

1 BEFORE THE ARIZONA POWER PLANT LS-281

2 AND TRANSMISSION LINE SITING COMMITTEE

3 IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION) DOCKET NO.
 4 OF ARIZONA PUBLIC SERVICE) L-00000D-23-0011-
 5 COMPANY, IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE) 00214
 6 REQUIREMENTS OF ARIZONA REVISED)
 7 STATUTES 40-360, ET SEQ., FOR A) LS CASE NO. 214
 8 CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL)
 9 COMPATIBILITY AUTHORIZING)
 10 CONSTRUCTION OF AN APPROXIMATELY)
 11 0.6 MILE 500 KILOVOLT (KV))
 12 INTERCONNECTION TRANSMISSION)
 13 LINE AND AMENDING CEC 135 TO)
 14 AUTHORIZE USE OF A NEW)
 15 TRANSMISSION STRUCTURE TYPE THAT)
 16 WILL CONNECT THE PROVING GROUND)
 17 SOLAR+STORAGE PROJECT TO THE)
 18 HOODOO WASH SWITCHYARD LOCATED)
 19 NEAR DATELAND, ARIZONA WITHIN)
 20 UNINCORPORATED YUMA COUNTY,)
 21 ARIZONA.) EVIDENTIARY
 22) HEARING

15 At: Yuma, Arizona

16 Date: February 13, 2023

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18 REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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1 BE IT REMEMBERED that the above-entitled and
2 numbered matter came on regularly to be heard before the
3 Arizona Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting
4 Committee at the Four Points by Sheraton Hotel,
5 2030 South Avenue 3E, Yuma, Arizona, commencing at
6 1:04 p.m. on the 13th day of February, 2023.

7

8 BEFORE: PAUL A. KATZ, Chairman

9 GABBY SAUCEDO MERCER, Arizona Corporation Commission
10 LEONARD DRAGO, Department of Environmental Quality
11 DAVID FRENCH, Arizona Department of Water Resources
12 (via videoconference)
13 JIM PALMER, Agriculture Interests
14 MARY HAMWAY, Incorporated Cities and Towns
15 RICK GRINNELL, Counties
16 (via videoconference)
17 MARGARET "TOBY" LITTLE, PE, General Public
18 (via videoconference)

14

15

16 APPEARANCES:

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17 For the Applicant:

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- and _

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(via videoconference)

24

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1 APPEARANCES: (Cont'd)

2 For Agua Caliente Solar, LLC: (Limited appearance)

3 PERKINS COIE

4 By: Mr. Christopher D. Thomas

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6 Phoenix, Arizona 85012

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1 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Good afternoon, everyone.
2 We're getting started a couple minutes late. We're
3 about five minutes late. There's some preliminary
4 matters that we need to take care of. Just give me a
5 minute or so to make sure that...

6 My understanding is, is that we're going to run
7 today until about between 4:00 and 5:00 p.m. and our
8 public comment session is at 5:30. I'm not expecting,
9 from everything I have seen thus far, that we're going
10 to get very many people appearing at the public meeting
11 at 5:30, but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

12 Also, I do know that the Applicant, APS -- and
13 just for the record, and I don't know if I said I was
14 going on or not, but this is the hearing for CEC 214,
15 the APS or Arizona Public Service/Strata Proving Ground
16 project. And we're here in Yuma, Arizona.

17 And before we go any further, I would ask the
18 participants, starting with my far left, who are here in
19 person to identify themselves.

20 MEMBER PALMER: Yes. Jim Palmer representing
21 Agriculture.

22 MEMBER HAMWAY: Mary Hamway, Cities and Towns.

23 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Do we need a pause? We're
24 getting feedback.

25 Okay. Go ahead.

1 MEMBER DRAGO: Hi. Len Drago. I'm the
2 Director's designee for the Arizona Department of
3 Environmental Quality.

4 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And I am Paul Katz, Chairman of
5 the committee.

6 And to my right?

7 MEMBER MERCER: Gabby Saucedo Mercer. I'm the
8 Designee for the Chairman of the Arizona Corporation
9 Commission.

10 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And I believe that we have Toby
11 Little and David French appearing virtually, but I'll
12 have Toby first and then David confirm that they are
13 present and able to hear us.

14 MEMBER LITTLE: Toby Little representing the
15 Public.

16 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Thank you and welcome.

17 MEMBER FRENCH: David French, Arizona
18 Department of Water Resources designee.

19 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And do we have anybody else
20 that's appearing virtually?

21 (No response.)

22 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And just so members of the
23 committee know, Adam Stafford is going to be the new
24 Chairman of the line siting committee. He begins his
25 work in the Attorney General's Office on the 21st, and

1 he'll be handling the hearing in Cochise County on the
2 27th. Most of you have met Adam previously. He was
3 working for Western Resources Advocates.

4 And I also noted that just joining us is Rick
5 Grinnell. Is that correct, Mr. Grinnell?

6 MEMBER GRINNELL: Yes, sir. Rick Grinnell
7 representing the Counties.

8 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Thank you.

9 But anyway, as I was indicating, Adam Stafford
10 intervened on behalf of Western Resources in opposition
11 to the Randolph project, but more recently he supported
12 the solar project that I think it was the somewhat
13 controversial one in the mountains just north of Tucson.
14 And he did work for Bill Mundell as his policy advisor
15 in the Corporation Commission a number of years ago. He
16 has substantial litigation experience.

17 And he's a lot younger than I am, so he
18 probably -- unless you drive him crazy -- will probably
19 last more than the 18 or 20 months that I've been
20 privileged in working with all of you, but this is my
21 last hearing.

22 And we have taken our roll call. Also, you
23 need to let the court reporter know if you need daily
24 transcripts, but we're going to break about every hour
25 and a half, plus or minus a few minutes, to save the

1 court reporter's hands and all of our mental health
2 status.

3 I also did receive -- and I don't know if all
4 the committee members have looked at it, we have a
5 notice of appearance and consent to serve by e-mail
6 filed by Christopher D. Thomas and Andrea J. Driggs of
7 Perkins Coie law firm, and I think they just want to
8 have a limited appearance because they were requesting
9 an opportunity to have a special condition entered into.

10 I don't know if what they're requesting is
11 something that is within our jurisdiction or is
12 something that needs to be decided by the Corporation
13 Commission.

14 But if we could get you maybe at a microphone,
15 Mr. Thomas, I'll have you identify yourself for the
16 record. And just as briefly, as focused as you can, let
17 us know what your client's specific concerns are.

18 MR. THOMAS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Members.
19 I'm here on behalf of Agua Caliente Solar, which is
20 currently shut down for attachment -- or connection of
21 the McFarland Solar project. And it's about \$2 million
22 a week or so for the plant to be shut down, so we're
23 hoping things could be done as quickly as possible.

24 I don't know if this particular project with
25 the Proving Grounds will also require our facility to

1 shut down, but, if so, we would like some conditions
2 that it be done 24/7, to the extent reasonable,
3 practical, and safely so that could be established on a
4 going-forward basis as the proper approach.

5 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And have you discussed this
6 matter with Mr. Derstine or with Linda Benally at APS
7 and has there been any attempt to reach a successful
8 resolution?

9 MR. THOMAS: The client's previously traded
10 some discussion before I got involved. I had the chance
11 to talk to Mr. Derstine for the first time this morning,
12 and I think we may have a chance to talk again at
13 several breaks. But thus far, there's no agreement on
14 any sort of condition in this CEC proceeding.

15 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And do you -- you're basically
16 wanting to have an order or a condition of the CEC here
17 compelling APS to work around the clock to expedite your
18 reconnection to the transmission line. Is that
19 substantially correct?

20 MR. THOMAS: That's correct, provided doing
21 so -- it can be done so safely, reasonably, and
22 practicably. But, you know, if light of our \$2 million
23 a week cost for being shut down, we thought that's a
24 reasonable request.

25 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And was there anything in the

1 agreement that you -- do you have an agreement with APS?

2 MR. THOMAS: We have an LGIA, which basically
3 commits APS to use good utility practice, and I think
4 it's fair to say the parties have a disagreement about
5 whether a good utility practice requires them to work at
6 night.

7 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And let me just hear briefly
8 from Mr. Derstine what APS's at least current position
9 is.

10 And again, as I indicated earlier, I don't know
11 that we can compel a party who's in front of us on a
12 project unrelated to the Agua Caliente project. I don't
13 know if we have the authority to compel them to do
14 anything by way of a special condition. Obviously, if
15 they have an agreement with the Agua Caliente folks, we
16 could insert that as a condition.

17 I'm just not sure whether we have jurisdiction
18 to make that decision or whether that would be something
19 that has to be made by the Corporation Commission. If
20 we should approve the CEC here, it goes before the
21 Corporation Commission, and they have far broader
22 authority when it comes to dealing with our public
23 service corporations such as APS, SRP, and TEP.

24 But Mr. Derstine.

25 MR. DERSTINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I

1 think the question you raise is the right one. You
2 don't have jurisdiction. But a couple points to make, I
3 guess, ahead of the jurisdictional issue.

4 Agua Caliente is raising concerns over an
5 outage at the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard, which is where
6 this particular project will interconnect, but those
7 outages have nothing to do with this project. The work
8 that's being done at Hoodoo Wash, as I understand it,
9 involves replacing or expanding the ring bus
10 configuration. That's substantial work that requires an
11 outage. And so that ring bus work, if it's associated
12 with a project, it's associated with the McFarland
13 project, which is an entirely different solar project.

14 Beyond that, I guess this is the thing that and
15 the issue that I had concerns with, and I know Member
16 Grinnell shared my concern with our Coolidge hearing,
17 that somehow this committee has become the forum for
18 anyone who has a grievance with a CEC applicant to ask
19 for a condition to be inserted.

20 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And what was the substation or
21 switchyard that's been shut down at least temporarily?

22 MR. DERSTINE: It's the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard.

23 MEMBER HAMWAY: Could I ask a question?

24 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yeah.

25 MEMBER HAMWAY: So I think what Mr. Thomas is

1 saying is it's already being shut down by maintenance on
2 this Hoodoo Wash with APS maintenance. And I think he
3 wants to know is this one going to cause another
4 shutdown that's going to affect his client.

5 Am I misrepresenting what you're asking?

6 MR. THOMAS: That's correct, ma'am.

7 MR. DERSTINE: Well, I think it is a bit
8 different than what I read. In the limited appearance
9 it was "I want a condition in this one that requires
10 work around the clock 24/7."

11 Now, I don't know if that's supposed to apply
12 retroactively to the work that's being done now for a
13 project that has nothing to do with the project that
14 will be covered by the CEC.

15 But the fact of the matter is this is a -- this
16 work and the contract that Mr. Thomas is referring to is
17 a large generator interconnection agreement. That
18 interconnection agreement has dispute resolution
19 provisions. Those are the provisions that govern any
20 issues that Agua Caliente has with the work that APS is
21 doing.

22 And maybe the team can bring up the LGIA.

23 So this is an over 60-page agreement. This is
24 what is being referred to and called into question by
25 Agua Caliente. And if you can take us to Section 27.

1 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Do we have this marked as an
2 exhibit?

3 MR. DERSTINE: We have not. I'm happy to, if
4 you would like.

5 MEMBER HAMWAY: So I'm just trying to figure
6 out -- so is the maintenance being done on the Hoodoo
7 substation, is that because it needs extra capacity?

8 MR. DERSTINE: That's my understanding. It
9 needs this larger ring bus capacity to allow for all of
10 these different solar projects which are interconnecting
11 at the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard.

12 MEMBER HAMWAY: Okay. So it's being shut down
13 for -- I think you said the McFarland or the Agua
14 Caliente?

15 MR. DERSTINE: It was the McFarland, yeah.

16 MEMBER HAMWAY: So will it need to be shut down
17 again to connect this one?

18 MR. DERSTINE: It may.

19 MEMBER HAMWAY: So we don't know that.

20 MR. DERSTINE: We don't know that. And I think
21 what we do know or what I'm being told by APS is that
22 this is the significant work that's being done that
23 requires the longer outage.

24 But then once this is in place, then
25 interconnecting this project, when it's time to

1 interconnect this project, should be a much shorter and
2 easier process, and it doesn't require the extended
3 outage that Agua Caliente is facing currently.

4 MEMBER HAMWAY: And so long has that been, the
5 extended outage? What is an extended outage? What does
6 that mean to you?

7 MR. DERSTINE: I think it's -- I don't know,
8 honestly. I think it's been out for several days and
9 maybe I'll ask -- I'll check with the client.

10 We don't have current information on how long
11 it's been out. I'm sure Mr. Thomas can tell us. But it
12 may take up to three weeks for that work.

13 CHAIRMAN KATZ: An additional three weeks if
14 they're working normal daylight hours?

15 MR. DERSTINE: Depending when it started, but
16 three weeks total for the outage, to do all the work,
17 correct.

18 MR. THOMAS: Mr. Chairman, Members, I believe
19 the outage began on the 21st and was scheduled to go
20 through March 9.

21 MEMBER HAMWAY: So that's, like, six weeks?
22 The 21st of?

23 MR. THOMAS: February.

24 MEMBER HAMWAY: Oh, February. I'm sorry. I
25 thought it was already out. I thought you were --

1 MEMBER PALMER: It hasn't began.

2 MR. THOMAS: So it's roughly -- yeah, it just
3 went out -- is today the --

4 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Today is the 13th.

5 MR. THOMAS: I'm sorry. Yeah. Then it's
6 scheduled to begin the 21st and last through March 9,
7 and it's roughly three weeks.

8 MEMBER HAMWAY: Okay.

9 MEMBER GRINNELL: Mr. Chairman.

10 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, Mr. Grinnell.

11 MEMBER GRINNELL: I'm a little bit confused.
12 Is this gentleman asking to be an intervenor in this
13 process or is he just -- because he's asking for
14 something here, and I didn't hear where he was actually
15 asking to intervene.

16 CHAIRMAN KATZ: He's not applied to be an
17 intervenor and the time frame has passed for that.

18 But he's basically asked to make a special
19 appearance for purposes of just asking that we add an
20 additional condition to the CEC.

21 And I don't know whether we want to even take
22 that issue up until we've heard all of the evidence in
23 this particular case. But again, as much as I like to
24 help everybody, I don't know whether or not we have the
25 authority or jurisdiction to order an applicant to do

1 something unrelated to the project that is before us.
2 But that is something that, because APS is a regulated
3 authority, I think that the Corporation Commission might
4 have that jurisdiction, basically, to do that.

5 MR. DERSTINE: Yeah. And thank you for that,
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 I would say that, number one, the issue that
8 Mr. Thomas is raising on behalf of his client is
9 governed by the provision that's on the screen in front
10 of you, which is part of the 60-plus page document. It
11 indicates and calls out different dispute resolution
12 procedures depending on who the dispute is with.
13 There's a variety of participants and owners at Hoodoo
14 Wash. This dispute apparently falls -- I assume is
15 directed at APS because it's essentially the operator of
16 Hoodoo Wash and is performing the work.

17 But as you can see there, there's -- we can
18 scroll down if you would like, but there's different
19 steps. There is a clear contractual dispute resolution
20 provision that governs how disputes are to be handled,
21 raised, and resolved.

22 And, you know, again, getting back to whether
23 it's, you know, a request for right-of-way or it's a
24 dispute because of an outage at a switchyard that's
25 governed by a large generator interconnection agreement,

1 that's under FERC's jurisdiction. Not necessarily the
2 Corporation Commission's but under FERC's jurisdiction.

3 This isn't the committee, this isn't the place
4 to handle those disputes. And I think increasingly this
5 committee is seeing parties who have some sort of
6 grievance show up in these cases and ask for, request a
7 condition when this committee has no jurisdiction to get
8 involved in those disputes in those matters.

9 And I would say, clearly, as you can see from
10 the LGIA and the dispute resolution provision, this is
11 not an issue for this committee. And if Mr. Thomas and
12 Agua Caliente want to follow the steps in the dispute
13 resolution provision, they would ultimately file a
14 complaint at FERC. I mean, maybe they have a basis to
15 ask the Corporation Commission to weigh in, but this is
16 largely -- the LGIA and the interconnection process is
17 governed by FERC, a federal agency.

18 And so once again, this is increasingly become
19 the place for people to come and complain. It shouldn't
20 be. This committee has no jurisdiction over this kind
21 of an issue.

22 And I suggest that you have no basis to insert
23 a condition in a CEC for a project that has nothing to
24 do with the outage that they're -- Agua Caliente is
25 complaining about.

1 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Anything further, Mr. Thomas?

2 MR. THOMAS: Yeah. Mr. Chairman, if I may, I
3 apologize for the confusion. I certainly didn't want to
4 hijack your hearing as a limited intervenor.

5 CHAIRMAN KATZ: You're not. I just wanted to
6 know what you want, and I don't know whether we'll
7 decide this matter right now by a vote or wait until
8 after when we're reviewing this CEC.

9 MR. THOMAS: Understood. And I certainly think
10 it's a fair issue to wonder whether you have
11 jurisdiction to sort of insert a condition into the
12 already granted McFarland CEC application. Understand
13 that's -- that horse is out of the barn.

14 On the other hand, as Member Hamway pointed
15 out, it appears that we're going to have at least
16 another outage from this -- associated with this very
17 project, and the Commission does have jurisdiction to
18 impose reasonable conditions on the granting of a CEC.

19 And so to set a precedent for what happens in
20 the future, we also would like to request that APS be
21 obliged to do its work, when there are outages to
22 accommodate upgrades and addition of new generating
23 facilities, that those be done 24/7 if that's reasonable
24 and practicable.

25 So if this is not the forum to reopen the

1 McFarland CEC to impose that condition retroactively, so
2 be it. We'll deal with the LGIA.

3 But certainly as to this particular CEC and
4 those going forward, I think that's something within
5 your jurisdiction.

6 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Member Hamway.

7 MEMBER HAMWAY: I just have one quick question.

8 So do your clients know that the Hoodoo Wash
9 potentially needed to be upgraded? Is that something
10 they were aware of when they chose that location?

11 MR. THOMAS: Yes, Mr. Chairman, Member Hamway.
12 Yes, they were -- they're in business now, obviously,
13 and they were in communication with APS about the
14 shutdown issue and unsuccessfully asked APS to make it
15 faster than three weeks.

16 MEMBER HAMWAY: Okay. Thank you.

17 MEMBER GRINNELL: Mr. Chairman.

18 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, sir.

19 MEMBER GRINNELL: I would move that we not
20 accept this tentative intervenor, or whatever, this
21 condition as part of this process. We're becoming more
22 of a judiciary instead of just a reviewer of the
23 application and the qualifications under the laws that
24 we are required to follow. And I just -- this is
25 becoming more and more of a...

1 Anyway, I move that we not accept this
2 opportunity at this time.

3 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And is there a second? Because
4 we can either do it now or we can wait until we're
5 resolving the CEC.

6 MEMBER MERCER: I second.

7 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Any further discussion?

8 MEMBER LITTLE: Mr. Chairman.

9 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, Member Little.

10 MEMBER LITTLE: My feeling is that this
11 intervenor or this observer should be allowed to be
12 present but only so far as what is discussed in this
13 hearing has to do with this particular case.

14 In other words, as was discussed by Member
15 Hamway, if there needs to be or if this attorney feels
16 that there needs to be a condition in there that
17 specifies how outages occur at the substation when the
18 interconnection is made for this particular project.

19 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Just so everyone understands,
20 there is no right to intervene, but he can make a
21 special appearance, and I could have held him here until
22 5:30 tonight and made it part of our public comment.

23 But I just wanted to get the matter out in
24 front of us. And we can either have a further
25 discussion of the motion that was made by Member

1 Grinnell. I believe it was seconded. We could have
2 discussion, or we could have a motion to postpone a
3 ruling until we're resolving the CEC. It doesn't matter
4 to me.

5 But as I expressed to all of you, there is a
6 mechanism for dispute resolution. It may not be swift,
7 and I don't know whether there's a means of expediting
8 it.

9 But I would like to have at least Article
10 No. 27 of the agreement that is up on the screen, which
11 is at Page 55, I believe -- unless you want to admit the
12 whole thing -- but I would like to have you,
13 Mr. Derstine, perhaps mark that as an exhibit.

14 MR. DERSTINE: I'm happy to mark the entire
15 LGIA as an exhibit.

16 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Okay. Well, then, we'll have
17 that marked and admitted. And I don't know what
18 exhibit number that will be, but you don't --

19 MR. DERSTINE: It will become APS-19.

20 CHAIRMAN KATZ: APS-19 will be admitted.

21 Now, we can have discussion as to whether or
22 not we want to say no right now to directing inserting a
23 special condition to require APS to work 24/7 in order
24 to expedite this.

25 And I believe Mr. Grinnell has moved to say no,

1 and I believe there was a second. Was that Member
2 Hamway?

3 MEMBER MERCER: No. Me.

4 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Oh, that was Member Mercer.
5 And is there any further discussion?

6 MEMBER LITTLE: Mr. Chairman, would you repeat
7 the -- what is being proposed here? What Mr. Grinnell
8 proposed?

9 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Would you restate your motion,
10 Mr. Grinnell.

11 MEMBER GRINNELL: Yes, sir.

12 I move that we not allow any discussion
13 regarding APS's work time frames as part of this CEC
14 application.

15 CHAIRMAN KATZ: That's with respect to the Agua
16 Caliente project.

17 MEMBER GRINNELL: Yes, sir.

18 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And that was seconded.
19 Any further discussion?

20 (No response.)

21 CHAIRMAN KATZ: All in favor.

22 MEMBER HAMWAY: Could you take a roll call
23 vote?

24 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, let's do that.

25 I'll start with Mr. Palmer. How do you vote

1 with respect to the motion to deny the possible
2 insertion of a special condition as proposed by
3 Mr. Grinnell?

4 MEMBER PALMER: I vote aye.

5 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Member Hamway.

6 MEMBER HAMWAY: You know, I'm always reluctant
7 to tell companies how to run their business, and so I
8 would never propose that I could tell APS, even if we
9 had the authority to do that. And, unfortunately, I
10 kind of think this is the cost of doing business, solar
11 business.

12 So I'm going to vote to not allow it. Is that
13 a "yes" or a "no"?

14 CHAIRMAN KATZ: That would be a "yes" or an
15 "aye" vote.

16 MEMBER HAMWAY: An aye. So aye.

17 MEMBER DRAGO: I vote aye.

18 MEMBER MERCER: I vote aye.

19 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And Member Little.

20 MEMBER LITTLE: I do not believe that we have
21 the authority to discuss anything having to do with
22 another project.

23 And I also vote aye.

24 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Mr. French.

25 MEMBER FRENCH: I vote aye.

1 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Mr. Grinnell.

2 You're muted, Mr. Grinnell.

3 MEMBER GRINNELL: I vote aye, sir.

4 CHAIRMAN KATZ: I will vote aye as well.

5 As much as I am empathetic to the Agua Caliente
6 project, they need to exercise their rights under
7 Article 23 of what has been marked as Exhibit 27 --
8 excuse me -- Article 27 as what's been marked as
9 Exhibit APS-19.

10 And I would hope that based upon the
11 interconnection agreement between APS and Agua Caliente
12 that they can peacefully resolve this. Otherwise, there
13 may be a loss of three weeks or so of business, which is
14 a substantial loss, but that's something that might be
15 able to be resolved in a court of law or a special
16 condition could be imposed. But I believe that that
17 would have to either be by FERC or the Arizona
18 Corporation Commission.

19 So I thank you for being here. You're welcome
20 to remain with us if you wish. We'll have public
21 comment at 5:30. But I understand your position and I
22 am empathetic to it, but I don't want to exceed this
23 committee' jurisdiction to handle matters that only
24 apply to this particular --

25 MR. THOMAS: Understood, Mr. Chairman, Members.

1 Thank you so much for your time and attention. And I
2 may hang around just since it's your swan song.

3 CHAIRMAN KATZ: You're more than welcome to do
4 that. And that being said, I just have another matter
5 that we need to -- I just need to make a note as to what
6 we did.

7 Also, Mr. Derstine, we talked at a prehearing
8 conference about a possible tour. I think that you,
9 with my belief or rejoinder in that, feel that a tour is
10 unnecessary, but I'm not going to preempt the committee
11 from conducting -- having you conduct a tour.

12 But why is it that you think we shouldn't or
13 don't need to have a tour?

14 And I also should also note for the record, we
15 do have our wonderful member -- Counsel Linda Benally,
16 counsel for APS, who has joined us virtually. She's
17 been listening to the last discussion and is here also
18 on behalf of APS.

19 Mr. Derstine.

20 MR. DERSTINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
21 jumped in with talking without stating my appearance
22 formally or stating Ms. Benally's appearance. I
23 appreciate that. We're both appearing on behalf of the
24 Applicant.

25 As to a tour, this project -- and if it's

1 helpful, we can pull up Google Earth, I think, and show
2 you, but this project is approximately 50 miles east of
3 here out in general unincorporated Yuma County. There
4 is the segment of -- or this project consists of
5 approximately 3,000 feet.

6 And so there are no -- unlike maybe some prior
7 cases that you have heard, maybe even prior cases you
8 have dealt with here in Yuma, there really are no
9 residences in any proximity to this project. It's
10 surrounded by open desert.

11 And as you have heard from our discussion over
12 the limited appearance of Agua Caliente that you have
13 the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard. You have two solar
14 projects. Agua Caliente is completed. There's the
15 McFarland project that's under construction. And then
16 you have some agricultural lands a little bit further to
17 the west. And so there really is nothing surrounding
18 this project.

19 And so given the short length of the actual
20 interconnection project, 3,000 feet, and the time it
21 will take, approximately an hour to drive back down the
22 freeway to Dateland, get off at the Dateland exit, drive
23 another 15 minutes in to see what would be a two-stop
24 tour, one from where the 3,000-foot gen-tie line would
25 start at the project sub and where it would end at this

1 Hoodoo Wash Switchyard, I think there just really isn't
2 anything to see here that a tour would help inform the
3 committee of.

4 So my suggestion is -- it's always certainly
5 within the committee's discretion, and we have made
6 arrangements for a vehicle and to take the tour if
7 that's your pleasure, but I suggest that there's little
8 value and benefit to the committee in rendering its
9 decision in this case from a tour.

10 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Okay. And let me just also ask
11 that -- we don't go anywhere near any residential
12 subdivisions or industrial sites?

13 MR. DERSTINE: That is correct. And I'm happy
14 to -- I think it will take us a minute, but we can
15 probably pull up Google Earth if you would like to see,
16 have a little better view of the project area if that's
17 helpful in deciding whether to take that tour.

18 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Let me just ask if we have a
19 motion to take or not take a tour. And if there's a
20 dispute between the members of the committee, we can
21 always post a map unless somebody wants it posted right
22 now.

23 MEMBER PALMER: Mr. Chairman, I'm somewhat
24 familiar with that area out there, and I agree with the
25 assertion that a tour probably doesn't gain us a whole

1 lot, and I'm willing to make a motion to not take the
2 tour.

3 MEMBER HAMWAY: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Any further discussion?

5 (No response.)

6 CHAIRMAN KATZ: All in favor of us not taking a
7 tour -- and we are going to have a visual flyover that
8 shows us where we're at and also depicts from points of
9 interest how things appear now and how they will likely
10 appear once the project is completed.

11 MR. DERSTINE: That's correct, Mr. Chairman.

12 CHAIRMAN KATZ: All in favor of not taking a
13 tour, please say aye.

14 (A chorus of ayes.)

15 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Anybody opposed?

16 (No response.)

17 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Hearing nothing, I think we
18 are -- I just have a couple more things to ask.

19 We don't have any objections from -- well, who
20 are the affected jurisdictions?

21 MR. DERSTINE: There's really one affected
22 jurisdiction. That's Yuma County. But we have included
23 under the category and provided notice to the Bureau of
24 Land Management and Arizona State Land Department.

25 I think under the definition of the statute,

1 those two agencies don't necessarily constitute
2 jurisdictions, but we've noticed those three parties as
3 our quote-unquote affected jurisdictions.

4 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And we don't have any NEPA
5 involvement in this project or do we?

6 MR. DERSTINE: We do. There was a NEPA process
7 that is largely complete, and we'll hear testimony on
8 the status of the NEPA process. There was an EA process
9 or an EA was issued by the Bureau of Land Management.
10 Then there were some minor -- and they, in connection
11 with that, granted the right-of-way for the project that
12 crosses land owned or controlled by BLM.

13 Since that time, then there was some minor
14 modification of the route which required that the
15 Applicant go back to the Bureau and ask for a slight
16 modification of the EA. That request is under review,
17 and we anticipate that that will be granted without any
18 real concern or changes to the EA.

19 So there was a federal permitting process.
20 It's complete subject to the amendment of the EA to
21 capture the minor changes in the interconnection route.

22 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And that was done -- was that
23 by the BLM?

24 MR. DERSTINE: BLM was the agency that handled
25 the permitting process, yes.

1 CHAIRMAN KATZ: I think, then, we're pretty
2 well set to get ourselves going with respect to this
3 particular hearing. If you have some opening remarks,
4 you can proceed with those.

5 And then we can administer an oath or
6 affirmation. It looks like we have Jill Grams, Dean
7 Hazle, and Collin Ramsey present as witnesses.

8 Are there any other witnesses that will be
9 called?

10 MR. DERSTINE: We don't anticipate -- we've
11 identified and submitted a witness summary for
12 Mr. Spitzkoff on behalf of APS in the event that there's
13 any questions that our esteemed panel are not able to
14 fully answer. But we anticipate that Ms. Grams,
15 Mr. Hazle, and Mr. Ramsey will be our only witnesses for
16 the case.

17 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And my last question is did you
18 get a letter from the Arizona Corporation Commission
19 either blessing, staying neutral, or condemning this
20 project? Because I don't believe I have a copy,
21 although if we recently got it, Tod might have put it in
22 my notebook. I just haven't directly seen it.

23 MR. DERSTINE: I don't think we had received
24 that letter from Commission Staff by the time of our
25 prehearing conference, but since then we did. It's

1 marked as an exhibit. It's APS Exhibit No. 16.

2 And if you don't have a copy, Mr. Chairman,
3 we'll make sure that you get one. But it is included in
4 the iPads and all of the APS exhibits.

5 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Okay.

6 MEMBER GRINNELL: Mr. Chairman.

7 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, sir.

8 MEMBER GRINNELL: Point of information. I did
9 receive, via certified mail today, the letter from the
10 Corporation Commission Staff, basically, supporting this
11 project.

12 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Just give me a second.

13 Okay. I know we'll admit Exhibit 16. We're
14 likely going to admit most of your exhibits because
15 there are very few folks here that really have any
16 standing to object. Obviously, the committee, if they
17 don't agree with an evidentiary ruling that I might
18 make, can speak up.

19 But at this point in time, feel free to begin.
20 I don't think there's any other preliminary matters that
21 we need to address.

22 MR. DERSTINE: All right. Thank you. I do
23 have what I think is a short opening, but I guess that's
24 in the ears and the eyes of the beholder. Let's see.

25 I'm happy to welcome you back to Yuma. I

1 understand you were here two weeks ago for another
2 project on the west side of town. This project is on
3 the east side of town, as I indicated, about 50 miles to
4 the east over in Dateland. That project, as I
5 understand it, was approximately nine-plus miles long.

6 As I mentioned, this project is about 3,000
7 feet long. So I think it does fall within the category
8 of the short gen-tie project that we've all grown to
9 love through -- over the couple years. And so many of
10 the cases that this committee is hearing recently are
11 these short gen-tie cases, and so it's probably fitting,
12 Mr. Chairman, that your last case is a short gen-tie
13 case.

14 But let me tell you about this project and what
15 is important about it. A little bit of project history.
16 This project was originally developed by Strata Clean
17 Energy. Strata developed the solar project which is at
18 the end of the line and includes a storage -- battery
19 energy storage system as part of that solar project, as
20 just about all of these new solar projects do. And that
21 also includes the interconnection project, this 500kV
22 gen-tie line.

23 APS acquired the project in 2022. And so as
24 you note from your caption and my appearance, APS is the
25 Applicant for the CEC, but Strata is remaining because

1 they were the developer and knows the project history
2 and was involved with this project from the beginning.
3 Strata and Mr. Ramsey will be testifying in support of
4 the CEC application, along with our two witnesses on
5 behalf of the environmental consulting firm SWCA.

6 Purpose and need of the project is very
7 straightforward. It's to interconnect the solar project
8 to the grid at the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard. Important
9 from the standpoint of expanding not only Arizona's but
10 the Southwest region's renewable energy portfolio and
11 clean energy resources that are available to serve the
12 electric needs of the residents of this state and
13 businesses in this area.

14 Project description. 500kV line, single
15 circuit. Total length, as I had indicated, 3,000 feet
16 from the project substation to the Hoodoo Wash
17 Switchyard.

18 And you may want to -- I think you have a
19 placemat in front of you. I want to make clear that the
20 gen-tie, the piece of this project that is before you as
21 the Proving Ground interconnection project, if you look
22 on the back page of your placemat with the light blue
23 land jurisdiction called out, that dark red line is this
24 project that's covered by the application.

25 The blue box then to the left of the dark red

1 line is the 69kV to 500kV project substation. And then
2 to get the energy from the solar project to the project
3 substation, the blue rectangle at the far right -- near
4 the far right corner of your placemat, there is a double
5 circuit 69kV line that runs from the solar project,
6 approximately five miles, to get to the project
7 substation, the step-up substation that then transforms
8 the power, pushes it up to 500kV where it interconnects
9 at Hoodoo Wash.

10 Hoodoo Wash is only a 500kV switchyard and,
11 therefore, that's the reason for that second step-up
12 substation. So there is a step-up substation that takes
13 the energy from the solar field, steps it up to 69kV,
14 and then it runs on that double circuit, that dotted red
15 line, to get to the actual project substation which
16 steps up the energy to 500kV. And then you see the
17 3,000-foot long length of 500kV line that is covered by
18 the CEC application.

19 So that's how we get from here to there.

20 MEMBER LITTLE: Mr. Chairman.

21 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, Member Little.

22 MEMBER LITTLE: Mr. Derstine, I'm sorry to
23 interrupt you, but I'm curious. When I was reading the
24 application, most often the substation -- the step-up
25 substation is included as part of the project and under

1 our jurisdiction, and I'm curious as to why it is not in
2 this case?

3 MR. DERSTINE: Mr. Chairman, Member Little, I
4 think in -- I think that many projects, and certainly a
5 number of projects that I have handled, we have not
6 included substations, per se, in the authorization
7 granted by the CEC, largely for -- well, one, it's a
8 statutory interpretation because the siting statute
9 calls out switchyards but doesn't reference substations,
10 but also for the practical reason that the final
11 location of the substation may change, and, therefore,
12 it's very difficult, then, to ultimately predict with a
13 project that's still just being mapped out and securing
14 right-of-way to come up with a final location for a
15 substation.

16 So what we do is call out, to the best of our
17 ability based on the latest engineering plans and
18 drawings, where that step-up substation will be located
19 but don't expressly permit or authorize the substation
20 in the CEC.

21 I know there's been some back and forth, and
22 I've certainly been a part of it in prior cases, about
23 whether the committee has jurisdiction over a
24 quote-unquote substation as opposed to a switchyard.
25 We're certainly not interested in engaging in that

1 discussion here.

2 And if you think it's important to call out the
3 location of that 69kV step-up substation, we're happy to
4 do that as part of the CEC if that's important to you,
5 Member Little.

6 MEMBER LITTLE: I was mostly curious.

7 I also am curious, but my -- the cases in which
8 I have participated over the years also, generally
9 speaking, the voltage is stepped up once and then the
10 gen-tie is whatever the ultimate voltage is that it will
11 need to tie into the system.

12 I'm curious why such a long 69kV line, which
13 sort of appears that you're enabling a short gen-tie.

14 MR. DERSTINE: I'm happy to have -- I think one
15 or both of our witnesses can speak to the design and why
16 it is what it is, why there is approximately five miles
17 of 69kV line.

18 I think one of the primary considerations, it
19 is much less expensive than -- you would have to run
20 five miles plus 3,000 feet of 500kV line from the actual
21 solar project to get over to Hoodoo Wash. And so by
22 utilizing double-circuit 69kV -- and the structures are
23 not as tall. It's less of a visual impact on the
24 environment as well.

25 And so by utilizing the double-circuit 69kV,

1 we're able to get, essentially, the same energy over to
2 the -- much closer proximity, 3,000 feet away from the
3 Hoodoo Wash Switchyard, and then step it up at that
4 point to the 500kV level where it needs to interconnect
5 at Hoodoo Wash.

6 So I think -- the bottom line, I think it's
7 much less expensive, less environmental impact. But I
8 think it's an important consideration, and we'll make
9 sure our witnesses address it.

10 MEMBER LITTLE: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And again, I'll have you have
12 your witnesses address it because you're just giving
13 your overview.

14 MR. DERSTINE: That's right. I think the
15 testimony and the evidence will be in line with what
16 I -- with my opening and my comments, Member Little.
17 But I am frequently wrong, so we'll see what the
18 testimony and the evidence actually says.

19 So the last piece here is, in the project
20 description, I had mentioned the 3,000 feet long. The
21 1,000 feet -- another important factor and part of this
22 case is that 1,000 feet of that 3,000-foot 500kV line is
23 going to be co-located with an existing 500kV line
24 that's already there.

25 So let me jump you to the next slide.

1 So the new 500kV line from the interconnection
2 project is going to be co-located with the Hassayampa to
3 North Gila line, it's referred to. That's HANG2.
4 There's a HANG1 line that comes into Hoodoo Wash, and
5 then there is also the HANG2 line.

6 The interconnection project, the new 500kV
7 line, will be co-located with the HANG2 on about a
8 1,000-foot segment, and we'll show that here in a minute
9 on another map.

10 HANG2, as I mentioned, is its own single-
11 circuit 500kV line. We'll be converting two of the
12 HANG2 structures to a double circuit to allow them to
13 carry the new 500kV circuits, and all that will be part
14 of this project. And it minimizes the impacts of the
15 project by using some of the structures and the line
16 that is already there.

17 We're able to co-locate, place the new 500kV
18 line on the existing line. We don't have to disturb
19 another path, create a separate transmission line.
20 We're able to put them both together by simply changing
21 out some of the structures and altering the alignment of
22 HANG2 slightly to accommodate both the new 500kV circuit
23 and the existing 500kV circuit.

24 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And I think the existing was
25 approved in CEC 135. I don't know whether there's any

1 requirement for any amendment, but I do need to ask
2 whether APS has either ownership or control of that
3 existing single-circuit line because you're going to be
4 using poles, and you either need the authority by way of
5 an agreement or by way of ownership to touch those poles
6 to string a second circuit.

7 MR. DERSTINE: Yeah, you're absolutely correct,
8 Mr. Chairman. And yes, APS does -- is a participant and
9 owner of the HANG2 line. And yes, we are seeking
10 through this process and our proposed form of CEC seeks
11 to amend CEC 135 to allow us to convert just two
12 structures and to make other minor changes to the HANG2
13 line as covered by CEC 135. And so that will be part of
14 the testimony and the evidence you'll hear.

15 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And I think this committee can
16 authorize the hanging of that second circuit, but you
17 may need to go to the Corporation Commission when this
18 matter comes before them to seek a formal amendment of
19 CEC 135.

20 MR. DERSTINE: Yeah. So I think in prior
21 cases, and I've been involved with at least two that we
22 have, through the process before this committee, amended
23 existing CECs so long as we have provided notice in that
24 separate CEC docket -- which we have done here -- that
25 we have, through the Certificate of Environmental

1 Compatibility heard by and granted by this committee,
2 then amended an existing CEC to allow the new line, the
3 new project to be, in most cases, co-located with an
4 existing line and to amend the existing CEC to authorize
5 that work.

6 And so that will all come before the Commission
7 under the -- when this CEC, assuming you decide to grant
8 it, when this goes before the Commission, then they can
9 consider whether there's a sufficient record and whether
10 they approve the amendment of the other CEC for the
11 co-location. But it's certainly a part of this project
12 and something that will be covered under our proposed
13 form of CEC.

14 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And I'm assuming it will also
15 be covered during the course of your witnesses'
16 testimony.

17 MR. DERSTINE: That's correct, yes. Let me
18 show you and give you a little bit more detail on what
19 that looks like.

20 So you can see this project will require the
21 first structure that comes out of the 69kV step-up
22 substation is a new single-circuit structure. It just
23 carries the new Proving Ground 500kV line. Then the
24 second structure is an existing HANG2 structure. It's
25 now a single-circuit structure. That will be converted

1 to -- the existing pole will be wrecked out and will be
2 replaced with a new double-circuit structure to carry
3 both HANG2 and the interconnection project.

4 Then the third structure that's being circled
5 there is a new double-circuit structure. There's not an
6 existing HANG2 at that third -- if we can move over to
7 the third triangle, whoever is tracing there, all the
8 way to the end -- almost to the end where the green
9 laser pointer is. There. That's the third structure.
10 That's a new double-circuit structure that will carry
11 both the HANG2 500kV line and the Proving Ground 500kV
12 line.

13 And then this is where the Proving Ground line
14 separates from HANG2 to the fourth structure. There is
15 an existing HANG2 structure, but that's going to be
16 replaced with a new structure that has a different
17 orientation that will carry just the Proving Ground
18 500kV circuit. And then the HANG2 line will continue on
19 its path to an existing structure as you can see on the
20 yellow line that's shown there in terms of its direction
21 and alignment.

22 So that is the work that's being done for this
23 project as well as the modification, the amendment of
24 CEC 135, essentially, for those two structures that are
25 in the middle of the four structures that comprise this

1 project.

2 So you'll hear more testimony about that and
3 better explanation.

4 Yes. I think I heard a question.

5 MEMBER GRINNELL: Mr. Chairman.

6 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, Member Grinnell.

7 MEMBER GRINNELL: I'm looking at what was sent,
8 and I'm noticing the right-of-way.

9 Has that right-of-way already been established,
10 and who owns the right-of-way, and who owns all the
11 property that you're working with on that right-of-way?

12 MR. DERSTINE: So you'll hear testimony from
13 our witnesses in terms of ownership and the jurisdiction
14 of the land. Some of that is privately owned. You can
15 see when that -- the transition color there goes from
16 the tan to white. The white is private land. I think
17 some of that is owned by Agua Caliente that APS and the
18 other owners of the Hoodoo Switchyard have an easement
19 to cross.

20 And then the portion in tan -- and I'm going to
21 look at my witnesses, but I think that's Bureau of Land
22 Management owned land. So those are the two owners
23 there that you can see.

24 And so the right-of-way, as I indicated
25 previously in response to the question from the

1 Chairman, part of that BLM permitting process was to
2 secure the right-of-way and the authorization to cross
3 and to place these facilities on the BLM land. That
4 also includes the 69kV substation as well as the 69kV
5 line that we talked about or mentioned a bit earlier in
6 my presentation.

7 All of that is governed by the BLM and the EA
8 process that is essentially complete, as I indicated,
9 with a slight modification for the final design of this
10 interconnection project.

11 Did that answer your question, Member Grinnell?

12 MEMBER GRINNELL: Yeah. I was just trying to
13 clarify for my own edification. Thank you.

14 MR. DERSTINE: Okay. Thank you.

15 So that's the route. That's the project.
16 That's the 3,000 feet, with that 1,000-foot segment in
17 the middle being where we're co-locating the new Proving
18 Ground line with the HANG2 line.

19 Yeah. So route corridor and right-of-way,
20 again, single route, 3,000 feet long. The corridor is
21 this -- that we're requesting is this yellow rectangle.

22 I directed you to the placemat. If you flip
23 that over, you can see the yellow box. That's the
24 corridor that we're requesting from the 69kV step-up
25 substation, then covers over to get us into the Hoodoo

1 Wash Switchyard.

2 Again, the committee is familiar with that kind
3 of a larger corridor for final design and final
4 engineering of the interconnection project. It gives us
5 the flexibility to put the structures where they need to
6 be and to work around and minimize any sort of
7 environmental issues or other things that we find on the
8 ground. And then the requested right-of-way is
9 200 feet.

10 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And just so you know, what we
11 did in our last hearing, because a portion of it was on
12 the Goldwater Range and was about a 7,000-foot wide
13 corridor, and the CEC did require that, ultimately, the
14 actual right-of-way in which the line would be placed
15 would not exceed, in that case, 120 feet. In this case,
16 maybe 200 feet.

17 MR. DERSTINE: Yeah.

18 CHAIRMAN KATZ: But the Corporation Commission
19 has previously requested through Tod and then to me that
20 we have the map that's Exhibit A attached to the CEC
21 that depicts the corridor, but we may want to just
22 indicate that the route itself is limited to a width of
23 X, Y, or Z.

24 MR. DERSTINE: We'll make sure. We'll
25 double-check how we've called that out. We certainly do

1 include and have included the map that you see before
2 you as part of our description of the corridor as an
3 exhibit to the CEC. We'll make sure the corridor width
4 is also called out.

5 But that 200 feet aligns with the 200 feet that
6 we've requested from the Bureau of Land Management and
7 has been authorized through their permitting process.

8 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Okay. And also, I don't know
9 whether -- we gave Adam Stafford the link, but I don't
10 know if Tod gave him the public link or our meeting
11 link.

12 I see Mr. Stafford. Welcome.

13 And I just invited him to witness this
14 proceeding, not necessarily to watch the whole thing,
15 but at least to see how we get things started. So he
16 may come and go, but he will be taking charge. I'll be
17 working with him in our office beginning on the 21st,
18 next week, and I'm confident that he'll be ready to go.

19 And even though I will be retired, I'm
20 available to help this committee on a volunteer basis as
21 might be needed but not to serve as a member of the
22 committee.

23 That all being said, are you ready to begin
24 your questioning of your witnesses or is there anything
25 further?

1 MR. DERSTINE: Yeah. I have a few slides here.
2 Just the federal permitting, which I think I've already
3 covered. The project does involve BLM land. There was
4 an EA that was completed for the transmission line, the
5 project subs, and the access roads. That was granted.
6 That's under review for the minor notification.

7 The testimony you'll hear from the
8 environmental witness, Ms. Grams and Mr. Hazle are,
9 essentially, as I had indicated when we talked about
10 whether or not a tour was needed or appropriate. The
11 project is located in unincorporated Yuma County on
12 vacant land, open desert, with some surrounding
13 agricultural operations. It's adjacent to the existing
14 switchyard and other solar projects.

15 And the testimony you'll hear is that there
16 will be minimal impact on land use, any of the
17 biological resources, recreation, cultural resources, or
18 scenic areas.

19 There was public outreach for this project and
20 you'll hear testimony on it. There was an in-person
21 open house as well as kind of a videotaped presentation
22 concerning the project that could be found on the
23 project website. Essentially, it took the place of a --
24 in lieu of a virtual open house.

25 The Applicant also used newsletters, newspaper

1 ads, as I mentioned, two project websites. APS included
2 this on their project website, and then Strata had
3 always maintained a project website. So there were two
4 websites where this information concerning this project
5 could be found. And social media was used, along with
6 the various mailings to publicize the project and this
7 hearing. And not surprisingly, there's been minimal
8 public interest due to the remote location of the
9 project.

10 You see our three witnesses there. We will
11 have the slides, and there will be a flyover simulation.
12 And I think we'll start that with a Google Earth, which
13 will give you kind of a bird's eye, Chinese-balloon view
14 of the project area.

15 And that's it. So it's -- you know, we talked
16 about short gen-tie projects, but this is a good
17 project. It's been well-planned. It's in a good
18 location. You know, whether or not these sorts of cases
19 should be before this committee, I think, you know, I
20 understand where we're -- I think we're all aligned on
21 that and we're looking and watching what the legislature
22 is doing with the current House Bill that's come out of
23 the Energy Committee.

24 But these projects are important, and we
25 certainly appreciate your time, your willingness. For

1 those of you who drove to Yuma and for those of you
2 appearing virtually, we appreciate your time hearing
3 this case.

4 And, Mr. Chairman, we certainly appreciate your
5 service over -- I guess it's getting close to two years
6 or maybe longer now.

7 CHAIRMAN KATZ: It won't be two years until
8 September, so it's about 18 or 19 months. I didn't
9 count the days.

10 MR. DERSTINE: Well, I won't ask you to.

11 CHAIRMAN KATZ: We've done about -- I think
12 this is about our 25th or 26th project since I served,
13 after being told by my predecessor that there were three
14 or four of these hearings a year.

15 MR. DERSTINE: Well, yes, we understand how
16 that went.

17 CHAIRMAN KATZ: But hopefully the legislature
18 will present us with a kosher piece of legislation and
19 not sausage.

20 MEMBER HAMWAY: I think you should expect
21 sausage.

22 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Been there and done that
23 before.

24 So that all being said, are we ready to go?

25 MR. DERSTINE: We're ready. The witnesses are

1 ready to be sworn.

2 MEMBER LITTLE: Mr. Chairman.

3 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes.

4 MEMBER LITTLE: I'm looking at the maps that
5 were in the application, and I don't see any of the maps
6 that have the -- they show the right-of-way but not the
7 corridor.

8 And it sounded like maybe there was a map that
9 was shown there in the room that showed the corridor.
10 I'm wondering if maybe that could be shown so that those
11 of us that are not present could see it briefly.

12 MR. DERSTINE: That map, Mr. Chairman, Member
13 Little, that map is part of the -- will be part of the
14 testimony. And you'll see that, I think, in our
15 PowerPoint slide presentation. So that absolutely will
16 be covered.

17 I don't think we had finalized the corridor map
18 yet at the time the application was filed, but it
19 certainly will be part of the record in this case and
20 you will see it.

21 MEMBER LITTLE: Thank you so much.

22 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Thank you.

23 Now that we're about ready to hear from our
24 panel of witnesses, Jill Grams, Dean Hazle, and Collin
25 Ramsey, and I think their name certificates are clear

1 enough, if we have good vision, so we get the proper
2 spellings of their name.

3 But does the panel prefer -- and we can do
4 both, depending on whether you're together or divided,
5 but I can administer either an oath or an affirmation.

6 So is there any feeling one way or the other
7 for all of you? And if not, we can do oaths and
8 affirmations depending on your preference.

9 MR. HAZLE: We'll do an affirmation as a panel.

10 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Okay. I would ask you to raise
11 your right hands. You don't need to stand up.

12 (JILL GRAMS, DEAN HAZLE, AND COLLIN RAMSEY WERE
13 DULY AFFIRMED, EN MASSE, BY THE CHAIRMAN.)

14 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Thank you very much.

15 And you're welcome to begin your presentation.

16 MR. DERSTINE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17

18 JILL GRAMS,

19 DEAN HAZLE, AND COLLIN RAMSEY,

20 called as witnesses as a panel on behalf of Applicant,
21 having been previously affirmed by the Chairman to speak
22 the truth and nothing but the truth, were examined and
23 testified as follows:

24

25

1 DIRECT EXAMINATION

2

3 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) We'll start by introducing
4 our witness panel.

5 Mr. Ramsey, we're going to start with you.
6 Using your slide, give the committee a little bit of
7 your work experience, your education, and your
8 background.

9 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Of course.

10 Good afternoon. My name is a Collin Ramsey.
11 I'm a development manager with Strata Clean Energy. I
12 have roughly about 13 years' of experience in the
13 renewable -- development of renewable energy space,
14 primarily focused on environmental land use and
15 regulatory permitting.

16 Q. Mr. Ramsey, I'm going to ask you, just for the
17 benefit of the court reporter, to slow down your cadence
18 a little bit.

19 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Sure.

20 Q. I know all of that. I have heard it before,
21 but I don't think she has and the committee hasn't. So
22 if you just slow down a bit, that will be helpful.

23 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Sure.

24 From an education standpoint, I got by master's
25 of science at the University -- or excuse me -- Cal

1 State University, Fullerton. And bachelor's of arts
2 degree at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

3 Q. And, Mr. Ramsey, you are the senior development
4 manager for Strata. As I mentioned in the opening,
5 Strata is the original developer of this project.

6 Maybe this is a good time to have you give the
7 committee a little background on Strata Clean Energy.

8 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Sure.

9 Strata Clean Energy has been around for about
10 15 years. We're based out of Durham, North Carolina.
11 Over those 15 years, we've constructed 250 or 250-plus
12 renewable energy projects. We've developed four
13 gigawatts of solar, solar plus storage, and stand-alone
14 storage projects.

15 Currently under our management and operations
16 is 4 gigawatts of renewable energy projects, and we
17 currently have roughly 14 gigawatts of renewable energy
18 projects in our pipeline.

19 Q. Okay. Mr. Hazle, I think you were -- I
20 mentioned the case that this committee heard in Yuma
21 about two weeks ago. I think you were a part of that
22 case, but go ahead and remind the committee of who you
23 are and give them a little more background on yourself.

24 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yeah, sure.

25 My name is Dean Hazle. I work for SWCA

1 Environmental Consultants where I'm an environmental
2 planner and project manager, primarily focusing on
3 renewable energy developments and their associated
4 transmission lines.

5 My business address is 1645 South Plaza Way in
6 Flagstaff, Arizona. I hold a bachelor's of science in
7 geology from Hope College in Holland, Michigan.

8 I have about a decade of renewable energy sort
9 of infrastructure siting experience both in state
10 government and directly in industry and as a consultant
11 similar to my time with SWCA here.

12 Prior to joining SWCA, I was the assistant
13 director of the Massachusetts Energy Facility Siting
14 Board, which reviewed high voltage transmission lines
15 and generating facilities similar to the Line Siting
16 Committee here today.

17 SWCA's role in this project was primarily to
18 lead the environmental resource studies for the Proving
19 Ground interconnection project, as well as some studies
20 dedicated to the lower voltage facilities as well. So
21 that includes the land use, biological, cultural, and
22 visual resources.

23 In addition, we prepared Exhibits A through J
24 of the application and also supported the public
25 outreach and notice of hearing activities.

1 Q. Okay. Ms. Grams, tell us about yourself.

2 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yes. Thank you.

3 So my name is Jill Grams, and I also work for
4 SWCA Environmental Consultants. Our business address is
5 1645 South Plaza Way in Flagstaff, Arizona.

6 I have over 20 years' of experience working as
7 an environmental planner and project manager and also
8 specialize in visual resource analysis. Fourteen of
9 those years have been with SWCA Environmental
10 Consultants in Flagstaff, Arizona, where I currently
11 serve as the senior director of our Northern Arizona
12 operations. I am currently the project manager for
13 Strata for the Proving Ground project.

14 Q. Thank you for that.

15 Before we move into the development history,
16 let me spend a minute just talking about the CEC
17 application.

18 Mr. Ramsey, you were involved with the
19 preparation of the CEC application which is marked as
20 APS Exhibit 1; is that right?

21 A. (MR. RAMSEY) That's correct.

22 Q. You have reviewed the CEC, application I think,
23 multiple times, and we've spent a lot of time talking
24 about it getting ready for this hearing.

25 Do you have any corrections to the CEC

1 application?

2 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Yeah. We have one correction.

3 In its current state, the CEC application
4 identifies a 150-foot wide right-of-way, and we are
5 going to request to modify that to 200 feet in width.

6 Q. Okay. And we touched on that, or I did briefly
7 in the opening, that the 200-foot right-of-way aligns
8 with what was requested and approved by the Bureau of
9 Land Management through their EA process; is that right?

10 A. (MR. RAMSEY) That is correct.

11 Q. Okay. Mr. Hazle, you were also involved with
12 the preparation of the CEC application, certainly all
13 the environmental analysis and exhibits.

14 Do you have any corrections to APS Exhibit 1?

15 A. (MR. HAZLE) I do not.

16 Q. Okay. All right. With that order of business
17 out of the way, Mr. Ramsey, why don't you start us off
18 with a little bit of the background and development
19 history for the project.

20 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Of course.

21 So just a brief history kind of on the
22 development of this project, and I'll discuss a little
23 bit why I'm here today working with APS.

24 So first and foremost, APS is the Applicant for
25 the CEC, and they are the owner of the entire project,

1 which includes the interconnection project and the solar
2 project.

3 Strata Clean Energy was the original developer
4 of the project. Last year, Quarter 2 of last year, APS
5 acquired the solar project, which includes the
6 interconnection project, from Strata Clean Energy.
7 However, Strata continues to support all siting
8 activities, working alongside APS.

9 Q. And that explains why you're here and not
10 someone on behalf of APS, because you're carrying this
11 part of the process in terms of the CEC hearing.

12 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Yeah. Correct. The thought was
13 that Strata has been working on this project for a
14 number of years, we have institutional knowledge, and so
15 we would be a good partner with APS throughout this
16 process.

17 Q. Thank you for that.

18 Let's talk about what is at the end of the line
19 or the reason for this interconnection project, that is,
20 the solar project. Let's spend a minute on that.

21 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Of course.

22 So as discussed briefly before, the solar
23 project will be an up to 250 megawatt solar, plus up to
24 250 megawatt battery energy storage facility.

25 It's located in unincorporated Yuma County.

1 The project site is located roughly 10 miles from
2 Dateland. It sits on about 1,600 acres -- the solar
3 project sits on about 1,600 acres of private land. And
4 that is shown in this white polygon that's outlined in
5 black to the -- I guess the left of the screen or the
6 left of the map of the exhibit. And that's roughly
7 about 1,600 acres. Again, all private land.

8 There will be a smaller substation -- solar
9 project substation located roughly in the northeast
10 corner of the solar farm site. That's where the
11 collection voltage, 34kV collection voltage will be
12 stepped up to 69kV.

13 From that northeast corner, there will be a
14 double-circuit 69kV line that will run about
15 five-and-a-half miles, and that is shown in the dashed
16 line. It shows up kind of gray in the exhibit right
17 now. And that will be a double-circuit 69kV line.

18 I know there was some previous question or
19 comment about the fact that we have two step-up
20 substations. The idea behind the dual 69 -- just a
21 quick history, development history -- the idea behind
22 the dual 69kV line was kind of two connected reasons.
23 One, 69kV -- by running a 69kV line instead of a 500kV
24 line, it allows us to use much shorter structures.

25 A 500kV line, you're looking at, you know, 100,

1 150-plus feet. You're looking at tubular monopole
2 structures, metal. With the 69, it allows us to be much
3 shorter. You could use wooden poles. So kind of a --
4 less height. And along with that comes less cost burden
5 on the project as well. Running a 69 is a lot more
6 beneficial from a cost perspective than running that
7 500kV.

8 So from -- the five-and-a-half miles, roughly,
9 of 69kV, dual-circuit 69kV, goes to the next step-up
10 substation, which is shown in that little box to the
11 right. We'll have a map that shows it in greater
12 detail. But to the right of the exhibit, right-hand
13 corner, the little box shows the step-up -- the second
14 step-up substation which increases the voltage from 69
15 to 500kV. Hoodoo Wash Switchyard, it's a 500kV
16 switchyard. Thus, we need to step up to match that
17 voltage.

18 Some quick hits on the economic benefits of the
19 project. It's going to create -- the solar project,
20 inclusive of the interconnection project, will create
21 over 500 construction jobs; at least three O&M
22 positions, full-time equivalent O&M positions; and there
23 will be an estimated \$20 million in new property tax
24 revenue that Yuma County will realize.

25 Q. So, Mr. Ramsey, if I'm looking at the right

1 screen, Slide 22, where the 69kV line transitions from
2 the light blue, and I assume the light blue
3 designates -- is that private land or that's ASLD land?

4 A. (MR. RAMSEY) That is Arizona State land
5 currently.

6 Q. So for the bulk of the 69kV line, you had to
7 work with Arizona State Land Department to secure
8 right-of-way.

9 Where are we in that right-of-way process with
10 ASLD?

11 A. (MR. RAMSEY) It is complete. We have right-
12 of-way with ASLD.

13 Q. Okay. So ASLD has approved that for the
14 double-circuit 69kV line.

15 And then towards the right of Slide 22, you
16 then transition onto the more tan-colored area, and I
17 gather that's BLM land; is that right?

18 A. Correct. Federal lands. BLM land.

19 Q. And you have also then -- I indicated in my
20 opening, if you'll just touch on it, I know we'll get
21 into greater depth, but you've been through the federal
22 permitting process with BLM, and BLM has approved the
23 right-of-way for the 69kV line as well as the 69kV
24 substation that's located at the end of the 500kV
25 gen-tie project?

1 A. (MR. RAMSEY) That's correct.

2 Q. Okay. And there's a variety of conditions that
3 BLM has placed on their grant and their approval of the
4 right-of-way for the 69kV line, as well as the 69kV
5 substation, as well as this 500kV line; is that correct?

6 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Correct. There's a list of
7 stipulations or conditions attached to that.

8 Q. All right. So that covers the solar project.
9 What is generating the energy that drives the
10 need -- I'm sorry.

11 MEMBER HAMWAY: Mr. Chairman, could I ask a
12 quick question?

13 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Certainly.

14 MEMBER HAMWAY: So I just was curious. Was
15 part of the reason for choosing double-circuit 69kV to
16 avoid line siting?

17 WITNESS RAMSEY: I don't believe so.

18 MEMBER HAMWAY: Okay. Because we're here
19 anyway.

20 WITNESS RAMSEY: Right, right, right. And I
21 think we always knew we were going to have to come in at
22 500kV into the switchyard.

23 MEMBER HAMWAY: Yeah. Typically, it starts 230
24 to 500. So you're going from 34.5 to 69 to 500.

25 WITNESS RAMSEY: Correct.

1 MEMBER HAMWAY: So typically it goes from 34.5
2 to 230 to 500.

3 WITNESS RAMSEY: Right. I think it was purely
4 a cost consideration.

5 MEMBER HAMWAY: Okay.

6 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) Also, I guess -- and I don't
7 know the answer to this, but I'm assuming that a 230kV
8 line would have had sufficient capacity to carry the
9 energy from this project, but that doesn't work for
10 interconnecting at the Hoodoo Wash. That you have to
11 interconnect at 500, and that's the reason for the step
12 from 69 to 500. But maybe a 230 line is not large
13 enough. I don't know.

14 A. (MR. RAMSEY) No. 230 would have been probably
15 too large just for the project. The two choices we had
16 were either a 115 -- a single-circuit 115 or a dual-
17 circuit 69. 230 would have worked, but it would have
18 been, frankly, overkill.

19 MEMBER LITTLE: Mr. Chairman?

20 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, Member Little.

21 MEMBER LITTLE: Along those lines, what
22 oversight, environmental and/or public outreach is
23 required for a 69kV line? Does anybody know?

24 MEMBER HAMWAY: Well, it would be local
25 jurisdiction.

1 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Member Hamway is correct.

2 MEMBER LITTLE: Okay.

3 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) And to Member Hamway's -- I
4 mean to Member Little's question, certainly, local
5 jurisdiction in terms of Yuma County. But then as
6 indicated, that right-of-way had to be negotiated and
7 obtained from both Arizona State Land Department and the
8 Bureau of Land Management?

9 And so there was a very -- you know, the normal
10 extensive federal permitting process that was done that,
11 I assume, included -- and we can have our witnesses
12 testify -- some level of notification, as well as then
13 the conditions that are placed on the grant of the
14 right-of-way that include a variety of, you know,
15 environmental considerations and conditions similar to
16 what you see in our CEC, but those are imposed by the --
17 by, in this case, the Bureau of Land Management.

18 Did I have that generally correct?

19 Q. (MR RAMSEY) Yeah. And I'll add that we had to
20 obtain a special use permit from the County of Yuma for
21 the project. So it included the -- it included the
22 solar portion plus the 69kV. And they even, you know,
23 took into consideration as a connected action the -- you
24 know, the step-up portion of the project and the 500kV
25 line.

1 Q. Okay. All right. So we've dealt with the
2 solar project, not the thing that's before this
3 committee, but it's important to talk about it and give
4 them an understanding of what is at the end of the line.

5 We've talked about the 69kV facilities that,
6 again, are not part of this application but part of the
7 project and get us to the start of the interconnection
8 project, which is the step-up from the 69kV to 500kV,
9 and then its the 500kV transmission line.

10 So let's talk about the actual interconnection
11 project that's presented to the committee in the
12 application.

13 A. (MR. RAMSEY) All right. So the project in
14 front of you, the interconnection project in front of
15 you today includes a 500kV transmission line located
16 between the project step-up substation shown here in the
17 kind of darker gray box.

18 So located between the substation -- step-up
19 substation to the west and the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard
20 shown here in kind of the trapezoidal shape in the
21 lighter gray here. It parallels the existing 500kV
22 Hassayampa to North Gila 1 and 2 transmission lines,
23 also known as HANG1 and HANG2.

24 A portion of the interconnection project, as
25 Matt described earlier, and the portion right here is

1 what I'm talking about between the two middle triangles.
2 That portion of the interconnection project will be
3 co-located with HANG2. The project requires two new
4 structures and the replacement of two existing
5 structures.

6 Purpose and need. Again, we went over this
7 briefly in the opening. But primary purpose is to
8 interconnect the new Proving Ground solar project to the
9 electrical grid through a connection at the Hoodoo Wash
10 Switchyard.

11 And the project as a whole, solar project plus
12 interconnection project, will aid the state and the
13 broader Southwest region in meeting the need for an
14 economic and reliable supply of renewable energy.

15 Q. We talked about -- I mentioned in my opening
16 and you just mentioned it that we're making some changes
17 to the structures for the HANG2 line. HANG2 is covered
18 by CEC 135. Let's give the committee more information
19 on that.

20 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Right. So as part of the
21 application, APS seeks to amend CEC 135 to allow for
22 co-location of the interconnection project with the two
23 structures of HANG2. Again, the middle triangles
24 indicate the co-location area.

25 Construction of HANG2 was originally authorized

1 by the ACC back in January of 2008. And HANG2, as a
2 whole, is a single-circuit 500kV line that runs from the
3 Palo Verde Hub, Hassayampa substation, and it runs in a
4 southwest direction, more or less, to the Hoodoo Wash
5 Switchyard, and then it terminates at the North Gila
6 substation in Yuma.

7 Q. Can we pull up APS-18, guys?

8 So this map that's being shown in the hearing
9 room on both screens is what is a separate, kind of a
10 new map that's marked as APS-18. This is a map that I
11 asked be prepared because I just couldn't get my head
12 around what we were changing and what wasn't changing or
13 how it was changing.

14 And you folks were kind enough to kind of
15 really walk me through it and label each structure, and
16 so this is kind of a remedial map for me. Maybe the
17 committee fully gets it.

18 But can you just kind of take us through again,
19 Mr. Ramsey, kind of what's being done, starting with --
20 there's four structures that I see there. Those are the
21 black triangles. Tell us what is happening with those
22 structures, what they're for, and when are we changing a
23 HANG2 structure.

24 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Sure. So really quick, kind
25 of --

1 CHAIRMAN KATZ: I don't know if we can have the
2 cursor following this as well so the virtual folks can
3 watch.

4 WITNESS RAMSEY: Yeah. So the red line is the
5 interconnection project that we're discussing today,
6 roughly 3,000 feet in length.

7 The yellow line indicates the relocated or
8 modified section of HANG2.

9 Starting in the west, there will be a new
10 structure right next to our project, a step-up
11 substation, and that will be a single-circuit structure.
12 So the line comes out of our step-up substation and goes
13 to the single circuit.

14 CHAIRMAN KATZ: That's where it goes to 500kV?

15 WITNESS RAMSEY: Yeah. It will be stepped up
16 to 500 at the substation. So everything leaving our
17 project substation will be 500kV. It goes to a
18 single-circuit 500kV structure. Continues east before
19 being co-located, converging with HANG2.

20 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) And co-located just means
21 both of those lines are being placed on the same pole,
22 the same structure.

23 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Correct. Side by side, more or
24 less.

25 This will be -- there is already an existing

1 structure here. It's a single-circuit structure, so it
2 has to be replaced with a double-circuit structure so
3 they could handle both the interconnection project and
4 the existing HANG2 line.

5 From that second structure, it runs --
6 continues south -- or excuse me -- continues east to the
7 third structure. This is going to be a brand new
8 structure. There's currently not a structure there.
9 That is going to be a double-circuit as well.

10 And then from there it diverges, with the
11 interconnection project running due north to a --
12 basically, the location of an existing structure, but a
13 structure that will have to be replaced. So that will
14 be replaced, that structure there.

15 HANG2, meanwhile, after it diverges from that
16 dual-circuit structure, it's going to continue more or
17 less in a northeast fashion and meet back up with the
18 current alignment of HANG2.

19 Q. So that the current alignment of HANG2, is that
20 shown in kind of the light dot-and-dash that's -- can
21 you show us where that -- as you work your way back
22 toward the --

23 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Correct. It's this guy. So it
24 kind of parallels just north of the railroad tracks,
25 then goes up and around and through Hoodoo Wash

1 Switchyard. It comes back down as we're going west and
2 then continues to parallel the train tracks.

3 Q. Passes to the south of the substation there?

4 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Correct. Yeah, correct.

5 And then just for everyone, I don't know if it
6 makes a difference, but HANG1 -- we did briefly touch
7 upon HANG1. HANG1 is this dashed and dotted line that's
8 located south of the train tracks and Palomas Road
9 there.

10 Q. And nothing is happening with HANG1?

11 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Correct. I just made reference
12 to it.

13 Q. Okay. Well, thank you for that explanation. I
14 know that helped me and, hopefully, that was of benefit
15 to the committee.

16 So in terms of -- you have outlined and
17 provided testimony concerning the changes that will
18 occur to the HANG2 line, and they really only kind of
19 happen within that roughly 1,000-foot segment where
20 they're going to be co-located with the new
21 interconnection project 500kV line.

22 Anything else you want to mention about changes
23 to HANG2 and how this project is working with HANG2 to
24 minimize impacts on the ground?

25 A. (MR. RAMSEY) No. I think we covered it,

1 unless the committee has more questions. Happy to...

2 Q. Okay. Let's talk about the route corridor and
3 right-of-way that you have up on the screen. I think
4 we've covered the route, but just for emphasis.

5 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And sometime within the next
6 five minutes, we probably want to take a break. So
7 whenever is a convenient breaking point.

8 MR. DERSTINE: Yeah. I think we can break --
9 we can break right after Mr. Ramsey covers this section.

10 CHAIRMAN KATZ: That's fine.

11 WITNESS RAMSEY: So as previously outlined,
12 the interconnection project, again shown in the red on
13 the exhibit, it's going to cover roughly 3,000 feet.
14 1,000 feet of that segment will be co-located along with
15 HANG2.

16 We are asking for the corridor -- CEC corridor
17 shown in the yellow rectangle in the exhibit.

18 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) Member Little asked about
19 the corridor. Is there a reason -- so can you just
20 speak generally to why we've landed on this yellow
21 rectangle as the corridor, given that we're only seeking
22 a 200-foot right-of-way?

23 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Correct. So I guess the easiest
24 way to describe it is to briefly go into a discussion of
25 the right-of-way itself.

1 So the right-of-way we're asking for is
2 200 feet in width. The route is pretty well-defined and
3 pretty well-baked right now. It matches the width of
4 both the CEC 135, which was 200 feet, and it also
5 matches the BLM right-of-way for HANG2 is right now.

6 This current 200-foot right-of-way route has
7 been designed and laid out along with APS, and I think
8 everybody is pretty confident in its location. However,
9 given that there may need to be some micrositing of
10 structures or the alignment either during, you know,
11 final construction drawing phase or even in the field
12 during construction, we felt it best to ask for this
13 corridor to give us a little bit of a contingency when,
14 you know, doing final designs and actually constructing
15 the project.

16 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And I also asked this already
17 of your attorney at the beginning, but APS has ownership
18 or control of the entire right-of-way area or will have
19 that?

20 WITNESS RAMSEY: Correct.

21 CHAIRMAN KATZ: In other words, the existing
22 single circuit is owned or controlled by APS, so we
23 don't need to get a third party involved regarding that.

24 WITNESS RAMSEY: Correct. Correct. Yeah.

25 Just to put more clarity or emphasis on that,

1 this area right here, everything -- I'm trying to draw a
2 straight line. But everything to the west, all of this
3 is BLM land.

4 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Right.

5 WITNESS RAMSEY: The Hoodoo Wash, which is in
6 the green trapezoid, is APS-owned. And then in between
7 is private property, but there is a -- APS has an
8 easement for their exclusive use through that.

9 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Regarding the HANG2 project as
10 well as the --

11 WITNESS RAMSEY: Correct. Yes.

12 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Okay.

13 MEMBER HAMWAY: I just have a quick question.
14 Something that's come up pretty often.

15 Do you know of any other existing corridors
16 that this is laying on top of on the Hoodoo Wash
17 Switchyard?

18 WITNESS RAMSEY: I don't.

19 MEMBER HAMWAY: Do you know why I'm asking?
20 I'm sure you do.

21 MR. DERSTINE: I don't.

22 MEMBER HAMWAY: Well, just because we approve
23 corridors like little Carter's pills. I mean, there's
24 just thousands of them out there. And so we're laying
25 them on top of each other, and we never know because we

1 can't remember if there are existing corridors.

2 So my question is are there other existing
3 corridors out there for other solar facilities within
4 your corridor?

5 WITNESS HAZLE: The interconnection line does
6 overlap with the corridor that was authorized for HANG2
7 in CEC 135.

8 MEMBER HAMWAY: Yeah, I figured that much. But
9 you don't know of any others?

10 WITNESS HAZLE: No.

11 MEMBER HAMWAY: I'm not sure you would ever
12 know of any others. I guess that's my question. I
13 mean, we're the only ones that know, and we can't
14 remember. I don't know. It's just something that comes
15 up and it bugs me.

16 MR. DERSTINE: I guess it's a matter of -- so
17 if you have secured the right-of-way from ASLD and
18 Bureau of Land Management, I assume you would receive
19 notice if they were giving another solar project rights
20 to the same corridor that you were already granted from
21 those two different agencies.

22 But beyond that, you wouldn't know if --
23 obviously, I'm sure there are other solar projects that
24 are in different stages of development in this area and
25 are looking to interconnect at the Hoodoo Wash

1 Switchyard, but where they are in their process and
2 whether or not they've been granted a similar path or
3 right-of-way, I don't know whether you would receive
4 notice of that from ASLD and/or BLM.

5 WITNESS HAZLE: It's also part of our Exhibit H
6 efforts to identify known plans of other developments,
7 whether those are from public agencies or private
8 developers.

9 And we did look at the interconnection queue to
10 see what other solar projects might be in the vicinity
11 of ours. But that process, admittedly, does not involve
12 looking back at corridors that have already been
13 authorized.

14 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And from my 11 years' of
15 experience in representing the Land Department -- I'm no
16 longer doing it with respect to solar leases or
17 rights-of-way -- but the rights-of-way are not exclusive
18 but preclude one new party from interfering with the
19 operations of an already existing party. And once the
20 actual right-of-way is established, it doesn't matter
21 how wide the corridor is. That's probably going to be
22 an exclusive placement for a line.

23 WITNESS HAZLE: Agreed. Correct.

24 MEMBER HAMWAY: Right. I mean, I'm just
25 curious.

1 CHAIRMAN KATZ: No. I understand.

2 MEMBER HAMWAY: I mean, I can't remember if we
3 had been here before.

4 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Understood.

5 Let's take about -- I have about 20 minutes to
6 3:00. We'll begin at about 2:55, between 2:55 and 3:00,
7 and continue for about an hour and a half, and then
8 we'll see where we're at. But we do stand in recess.

9 (A recess was taken from 2:40 p.m. to
10 2:52 p.m.)

11 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Whenever you're ready,
12 Mr. Derstine.

13 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) Mr. Ramsey, I think the
14 screen is telling me that you're going to describe the
15 structures that will be used for this project, and I
16 think after that we're going to go into the flyover.

17 But let's cover the structures. I think
18 there's a couple different types of structures that may
19 be used.

20 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Sure. So there's a variety of
21 structures that may be used on the interconnection
22 project, including tubular, shown on the left portion of
23 the exhibit. And that would be most likely for the
24 co-located, dual-circuit portion of the project where it
25 shares structures with HANG2.

1 Q. I think just driving around, I'm familiar with
2 seeing the lattice, which is on the far right, and then
3 seeing the monopole structures in the middle.

4 I'm not familiar -- maybe I just haven't paid
5 attention closely enough, but the tubular structure, is
6 that -- the benefit of that is it's stronger and,
7 therefore, it can carry a heavy load of the two 500kV
8 circuits?

9 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Correct. And I will preface this
10 with this is not my forte, per se, but I believe the
11 idea is that you could double circuit some very high
12 voltage 500kV, or whatnot, on a structure that is not as
13 obtrusive visually as maybe like a lattice tower would
14 be.

15 Q. Okay. Thank you.

16 A. (MR. RAMSEY) And the strength and kind of the
17 engineering perspective all comes into play there.

18 The project may include monopole structures as
19 well, likely for the single-circuit portions of the
20 project.

21 And then we included lattice structures as well
22 because HANG2 currently uses lattice structures, and
23 there's also lattice structures within the Hoodoo Wash
24 Switchyard. So we just wanted to highlight that these
25 are a possibility and, you know, it's all kind of

1 dependent on final engineering and design of the
2 interconnection project.

3 As far as height goes, in all likelihood, the
4 structures will be less than 200 feet, 199 feet or
5 below. We did identify in our application that the
6 maximum structure height can reach up to 210 feet.
7 Again, that's just more for kind of a contingency or
8 some wiggle room, but in all likelihood they're going to
9 stay under 200 feet.

10 Q. Is it the 200 feet or 199 feet a threshold for
11 some sort of FAA regulation?

12 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Yeah. It's the magic number. So
13 if it stays under 200 feet, 199 below, I believe the
14 regulation allows it to not include a light -- a red
15 flashing light that you see on the top of radio towers
16 or wind turbines or something like that.

17 Q. Okay. So if we get to 200 feet or above, then
18 we'll be required to place a light at the top of the
19 structure.

20 A. (MR. RAMSEY) That's my understanding, yes.

21 MEMBER GRINNELL: Mr. Chairman, just a
22 question.

23 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes.

24 MEMBER GRINNELL: One of the arguments for
25 having a dual 69kV line was that the poles would be

1 shorter and they would not exceed.

2 And now we're hearing that the poles are going
3 to be in reasonably close proximity, potentially up to
4 200 feet. So can we go back to this 500? It just seems
5 to be a little contradictory.

6 MR. DERSTINE: Yeah. Member Grinnell, that's a
7 good point of clarification.

8 We were talking about the 69kV structures. One
9 of the benefits of the 69kV line, that double-circuit
10 69kV line to get to the step-up substation to bring the
11 voltage up to 500kV is that the structures could be
12 shorter, less obtrusive; and, therefore, there's a
13 benefit to that, as well as the cost. Less expensive.

14 These structures where we're calling out the
15 the maximum height to 210 feet is for the 500kV portion
16 of this project, the portion of the project that's
17 covered under the CEC application.

18 The 69kV line we have described, and we've
19 given you testimony about how the energy gets from the
20 solar project to the step-up substation that brings the
21 voltage up to 500kV, which is in close proximity to the
22 Hoodoo Wash Switchyard.

23 But what we're talking about here are the
24 height of the structures only for the 500kV line.
25 That's not the 69kV line.

1 MEMBER GRINNELL: I understand that. But I
2 guess -- well, let me ask you this, then.

3 If you had from Point A throughout this whole
4 project the 500kV lines, would you need a step-up
5 substation?

6 MR. DERSTINE: You're saying if we built the
7 project at the 500kV level from the solar project all
8 the way to Hoodoo Wash Switchyard, would we require the
9 second step-up substation? The answer would be no.

10 MEMBER GRINNELL: Well, you're talking about
11 costs of building the substation. I would imagine
12 that's a substantial cost as well.

13 MR. DERSTINE: Certainly, the additional
14 substation presents additional cost, but I think five
15 miles of -- and I'll ask the witnesses to confirm, but
16 five miles of 500kV line and 500kV structures as opposed
17 to five miles of double-circuit 69kV is still less
18 expensive to build than if you were to build it out
19 500kV from beginning to end.

20 CHAIRMAN KATZ: You might want to just ask
21 Mr. Ramsey or the appropriate witness that question to
22 confirm your belief.

23 WITNESS RAMSEY: Yes. In all likelihood, the
24 cost of building the step-up substation would be less
25 than the five-and-a-half miles if, you know,

1 hypothetically, you did 500kV. I'm doing some very
2 rough math. That would be likely dozens and dozens and
3 dozens of 500kV monopole structures.

4 And, you know, not just cost but the
5 engineering and the foundation and the footing for a
6 500kV structure is, obviously, much bigger than it would
7 be for a 69 pole. So environmental impact, disturbance
8 would be much greater as well.

9 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And wouldn't the cost be
10 somewhere near a million-one to -- a million to a
11 million and a half dollars per mile?

12 WITNESS RAMSEY: At least.

13 CHAIRMAN KATZ: If you know.

14 WITNESS RAMSEY: Yeah. It seems like that
15 price increases every day that you get an estimate.

16 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Go ahead, Counsel, whenever
17 you're ready.

18 MR. DERSTINE: The whisper in my ear was the
19 cost per mile of a 500kV line is about 5 million per
20 mile. So considerably more expensive.

21 And so, yeah, Member Grinnell, I apologize for
22 the confusion. There was testimony about the shorter
23 structures and the benefit of the 69kV line. In
24 addition to cost was that they could be shorter
25 structures. They could be constructed on wood

1 structures, which are considerably less expensive than
2 steel structures.

3 But even utilizing the steel structures,
4 testimony that you heard from Mr. Ramsey and what I am
5 hearing from APS is that it's much more expensive to
6 build a five-mile 500kV line than a five-mile 69kV line,
7 even taking into account the additional substation.

8 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) All right. Mr. Ramsey,
9 anything else on the structures?

10 A. (MR. RAMSEY) No. I think we covered it,
11 unless there's any more questions from the committee.

12 Q. All right. Let's spend a minute -- we've
13 talked about the involvement of the Bureau of Land
14 Management, and that was the trigger for a federal NEPA
15 process. Take us through that, please.

16 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Sure.

17 So back in 2019, we initiated the NEPA process
18 and the right-of-way grant process with the BLM. That
19 originally covered the 1.1 mile long right-of-way.

20 Starting at the west, right where my -- the
21 green laser pointer point is and going east all the way
22 to where it ends, where that tan section ends right
23 there to the east, so that's a 1.1 mile long
24 right-of-way that was covered by the BLM's EA, or
25 environmental assessment, along with the aforementioned

1 substation and access roads and other accessory
2 components of the project.

3 In 2020, we received a record of decision from
4 the BLM that accompanied the finding of no significant
5 impact, or FONSI, and a right-of-way grant was issued by
6 BLM.

7 Between '20 when we got that right-of-way grant
8 and 2022, there were some design modifications that
9 warranted us going back to BLM and initiating a
10 right-of-way grant amendment modification. We're
11 working with BLM right now. Strata/APS and BLM are
12 working in unison to review those modifications and to
13 review the NEPA adequacy for those modifications.

14 Another permit that we have recently received
15 is the jurisdictional water-related permits. Last year,
16 in 2022, SWCA conducted field work out in the
17 interconnection site -- interconnection project site to
18 map any potential waters of the U.S. That field work
19 was later added to an application for a preliminary
20 jurisdictional determination, and it was submitted to
21 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

22 In December of 2022, we received notification
23 from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that they accepted
24 that preliminary jurisdictional determination, sometimes
25 referred to as a PJD. And, basically, the U.S. Army

1 Corps of Engineers agreed with SWCA that there were no
2 waters of the U.S. located within the footprint of the
3 interconnection project.

4 Q. Okay. Well, I think we've covered all the
5 aspects in terms of the description of the project,
6 structures, and then closed with the federal permitting.

7 Maybe it's time for the committee to actually
8 see the project and have us present them with the
9 virtual tour. Mr. Hazle, I think you're going to direct
10 us through that and maybe start us with Google Earth,
11 kind of orienting all of us to where the project is
12 located and then go from there.

13 A. (MR. HAZLE) That's correct.

14 So this is a screen share from my laptop with
15 Google Earth. And since the project is not in close
16 proximity to any immediately recognizable landmarks, I
17 thought it would be appropriate to just kind of orient
18 us.

19 This is the greater Yuma area with Marine Corps
20 Air Station down here to the south. This little pin
21 right off of I-8 is where we are today at the Four
22 Points.

23 So our project, Proving Ground, is about
24 55 miles east down I-8 to the Dateland exit, which is
25 right here, and then another 10 miles north on

1 Avenue 64E, and then finally we can see the 500kV
2 segment right here.

3 So with that, I think we're ready to pull up
4 the virtual tour and I'll narrate us through that
5 portion.

6 Okay. I'll just ask to pause quick here.
7 Again, I know the committee has heard this a few times,
8 but just to orient people, this is the Agua Caliente
9 solar project to the north, which we've heard about a
10 few times today. It's constructed and is in operation.

11 The McFarland solar project, which we've also
12 heard about a few times today, it's also interconnecting
13 to the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard. It's located south of
14 Palomas Road over here. You can kind of see where
15 they've started to do some land grading for it in this
16 aerial image, just indicating that it's in the early
17 stages of its construction.

18 Our project is the black polygon over here to
19 the west. As Mr. Ramsey testified, we have the sub
20 jurisdictional lead lines that come into the project
21 substation and then into Hoodoo Wash.

22 Let's resume the tour here.

23 So the first sort of feature of our tour is to
24 come into what we call our Key Observation Point No. 2.
25 And Ms. Grams will provide more testimony about that

1 when we discuss visual resources, but just sort of for
2 the committee's benefit in this establishing overview, I
3 would like to pause right here.

4 These are our, like, visual simulations from
5 KOP-2 with existing conditions on the top, and then what
6 the project facilities would look like, you know, as a
7 scale, simulated model built into that photograph.

8 We can continue on.

9 This is Palomas Road here, facing to the
10 northeast.

11 So this facility here is the step-up
12 substation, which we've heard about a few times today.
13 The solid red line is the 500kV interconnection project.

14 So let's pause right here for a second.

15 This is that first triangle that we've been
16 seeing. This would be a single-circuit structure. And
17 just for representative purposes, we've added a lattice
18 structure here, but it's possible that a monopole would
19 be used where we only need to site a single circuit.

20 Please continue.

21 So here we're heading in towards HANG2, and
22 let's pause right here. Perfect.

23 Okay. So we've got a lot of lines going on
24 here. The dashed purple line is the existing alignment
25 of HANG2. The solid yellow line is the proposed

1 modification to HANG2. So we would move it from the
2 purple line to the yellow line. And then again, solid
3 red line is our 500kV interconnection project.

4 So these are tentative models of the so-called
5 tubular structures. They're double-circuit towers. We
6 would have HANG2 on the south side of the structure
7 here, which would be the right side, and then our
8 project on the north side. And then the sort of yellow,
9 lime green halo is the approximate width of the
10 right-of-way.

11 So let's continue on.

12 Q. Before you move on, Mr. Hazle, can you keep it
13 paused there for a second?

14 A. (MR. HAZLE) Sure.

15 Q. So at that second structure, that's where we
16 transition from the BLM land onto the private land. Do
17 I have that right?

18 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yeah. The second structure is
19 just back a little ways on BLM land. This sort of
20 difference between the cleared land and sort of the
21 desert scrub that you can see on the aerial photograph,
22 that lines up pretty well with the property line between
23 BLM and private land.

24 Q. Okay.

25 A. (MR. HAZLE) This, like, rectangular feature

1 here is a storm water retention basin that's affiliated
2 with the Agua Caliente solar project.

3 Q. And so it's the piece of the 69kV line, the
4 step-up substation from 69 to 500 that we just passed
5 and then those first two structures, the one that we're
6 looking at on the screen currently in your flyover,
7 those were all analyzed in BLM's environmental
8 assessment. Am I correct about that?

9 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yeah.

10 Q. Okay. And that environmental assessment, I
11 think, is included in the CEC application under maybe
12 Exhibit B.1. Do I have that right?

13 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yeah, that's correct. We have the
14 environmental assessment and the finding of no
15 significant impact both as exhibits behind Exhibit B.

16 Q. Okay. And B.2, I think, is the finding of no
17 significant impact?

18 A. (MR. HAZLE) Correct.

19 Q. And so I guess the questions about who has
20 analyzed and who has, you know, ensured that those
21 project facilities that are not part of this
22 application, those are -- certainly up to the edge of
23 the BLM land, those are covered under BLM's analysis in
24 the EA and the finding of no significant impact;
25 correct?

1 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yes.

2 Q. Okay. Go ahead and continue.

3 A. (MR. HAZLE) So again, the trapezoid is the
4 outline of the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard. It's a pretty
5 sizable facility.

6 Let's just take a brief pause right here.

7 So again, this is HANG1 on the south side of
8 Palomas Road. It just takes a little jog into Hoodoo
9 Wash Switch and back out to the south side of Palomas
10 Road. Again, we're not doing anything to modify or
11 change HANG1.

12 So let's continue the tour.

13 This little balloon here is our second key
14 observation point. We just wanted to preview the visual
15 simulation. So again, we've got sort of the simulated
16 facilities down here where you can see a couple new
17 structures that would be added to this landscape that's
18 visible in the existing condition. And Ms. Grams will
19 go over that in good detail for us a little later.

20 If we're paused, we can continue on with the
21 tour. Perfect.

22 And from here it's just going to take us back
23 out to sort of a bird's-eye view of the project.

24 So I know we've heard it several times, but
25 that's sort of the overview of the interconnection

1 project and its modification to HANG2.

2 And my next set of topics would be land use,
3 but I would be happy to answer any clarification
4 questions from the committee at this time.

5 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Anybody have any questions
6 regarding the flyover video that we were just watching
7 and that was described to us by Mr. Ramsey?

8 (No response.)

9 CHAIRMAN KATZ: You may proceed, Counsel.

10 MR. DERSTINE: Thank you.

11 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) So, Mr. Hazle, you mentioned
12 land use. I guess why don't you take us through an
13 overview of all the environmental study that SWCA
14 performed to support this CEC application, and then you
15 can start us off with land use.

16 A. (MR. HAZLE) Sure. So I'm going to provide
17 testimony today on land use which corresponds to
18 Exhibits A, B, and H from the application. And then I'm
19 going to -- I'll also cover recreation and noise and
20 interference in Exhibits F and I, respectively.

21 My colleague Ms. Grams will cover biological
22 resources from Exhibit C and D, and visual and cultural
23 resources from Exhibits E and G.

24 After we offer our findings on the project's
25 environmental compatibility, I'll cover our notice of

1 hearing activities and the public outreach that was
2 conducted for this project.

3 So for land use, we've heard a bit about it
4 just by way of the project description from Mr. Ramsey.
5 But the surface jurisdiction for land use entitlements,
6 it runs with Yuma County. We are in an unincorporated
7 portion of the county, so there's no municipalities or
8 cities or towns in this area.

9 Dateland, that we've been referring to in our
10 previous remarks, is a -- I believe it's a census-
11 designated place, but it's not its own municipality. It
12 doesn't have a separate government from the Yuma County.

13 In terms of land ownership, on the right-hand
14 screen, once again, the light blue color is Arizona
15 State Land where the lower voltage facilities would be
16 located. The tan brown is the BLM. And then sort of
17 the gray, no-color-added is private land.

18 So with respect to the breakdown of the
19 interconnection projects across those landowners, you
20 can see we have about half or 53 percent on BLM land,
21 with the balance going across private land. And again,
22 the private landowners are affiliated with the Agua
23 Caliente project for this short segment right here
24 between BLM land and the Hoodoo Wash switch.

25 As Mr. Ramsey mentioned, we'll use existing

1 easement rights to cross that portion of private land,
2 and then Arizona Public Service Company is the landowner
3 for the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard.

4 A little bit on the existing land use. It was
5 probably somewhat apparent from the flyover and the maps
6 we've shown, but this is a very rural portion of Yuma
7 County. We focused our land use inventory on a two-mile
8 study area around the interconnection project, so that's
9 what this dashed oval is out here.

10 The sort of pink-colored areas are a land use
11 category we just called "utilities," and then with the
12 hatch mark indicating that it's utilities under
13 construction.

14 The areas with no color are just vacant, open
15 desert.

16 We mentioned the presence of agriculture out
17 here in this portion of the county. The circular
18 facilities or features are center-pivot irrigation
19 fields. I believe those green circles are cultivated
20 for alfalfa that support some of the dairy operations
21 west of here.

22 Finally, with respect to zoning, this whole
23 study area is zoned Rural Area 40, which means minimum
24 parcel size of 40 acres. So that's Yuma County's
25 largest parcel size zoning district, which sort of

1 further signifies this is a very remote area.

2 One note about sort of the existing land use
3 from a BLM perspective, but when the BLM looked at the
4 HANG1 and HANG2 transmission lines in those original
5 NEPA proceedings, the BLM designated a utility corridor
6 that they called the San Diego Gas & Electric
7 interconnection corridor. That's one-mile wide with
8 HANG1 and 2 in the center. And our project would be
9 inside of that BLM-designated utility corridor.

10 I don't know the particulars of how the BLM
11 uses the term "corridor" being similar or different from
12 how the committee uses "corridor." But just from a land
13 use perspective, the BLM likes to see new utility
14 facilities sited inside of existing corridors.

15 We find that co-locating and paralleling the
16 existing transmission lines is a good way of sort of
17 minimizing or reducing the potential land use impacts of
18 our project.

19 A little bit about the planned land use where
20 we look at, you know, the county's comprehensive plan to
21 see what they might want to do with this area in the
22 future. So the green circle over here is an indication
23 that this is all one land use designation under the
24 county's comprehensive plan. That is an agricultural,
25 slash, rural preservation.

1 The development of solar and utility facilities
2 within that land use designation does not require a plan
3 amendment from the county. And furthermore, we looked
4 at sort of some of the planning objectives from the
5 county's Dateland, slash, East County planning area, and
6 the county specifically lays out planning objectives to
7 promote the construction of solar and wind power plants
8 and to encourage appropriate buffers to mitigate
9 conflicting land uses.

10 So certainly with the first planning objective
11 here, we're right on the mark by developing renewable
12 energy facilities in this area. And then, you know, I
13 would argue we're consistent with this second objective
14 as well by maintaining appropriate buffers from
15 surrounding land uses.

16 MEMBER HAMWAY: May I ask a question? What is
17 an appropriate buffer?

18 WITNESS HAZLE: Yeah. The comprehensive plan
19 doesn't provide, like, a minimum threshold for what they
20 think is an appropriate buffer. But there are no
21 primary residences within a mile of this project so, you
22 know, where we think about conflicting land uses being
23 like a transmission line going through, you know, a
24 heavily developed area or something like that, that's a
25 situation we're avoiding with this project.

1 MEMBER HAMWAY: So do you put your solar panels
2 right on the property line or do you offer a setback
3 just by principle?

4 WITNESS HAZLE: Yeah, the solar project
5 received a special use permit from Yuma County, I think
6 back in 2018. And that special use permit requires
7 compliance with the setback distances required for the
8 RA-40 zoning district. I could look those up for you on
9 break, but I don't know the setback off the top of my
10 head.

11 MEMBER HAMWAY: Okay. Thanks.

12 WITNESS HAZLE: Finally, on planned land use,
13 we looked at the BLM's Yuma Field Office resource
14 management plan, which sort of lays out how the BLM
15 wants to develop or maintain, use the resources that it
16 manages in that district.

17 The resource management plan contains various
18 management actions and decisions, they call them. So we
19 have LR-31 and LR-34. I think "LR" stands for lands and
20 realty.

21 But again, this pertains to sort of
22 consolidating new facilities adjacent to or within
23 existing corridors. So the first one being, to the
24 extent possible, locate new rights-of-way within or
25 parallel to existing rights-of-way to minimize resource

1 impacts. And then, secondly, designated corridors are
2 the preferred locations for major rights-of-way.

3 So we're siting the interconnection project
4 inside of the previously designated San Diego Gas &
5 Electric interconnection corridor, and it will be
6 consistent with both of these land use objectives from
7 the BLM's perspective.

8 The final part of our land use outreach is to
9 contact government and private developers to request
10 information about known or future plans for development
11 in the vicinity of the interconnection project.

12 This is what we call our -- the so-called
13 Exhibit H mailing. We sent out a letter to 13 federal,
14 state, and local agencies or departments or their
15 representatives describing the project, including a map
16 of the project, and again requesting information that
17 those entities might have on other projects in the area.

18 We received one comment letter from the Arizona
19 Game and Fish Department. Although that letter did not
20 identify other known plans for development, it did
21 provide a number of recommended best management
22 practices for construction and mitigation measures. I
23 believe Ms. Grams will cover that in a little bit more
24 detail during her testimony.

25 With regard to the known plans of private

1 developers, we're aware of the White Wing Ranch project
2 to the north of Agua Caliente. That's another solar
3 development. And then, of course, the McFarland solar
4 which is under construction to the south of Palomas
5 Road.

6 MEMBER HAMWAY: Just a quick question. Is the
7 Hoodoo Wash substation the only utility-scale substation
8 out there?

9 WITNESS HAZLE: Yes. Yeah, I think the next
10 subs would be close to Palo Verde and then down in the
11 city of Yuma.

12 MEMBER HAMWAY: Okay. Thank you.

13 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) I think you're going to
14 summarize your conclusions on existing and future
15 planned land use.

16 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yeah, that's correct.

17 So our project is consistent with the Yuma
18 County 2020 comprehensive plan. Again, there's no plan
19 amendments required for this development. We would be
20 inside of an existing BLM-designated utility corridor,
21 and we would be consistent with other known plans for
22 development in the area.

23 So overall, we view the project as compatible
24 from a land use perspective.

25 Q. All right. Ms. Grams, I think you're going to

1 take us through the study work that was done concerning
2 biological resources that are found on Exhibits, I
3 think, B and C of the application.

4 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yes. Thank you.

5 So for biological resources, we conducted both
6 desktop review of the area as well as site visits in the
7 field.

8 Our desktop review began with reviewing the
9 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' IPAC database for
10 threatened and endangered species that may be affected
11 by the project. And we also reviewed the Arizona Game
12 and Fish Department's environmental review database tool
13 looking for species of special status or special areas
14 within five miles of the project.

15 Following that, we conducted a biological
16 reconnaissance survey of the area in November of 2021,
17 and that was a general review of biology and biological
18 resources in the project area.

19 Following that, we conducted more of a field
20 survey on the BLM lands in August of 2022. That August
21 survey was looking for general habitat conditions, BLM
22 special status plants, noxious weeds, as well as habitat
23 for the Sonoran Desert tortoise.

24 As Mr. Hazle mentioned, we did provide Arizona
25 Game and Fish a letter associated with our Exhibit H

1 mailing, and we received a response from them in
2 September 2022 that, as Mr. Hazle mentioned, described
3 best management practices and mitigation measures
4 recommended by the department to implement for the
5 project.

6 So the findings of our surveys were that we had
7 the community -- the habitat up there is associated with
8 the Sonoran desert scrub biotic community, which is
9 common in this area of southern Arizona. We did not
10 observe any signs of Sonoran Desert tortoise or BLM
11 sensitive plants during the survey.

12 We did discover -- our research showed that two
13 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services listed or candidate
14 species have suitable habitat in the area. The listed
15 species is the Sonoran pronghorn, and the candidate
16 species is the monarch butterfly.

17 Based on the limited forage and the condition
18 of the site and habitat on the site, we expect that the
19 Sonoran pronghorn impact is minimal or negligible.
20 During construction, when there's human activity and
21 noise present on site, there could be individuals
22 impacted of the Sonoran pronghorn; however, the habitat
23 surrounding the project area is adequate to serve those
24 individuals, and then they would be able to reuse the
25 project area once the construction is completed.

1 For monarch butterfly, the milkweed habitat
2 that is something that's important to the monarch
3 butterfly is not present in the project area; and,
4 therefore, we expect, again, the minimal impacts to the
5 butterfly.

6 We did list, in Exhibit C, more special status
7 species that have potential to occur in the area,
8 looking at the species of greatest concern needs,
9 eagles, birds of conservation concern, BLM sensitive
10 species that could be in the area. Those are all listed
11 in Exhibit C.

12 Q. Do you want to give the committee kind of your
13 overall conclusions on the biological resources and the
14 potential impact of the project?

15 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yes.

16 So in summary, there are no areas of biological
17 wealth in the project area. The effects on special
18 status species, the monarch butterfly and Sonoran
19 pronghorn, would be negligible. And the construction-
20 related activities that would affect the pronghorn would
21 be short-term in duration. So again, a negligible
22 effect.

23 So based on these findings, we anticipate the
24 project would be compatible with biological resources.

25 Q. All right. I think you're going to take us

1 next to Exhibit E. Exhibit E covers a number of
2 different topics, but you're going to start us off with
3 visual resources and scenic areas within the project
4 area.

5 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yes. So for visual resources, our
6 approach was really three-fold. We started with doing a
7 desktop review to identify any designated scenic areas
8 in the project or within the vicinity of the project,
9 including national or state parks, scenic overlooks,
10 wild and scenic rivers, or other areas of scenic
11 designation.

12 We followed that by conducting a field visit to
13 review the area for sensitive views and take a general
14 status of the project area for visual resources, as well
15 as collecting data for our visual simulations.

16 And thirdly, we did develop visual simulations
17 for the project from these sensitive viewing locations
18 as identified.

19 In terms of our assessment of visual resources,
20 we determined that there are no scenic areas designated
21 within the area of the project or around the project.
22 The area is generally an open desert area of scrub
23 vegetation with mountains defining the horizon in the
24 background.

25 For sensitive viewers, we determined that the

1 only sensitive viewers in the area would be persons
2 driving or traveling along Palomas Road, which is the
3 road that you've been seeing on several figures.

4 And we did also document a lot of existing
5 structure and utilities in the area, including the
6 Hoodoo Wash substation and the HANG2 transmission line,
7 as previously described.

8 So we did identify two key observation points.
9 As mentioned, KOP-1 is here on Palomas Road. It is on
10 the east side of the project area. It's the view of
11 persons traveling to the west on Palomas Road, looking
12 west at the project.

13 KOP-2 is on the other side of the project, on
14 the western side, looking northeast towards the
15 infrastructure of the project.

16 So to show you our simulations from each of
17 these KOPs, I'll start with KOP-1. So as I said, KOP-1
18 represents views looking west towards the project. The
19 top photograph here is the existing condition. You can
20 see, in the photo, existing infrastructure is Palomas
21 Road. We also have existing transmission structures.
22 The Hoodoo Wash substation is here. You can see the
23 HANG2 -- one of the HANG2 structures here as well. And
24 then another feature in this area is an elevated rail
25 line which is here on the north side of Palomas Road.

1 The bottom photograph represents the visual
2 simulation that was produced for the project. Here in
3 the middle to the left you can see there would be two --
4 you see two of the new structures. These are the HANG2
5 tubular structures that were shown during the flyover.

6 In the background, it's harder to see at this
7 scale, but you can see the step-up substation where this
8 project is stepped up from 69kV to 500kV.

9 And that's primarily the infrastructure that
10 you can see from this viewpoint.

11 The second visual simulation was for KOP-2,
12 also on Palomas Road, but representing a view for
13 eastbound travelers traveling here along Palomas Road.

14 The existing view on top, you can see again a
15 HANG2 structure here, other facilities here. I believe
16 this you can see the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard. And again,
17 there's an elevated rail line here that you can see to
18 the north of the project.

19 For the visual simulation on the bottom, you
20 can see here, center left, is the step-up substation.
21 And that is then shown -- you can see where there is a
22 replacement -- a new structure here. I believe this is
23 the first substructure that comes out of the substation.
24 And then over here to the right center is the tubular
25 structure. Then replacement structure for the HANG2

1 line here.

2 So in terms of visual impact from these KOPs,
3 you can see in these simulations that there's a lot of
4 existing infrastructure in the area and the simulations
5 show that the new transmission structures and features
6 are really consistent with the existing infrastructure
7 and show similar form, line, color, and texture in the
8 area, and are thereby showing really a weak contrast and
9 a minimal visual impact in the area relative to the
10 existing landscape.

11 Q. Do you want to give us your overall conclusions
12 concerning the visual impact of the project?

13 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yes. I would say that the project
14 will have minimal visual impacts relative to the
15 existing landscape in the area. Sensitive viewers are
16 limited to persons traveling along Palomas Road. There
17 are no recreational viewers or residential viewers of
18 the project. As a result, this would really be of
19 little visual impact and be compatible with the visual
20 resources of the area.

21 Q. Okay. Exhibit E also --

22 A. (MS. GRAMS) Sorry. There we go. There's my
23 conclusion.

24 Q. Oh, okay. So the Slide 89 kind of reinforces
25 the conclusions you just stated for the record?

1 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yeah. And could I mention one
2 more thing?

3 Q. Yeah.

4 A. (MS. GRAMS) I also just want to clarify that,
5 as Mr. Ramsey mentioned previously, the structures,
6 there's a possibility that the structures could be over
7 200-foot tall. And if so, the Applicant would comply
8 with FAA night lighting requirements for aviation
9 safety.

10 Q. And the simulations you showed were not
11 nighttime simulations. So we haven't really modeled the
12 impact of what that would look like at night, but I
13 think the committee has sufficient experience in seeing
14 structures that have been lit and what that does.

15 And I assume your conclusions don't change
16 significantly even if the structure exceeds the 200-foot
17 threshold and has to be lit in terms of the contrast
18 that we're likely to see out there given that it's
19 generally out in the open, away from any sort of regular
20 viewers?

21 A. (MS. GRAMS) Again, yes. In terms of viewers,
22 it would be primarily viewers traveling along Palomas
23 Road that would be seeing even the night lighting for
24 the structures, yes.

25 Q. All right. Thank you. So Exhibit E also

1 requires that we understand and discuss what sort of
2 impacts there may to cultural and historic resources. I
3 think you're covering that?

4 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yes.

5 So to review the project for cultural
6 resources, SWCA conducted a Class 1 inventory of the
7 project as well as a Class 3 pedestrian survey of the
8 project.

9 The Class 1 inventory consisted of reviewing
10 known previous surveys or identified archaeological
11 sites within a mile of the project.

12 And then the Class 3 survey consists of two
13 SWCA archaeologists doing standard transect surveys of
14 approximately six acres of the interconnection project
15 area shown here.

16 Q. I'm sorry. What does that mean? The
17 standard -- did you say "transect"?

18 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yeah.

19 Q. What is that?

20 A. (MS. GRAMS) It would be a 20-meter transect.
21 So two archaeological surveyors walking the area,
22 looking for cultural resource sites.

23 Q. Okay.

24 A. (MS. GRAMS) So the Class 3 pedestrian survey
25 was conducted in March of 2022.

1 So through these surveys, we determined that
2 there were no previously recorded or new archaeological
3 sites or cultural resources in the interconnection
4 project area and that the nearest eligible site is
5 approximately a half mile west of the interconnection
6 area.

7 Through this process, we also consulted with
8 the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office. We sent
9 them a letter, and we also included the -- in September
10 of '22, we also included their checklist which is titled
11 "The ACC SHPO Consultation Checklist for Compliance with
12 the State Historic Preservation Act."

13 We sent them the letter in December of 2022.
14 Since then, the SHPO has confirmed receipt of our letter
15 but has not provided any written reply or comment on the
16 project.

17 Q. This ACC SHPO checklist, that's something
18 that's relatively new, but we've, you know, complied
19 with it, provided our analysis in support of the various
20 items required under the checklist, and we haven't
21 received anything back from SHPO, as I understand it.

22 A. (MS. GRAMS) Correct.

23 Q. All right. Do you want to give us your
24 conclusions on cultural resources?

25 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yes. In summary, for cultural

1 resources, there are no cultural resources identified in
2 the interconnection project area. No none would be
3 directly impacted by the project; and, therefore, the
4 interconnection project is compatible with cultural
5 resources.

6 Q. All right. Thank you.

7 I think, Mr. Hazle, you're going to cover any
8 sort of discussion on the analysis of recreational
9 resources within the vicinity of the project?

10 A. (MR. HAZLE) That's correct.

11 As part of our land use inventory, we looked at
12 whether or not there were any developed parks or
13 recreation facilities within that two-mile study area.
14 We did not identify any playground or, you know, parks
15 that would be maintained by the county or otherwise in
16 the two-mile study area.

17 We did find that there are hunting seasons for
18 various species of mule deer, dove, and quail in the
19 area, and the BLM lands are open to those hunting
20 activities as dispersed recreation.

21 However, given the interconnection project's
22 proximity to the existing HANG2 line, Palomas Road, and
23 the Hoodoo Wash Switchyard, we believe that the
24 interconnection project wouldn't interfere or otherwise
25 disrupt those dispersed recreation activities on BLM

1 land just by virtue of how close it is to existing
2 infrastructure.

3 So in addition to sort of the existing
4 recreation opportunities, the Applicant does not have
5 any plans to develop recreational aspects along the
6 proposed route. So we feel that the project is
7 compatible with respect to recreation resources.

8 Q. And that's really your bottom line conclusion.
9 There is no impact from this project to recreation in
10 the area; correct?

11 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yes.

12 Q. Okay. I think you're going to take us through
13 noise and interference next?

14 A. (MR. HAZLE) That's correct.

15 With regard to noise, we don't anticipate that
16 the project would impact existing noise levels. I'm
17 sure the committee is familiar with sort of the corona
18 discharge crackling noise that transmission lines can
19 make, especially in wet or humid conditions.

20 Again, just given its proximity to the existing
21 500kV lines, we don't anticipate that adding this
22 relatively short line segment in direct proximity to
23 those existing facilities would have any appreciable
24 impact on the existing noise levels.

25 With respect to construction, noise from

1 construction would be temporary and primarily limited to
2 daylight hours.

3 And then, finally, we don't anticipate any
4 signal interference where it doesn't already exist. And
5 again, that's just by virtue of its proximity to
6 existing transmission facilities that, if there is any,
7 may be contributing to such interference.

8 Finally, just to kind of tie it back to
9 existing land uses, the nearest potential -- I say
10 "potential" because it's not clear if it's a primary,
11 year-round residence, but it does look like there's sort
12 of an agricultural-type housing for some of those
13 center-pivot irrigation fields farther to the west. And
14 those would be the nearest residences that would be even
15 potentially in the area to hear noise from construction
16 or the project.

17 So our conclusion for noise and signal
18 interference is pretty straightforward. The project
19 wouldn't change existing noise levels and would not
20 contribute to signal interference.

21 Q. Okay. Ms. Grams, I think you're going to wrap
22 up all of the environmental analysis and give us your
23 broad conclusions about whether the project is
24 environmentally compatible.

25 A. (MS. GRAMS) Yes.

1 So in summary, the project is consistent with
2 the local zoning and land use plans as reviewed. The
3 project would permanently disturb a small amount of
4 land, much of which is already previously disturbed by
5 various activities.

6 It would be constructed near an existing and
7 adjacent to an existing high voltage transmission
8 facility. And this would result in really minimal
9 effects on existing planned land use, recreation,
10 visual, cultural and biological resources.

11 In my professional opinion, based on our
12 analysis, the project is environmentally compatible with
13 the siting statute.

14 Q. Anything, Ms. Grams or Mr. Hazle, you want to
15 add on the environmental analysis or did we cover it?

16 A. (MR. HAZLE) I think we covered it.

17 Q. Okay. So, Mr. Hazle, you're going to take us
18 through kind of the formal notice requirements required
19 by statute or the Chairman's procedural order.

20 As noted on Slide 113, the application was
21 filed on January 5, 2023. We're required to publish the
22 notice of hearing following the filing of the
23 application. Was that done for this case?

24 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yes, it was. We published the
25 notice of hearing in the Yuma Sun on January 12 and

1 January 13. The Yuma Sun is a general circulation daily
2 newspaper in Yuma County. I believe it circulates about
3 10,000 papers per day.

4 And interestingly, when I reached out to the
5 Yuma Sun, they specifically noted that they send papers
6 to the Dateland Elementary School, which is the nearest
7 public building to the project.

8 So on the right-hand screen, we just have a
9 tear sheet of the publication from the Yuma Sun, and
10 then an affidavit of publication because it was run as a
11 legal notice in the newspaper.

12 Q. Okay. And the affidavit of publication and, I
13 think, copies of those tear sheets are found under --
14 well, the affidavit of publication is found under APS
15 Exhibit 8; correct?

16 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yes.

17 Q. All right. In addition, by statute we're
18 required to give notice to affected jurisdictions. The
19 Chairman asked me about who were the affected
20 jurisdictions, but run through those three jurisdictions
21 again or who we gave notice to as jurisdictions.

22 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yeah. The primary area of
23 jurisdiction that was affected by the project would be
24 Yuma County. So we sent a notice letter to the -- I
25 believe it's the county administrator or the county

1 manager. And then we also noticed the Arizona State
2 Land Department and the Bureau of Land Management's Yuma
3 Field Office.

4 Q. We encountered an issue in this case -- I
5 haven't actually encountered this before, but that the
6 Docket Control typically sends out, by certified mail,
7 notice to the affected jurisdictions.

8 As we kept checking the docket, we discovered
9 that that mailing apparently did not go out. So we then
10 immediately sent out new notices by Federal Express and
11 also by e-mail.

12 And then we received confirmations back from, I
13 think, all three other than Yuma County. And those
14 evidence of the Federal Express mailings, as well as
15 some additional efforts at mailing and e-mailing, are
16 all collected under APS Exhibit 12. Do I have that
17 correct?

18 A. (MR. HAZLE) That's correct.

19 Q. Okay. And just so that the record is clear, in
20 terms of coordination with Yuma County, I understood
21 either from you or Mr. Ramsey that there is a process
22 that Yuma County was well aware of this project through
23 the special use permit application that was granted by
24 Yuma County; is that true?

25 A. (MR. HAZLE) That's correct. And APS

1 Exhibit 12 does contain e-mail confirmation from county
2 staff that they received the follow-up message that I
3 believe your firm sent earlier this month.

4 Q. Okay. So we did get confirmation from all
5 three that they had received our notice.

6 A. (MR. HAZLE) Correct.

7 Q. And then just for background, I believe you and
8 Mr. Ramsey have testified at some length about the
9 process with Bureau of Land Management and their
10 coordination and their understanding of this project
11 going back to 2022 or even earlier; correct?

12 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yes. The Bureau of Land
13 Management process goes back to 2018, actually. And
14 we've been in regular communication with their staff
15 throughout 2021 and 2022 -- or excuse me -- 2022 and
16 2023.

17 Q. And then with regard to Arizona State Land
18 Department, the application for right-of-way and the
19 grant of right-of-way that was given by State Land
20 Department, do you have an idea of the timeline for
21 that?

22 Would that go to you, Mr. Ramsey?

23 A. (MR. RAMSEY) I believe we had to go back for
24 an amended right-of-way, and I believe that was in 2022.

25 Q. Okay. And I assume, then, the process started

1 much earlier and ASLD is -- your coordination with ASLD
2 goes at least from 2022 and probably sometime earlier?

3 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Correct. It went back probably
4 as long as the BLM's. So about 2018 they were aware of
5 this project, and we were working with them on the
6 right-of-way.

7 Q. Okay. So it's fair to say that our view is
8 that those jurisdictions, if we're calling all three of
9 those jurisdictions, that they're well aware of this
10 project and they received notice concerning this case
11 and this hearing.

12 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Yes.

13 Q. Beyond the notice to affected jurisdictions,
14 the Chairman's procedural order required that we provide
15 copies of the CEC application to nearby libraries.

16 I'm guessing that there's not a public library
17 really close to the project, but tell us how we complied
18 with that requirement.

19 A. (MR. HAZLE) Sure. The Dateland Elementary
20 School is the nearest public building to the
21 interconnection project, and it sort of serves as an
22 all-in-one community center. It's an elementary school.
23 It has a small public library affiliated with it. I
24 think it actually has a post office in there too. So
25 that's probably the first and best location where we had

1 the application placed for public review.

2 But then moving down the valley toward Yuma,
3 just to make sure we had it widely available, we placed
4 an application in the Wellton Public Library and the
5 Foothills Public Library, which is in the city of Yuma.
6 And then looking back toward the east, we also had an
7 application placed at the Gila Bend Public Library.

8 Q. And the notice of hearing that we published
9 calls out these library locations?

10 A. (MR. HAZLE) That's correct.

11 Q. And copies of the transcripts from our
12 prefiling and prehearing conference are delivered to
13 those same locations by the court reporting firm;
14 correct?

15 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yes. And that information is
16 contained in APS-10.

17 Q. Okay. Thank you. We're also required to post
18 signs within the vicinity of the project. Take us
19 through how we complied with that requirement.

20 A. (MR. HAZLE) Sure. We looked at sign locations
21 that were both directly proximate to the project itself
22 and then also just in general locations where people
23 traveling through the area might see the signs.

24 So the first two locations may be a little hard
25 to see on the right-hand screen, but they're up here

1 kind of flanking the east and west end of the project
2 itself. And those two sign symbols correspond to these
3 photographs on the bottom right here. Those are on each
4 end of the solar project -- or excuse me -- each end of
5 the interconnection project.

6 We had a sign installed at the intersection of
7 Avenue 64E and Palomas Road, which is a few miles from
8 the project. But, you know, if you're traveling this
9 way, you'll go through that intersection.

10 And then most important, we had a sign
11 installed between the I-8 Dateland exit and the
12 elementary school, which is likely the most traveled
13 portion of road in that area.

14 So we feel that we really canvassed this area
15 thoroughly with our public notice signs. The signs
16 themselves contained a map of the project and a link to
17 the project website and also the details for today's
18 hearing.

19 Q. And what you're showing on the right screen
20 here in the hearing room, Slide 118, which is the map of
21 the sign locations and then photos of signs, those are
22 also contained under APS Exhibit 13; is that correct?

23 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yes.

24 Q. Newsletter. We sent out a newsletter providing
25 information on this hearing. Why don't you talk about

1 that a minute.

2 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yeah. We sent a newsletter to
3 property owners within two miles of the interconnection
4 project and also to key public agencies, departments,
5 and representatives.

6 Acknowledging the larger Spanish-speaking
7 population in Yuma County, we included a shorter Spanish
8 translated message at the bottom of that outreach letter
9 indicating that further information in Spanish was
10 available on our project website and providing an e-mail
11 address and phone number that could be contacted for
12 more information.

13 MEMBER HAMWAY: Mr. Chairman?

14 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, Member.

15 MEMBER HAMWAY: How many newsletters were
16 within the two-mile radius?

17 WITNESS HAZLE: It's pretty small. It's about
18 21, I think. So these are -- like I mentioned earlier,
19 the minimal parcel size for the zoning district is
20 40 acres. So even with a big notice area, we came up
21 with few landowners.

22 MEMBER MERCER: Question. Are you required to
23 have everything in Spanish or just a public service?

24 WITNESS HAZLE: Yeah, it's not a prescriptive
25 requirement from the regulations or the Chairman's

1 order. It's our practice as a consulting firm to kind
2 of look at the census demographics for the project area
3 and make a judgment call if interpretive services or
4 translation is appropriate for a particular project.

5 I'll talk more about this in my general
6 outreach slide, but we have a project website that
7 Strata and SWCA maintained, and then separately APS has
8 their own project website for this. So these website
9 updates for the notice of hearing kind of rolled out in
10 tandem on our website and on the APS website.

11 But they include kind of the whole gamut of
12 details and information. So hearing links, transcripts,
13 key documents, including the full Certificate of
14 Environmental Compatibility application. We have the
15 Zoom links and video links for remote participation and
16 dial-in posted.

17 And then on the right-hand portion of the right
18 screen we can see that Spanish-translated section that
19 we had posted on the website, which again kind of has a
20 basic project description and then information about the
21 CEC hearings today.

22 And I think I forgot to mention, in the
23 newsletter and really with all of our public
24 communications, we included contact information for the
25 project team so that anybody receiving those

1 communications could actually reach us.

2 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) I think the screen print of
3 the -- if you go back to the website posting concerning
4 the hearing, I think those are found under APS-11. And
5 then that third newsletter or that newsletter that
6 announced the hearing was found also under APS
7 Exhibit 14. I think I have that right.

8 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yes.

9 MEMBER HAMWAY: Mr. Chairman, I just have a
10 quick question.

11 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes.

12 MEMBER HAMWAY: I know it's not required, but
13 do you have the same kind of information for the solar
14 facility?

15 The reason I'm asking that question is I was
16 asked by a legislator if -- I've lost my train of
17 thought. But anyway, I lost my train of thought. I'm
18 sorry.

19 WITNESS HAZLE: That's okay. I think when we
20 write these project descriptions in our public
21 communications, it just kind of makes sense to give a
22 full project description so that it doesn't seem like
23 this is a transmission line going to nowhere.

24 MEMBER HAMWAY: Right. Do you send out -- do
25 you do a same two-mile radius around the solar facility

1 and send to those people?

2 For example, the last hearing we had, they did
3 community outreach. They tried to assimilate themselves
4 into the Yuma city proper and wanted people to know
5 about them. So I'm just curious how much of that goes
6 on when you're way out in the middle of nowhere.

7 WITNESS HAZLE: Yeah, I think when we look at
8 these projects, we kind of calibrate the public outreach
9 based on the setting of the project. So if we're in
10 more developed areas, oftentimes that, you know, gives
11 us a reason and cause to go above and beyond what is
12 done in other cases.

13 So in this instance, that two-mile study area
14 that we used for our resource studies was also applied
15 to the public outreach, and that's buffered around the
16 interconnection project 500kV portion.

17 MEMBER HAMWAY: Right. So the same kind of
18 two-mile radius around the solar field, you didn't do
19 that.

20 WITNESS HAZLE: Correct.

21 MEMBER HAMWAY: Okay. That's what I wanted to
22 know. Thanks.

23 WITNESS HAZLE: Uh-huh.

24 MEMBER LITTLE: Mr. Chairman.

25 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Yes, Member Little.

1 MEMBER LITTLE: Just a quick question to kind
2 of continue along the lines of Member Hamway's
3 questions.

4 So if there had not been a hearing required for
5 this transmission line, would there have been any public
6 outreach at all for the project itself? Not just the
7 transmission line but for the solar and the 69kV line
8 and the substation and the whole thing.

9 WITNESS HAZLE: Yeah, I think both Strata Clean
10 Energy and certainly Arizona Public Service Company have
11 long track records of doing outreach sort of regardless
12 of the permitting requirements or, you know, what a
13 particular committee or regulator is going to look for
14 in an application.

15 So we find that it just leads to better project
16 outcomes overall when you kind of gauge the awareness
17 and the kind of concern of the neighbors and the
18 communities more broadly. That allows developers to
19 tailor their projects to what the community is saying
20 and make adjustments where that's appropriate.

21 I don't know. Mr. Ramsey might be able to
22 offer more on Strata's sort of development philosophy
23 with community outreach. But I think the answer is,
24 yes, we would do outreach sort of regardless of the
25 prescriptive requirements of any particular permit.

1 MEMBER LITTLE: Thank you.

2 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) And I guess on that topic,
3 am I correct in understanding that the NEPA process, the
4 environmental assessment process that was led by the
5 Bureau of Land Management also has its own outreach and
6 engagement requirements? I don't know what they were
7 done here, but there is a notification and outreach
8 process that's required under NEPA.

9 A. (MR. HAZLE) That's correct. The BLM held what
10 they call a scoping meeting back in 2018. And as part
11 of that process, they solicited public comments and held
12 an open house in Dateland.

13 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Also, I would assume because
14 every project, even if it was exempt from our view,
15 would require a special land use permit from either a
16 city or a county, and the cities and counties are
17 required to give public notice and an opportunity for
18 the community to submit written objections or
19 affirmations of the project and to appear in person
20 before the Board of Supervisors or the city council.

21 WITNESS HAZLE: That's correct.

22 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) I think you were going to
23 touch on kind of the last formal notice requirement,
24 which is the Chairman's procedural order requires you to
25 utilize social media to some extent to publicize this

1 hearing and as appropriate for the project in general.

2 A. (MR. HAZLE) That's correct. We ran a social
3 media ad on Facebook and Instagram through sort of the
4 Facebook advertising platform.

5 One interesting thing about setting this ad up,
6 which I haven't encountered in other instances I've done
7 this, is that we started with a two-mile buffer around
8 the 500kV line, and Facebook came back and said "Hold
9 on. There's not enough accounts in this two-mile area.
10 You have to look at -- you have to pay for a bigger
11 area."

12 So we kept stepping out our notice area on the
13 Facebook ad until we got to about a 13-mile radius,
14 which would encompass the Dateland exit and the Dateland
15 Elementary School, before we sort of satisfied, you
16 know, the account threshold for an ad to be viable on
17 the Facebook platform.

18 So we ran this ad for about one week leading up
19 to hearings. A screen grab of that advisement is shown
20 on the right here. It contains a lot of information
21 right in the ad itself, and then individuals who clicked
22 on this were directed to our project website where, you
23 know, the full suite of information was available.

24 In that one-week period that we ran the ad for,
25 we had about 170 impressions and 6 clicks. And just in

1 my experience running Facebook ads for these projects,
2 we frequently see numbers kind of in the thousands and
3 hundreds, respectively. So I think this is pretty
4 indicative of the just kind of exceptionally remote area
5 that we're in.

6 Q. All right. You ticked off the various notice
7 requirements required by statute or by the Chairman's
8 procedural order.

9 I think this last section you're going to just
10 more broadly cover some of the outreach engagement that
11 was done in connection with the interconnection project.

12 A. (MR. HAZLE) That's right. We're going to step
13 back to what we did leading up to hearings. This is
14 kind of everything before the notice of hearing.

15 Just as an overview, this outreach program that
16 we ran for the project included newsletters, an
17 in-person open house, two websites, a dedicated
18 telephone number and e-mail address that were monitored
19 by the project team. And then, of course, the notice of
20 hearing which I just described.

21 So again, I think I touched on this in response
22 to Member Hamway's question, but we focused our
23 communications on a two-mile study area. For our mailed
24 communications, we developed a mailing list that was
25 based on the Yuma County Assessor's Office, and then we

1 added into that sort of the relevant public officials,
2 agencies, and departments. Those include groups like,
3 you know, the county. I think even for the county we
4 included the administrator but then also the public
5 works department and the planning department all got
6 their own letters here.

7 We sent letters to Arizona Public Service,
8 actually, before they were the owner of the project, and
9 several other agencies like that.

10 We did run advertisements for our open house in
11 the Yuma Sun, and then we actually had our open house at
12 the Dateland Elementary School, which is the nearest
13 venue we could find.

14 So I think I mentioned a minute ago that we set
15 up a dedicated e-mail and telephone number. Those are
16 shown on the right-hand screen up here. Ms. Grams and I
17 had access to both of these. So if anybody were to
18 leave a voicemail here, Jill and I would both be
19 notified right away and same goes for the e-mail.

20 This is our project website on the left here.
21 So this was what we originally stood up with the Strata
22 team prior to APS's involvement. And we've updated this
23 several times over the project's development cycle with
24 just new information as it becomes available.

25 Despite having included this website link in

1 all of our public communications, newsletters, newspaper
2 ads, things like that, you know, these are the website
3 views on an annual basis, which I think tells a lot.
4 You know, 30 views in 2021. 200 views in 2022. And
5 then just since we've had our public outreach notice
6 activities here in 2023, another 130 views. So again,
7 pretty minor compared to some of the other project
8 websites that I've personally operated.

9 The website addresses, e-mail, telephone number
10 were included in all of our public outreach materials so
11 that people could always go and get more information if
12 they wanted it or contact the project team directly.

13 This is our first newsletter we sent out way
14 back in November of 2021. This sort of introduced the
15 project and notified people about our open house,
16 inviting people to attend the open house at the Dateland
17 Elementary School. Again, we ran a little ad in the
18 Yuma Sun inviting people to come attend the open house.

19 MEMBER HAMWAY: Did you get anyone?

20 WITNESS HAZLE: Yes. We had about two people
21 attend. Both individuals were expressing interest in
22 employment opportunities with the project's
23 construction.

24 The open house was set up with sort of an
25 informal poster boards on easels format, and there were

1 members from the Strata team and SWCA in attendance at
2 that open house. The poster boards on easels had basic
3 project description information and contact information,
4 things like that.

5 In the second quarter of 2022, as Mr. Ramsey
6 indicated earlier, APS became involved as the -- APS
7 purchased the project from Strata in 2022. And after
8 that acquisition, we sort of refreshed our outreach
9 activities. There had been a few sort of updates to the
10 approach that the interconnection route was going to
11 take, so we took the opportunity to explain APS's
12 involvement in the project, being the sort of
13 well-recognized footprint utility, and also to describe
14 the updates to the project.

15 All of the project updates that happened
16 leading up to this August 2022 outreach round were also
17 implemented on our project websites.

18 I got a little ahead of myself. Yeah. We
19 updated all this information on the SWCA Strata website,
20 which is on the left here. And then August 2022 is
21 about the time that Arizona Public Service Company put
22 up their own project-specific page for Proving Ground.

23 As part of our website updates, we wanted to
24 include sort of a virtual engagement piece, and to do
25 that we developed sort of a prerecorded, narrated

1 presentation again with the project description, contact
2 information for the team, describing APS's involvement,
3 things like that. So that kind of ended up in the form
4 of a YouTube video that's directly embedded in our
5 website and people can watch that anytime they would
6 like.

7 And in addition, just leading up to hearings
8 here in the last couple weeks, we did have the virtual
9 flyover tour posted to the website just to give people a
10 further look and feel for what the project will be like
11 once constructed.

12 So I know that was a lot, and I would be happy
13 to answer any questions on the public engagement that
14 we've done so far, but that's everything I have
15 prepared.

16 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) I just wanted to cover with
17 you, I think APS Exhibit 9 is a summary of our public
18 outreach efforts, but all the various public outreach
19 efforts are also included under Exhibit J to the CEC
20 application which is also APS Exhibit 1; is that right?

21 A. (MR. HAZLE) Yes.

22 MR. DERSTINE: Okay. Make sure I covered it
23 all. Yeah. Mr. Chairman, if this is a good time for
24 the afternoon break. And then we may have a few
25 exhibits to cover with the witnesses, and then we are

1 done.

2 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Okay. So we'll pick back up,
3 then, at 5:30? Is that what your thought is? Or are
4 you talking about taking a 15-minute break?

5 MR. DERSTINE: If we can take a 15-minute
6 break.

7 CHAIRMAN KATZ: It's about 20 minutes after
8 4:00. We can break until about 4:35 and go back in for
9 20 minutes or so before we take a little rest before the
10 likely lack of public comments at 5:30.

11 MR. DERSTINE: All right.

12 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Anyway, we do stand in recess,
13 unless the committee has any immediate questions for any
14 members of the panel.

15 Okay. Well, think about it, and we'll recess.
16 And more questions will come from counsel and, if
17 necessary, from the committee.

18 MR. DERSTINE: Thank you.

19 (A recess was taken from 4:16 p.m. to
20 4:35 p.m.)

21 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Good Afternoon a second time
22 today, maybe the third time. But we are ready to go for
23 about another 20 or 30 minutes, and then we'll break and
24 hold off for our 5:30 public comment session.

25 Mr. Derstine, if you're ready to proceed,

1 please feel free to do so.

2 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) Yeah. I wanted to have the
3 witnesses speak to two of the exhibits that we haven't
4 touched on yet, but, Mr. Chairman, you raised it at the
5 beginning of the hearing, and that is Staff's letter.

6 So, Mr. Ramsey, if you could turn to APS-16 in
7 your exhibit binder. That's the Commission Staff's
8 letter dated February 7, 2023. And maybe just for
9 purposes of the record, read the conclusion at the end
10 of that letter.

11 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Sure. Just for clarity, I'm on
12 Page 3 of their letter.

13 It says "Based on Staff's review of the
14 application, as well as the Applicant's response to a
15 Staff issued data request, Staff believes the proposed
16 project can improve the reliability and/or safety of the
17 operation of the grid and the delivery of power in
18 Arizona."

19 MR. DERSTINE: And I don't know whether Member
20 Little or there's any members of the committee have any
21 questions that they want to ask concerning the content
22 of the letter, but I wanted to make sure we covered it.

23 MEMBER LITTLE: Thank you, Mr. Derstine. I
24 don't have any questions. Thank you.

25 MR. DERSTINE: Thank you.

1 Q. (BY MR. DERSTINE) And then, Mr. Ramsey, APS
2 Exhibit 17 is Arizona Corporation Commission Decision
3 70127, docketed January 23, 2008, and it references Line
4 Siting Case No. 135, and attached to the decision is the
5 CEC granted by this committee in Case 135.

6 Am I correct in understanding that the CEC in
7 Case 135 and the Decision No. 70127 is for the HANG2
8 line that's been the subject of testimony and that the
9 interconnection project's 500kV line will be co-located
10 with on the two structures that has been identified in
11 your testimony and, I think, in Mr. Hazle's testimony?

12 A. (MR. RAMSEY) Yes. You are correct.

13 MR. DERSTINE: Okay. I think that covers it,
14 Mr. Chairman. I'm happy to move the admission of our
15 exhibits.

16 CHAIRMAN KATZ: That's fine.

17 MR. DERSTINE: Okay. Let me make sure I've
18 kept my list in order.

19 So I would move the following APS exhibits:
20 APS Exhibit 1, which is the CEC application.

21 APS Exhibits 2, 3, and 4, which are the witness
22 summaries that were filed in accordance with your
23 procedural order for Mr. Hazle, Mr. Ramsey, and
24 Ms. Grams.

25 I'm going to skip APS-5.

1 APS-6 are the witness presentation slides that
2 were used by the witnesses in their sworn testimony
3 today in this hearing to support their testimony and
4 illustrate various points.

5 APS Exhibit 8 is the affidavit of publication
6 that Mr. Hazle spoke to.

7 APS-9 is the summary of public outreach which
8 summarized the various outreach and engagement efforts.
9 Mr. Hazle also spoke to that.

10 APS Exhibit 10 is the proof of the delivery of
11 the CEC applications to the libraries that were
12 identified in Mr. Hazle's testimony and on the slides
13 here in the hearing room.

14 APS Exhibit 11, which is the evidence of the
15 website posting and the notice of hearing information.

16 APS-12 is the collection of the various
17 evidence of the notice to the affected jurisdictions.

18 APS-13, which is the proof of the posting of
19 the signs along the project route and it includes the
20 map of those sign locations.

21 APS-14, which is the newsletter announcing this
22 notice of hearing.

23 We'll skip APS-15.

24 APS-16, which is the letter from Commission
25 Staff dated February 7, 2023, that Mr. Ramsey just spoke

1 to.

2 And APS-17, which is Decision No. 70127, that
3 includes the CEC and Line Siting Case No. 135.

4 And then APS-18, which is the separate,
5 standalone map which Mr. Hazle spoke to. And I think
6 Mr. Ramsey actually walked us through the different
7 callouts that actually was, you know, prepared for me to
8 help better illustrate exactly what is happening with
9 each of those four structures.

10 And then I would move APS-19, which is the
11 large generator interconnection agreement that addressed
12 the issues that were raised in the limited appearance
13 that you dealt with at the outset of the hearing.

14 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Then Exhibits 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8,
15 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, and 19 have been
16 offered into evidence, and they will all be admitted.
17 And you need to make sure that our court reporter has
18 copies of each of those exhibits.

19 And just one other thing. I'll be a teacher.
20 I already did this once to Mr. Acken.

21 When I was a young lawyer in the U.S.
22 Attorney's Office and at the Attorney General's Advocacy
23 Institute doing, like, the moot court and training
24 programs in D.C., I got yelled at when I moved an
25 exhibit. They said you offer exhibits and the court

1 receives them.

2 But today it's about like the difference
3 between "well" and "good" or "I" and "me." Half of the
4 universe doesn't know the difference. So I just share
5 that thought.

6 MR. DERSTINE: I appreciate the point of order,
7 and I will use "offer" from now on.

8 CHAIRMAN KATZ: But you've been very good at
9 these hearings, so I appreciate it.

10 MR. DERSTINE: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And we can pat each other on
12 the back when this thing is all over.

13 Anything else, though, for today?

14 MR. DERSTINE: I have nothing else for today.
15 You know, as I mentioned at the end of my opening
16 statement, we greatly appreciate, Mr. Chairman, your
17 chairmanship over these -- whatever the count is --
18 these 18 months or so. And we also greatly appreciate
19 the time and the service of the members of this
20 committee, those who appear in person and those who are
21 appearing virtually today.

22 You know, this project falls into that bucket
23 of short gen-tie cases and, you know, putting aside the
24 issue of how these cases should be dealt with
25 procedurally and efforts to maybe pull them out of the

1 hearing queue for this committee because of their length
2 and their minimal environment impacts, I think all of
3 the Applicants and counsel in this room support that
4 effort. Where you end up with that legislative effort,
5 I don't know. We hope it will be successful.

6 But these projects, the short gen-tie projects,
7 are important. They're short because in most cases the
8 project developer makes an effort to site the project
9 close to the interconnection point so it minimizes the
10 impacts of the project. And in this case, we have a
11 project that, you know, is close to a switchyard and
12 other solar projects and not much else.

13 And so there are very minimal impacts, but
14 these projects are important, and we appreciate your
15 time hearing these cases until there's a change and you
16 no longer hear them.

17 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Right. And I have made it
18 clear to the committee members, as well as to Adam
19 Stafford, that I'm available if my input is required,
20 whether it's testifying before the legislature or
21 working on drafting things or making sure that the new
22 members, if any, of this committee, as well as the new
23 chair are well-prepared and understand what they're
24 doing.

25 MR. DERSTINE: Right.

1 CHAIRMAN KATZ: So anyway, we stand in recess
2 until 5:30. And I'm not expecting a large crowd to
3 appear virtually. There's nobody here from the public
4 in person that I'm aware of. So we'll see you back here
5 about 5:30, and we'll take it from there.

6 (A recess was taken from 4:43 p.m. to
7 5:28 p.m.)

8 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Let's go back on the record.
9 It is now 5:30. And we can wait but maybe
10 another five minutes or so before we recess. But I
11 don't see any members of the general public present that
12 have filled out forms and wish to address us either
13 verbally or by way of written comment.

14 And our IT folks have indicated that there's
15 nobody other than Adam Stafford as well as our other
16 virtual participants on the line.

17 I don't know if we want to wait another five
18 minutes or so. So we'll go off the record, but I'm
19 going to wait about five minutes. And if we don't have
20 anybody that shows up personally or virtually, we'll
21 call it a day.

22 And then we decide do we want to begin at 9:00
23 tomorrow. We can. We will probably finish within an
24 hour or two and have to decide whether we want to just
25 sit around for a couple of hours until our 2:00 special

1 meeting, or whether we would like to start later, but we
2 don't have to cross that bridge immediately. Just give
3 it some thought.

4 We stand in recess for about five more minutes.

5 (A recess was taken from 5:30 p.m. to
6 5:36 p.m.)

7 CHAIRMAN KATZ: We're going back on the record.
8 We had a slight delay, some IT issues that had to be
9 corrected.

10 But it's my understanding that we -- I haven't
11 seen any strangers enter the hearing room where we're
12 all seated, and we don't have any new folks appearing on
13 our virtual website for public comment. So there will
14 be none.

15 What are your recommendations, Mr. Derstine, in
16 terms of what time we start tomorrow? And I'm happy to
17 do it at 9:00 and to have a long break, or we can start
18 a little bit later. It doesn't matter to me.

19 Do any of our committee members have any
20 thoughts one way or the other?

21 MEMBER PALMER: No.

22 MR. DERSTINE: I don't have a strong
23 preference. It's whatever the preference is of the
24 committee. I know that in Coolidge we started an hour
25 later. I think we started at 10:00 instead of 9:00. It

1 makes for a little easier morning, but it doesn't matter
2 to us. We'll be ready.

3 CHAIRMAN KATZ: What do you figure? You have
4 probably about a 10- or 15-minute, at the most, closing
5 argument?

6 MR. DERSTINE: You already heard my closing.
7 I'm done.

8 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Okay. So we really -- absent
9 some unforeseen issues that come up during the night,
10 we'll have -- you have already advised me that the CEC,
11 with a couple of edits from the original version
12 provided to me, has been sent to Tod.

13 MR. DERSTINE: Correct.

14 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Tod will convert those either
15 this evening or early morning because he's in trial with
16 the Liability Management Section attorney in the
17 Superior Court.

18 He said either tonight or early tomorrow
19 morning he will review it to make sure that we don't
20 have any grammatical or typographical errors. And any
21 references to prior CECs, if they're still there, will
22 be stricken because we don't need to have those in what
23 we're reviewing.

24 And we'll get a PDF version back, which will be
25 Chair Exhibit No. 1, and we can project that on the

1 right screen because the left screen is closer to
2 counsel. And we can put the Word version, Chair
3 Exhibit 2 up.

4 Chair Exhibit 1 is strictly there so that the
5 public and the Corporation Commission knows what we
6 started with. We won't touch it.

7 The Word version will be the one that has all
8 the edits, additions, subtractions, and whatever else we
9 might need to do to it.

10 And then unlike the last one where I forgot to
11 ask for a motion to allow me to correct scrivener
12 errors, we'll do it anyhow, but we would like to have
13 that motion so if there are any typos or other scrivener
14 errors, we can correct them.

15 Any thoughts? Should we make it 9:30?

16 MEMBER PALMER: Whatever you want, Mr. Chair.

17 MR. DERSTINE: Whatever your preference is. I
18 think you have your special meeting noticed for 2:00.

19 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Right. And we can't move it up
20 because of the public notice requirements.

21 MR. DERSTINE: So you either have more of a
22 gap, however long the deliberations take, and start a
23 bit later, or we can start at 9:00 and then you have a
24 longer gap between deliberations and the 2:00.

25 CHAIRMAN KATZ: I say maybe 9:30 or 10:00.

1 MEMBER PALMER: Anything you want.

2 MR. DERSTINE: I'll just suggest 10:00.

3 CHAIRMAN KATZ: Okay. We'll meet at 10:00.

4 You might want to let your breakfast people know that
5 breakfast -- I don't know -- from 8:00 to -- I don't
6 know what time you want to have breakfast served.

7 MR. RAMSEY: We have breakfast starting at 8:00
8 in Room C.

9 CHAIRMAN KATZ: And we can off the record.

10 (The Evidentiary Hearing recessed at 5:40 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF ARIZONA)
) ss.
2 COUNTY OF YUMA.)

3

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14 obligations set forth in ACJA 7-206(F)(3) and
15 ACJA 7-206(J)(1)(g)(1) and (2).

16 DATED this 16th day of February, 2023, at Yuma,
17 Arizona.

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22 MICHELE E. BALMER
23 Arizona Certified Reporter
24 No. 50489

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