natural and cultural resources.

19           Lastly, we think the final plan should lay out  
20 more clear guidelines for how the projects should be built  
21 and operated so that potential for harm to sensitive  
22 landscapes is avoided, minimized, and properly mitigated  
23 for. The BLM's preferred solar -- preferred solar  
24 development alternative, by contrast, not only does not  
25 provide the screening and guidance needed to avoid conflict

1 and delays, it sends the exact wrong message to the  
2 development community.

3           It says: We are open to industrial-scale  
4 development astride the San Pedro River, the most endangered  
5 and last free-flowing river in the Southwest. We're open to  
6 a water-intensive development right next to the San Pedro  
7 River.

8           It says: Tens of thousands of acres of biological  
9 core and important riparian areas in the landmark Sonoran  
10 Desert Conservation Plan and the Conservation Plan's  
11 conservation land system are perfectly appropriate places to  
12 build solar plants.

13           It says: Please give us proposals to develop  
14 potential wilderness areas, half a million acres worth in  
15 Arizona wild landscapes.

16           It says: Why not develop a solar plant right next  
17 to the Ironwood National Monument?

18           It says: We welcome vegetation-clearing fences,  
19 road and night lighting in prime Sonoran Desert tortoise  
20 habitat.

21           We are not so concerned that such development  
22 might further endanger this already imperiled species -- and  
23 I apologize for the sarcasm. But if you look at the  
24 preferred alternative, which is being forwarded, that is the  
25 message I see it's sending to the development community.

1           Finally, the preferred alternative fails to  
2 adequately analyze the impacts of development on this scale  
3 to the environment, both direct and cumulative, and numerous  
4 BLM sensitive and special-status species. It's simply not  
5 focused enough to be meaningful.

6           So we have a case of the following areas in the  
7 preferred alternative to be removed from further  
8 consideration from development: And that would include  
9 citizen-proposed wilderness areas; all lands in the Sonoran  
10 Desert Conservation Plan's conservation land system; land in  
11 the San Pedro River Basin; wildlife linkages identified and  
12 modeled by -- jointly by ADOT, Arizona Game and Fish, and  
13 NAU; lands near the boundaries of national parks; lands on  
14 the Arizona Strip; [inaudible] Valley; and especially lands  
15 crucial to maintenance of the [inaudible] wildlife corridor;  
16 also, to eliminate suitable habitat for the Sonoran Desert  
17 tortoise and other imperiled BLM-sensitive species including  
18 the Pygmy Owl.

19           In this case, less is truly more. We support the  
20 zone approach and encourage the BLM to incorporate the  
21 restoration design energy project as the model for how  
22 additional solar zones can be systematically identified,  
23 screened, and added to system of solar zones in Arizona.  
24 And this is, as I guess was mentioned earlier, a great model  
25 for the other Western states as well.



1           This will allow for enough -- for more than enough  
2 land to be open for solar energy development in order to  
3 quickly meet our goals to foster a sustainable,  
4 renewable-energy future. This will allow us to avoid  
5 mistakes of damaging wildcat energy development patterns of  
6 the past, and enable us to be Smart from the Start. Just  
7 because renewable energy is clean does not necessarily mean  
8 that it is green. Let's make sure we do it right this time  
9 around. If not for our own conscience, then for future  
10 generations who are depending on us to make the right  
11 choices for our share of public lands.

12           And I know I'm over my time limit, but I'm just  
13 going to end with a quote from Robert Marshall, who is one  
14 of the architects of the Wilderness Act. And he said in  
15 1937: Yet the universe of the wilderness all over the  
16 United States is vanishing with appalling rapidity. It is  
17 melting away like the last snowbank on some south-facing  
18 mountainside during a hot afternoon in June.

19           And I think it's ironic that we're talking now  
20 about harnessing the warmth and energy of the sun to create  
21 energy in order to save the planet. Now just encourage us  
22 to avoid despoiling our last remaining wildlands and the  
23 wildlife that we cherish in our attempts to do that.

24           Thank you.

25           MR. BISSON: My name is Henri Bisson. And I

1 didn't come here expecting to speak, but I decided to go  
2 ahead anyway.

3 I'm a resident of Pima County. I'm retired. I  
4 spent a lot of time working in the desert in my prior life,  
5 in my former career. I want to begin by saying that I  
6 really feel for the gentlemen that spoke earlier about the  
7 impacts of his home, his ranch. And I hope that in  
8 situations like that -- I don't believe that involves the  
9 BLM, it may involve DOE -- but I hope in situations like  
10 that, you can find someone to help you try to work your way  
11 through it. Perhaps the Pima County Board of Supervisors,  
12 who are a supervisor in this, is someone you can try to go  
13 to get them to at least facilitate a meeting and intercede  
14 on your behalf. I hope you find a similar solution for  
15 yourself.

16 First of all, let me begin by saying that I think  
17 the BLM and DOE have done a great job on the analysis that  
18 is contained in this document, in their analysis of the six  
19 states. I'm speaking personally. I'm not representing  
20 anybody. I belong to some organizations, but these are my  
21 own personal comments. And I'm focusing primarily on  
22 Arizona.

23 I, for one, support competitive leasing and  
24 development in the SEZs based by application. And I believe  
25 that after Arizona's EIS and restoration design is complete

1 across all ownerships -- they're not just looking at their  
2 own lands -- I think that is the time to look at leasing in  
3 areas outside of these SEZs. And whether that means  
4 amending what you're doing or augmenting for an Arizona  
5 decision, I think that only those lands outside of the SEZs  
6 that make it through that Arizona process are the ones that  
7 should be considered, again, for competitive leasing.

8 I think that any leasing in these areas -- my  
9 understanding is your proposal is to do leasing by  
10 application. And we know what kind of a mess that could  
11 lead to when people speculate and bet on the future. And  
12 they tie up a lot of land unnecessarily that will never be  
13 developed. So if there's a process established for people  
14 to nominate areas from among the ones that survive the  
15 Arizona Restoration Design Project and then put them up for  
16 competitive leasing, I really think that's how that should  
17 be done.

18 A lot of electricity in this state is used to move  
19 water. I mean, it fills from the Colorado River all the way  
20 to Tucson -- pump stations, you know -- all sorts of devices  
21 along the way to move the water. And my understanding is  
22 your reclamation is looking at ways to generate renewable  
23 energy along the central Arizona project, along its canals.  
24 And that could be solar. It could be something hydraulic  
25 from the water moving. I don't know whether that's included

1 in your reasonable, foreseeable development scenario. It  
2 could amount to quite a bit of electricity. And if it's not  
3 in there, it should be considered as you go to your final.

4 I believe that there's a big hole in this PEIS.  
5 And that has do with not including public lands that are  
6 withdrawn by the military for purposes of the military  
7 reservations. DOI, DOE, and DOD need to work together to  
8 find the solution that allows development on military  
9 withdrawals and settles the issue of how revenues are split.

10 Many of these lands are disturbed, they're bombing  
11 ranges, they're airport facilities, they're all sorts of  
12 things. But they're not being made available for  
13 development because the BLM is responsible for doing the  
14 leasing. But if the BLM does the leasing, then the revenues  
15 go to the treasury, and the military bases gain no benefit  
16 from it. The money could be used for operations, but  
17 there's really no way to make it happen because the law  
18 doesn't allow it to happen.

19 So I think the Congress, with help from these  
20 three departments, needs to find a solution that allows that  
21 development to occur. As an example, you know, there's  
22 potential for solar development on a number of facilities in  
23 California. There's potential for geothermal. There's a  
24 potential for wind. And all of that is not being used in  
25 areas that have already been disturbed. And instead, new

1 desert ground is being broken for these new projects. And I  
2 don't think that's really a holistic view of how this energy  
3 ought to be developed.

4 Thank you for the chance to speak tonight. And  
5 our organizations will be submitting with comments before  
6 the end of the comment period.

7 Thanks.

8 MS. HARTMAN: Is there anyone else who'd like to  
9 speak?

10 MR. PHILLIPS: I'm Chet Phillips. And I'm a  
11 Ph.D. student at the University of Arizona. And I study  
12 collaborative conservation planning and conservation  
13 biology. I'm also the co-chair of a grassroots  
14 organization in the San Pedro Valley called the Cast of  
15 the Working Group.

16 I'd like to say, first of all, that nationally --  
17 and not just here in Arizona or in the Southwest -- we have  
18 a problem where the need to develop renewable energy --  
19 which I think most of us in this room, if not all of us,  
20 support -- and the need to protect our wildlands -- which we  
21 have abundantly here in Arizona -- are coming into conflict.

22 To me, this speaks to a need to have a more  
23 transparent, more community-oriented process where we, the  
24 public, have more opportunities to be involved in planning  
25 these projects and questioning these projects, rather than

1 what are sometimes little-publicized public meetings where  
2 we stand in a row and give our comments, but rather where we  
3 have more collaborative processes where we're at a table and  
4 these things are negotiated.

5 I support the approach to fast-tracking plans for  
6 this kind of formidable energy development. But I think we  
7 should not have to choose between our last remaining large  
8 wild landscapes -- such as those proposed for wilderness  
9 designation or which are currently being studied or  
10 inventoried for wilderness -- and the need to produce  
11 renewable energy with the abundant sunlight we have here in  
12 the state of Arizona.

13 We should not have to choose. We should not  
14 jeopardize wild areas like the thousand acres near the  
15 Ironwood National Monument. And we should be sure that if  
16 we do have to make tradeoffs between sensitive areas --  
17 where there are threatened and endangered species, where  
18 there are large landscapes that are intact -- we should be  
19 sure that before we go to those landscapes, we've covered  
20 all of our abandoned "ag" fields that sit empty -- our mine  
21 tailing sites, other sites that are already disturbed --  
22 with solar. And that we prioritize those areas ahead of our  
23 large and relatively intact ecosystems.

24 So I'm not sure that clearing -- what is it? --  
25 4.5 million acres, or kind of fast-tracking 4.5 million

1 acres, is the way to start this -- as opposed to a more  
2 careful and considered planning process -- so that we know  
3 that the areas that we designate are ones that are broadly  
4 supported and ones that are not going to do irreversible  
5 damage.

6 I also believe that community by community in the  
7 United States, we have guidelines for doing this kind of  
8 thing more collaboratively given to us by the Council on  
9 Environmental Quality, which tells you -- which provides  
10 guidelines on how to carry out NEPA processes. So BLM  
11 officials who are here and transcribing these notes or who  
12 are listening, this is not the only way to solicit public  
13 input. It's certainly not the most transparent way. And I  
14 don't think it's the way that's going to most best avoid  
15 future lawsuits or damage to sensitive species, etc. I  
16 think we need a more careful, considered process for that.  
17 And I think we should get about it now.

18 Thanks.

19 MS. HARTMAN: Is there anyone else who would  
20 like to talk?

21 MS. SOMMERS: Hi, my name is Pacifica Sommers.  
22 I'm a Ph.D. student here at the University of Arizona as  
23 well. I'm studying ecology and evolutionary biology. I  
24 was drawn to Arizona not just because of the great  
25 department I'm a part of, but because of the open space,

1 because of the biodiversity and the unique biodiversity of  
2 the Sonoran Desert.

3           Four years ago, I had the opportunity to intern  
4 for six months with the BLM up in Nevada. So I saw  
5 firsthand how difficult and time-consuming it is to try to  
6 do something really proactive and organized. And I really  
7 commend everybody that's working together to make the  
8 decisions -- to make these solar energy development zones  
9 early and make them with consideration and a thought to  
10 going first to mine tailings, abandoned fields, and not  
11 first to proposed wilderness areas or places that will  
12 affect people's property or beloved places, people with much  
13 deeper roots and longer histories in Arizona than I.

14           Thank you.

15           MS. HARTMAN: Any more now?

16           I want to remind the people that did provide  
17 statements to sign the release forms if they don't mind  
18 being heard on the radio -- from Arizona Public Radio.  
19 Thank you, everyone, for taking time to come to the meeting.  
20 We do appreciate your input.

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## C E R T I F I C A T E

I, John Fahrenwald, certify that I took the shorthand notes in the foregoing matter; that the same was transcribed under my direction; that the preceding pages of typewritten matter are a true, accurate, and complete transcript of all the matters adduced to the best of my skill and ability.

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John Fahrenwald