

**Public Hearing on  
Energy Policy Act—Section 368  
Energy Corridors in the West:  
Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement**

**Speakers who asked that their name and address or just their address be  
withheld from the public record have that information replaced by xxxxx's.**

**Las Vegas, Nevada, January 17, 2008, 2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m.**

Brian Mills: Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us for this public hearing on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement on Designating Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in the West. I'm Brian Mills from the Department of Energy. I'll serve as today's hearing officer.

Before we begin the formal hearing, Angie Lara, the Field Office Manager here in Las Vegas, will make a brief opening statement.

But first, if you haven't signed in or let us know that you want to speak at this meeting, you can do so right now at the registration desk out front.

Restrooms are located to the left outside. In the event of a fire or other alarm, please take your personal belongings with you and evacuate the building as quickly, quietly and safely as possible.

With us today, representing the federal interagency team managing this work, are Kate Winthrop from BLM and Bob Cunningham from the Forest Service. After we're finished taking your comments, we'll stay around to answer any questions you might have.

Now, I'll turn the mic over to Angie Lara.

Angie Lara: First of all I want to thank you for the promotion, because I'm just the Associate Field Manager, but that was a nice thought.

So, I want to say good afternoon and thank you for coming to give your comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Designation of Energy Transport Corridors on Federal Lands in the West. As was mentioned, I'm Angie Laura and I am the Associate Field Manager for the Bureau of Land Management, Las Vegas Field Office.

In a few moments you'll hear a brief presentation about the document, which the Departments of Interior, Energy and Agriculture are preparing to meet requirements in the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

Currently, applications for rights-of-way to cross federal lands with pipelines or electric transmission infrastructure are considered on a case-by-case basis, without much coordination among the various federal agencies whose lands are often involved in the projects that transport energy across long distances.

In 2005, Congress directed federal agencies to address this situation by designating energy transport corridors, and also performing necessary reviews of the environmental impacts of designation. A Programmatic EIS, developed under the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA, represents that environmental review. It is important

to note that another round of site-specific NEPA analysis will be completed for each project proposed for a location in a designated corridor.

The Department of Energy, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service developed the corridor locations proposed in this Draft PEIS using a three-step process, which is detailed in the document, in a handout available on the information table, and which the presentation will also describe.

In essence, today's hearing represents step four in that process. Public comments will help the agencies further refine the locations of corridors so that important goals of the project are met, balancing the need to improve energy delivery in the West with our responsibility to protect the many resources found on public lands.

From the beginning, the agencies have been committed to this strategy, and your comments will be valuable in helping to ensure that it is carried through to the end of this planning effort.

Representatives from DOE, BLM and the Forest Service are here to receive your comments. And on behalf of all three agencies, thank you again so much for your interest and participation.

Brian Mills:

Thank you, Angie.

We are here today to receive your oral comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. You can also submit comments via the project website, by fax, or by mail.

This hearing is being webcast and transcribed, so speakers are asked to speak clearly and distinctly into the microphone. If you have any trouble hearing a speaker in the room, please signal me. I'll advise the speaker accordingly. After everyone who wishes to comment has spoken, I'll close the hearing.

So far, we have ten people who've requested to speak to this issue today. Each will have seven minutes to make their presentation. When you have 30 seconds remaining, I will notify you so you can wrap up.

This hearing is to take comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement prepared in response to direction given by Congress to five federal agencies: Energy, Agriculture, Interior, Commerce and Defense. Section 368 directs the Secretaries to designate corridors for oil, gas, hydrogen pipe and electric transmission lines on the federal land in the 11 western states; perform necessary environmental reviews; incorporate these designations into land use, management or equivalent plans. A separate and distinct public process is expected to begin later this year to identify corridors in the other 39 states.

The statute requires that when the Secretaries designate these corridors, they must specify the corridor center line, width, and compatible uses. Congress also directed the Secretaries to take into account the need for electric transmission facilities to improve reliability, relieve congestion, and enhance the capacity of the national grid to deliver electricity.

The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement proposes designating more than 6,000 miles of corridors: 62 percent would incorporate existing locally-designated corridors and/or rights-of-way, 86 percent would be on BLM land, and 11 percent on Forest Service land. The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement identifies

166 proposed corridor segments in all 11 western states. If all are included in the follow-on decisions, this would involve amending 165 land-use or equivalent plans.

Previously designated corridors are outlined in yellow on the project maps. Some of these are proposed for upgrade only. In the case of existing previously designated utility corridors, amendments to land-use plans designating 368 corridors would subject these corridors to the interagency coordination processes described in the Programmatic EIS, and they would be assigned to Section 368 criteria.

Using these alone would not meet the requirements of Section 368. So, we've identified an additional 2,300 miles of proposed corridors. The proposed corridors also vary in width. We used a 3,500 foot starting point to provide flexibility for siting multiple rights-of-way.

An energy corridor is defined as a parcel of land identified through a land-use planning process as a preferred location for existing and future utility rights-of-way, and that is suitable to accommodate one or more rights-of-way which are similar, identical, or compatible. Corridor designations assist in minimizing adverse impacts and the proliferation of separate rights-of-way.

A right-of-way is a specific land use authorization—not a change in ownership—granted to allow construction and operations of a specific project that's often linear in character, such as a utility line or a roadway. Rights-of-way permits include requirements for compatible land uses and are not granted until a project applicant has complied with all relevant requirements, including the appropriate environmental review.

In November 2007, we published the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Comments are due February 14th. We will analyze and respond to comments and complete the tasks necessary to prepare the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. We expect to have this ready sometime in mid-2008.

The land management agencies will be able to sign records of decision to designate corridors through amendments to land-use plans no sooner than 30 days after the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement is issued.

The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement analyzes two alternatives: taking no action and the proposed action. Choosing to adopt the no-action alternative would result in continuing ad hoc, uncoordinated development, as it is done now. The proposed action is the result of a three-step corridor siting process described in detail in chapter two of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

The first step was to incorporate comments provided by the public during scoping and after the draft map was released in 2006. Then the agencies worked closely with local and federal land managers to accommodate land use priorities, incorporate local knowledge of areas, and to avoid areas known to be incompatible with energy corridors. A handout summarizing this process for determining where the proposed corridors would be located is on the information table and examples of specific corridors are also available on the project website.

We believe that the analysis of these alternatives meets the National Environmental Policy Act's requirements for a hard look. Because the proposed action does not involve any site-specific, ground-disturbing activities, site-specific National Environmental Policy Act review will be required to support all proposed projects in a 368-designated corridor.

And today, we don't know when and where these projects will be proposed by applicants. As a result of this uncertainty, the environmental effects described in chapter three of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement are necessarily more general than a site-specific analysis for a known project would be.

Comments will be most useful if they are specific, include suggested changes or methodologies, provide a rationale for your suggestion, and refer to the specific section or page number of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

Finally, we encourage you to submit comments via the project website. It's easy for you, it speeds our ability to get comments into the database for analysis and up on the website for public review, and it doesn't require stamps or envelopes.

I will call speakers in the order in which you registered. Please step up to the microphone and clearly state your name and organization, if you're representing one, before making your comments. Please limit your oral comments to seven minutes so that everyone who wants to speak today may have a chance to be heard. I will advise you when you have 30 seconds left so you can wrap up.

We will repeat this process until everyone who's registered to speak has had a chance to provide comments. I'll then ask if anyone else wants to speak. After those people have had a chance to speak we'll close the hearing and remind you of when comments are due and how to submit them. If you're speaking from a prepared statement, please also leave us a copy at the registration desk.

While agency representatives won't be answering questions during the hearing, we'll stay afterwards to discuss the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement with you. If needed, we'll take a 15-minute break midway through our scheduled time.

If there are no questions on the process we'll use today, we'll now begin taking your comments.

Our first speaker, Francis Cherry. Our second speaker will be William Belknap.

Francis Cherry: Ready?

Brian Mills: Yeah, go ahead.

Francis Cherry: Good afternoon. My name is Frank Cherry. I'm an environmental specialist with Kern River Gas Corporation located in Salt Lake City, Utah. Kern River Gas Transmission Company is a subsidiary of MidAmerican Holding Company, and we do appreciate the opportunity to be able to comment on this PEIS.

Kern River respectfully submits these comments on issues that should be considered in appropriation of the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and in the designation of the corridors selection under Section 368 of the National Energy Policy Act of 2005.

Kern River owns and operates some 1,680 miles of interstate pipeline through the states of Wyoming, Utah, Nevada and California. Kern River's pipeline system currently has the design capacity of more than 1.7 billion cubic feet of gas per day, and is considered critical energy infrastructure for the Western United States. For example, Kern River delivers approximately 26 percent of the daily average demand of natural gas into the state of California and 84 percent of the average daily demand of natural gas into Southern Nevada.

On January 25th, 2007, the California Public Utilities Commission adopted an Interim Greenhouse Gas Emission Performance Standard in an effort to help mitigate climate change. This facility-based emission standard requires that all new long-term commitments for base-load generation that serve California consumers be with power plants that have emissions no greater than a combined cycle gas turbine plant. Kern River facilities are an essential component in meeting this standard.

It is also Kern River's understanding that the state of Nevada is looking to expand the use of gas-fired electric generation plants to replace traditional coal fired plants. And it was recently announced in Utah that Rocky Mountain Power, the principal electric generator, was putting on hold the development of coal-fired generation plants due to the uncertainty of future emissions standards.

It may be reasonably inferred from these developments that additional natural gas-fired electric generation facilities will be constructed in the market area of the Western United States in the coming years. Kern River feels strongly that, as transmission corridor designations are evaluated, consideration for transmission of fuel to power plants be given as high a priority for development as electric transmission lines. It is as difficult to locate and authorize the necessary fuel lines, be they oil or natural gas, as it is to authorize transmission lines inside or outside designated corridors, especially in congested areas.

Kern River applauds the authors of the West-Wide Corridor Study for assessing corridors using traditional multiple use principles. It is also gratifying to note that potential designation accommodate multiple facilities with a width sufficient for compatible use between multiple—excuse me—between multiple electric transmission lines and multiple pipelines.

Corridor widths, depending on the site-specific resource issues, should be sufficient to meet the expanding needs for energy transportation throughout the Western states. Narrow corridors may restrict the long-term energy supply growth. Corridors designated to mountain passes and other land obstacles need to be studied thoroughly and may need to be widened accordingly. Typical corridors through these land obstacles cannot support the same multiple use facilities as normal land terrain corridors, and eventually become bottlenecks for future facilities.

Corridor designations should also account for ancillary facilities associated with energy transmission. As an example, natural gas pipelines typically include compression facilities that require additional sites of approximately 25 acres each.

Kern River's analysis of the PEIS identified several distinct advantages to the designation of corridors as defined in the document. Some of these are that the West-Wide Corridor designation will amend all existing federal land-use plans to recognize these corridors. This action would significantly reduce the time and expense which would need to be invested in the current authorization process. Due to the predisposition in the land-use plans for projects within the corridors, this action would support a more timely and favorable decision field as a project is being analyzed.

Another major advantage is the linking of corridors to the different federal land units by a West-Wide designation that will allow the matching of corridor segments as they transcend each federal boundary. This is also important as contiguous states will now reflect common corridors rather than the previous situation where there is no recognition of designated corridors across any boundaries.

It allows for uniform treatment of applications between different agencies and locations. It provides a single point of contact for each project within a corridor. And it reduces the number of NEPA alternatives and siting studies that would be required for projects identified within the designated corridors.

Kern River, however, also has several areas of concern that are specific to the PEIS itself, and feels that addressing these issues in a more specific manner would be beneficial not only to proponents of the projects within the future designated corridors, but also to those preparing documents and to the reviewers of specific proposals.

While the PEIS goes to great lengths to identify resource, species and issues, it does very little to cover specific mitigation remedies other than best management practices. It is not clear—it does not clear specific portions of potential corridors from encumbrances such as wilderness study areas, [unintelligible] study areas, or areas of critical environmental concern. Each of these areas would require additional analysis, some type of clearance and, in some cases, legislation to remove the barriers to placement of facilities in these areas, even though designated corridors pass through them.

The document and future designation does not delineate corridors on state and private lands. Non-designation of these lands leaves the project proponent with some uncertainty as to whether a project crossing a break in public land ownership has the ability to complete route planning and tie to the next corridor segment.

Although Kern River recognizes the difficulty of contiguous corridor delineations across all ownerships, it leaves the project proponents in a difficult position as routes are considered. While it is expected a project would receive expedited treatment within the designated corridor, there's uncertainty as to what will happen at the end of a public land corridor. Will a proponent be forced into other routing which will not allow connecting it to the next portion of the designated corridor on public land? Or worse, refusal by other landowners to the passage of a right-of-way, thus forcing abandonment of a designated corridors?

Concerns would also arise with the type of NEPA analysis required outside of designated corridors which could make the preparation of environmental documents extremely difficult.

While Kern River is pleased that our concerns submitted early in the scoping process were acknowledged, and further that a corridor around the east side of Las Vegas was identified, the PEIS in identifying the above-mentioned proposed corridor has the same traversing the Sunrise Mountain Instant Study Area. Although this study area already has two power lines traversing it, it appears that the designation does nothing to allow additional rights-of-way within the area. This may render this vitally important proposed corridor though a highly congested area useless unless resolution of the instant study area is attained or at least clarification is provided.

Many areas of the West are experiencing unprecedented growth. Urban growth and growth-related congestion inherently makes it difficult to locate major interstate energy systems. The designation and implementation of vital national energy corridors through this PEIS process need to be honored into the future as impacts from growth, industrial expansion, and recreational needs impact their effectiveness and reduce the carrying capacity.

The proposed route in the corridor does not designate corridors within the confines of the Salt Lake Valley. This creates problems transporting products from the highly productive gas fields of Southwest Wyoming into Eastern Utah to markets in Southern

Nevada and California. Around the Las Vegas area, the proposed designations do not include the Northway McCullough Pass area south of Las Vegas, even though this pass has existing transmission lines and approved rights-of-way, or pipelines already routed through it, it would be advantageous to have both the north and the south McCullough Pass areas designated as corridors for more flexibility in passage of the congested area.

One specific area is on the California Segment 27-225 where the corridor designation changes from a multiple classification to an electric-only classification. This area already contains several gas pipelines and provides the only Southwest Utah, Las Vegas corridor. Designation needs to—of the corridor needs to consider making this a modal effort.

Kern River supports the actions of the West-Wide Study team and has undertaken to date—that they have undertaken to date and appreciates the immensity of the task before them. We thank you for the comment—the opportunity to comment on the PEIS and Kern River stands ready to answer any questions you might have later.

Thank you.

Brian Mills: Our next speaker is William Belknap followed by Patrick Clennan.

William Huggins: I'll be extremely brief. I have to go to work. And I appreciate Bill for letting me step in, and for Mr. Mills for letting me kind of skip ahead in the process.

My name is Bill Huggins, William Huggins. I commented online. I just wanted to come in here and just briefly add to what I commented on online, that I am a volunteer for a couple of the wilderness organizations out here in Nevada. And a lot of us have dedicated years of our lives to working for wilderness protections for public lands out here. I spend a lot of time. I spend a lot of time in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge and the Delamar Mountains.

And we need to be specific in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge proposal, corridor 223-224, and 37-232. No way. That should never happen. And the Delamar and the Meadow Valley area, corridor 232-233, no. Absolutely not. No opening of any wilderness areas in this state to any energy corridors ever. Not just for the people who spend time out there, but for the wildlife who that whole area is protected for. The desert tortoise, the Bighorn Sheep and everything else out there. The essence of The Wilderness Act is untrammled, not touched by man. Leave it alone. Thank you.

William Belknap: I'm William Belknap from Boulder City. I'd like to speak to specific local impacts, a hoped for approach, and the underlying assumptions behind the corridors.

There are two local areas where proposed corridors would impact wilderness—or proposed wilderness. Specifically, the 223-224 and 37-223 lines that are in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, and the 232-233 east line that impacts the Delamar Mountains and Meadow Valley Range Wilderness areas. Wildlife refuge should be designation enough to avoid placing power corridors.

In addition, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has found the Sheep Range, Fossil Elbow and Gas Peak citizen-proposed wilderness areas in the Desert Refuge to be suitable for a wilderness designation.

Where existing right-of-ways are being considered for future growth wetland and stream crossings should be reassessed for environmental impacts. My experience in Washington State was that culverts associated with existing power line right-of-ways all too often

created fish blockages. There should be the assumption that poorly-sited or implemented rights-of-way should be corrected when utilized for expansion.

Expedited application and permitting, sharing of right-of-ways, these are obvious gains for society when the right-of-way should be built. The right-of-ways are necessarily appendages of power production facilities and planning for new ones implies the meeting forecasted energy needs and solutions to meet those. It appears that these proposed energy corridors would facilitate utilization of energy sources with high carbon and ground disturbance footprints to meet the needs that do not reflect the efficiencies of the future.

It is my view that future energy corridors should not be planned with coal or other fossil fuel power plants in mind. It should not be long before such plants will no longer have a free ride to release carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. And when that occurs, they lose their cost advantage.

Nuclear power is not viable due to the danger of its byproducts and lack of adequate long-term methods to contain them, and the value that they offer terrorists. They should not be part of the energy corridor planning.

Long-range transmission of energy makes no sense for future needs that can be offset by increases in efficiency, conservation, and local renewable energy production.

Planning for energy needs of future growth in the desert southwest looks especially tricky. The combination of increased new housing energy efficiency, appliance efficiency gains, distributed solar, wind and thermal energy production, and the inevitable collision of growth and water supply, means that forecasts dependent on current trends will be excessive.

My hope is that the West-Wide Energy Corridor Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement can avoid rejection by states and environmental groups, unlike its recent predecessor in the East. If it depends on fossil or nuclear fuel power plants, includes new incursions on wilderness or roadless areas, does not adequately account for reductions in future per capita energy use and regional population growth, then it's not likely to be accepted or will precipitate avoidable costly legal resistance.

Thank you.

Brian Mills:

Patrick Clennan followed by xxxxx.

Patrick Clennan:

Hello. My name is Patrick Clennan. You'll have to excuse me. As I get older, I can't see as well. And so, I'm going to have to read a lot of this rather than being extemporaneous. But first of all, thank you very much for giving me the opportunity for—to voice my concerns on this proposed energy corridor.

This public hearing is about natural resources and about energy distribution. I don't know that much about energy distribution, but I do know a little bit about natural resources or resources in general, whether they are cultural or historic or economic, etc.

The resource that doesn't get much press, in my opinion, is aesthetics. In other words, beauty, and that's the main reason I'm here today. I know that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, but I've spent many days hiking, backpacking, mountain biking through the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. And I believe that the energy corridor would degrade the aesthetics of that area significantly.

The beauty of that area must be preserved and protected. The sight of 100-foot support structures and the latticework of power lines dominating the viewscape for tens of miles, in my opinion, would greatly diminish the beauty and the sense of solitude that I enjoy when I go to that area. I go there to escape Vegas; not to be immersed within it.

Judgments are based on perceptions and, often, perceptions are based on ignorance. Our federal government would think twice about building an energy corridor through a forested landscape, through a coastal environment, or a region dotted with lakes. And I believe that is because, according to them back East, blue and green are beautiful and brown is not. After all, they live in an area that is cool, foggy, cloudy, rainy, forested—green in other words—with lots of rivers and lakes—blue.

But the landscape here in the Southwest is brown. And the people in power back East, in my opinion, believe that brown is bad. It's not worthy. It's not worthy of being protected, not worthy of preserving. It's useless. It doesn't have merit.

Deserts are the Rodney Dangerfield of environments. They just don't get no respect. And according to Washington, it is okay to defile and to degrade deserts. And if you want proof of that, just think of Yucca Mountain.

Now, this is geographical prejudice based upon geographical ignorance. Please do not build this energy corridor through the Desert National Wildlife Refuge.

Thank you very much.

Brian Mills: xxxxx, followed by Arlo Stockham.

xxxxx: Hi. My name is xxxxx. And I would just like to have the agencies make this process clear to the public with detailed maps and various alternatives. Without detailed maps, we cannot accurately comment. And without alternatives, the public can only comment on when we—on what we don't like about the proposed plan.

Thank you.

Brian Mills: Arlo Stockham, followed by Vanessa Gazipura.

Arlo Stockham: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name's Arlo Stockham. I'm General Manager for Buckhorn, LLC. We own an 8,700 acre ranch in Northern Nevada, roughly 30 minutes north of the city of Reno. There's no public meeting up in the Reno area, so I'm down here speaking on our behalf.

Let me first say that we support the goals of this plan. We understand the need to have electricity and other utility distribution systems, and the benefits of collocating and replanning those systems to avoid ad hoc corridor alignments.

We do have some concerns specifically regarding the alignment of corridor number 15-104. This corridor, as proposed, would substantially impact our property, traversing through at least four miles of currently undisturbed lands. The corridor also traverses significant miles of additional federal lands.

But lastly, it appears to be an unnecessary corridor because there's an existing high-voltage power line making the connection proposed by the corridor, through a much shorter route that's already been through the detailed environmental review process.

If I could just spread out a map here so you can see graphically what I'm talking about. The solid lines on this map are existing major utility corridors. The red is a 345-kV electric distribution line traversing through the property. The purple, I believe it is, is the natural gas pipeline and the blue is a water pipeline, all existing on the ground.

The proposed alignment of the corridor I'm referencing is shown in the dashed red line. As you can see, it's substantially longer than the existing power line and it really severely impacts our property, including very sensitive lands. We have [unintelligible], some wetlands and high valley wildlife habitat.

Also, this very recently came to my attention so I made a couple calls to see if anyone in the Reno area was aware of this. It doesn't appear that many people are, including our neighbors and including the regional planning agency, which is currently updating our regional utility corridor plan.

So, with that, we respectfully recommend that you use existing corridors preferentially to make these connections, and only establish new corridors where necessary.

We would also very much appreciate if there was a public meeting opportunity in the Northwestern Nevada area.

Thank you.

Brian Mills: Vanessa--.

Vanessa Gazipura: --Gazipura.

Brian Mills: Gazipura, yeah. Followed by Olaf Haldorsen.

Vanessa Gazipura: Hi. My name is Vanessa Gazipura and I'm here as an interested citizen. I worked as a geologist in the late '70s for Southern California Edison and I saw firsthand how some of the decisions were made in selecting sites for power stations. The process involves many departments with conflicting concerns and compromises are made. I believe that the public should have some alternatives to choose from, and be a partner in the decision-making process.

There are many people who live in the desert and other parts of Nevada who do not see the fragile beauty of this stark landscape. It doesn't all look the same. I've been lucky enough to be—to see the Bighorn Sheep at close range in a wash. They are magnificent animals. They and other species cannot just go into another part of the desert as resources are very limited and many animals have a limited area where they can survive.

We have the power to change these grids to fit our future needs, both for energy and ecology, and keep our wildlife safe.

Thank you.

Brian Mills: Olaf Haldorsen, followed by xxxxx.

Olaf Haldorsen: Good afternoon. My name is Hal Haldorsen. My wife and I have lived in Las Vegas for over 35 years and I am well aware of the growth in this community. But, I'm also offended a little in the society and I want—I would like the, you know, the government agencies involved to be co-stewards with us in regards to taking care of the land that's been given to us to look after. Specifically, the Desert National Wildlife Range, the

Blackrock Desert, High Rock Canyon National Conservation areas are extremely sensitive areas and we wish those not to be disturbed if at all possible.

And of course, the priority consideration should be given to access for renewable energy such as wind and solar. But, we—I would like to just say that I'm concerned about the use of the land and that we should take good care of it and hopefully the government agencies involved will be co-stewards with us in regards to the care of this land.

Thank you.

Brian Mills: xxxxx, followed by Walter Barbuck.

xxxxx: My name's xxxxx. I'm with the Mardian Ranch. The Mardians live here in Las Vegas, but they own 40,000 acres in Northwest Arizona. This—one of these corridors will cross their property. It's a checkerboard type land status, so it's every other section that this energy corridor passes through. I'm just going to make a couple of cursory comments and we will be giving written comments later.

One comment is—I can't remember the exact words in NEPA, but these documents are supposed to be short, concise, and to the point. There's enough verbiage in this thing to choke a horse. And this makes it very difficult to analyze and figure out exactly what's being proposed.

I want to read one item here on page ES-8: "The proposed designation of Section 368 energy corridors would not result in any direct impacts on the ground that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment." We take strong exception to that statement. I realize the way this is written that it's just supposedly addressing the impacts on federal land.

However, in a checkerboard land situation where—for instance, we own a lot of land that this—any power line or pipeline would have to cross, immediately when this designation is made then you've directly impacted our private land. Severely. For example, how would you sell a piece of private land if someone knew this energy corridor was in existence? It'd be almost impossible.

So, I just did a little quick calculation this morning. There's already a transmission line crossing the property. And there is a right-of-way in place that equals about 390 acres on our property. This right-of-way, if it's 3,500 foot in width, would add another 2,289 acres. In my opinion that's a taking, and it's a taking in the tune of about \$1.1 billion.

So, I just wanted to make those few comments. And we will be submitting additional comments later.

Brian Mills: Walter Barbuck, followed by Janeth Rowland.

Walter Barbuck: I am Walter Barbuck, a caring citizen who lives xxxxx. And I suggest that the no-action alternative be adopted for this energy corridor process for two reasons. One, with the complexity of this project, a figure quoted of the 62 percent that is gonna incorporate existing corridors is probably optimistic. And then ad hoc should be the only way to go.

Sources of energy will change. There's a lot of trouble with coal. It's a big problem with global warming. And as our sources of energy change, there's no way this can be factored into a project like this. And nuclear energy, of course, there's no place to store it. Yucca Mountain is not viable. And that's just being kicked around.

And I have nothing else to say. I thank the agencies for letting me comment.

Brian Mills: Janeth, followed by Gary Vesperman.

Janeth Rowland: Hi. My name is Janeth Rowland. I'm a student and a trained [unintelligible] this state. And I would like to say that this proposal to put an energy corridor through the Desert Refuge is a bad idea for the people of Southern Nevada and the wildlife. It would destroy the wildlife habitat that the refuge was created for in the first place. And I would like the preservation of the Desert Bighorn Sheep and the beautiful habitats that we find here in Nevada.

I also think that agencies need to make this process more transparent to the public and provide us with maps that we can actually see, and see the different alternatives that they are offering. And I think a that special [unintelligible] should be given to public lands. I think that the whole process should be avoided altogether, and definitely the Desert National Wildlife Refuge.

Thank you very much.

Brian Mills: Gary Vesperman.

Gary Vesperman: Hi, there. I'm Gary Vesperman, Chief Operating Officer and Director of Research for Blue Energy Corporation in Henderson.

My comments are in two parts. One is, in regard to Nevada, two proposed corridors pass through or adjacent to the Desert National Wildlife Refuge. The Refuge is home to Desert Bighorn Sheep, as are the three wilderness areas, Delamar Mountain, Arrow Canyon and Meadow Valley which border the proposed corridor to the east of the Refuge in path to the Bighorn Sheep habitat and the refuge will likely impact the population in both the refuge and the wilderness areas. The refuge also provides habitat for the threatened Desert Tortoise, that the corridor is likely to harm as well.

The proposed corridor also impacts the Fossil Elbow and Gas Mountain citizen proposed wilderness areas, both of which have been found by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to be proposed a wilderness designation. To mitigate the impact from the corridor must be considered in conjunction with the developments already occurring such that all of the other land around the adjacent highways and proposed corridor to the east of the refuge that is not protected as wilderness, is already subject to intensive private development. Now, my comment refers to the other states, the other paths [unintelligible] the time being.

The second part of my comment's a little more original. Let's see. The West-Wide Energy Corridor DEIS should authoritatively, honestly, and [unintelligible] consider the alternative of eliminating the need altogether for extensive energy corridors by fast-paced World War II Manhattan Project style research and development of decentralized electricity generation gas production.

I have a number of energy-related documents that are posted on the internet. The 123-page fourth version of my compilation of energy invention suppression cases is available at several different websites, one of which is energysuppression.com. Out of my compilation, 95 energy invention suppression cases, various agencies of the United States government are accused of participating in 59 of these incidents.

Furthermore, the U.S. Patent Office has unfairly discriminated against numerous energy inventions. The U.S. Patent Office even has classified—unjustly classified—secret, an

unknown number of energy inventions among a total of 5,000 classified patents. It seems reasonable to suggest as an alternative to 6,000 miles of energy corridors an end to the U.S. government's ongoing viciously [unintelligible] suppression of new energy inventions and declassification of energy—secret energy patents.

I have a couple of minutes left?

There are three or four other websites in which I have compiled summaries of various energy inventions. An easy one for you to remember is [www.iiic.be](http://www.iiic.be) [that's in Germany]. And there's about two dozen different energy inventions on that particular website I've described.

There's another one, Advanced Technology for [unintelligible] Project. That has about four dozen different energy inventions.

Last, but not least, I am a founding member of the New Energy Congress, a voluntary organization of energy researchers. For over two years we have compiled—we have been collecting new energy inventions. We have compiled a listing of the very best 100 energy inventions which are available. If you go to—if you do a search on Google, try New Energy Congress.

Let me end by saying that it seems reasonable and cost effective to consider every single one of these energy inventions as an alternative to designating a massive network of 6,000 miles of energy corridors through our beautiful Western land.

Brian Mills: If there are no other speakers, I am now closing the hearing. We will be here and reopen the hearing if anybody else comes in that would like to speak.

Melissa Campbell: [Inaudible.]

Brian Mills: Come on up. I don't have a paper, but that's all right.

Melissa Campbell: I'm kind of small. [Unintelligible.]

Should I just introduce myself then, sir?

Brian Mills: Yes.

Melissa Campbell: Hi. I am Melissa Campbell. And I thank you today and I wish you a good afternoon. I'm here to speak of a tomorrow that begins with today. These agencies would like us to believe that this corridor, encompassing over 925,000 acres of Nevada soil, are beneficial for us all. I ask what are the costs? Where are the technologies of today? Why would we be willing to step backwards to use technology that would put this planet in peril when we are in severe peril today?

Conservation used to be the word of the day. Now, it is consume. Consume, consume, consume. We are consumed by our greed. Why, instead of relying on electric cars, which could be charged with solar energy, are we possessed with our inefficient, gas-guzzling vehicles to the point of we must search around for the next source of crude oil like a crack addict looking for his next fix? Why is a private company like Citizenry able to compile a plan of leasing solar panels to the average citizen and bringing that energy that the citizen uses, the excess, back in through net metering to us all, when the government that has millions of dollars in budgeting allotment for technology research is back using archaic methods of destruction?

FDR said, "A nation that destroys its soil destroys itself." This is one area we are succeeding in greatly. We are hell-bent on tearing up and controlling every last bit of land. There will be 11 states that will lose their most precious resources in some of the most beautiful lands I've seen. Instead of taking our children to the north end of this valley to show them the peace and the beauty and the power of creation, there could be at the very least the constant hum and drone of power lines. Diversity lost, a raped, scarred land that was forced to give sanctuary to foreign, grotesque entities which will terrorize our very existence, our need for wild spaces, for clean water and soil.

The first time I heard the coal commercial on the radio I thought it was a spoof. I laughed and wondered, they're really projecting coal for a clean America? I grew up in a mining area. Is it clean? Mountains are topped, streams run red, yellow or green. Watersheds are destroyed. Mudslides. And the community that I lived in suffers from high rate of cancers, infertility and Alzheimer's. Is this what we want for our future?

I wish I could take you to some of my favorite places. A lot of them are now gone. Parking lots, housing or shopping centers. Most of them—oh, I'm sorry—no longer the sparkling crown jewels that we proclaimed here in this valley are here. Why? Because progress and greed got into the way.

It's time—sorry—it's time to stand up and say enough. This has to stop. Too much has been lost and we cannot regain what we've lost. The Earth's precious places we cannot rebuild. When a species is lost due to habitat, it cannot be revived. We cannot recreate biodiversity and we cannot replace an ecosystem.

Remember, we are all connected in this web of life. Oil and coal are nonrenewable resources. More importantly, so is water and so is soil. We can't survive without those.

Wild places and nature keep us human. They keep us grounded. It is time to be accountable and responsible to our future, not a slave of consumerism, waste, and greed. For the good of the day. I plead with you that we should not approve this energy corridor and we should promote conservation and preservation for our future plan of action. We need long-term goals and solutions for the benefit of all life. Not a quick, cheap fix for energy giants with high cost for the rest of our planet. I ask you, not for me, not for them, but for those who will come after us, what legacy should we leave? What shall we have to say to the future and what will the future say about their ancestors? Today, we are responsible for all those in the future.

Thank you.

Brian Mills: You'd like to speak, too? We've got to [inaudible]. Can you fill out one of these forms? You did? They're somewhere else, then.

All right. If—what's your name?

Bob Fertek: Bob Furtek.

Brian Mills: Bob—?

Bob Furtek: Furtek.

Brian Mills: Bob Furtek, followed by Vaughn Lawrence.

Bob Furtek: I am Bob Furtek and I'm here as a citizen. Special or sensitive public lands need to be avoided altogether. Such areas include the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, the Delamar

Mountains Wilderness Area, and the Meadow Valley Range Wilderness Area. The corridors will fragment the habitat of the threatened Desert Tortoise and the Desert Bighorn Sheep. So, I just say that wildlife habitat suffers from roads and power lines. The Desert National Wildlife Refuge is a wildlife refuge; not a power corridor.

Thank you.

Brian Mills: Vaughn Lawrence.

Vaughn Lawrence: Hi. I'm speaking as a concerned citizen as well. I didn't prepare a fancy speech or anything so I'll just be a couple minutes.

But, I feel this is—the energy corridor is wrong for a couple reasons. One, of course, is that we have good reliable sources of energy that have been around for a couple thousand years. And luckily, due to good technology, we've found good ways to harness that energy and make it efficient, namely solar and wind energy. And Nevada has abundant resources to make that type of energy useful here.

The other reasons is that, I came to Vegas not for the fancy casinos and a lot of the other reasons people come to Vegas. I came to Vegas because I can go an hour in any direction, or less, and see beautiful landscape and wildlife. And I've been hiking in this area for years and I love it. And the Desert Wildlife Refuge is one place where I love to be. And I think the energy corridor, obviously, would destroy that and there's other ways to do it.

Thanks.

Brian Mills: Are there any other—another speaker. Okay. Please state your name.

Hermi Hiatt: I wasn't going to speak today, but I have to say something anyway. I'm Hermi Hiatt. I'm a board member of Friends of Nevada Wilderness, and also other conservation organizations. And my comments that I'm gonna be submitting will be mostly talking about the cumulative impacts and also some of the resources. Because I'm really concerned that these corridors kind of disregard all the resources on the ground.

My main comment I want to make today is, I was at a meeting this morning on solar energy. And I just couldn't believe the maps I was looking at. We're gonna be seeing Nevada as total ground cover of solar energy, wind energy, and the energy corridors. And I just want you to know that. You've gotta find a map to look at this. It's just awful.

Clark County, Nye County, so many projects. I think a total of like—God, I hope I get the numbers right—25 solar projects or something. And then there are a ton of wind projects, again in Clark County. Also in around Reno area. So basically, Nevada is gonna be covered with all this. Is that what we really want? I think we need to propose the no-action alternative.

Thanks.

Brian Mills: Anyone else like to speak? Okay. If there are no other speakers I'm now gonna close the hearing. We will reopen the hearing if there are additional speakers.

Thank you for joining us today to provide oral comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Comments on the Draft are due February 14th and may be submitted online via the project website, by mail, or by fax. All comments received by February 14th will be considered in preparing the Final Programmatic

Environmental Impact Statement. Comments submitted after February 14th will be considered to the degree possible.

Again, thank you for your attention and we'll now stay around to discuss and answer questions with the [unintelligible] folks.

Brian Mills: Kayrene Williams would like to speak.

Kayrene Williams: I've never done anything like this before, but I think it's time that citizens need to get more involved. And it's kind of scary being up here. I'm already breaking a sweat.

But, I think the most important thing is just to be heard, to let people—all of you know that there are people out there interested, maybe a little afraid to speak up, but interested. And I think one of the strongest points that needs to be made is the agencies need to get the information out there to the public, make it more transparent so that people know exactly what we're dealing with. People don't know that we have alternatives, but I know that we do. And people need to be told.

Another very close thing to my heart is the public lands. I spend a lot of time myself there. And I'm very well aware of people from all over the world that visit these areas, how vital they are, the animals, nature, the eco-balance. It is all so important. All of you know it, too, I know. And something needs to be done to protect that. And it would be a really, really bad idea for the corridors to be running through these areas and disrupt the beauty and the life that is being held there.

I think that's good. Thank you. Thank you.

Brian Mills: Thank you. We have some water in the back.

Thank you very much. I'm now gonna close the hearing again until somebody else wants to speak. Thank you.

**Las Vegas, Nevada, January 17, 2008, 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.**

Brian Mills: Good evening. Thank you for joining us for a public hearing on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Designating Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in the West. I'm Brian Mills from the Department of Energy. I'll serve as today's hearing officer.

Before we begin the formal hearing, Angie Lara, the Associate Field Manager here in Las Vegas, will make a brief opening statement.

But first, if you haven't signed in or let us know that you want to speak at this meeting, you can do so right now at the registration desk.

Restrooms are located to the left outside the meeting room. In the event of a fire or other alarm, please take your personal belongings with you and evacuate the building as quickly, quietly and safely as possible.

With us today, representing the federal interagency team managing this work, are Kate Winthrop of the BLM and Bob Cunningham of the Forest Service. After we're finished taking your comments, we'll stay around to answer any questions you might have.

Now, I'll turn the mic over to Angie.

Uh-oh. You're up.

Angie Lara:

I only had five [unintelligible].

Good evening, everyone. Sorry I held up the show.

I want to thank you all for coming to give your comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for the Designation of Energy Transport Corridors on Federal Lands in the West. I'm Angie Lara, Associate Field Manager of the BLM, Las Vegas Field Office.

In a few moments you'll hear a brief presentation about the document which the Departments of Interior, Energy and Agriculture are preparing to meet requirements in the Energy Policy Act of 2005.

Currently, applications for rights-of-way to cross federal lands with pipelines or electric transmission infrastructure are considered on a case-by-case basis, without much coordination among the various federal agencies whose lands are often involved in projects that transport energy across long distances.

In 2005, Congress directed federal agencies to address this situation by designating energy transport corridors, and also performing necessary reviews of the environmental impacts of designation. A Programmatic EIS, developed under the National Environmental Policy Act, NEPA, represents that environmental review. It is important to note that another round of site-specific NEPA analysis will be completed for each project proposed for location in a designated corridor.

The Department of Energy, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service developed the corridor locations proposed in the Draft PEIS using a three-step process, which is detailed in the document, in a handout available on the information table, and which the presentation will also describe.

In essence, tonight's hearing represents step four in that process. Public comments will help the agencies further refine the locations of corridors so that important goals of the projects are met, balancing the need to improve energy delivery in the West with our responsibility to protect the many resources found on federal lands.

From the beginning, the agencies have been committed to this strategy, and your comments will be valuable in helping to ensure that it is carried through to the end of this planning effort.

Representatives from DOE, BLM and the Forest Service are here to receive your comments. And on behalf of all three agencies, thank you again for your interest and participation.

Brian Mills:

Thank you, Angie.

We are here to receive your oral comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. You can also submit comments via the project website, by fax, or by mail.

This hearing is being webcast and transcribed, so speakers are asked to speak clearly and distinctly into the microphone. If you're having trouble hearing a speaker in the room, please signal me. I'll advise the speaker accordingly. After everyone who wishes to comment has spoken, I'll close the hearing.

So far, we have one person who's requested to speak to this issue tonight. You will have—it says 10 minutes, but whatever—to make your presentation.

This hearing is to take comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement prepared in response to direction given by Congress to five federal agencies: Energy, Agriculture, Interior, Commerce and Defense. Section 368 directs the Secretaries to designate corridors for oil, gas, hydrogen pipe and electric transmission lines on federal land in 11 western states; perform necessary environmental review; incorporate these designations into land use, land management or equivalent plans. A separate and distinct public process is expected to begin later this year to identify corridors in the other 39 states.

The statute requires that when the Secretaries designate these corridors, they must specify the corridor center line, width, and compatible uses. Congress also directed the Secretaries to take into account the need for electric transmission facilities to improve reliability, relieve congestion, and enhance the capacity of the national grid to deliver electricity.

The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement proposes designating more than 6,000 miles of corridors.: 62 percent would incorporate existing locally-designated corridors and/or rights-of-way, 86 percent would be on BLM land, and 11 percent on Forest Service land. The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement identifies 166 proposed corridor segments in all 11 states. If all are included in the follow-on decisions, this would involve amending 165 land use or equivalent plans.

Previously designated corridors are outlined in yellow on the project maps. Some of these are proposed for upgrade only. In the case of existing previously designated utility corridors, amendments to land-use plans designating 368 corridors would subject these corridors to the interagency coordination process described in the Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement and they would be assigned Section 368 criteria.

Using these alone would not meet the requirements of Section 368. So, we've identified an additional 2,300 miles of proposed corridors. The proposed corridors also vary in width. We used a 3,500 foot starting point to provide flexibility for siting multiple rights-of-way.

An energy corridor is defined as a parcel of land identified through a land-use planning process as a preferred location for existing and future utility rights-of-way, and that is suitable to accommodate one or more rights-of-way which are similar, identical, or compatible. Corridor designations assist in minimizing adverse impacts and the proliferation of separate rights-of-way.

A right-of-way is a specific land use authorization—not a change in ownership—granted to allow construction and operation of a specific project that's often linear in character, such as utility line or roadway. Rights-of-way permits include requirements for compatible land uses, and are not granted until a project applicant has complied with all relevant requirements, including the appropriate environmental review.

In November 2007, we published the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. Comments are due February 14th. We will analyze and respond to comments and complete the tasks necessary to prepare the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. We expect to have this ready sometime in mid-2008.

The land management agencies will be able to sign records of decision to designate corridors through amendments to land-use plans no sooner than 30 days after the Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement is issued.

The Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement analyzes two alternatives: taking no action and the proposed action. Choosing to adopt the no-action alternative would result in continuing ad hoc, uncoordinated development, as is done now. The proposed action is the result of a three-step corridor siting process described in detail in chapter two of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

The first step was to incorporate comments provided by the public during the scoping and after the draft map was released in 2006. Then, the agencies worked closely with local and federal land managers to accommodate local land use priorities, incorporate local knowledge of areas, and to avoid areas known to be incompatible with energy corridors. A handout summarizing the process for determining where the proposed corridors would be located is on the information table, and examples of specific corridors are also available on the project website.

We believe that the analysis of these alternatives meets the National Environmental Policy Act's requirement for a hard look. Because the proposed action does not involve any site-specific, ground-disturbing activities, site-specific National Environmental Policy Act review will be required to support all proposed projects in a 368-designated corridor.

And today, we don't know when and where any projects will be proposed by applicants seeking to site pipe and/or transmission lines. As a result of this uncertainty, the environmental effects described in chapter three of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement are necessarily more general than a site-specific analysis for a known project would be.

Comments will be most useful if they are specific, include suggested changes or methodologies, provide a rationale for your suggestions, and refer to the specific section or page number of the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement.

Finally, we encourage you to submit comments via the project website. It's easy for you, it speeds our ability to get comments into the database for analysis and up on the website for public review, and doesn't require stamps or envelopes.

I will call speakers in the order in which you registered. Please step up to the microphone and clearly state your name and organization, if you're representing one, before making your comment. Please limit your oral comments to several minutes so that everyone who wants to speak today may have a chance to be heard. I will advise you when you have 30 seconds left so you can wrap up.

We will repeat this process until everyone who's registered to speak has had a chance to provide comments. I'll then ask if anyone else wishes to speak. After those people have had a chance to speak, we'll close the hearing and remind you of when comments are due and how to submit them. If you're speaking from a prepared statement, please also leave us a copy at the registration desk.

Agency representatives won't be answering questions during the hearing. We'll stay afterwards to discuss the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement with you. If needed, we'll take a 15-minute break midway through our scheduled time.

If there are no other questions on the process we'll begin taking your comments.

Our first speaker is Tyler Lavigne. Okay. Followed by Rebecca Olschewski.

Tyler Lavigne:

Hi. I'm Tyler Lavigne. I'm a student at the College of Southern Nevada.

This proposal to put an energy corridor through the Desert Refuge is a bad idea for the people of Southern Nevada and our wildlife. It would destroy the wildlife habitat that the refuge was created for in the first place for the preservation of the Desert Bighorn Sheep and its habitat. The Desert Refuge is our largest refuge in the lower 48 states and is a critical habitat for many species and plants and animals, but is dying a death from a thousand cuts, sprawl, military use, lack of funding for the refuge system.

Running energy corridors through it is a bad environmental policy and a bad energy policy. Agencies need to move the corridors to avoid them. Specific to our region, the 223 line that is in the Desert National Wildlife Refuge, and the 232 line that impacts the Delamar Mountains and the Meadow Valley Range Wilderness Areas.

The corridors will fragment the habitat of the threatened Desert Tortoise and the Desert Bighorn Sheep. Scientists say that the wildlife habitat suffers from roads and power lines. The wildlife refuge is a wildlife refuge, not a power corridor.

America needs a forward-thinking energy policy that moves the country toward the use of renewable energy sources and away from fossil fuels. Such a policy requires an electricity transmission grid to support it and not coal. I find it important to protect these areas because it offers the people of Las Vegas a higher quality of life to have protected places near their urban areas.

Thank you.

Brian Mills:

Rebecca Olschewski. Okay. Followed by xxxxx.

Rebecca Olschewski:

I am Rebecca Olschewski. Wow, that's a loud microphone. I'm not representing an organization. I'm representing myself as an individual and as a resident of xxxxx and of Nevada. I've been here for four years. And even before I moved here I enjoyed our open spaces such as Red Rock National Park and other spaces, the BLM land that we get to hike on and camp on and enjoy.

I came dressed in my hiking clothes, which I might need to put away if they put up this corridor because that will restrict me from using some of our open spaces. I would have brought my dog, because he enjoys hiking along with me. This is a bad idea.

Also, we—the feds regulate the information on what we know about energy projects. I was doing a little research and was on the Energy Information Administration website and I found some very interesting things. But, they were all so very vague and were so very little information for us to actually see where and when these things are gonna take place, where they're located, how it impacts us directly. And I would just like to encourage the powers that be and those that are making decisions, I say that no action is not much of an alternative but it's a better alternative to what they propose to do by putting the corridor up.

So, as a resident I speak for myself. As an avid hiker, an outdoors person, I have also had the privilege of adopting tortoises and taking care of them when they were threatened and their habitat was threatened. I did this in California in Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palms. We know how destructive not only building and development is, but how destructive the construction and maintenance of the power lines are in those areas.

So, that just a few things that I'd like to say as a resident. And I encourage any of you else to stand up and say what you feel as well.

Thank you.

Brian Mills: xxxxx, followed by Brian Brown.

Lorna Olschewski: Hello. My name is Lorna Olschewski. I was born and raised here in Las Vegas. I've been here 37 years.

And I understand the need for power corridors. I think it's important that we think about long-term needs for providing services that this country continues to find a need to need power, whether it's natural gas or electronic or electric of some sort. If we find a way of encouraging our government to harness the natural resources that we have here we could possibly send that out to other areas. I'm not thinking about bring power in, I'm about—I'm thinking about sending power out.

I think it's highly irresponsible of our state and national government to take the power that is here that we could harness and keep it for ourselves or not even use it at all. And also, I think it's highly irresponsible of these same governments to not use the corridors that are existing.

Whether you go through a wildlife refuge area or a national park or whatever it may be, I think that these corridors should be located along the highway systems that were put into place years ago. The trains have already been cut. We wouldn't have to tap into any new raw terrain. People who like to hike, they can hike. People who like to OHB [ph] can OHB. People who like to just watch the scenery.

It's already chewed up. There's already power lines along some of these corridors. Stop cutting in new corridors. Use the ones that are already there. Multi-use them, just like we're trying to talk about multi-use of land within our urban and suburban areas. And I understand the need, but I think we need to look at this in a different route. It'll cost millions upon billions of dollars to cut in a new corridor. We already have corridor sections that you could use that could possibly be cheaper to develop. You just need to tell the states and whatever department it is between the national agencies to stop bickering over jurisdictional issues and to get along and to use the resources that are there.

Brian Mills: Brian Brown, would you like to speak? Okay.

Brian Brown: Yeah. I'm Brian Brown with the Armargosa Conservancy. We are a nonprofit land trust. We're particularly concerned about the corridor going up along the California/Nevada border, the conceptual corridor at least. I haven't studied this thing thoroughly, so I can't make detailed comments.

I'd like to see just a large-scale map like that available to the public. This is so small. But I think that, region-wide, these energy corridors are gonna impact probably millions of acres of desert and other habitats. It would be nice if these things were—as someone said earlier, so that the desert and the land doesn't suffer, you know, the death of a thousand cuts, that every little project and piece of land it takes hundreds of thousands of acres, it cuts up the desert into smaller and smaller pieces. Wildlife corridors and whatnot are—begin to get blocked off.

When these energy—potential energy corridors are coupled with some of the massive solar and wind energy projects that are proposed, particularly on the California side, we're talking about removing in the low millions of acres. And so, it begins to— it begins to figure in significantly.

So, I believe that's—those are the comments I had to make.

Brian Mills:

Thank you. Anybody else who would like to speak this evening?

If there are no other speakers, then I'm going to close the hearing. I will reopen the hearing if somebody else wishes to speak and they let us know that they would like to speak, before 8:00.

Thank you for joining us today to provide oral comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement Proposing to Designate Energy Corridors on Federal Lands in the West.

Comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement are due February 14th and may be submitted online via the project website, by mail, or by fax. All comments received by February 14th will be considered in preparing the Final. Comments submitted after February 14th will be considered to the degree possible.

Again, thank you for your attention and we'll now stay around to discuss the project.

Brian Mills:

We're going to reopen the hearing. And Samuel McCool is our first speaker.

Samuel McCool:

Hi. Good evening. I'm from Sandy Valley, Nevada and I've lived here since 2003. And I wasn't really going to say anything tonight because I don't think we really know enough about what they're gonna do with these corridors. But I supposed, because this is a hearing and you need the input, I'll put in my two cents worth.

My concern is that the way this is planned we're gonna cut off the migratory route for the Desert Bighorn. I've been spending some time and talking to hunters. And I am part of a Nevada association that is about protecting the Bighorn. And so, my concern is, is that you've made these multi-modal and you're not planning on—you're let—you're gonna let this open to be anything above ground or below ground. And right now, we have enough electric lines coming across the corridor from Pahrump over to Las Vegas that are actually disturbing the migratory route.

And the northern herd of the Desert Bighorn along the Spring Mountain or the upward Spring Mountains has been diminishing. And the southern herd, in fact, is getting so small that the hunters that hunt along Table Mountain and the southern part of the Spring Mountains are starting to stop hunting there, even though there's guzzlers and there's resources for the Desert Bighorn. And what you're proposing is gonna even cut off that migratory pathway for our state animal, which I think I need to emphasize here because some of the folks may not realize that. You're gonna cut that off to the point where the herd that comes out of California from the Mojave and comes up along the southern Spring Mountains is gonna get chopped off completely from the northern herd.

Now, right now, the—I'm trying to remember the name of it. I'm having a memory problem. But, the group that protects the Bighorn and does a lot of the local initiatives. Do you know the—? The Fraternity of the Desert Bighorn. They have put guzzlers along that area to try to, you know, support that herd. But, that's not working that well. And they're also having to move parts of the herd from the northern part down so that they can—so they can keep the herd strong.

I just see this as a way of just cutting up more of this area. And I can see maybe some rationale that, well, because this is gonna be urban we don't expect to see the Desert Bighorn anymore in this area. And I can see where you can say, well, we're just gonna cut off southern Nevada and just forget about and the only thing that's gonna be here is houses. But, if you keep doing this it's just gonna—it's gonna do exactly that. And the only place the Desert Bighorn is gonna have is right in the center of the state.

So, I just—I think—if you're thinking this through, and if you have to do this, then you should make sure that these corridors are not multi-modal, but actually designated as only being underground and not disturbing the wildlife or the terrain along the Spring Mountain Range.

Anyhow, that's my comment. Thank you.

Brian Mills: Thank you. Macaire Moran.

Macaire Moran: Hello. My name's Macaire Moran, like you said. I've been a resident of Las Vegas since '01, so about six—seven years now. Wow. From Chicago originally and have a lot of family and friends with Argonne. I hear we've got some Argonne people in the audience. I see some fellow Chicagoans.

I have concerns, too, about energy corridor. And my concerns kind of lie along lines of this gentleman before, with the wildlife and interfering with their habitat. And mine is more not necessarily the hunting aspect of it, because I don't hunt big game, but more just the encroaching on the animals' habitat. And we get enough of the spillover down here in the valley already. I think not even a month ago, wasn't there something on the news about a mountain lion coming in people's backyard and you have to kill them. And just—I hate to hear that kind of stuff.

And placing these corridors on these sensitive, protected lands also interferes with a lot of people's recreational activities. I like to go out and hike and camp and all that. And I don't really like to do it under power lines or have to worry about energy corridors. And these—the current plans seem to focus on our old sources of energy, the coal-powered fire plans, the natural gas. And I'd like to stay more focused on solar, wind and geothermal energies and take that stuff into consideration when planning and getting easements and right-of-ways to private power or any kind of private companies in general, including mining.

But, that's probably about it. So, thanks.

Brian Mills: Thank you. Would anybody else like to speak this evening? One more. Laurie Hambaro.

Laurie Hambaro: Hi. Okay. My name's Laurie Hambaro and I'm actually from Monterey, California. And I live here in Las Vegas part time. And it took a lot of getting used to because it's very different over there by the ocean with all kinds of trees. And I learned that there's a very unique beauty to the wilderness that surrounds Las Vegas, and unique habitat, unique wildlife. And I just really feel that it's very important to appreciate that for what it is. And wilderness is not a commodity that we have too much of. We have too little of it. So, I kind of wrote up a few things here to say.

Okay. Renewable energy is the vanguard of the future. Coal pollutes the air and the water and water is a very precious resource right now. As a nation, we need to use renewable energy, sun, solar and geothermal, which I believe Nevada has a lot of, especially sun. We seem to have an endless supply of sun, even more so now that global

warming seems to be an accepted fact. And it also plays havoc with rainfall. Get too much some places, not enough other places. And I believe that in this state and in this area with the growth that we really need to concern ourselves with water.

Wildlife and wildlands give the people of Las Vegas something to be with in nature, a place to go to get out of this very crowded and intense city. And it really feeds the soul of the people who live here. That's my belief. I—like I said, it took me a little bit to appreciate it because it's very different for me.

I want to thank Congressman Harry Reid for moving forward with renewable energy at a federal level. It's definitely been a long time coming. And you know, we can see with what's going on in the Middle East that it's something that's very necessary to us as a nation and to the world because renewable energy is what is hopefully going to stop global warming. Because we can't keep on using oil, coal, things that go out into the environment and into the air.

And as far as corridors, I'm not all that up on this whole concept. But, I do know that in Alaska, for instance, when the wild animals, the caribou, come across these power lines and oil—that pipeline thing—I don't know if they have power lines up there, but I know they have a pipeline. Anyway, they—it really disrupts their herding and, you know, the way that they do things.

So, it sounds nice that we can move things from here to there, but whatever we do will definitely disrupt what's going on in the natural environment. And we need to pay attention to this.

So, that's it. Thank you.

Brian Mills:

Thank you. Are there any other people wanting to speak? We'll close the hearing and we'll reopen it if anyone else wants to speak. Thank you.