

# **Appendix F**

*Summary of Verbal Public Comments from  
Scoping Meeting on January 6, 2011, El Centro,  
California*

## Ocotillo Express Wind Energy Scoping Meeting 1-6-11

### Verbal Comment Summary Transcripts

**Meeting Location:** County of Imperial Ocotillo Community Center  
266 West Imperial Highway  
Ocotillo, California 92259

**Audio length:** 02:30:08

#### Verbal Speakers

- Arrow-weed Preston 01:08:57
- Barbara Hill 01:16:01
- Alan Ridley 1:21:52
- Michael Cuff 1:24:40
- Edie Harmon 01:31:50
- Dan Boten 01:40:56
- Terry Weiner 01:45:14
- Jack (last name unknown) 01:52:37
- Fred Keagal 01:58:45
- Ingrid Crickmore 02:01:20
- Pete Zeitler 02:07:07
- Juan Zaritia 02:10:48
- Dennis Troficante 02:14:26
- Tim Lambs 02:21:11

**Name:** Arrow-Weed Preston  
Ocotillo

**Audio Start Time:** 01:08:57

#### Comment Summary

1. I just heard you say that nature made this area viable for this project. That's questionable because to say nature created this area for your project is to say that nature intended to destroy creatures

and creatures that fly, so that you can light homes. Is this a process of elimination of life in the desert? There is also evidence of a people that lived in those areas long ago. Did nature intend for those areas to be destroyed too? Those areas are sacred to us, the Quechan and the Kumeyaay. And those areas glorify nature. And I don't know how nature would go and destroy what glorifies nature. You have miss used the name of nature because that is the creation and the creator. That's what we are talking about. And you have miss used that here, and I resent that. And my people will resent what you put in there. And you have admitted that you don't care if you destroy them. By that statement that you made, that nature is viable for the wind project, you are saying that, that's wrong to say that. You might as well have said that god almighty said it's okay to do this. You might as well bring up the bible, and say let's rewrite the bible to say it's okay to destroy nature and other evidence that glorifies nature or the creation. You might as well put that in there too because that very bible is what you swear by to do the right things. Also we go by that nature, all the things that are left out, all the things that we know through our songs, through our story. We are a part of the ecology. We don't mind people who live here and destroy the ecology as long as you can live in harmony with it. There's no way for harmony, no substitution when you destroy nature. I listened to all these things you done how you gathered everybody here. That was sacrilege what you said here, and I think that's very wrong. You have never gone to my tribe to talk to them personally. Face to face because you are supposed to have a government to government. You have never gone over there. Tell them nature says we can destroy all of your artifacts and we can destroy all of the creatures that you hold to be very sacred because you are talking about creatures that are very important to the creation story red tail hawks (etcetera),.

2. That area is just right for big horn sheep because it's cooler. You're going to destroy his habitat before he gets there. Because the desert is getting hotter and hotter.
3. Ocotillo isn't getting any of the electricity or the jobs.

**Name:** Barbara Hill  
980 Palo Verde in No Mirage.

**Audio Start Time:** 01:16:01

### **Comment Summary**

1. Concerns are in the EIR on the construction area. She has worked in construction for over 20 years in deserts, Indio, and Palm Springs and she knows the damage construction does. They put down chemicals and they are no good. Construction workers don't use out-houses that are provided. When you disturb this desert, and we get winds, we get dust. Is the planning commission going to keep this dust down to the level that they have on construction, 4 feet from the vehicle? No, its not, it's almost impossible. The wind blows but there are other areas and you are saying we have high winds. So do Coachella and Salten Sea and the winds blow just as hard there as they do here? I am also concerned about the traffic that will create. Our little roads can't handle a lot and you are saying that this job will bring 100-300 jobs out here. I know you say carpooling but where are you going to park all the cars. There is no room for the cars. The plants will be disturbed and destroyed. You say that you will plant it but do you know how long it takes

for plants out here to grow and to reestablish itself? It takes 3-10 years. Ocotillo's it take 25-50 years to get these plants up. They are very slow growing. The smoke trees and even the sage brush trees and you are just going to mow them down. We have spotted eagles, redtail hawks and huge owls that will leave. She rescues birds that come into the area. Blue footed ducks get blown around. Big horn sheep, deer, foxes will be disturbed as well. You will be destroying an awful lot. The compaction machine will destroy the sand and the desert is fragile and by putting in this big equipment, it will destroy the desert.

**Name:** Alan Ridley

**Audio Start Time:** 1:21:52

### **Comment Summary**

1. I live in Chula Vista and work at Cuyamaca College. Mention that it's very beneficial for us to avoid mercury and they say pregnant women shouldn't eat fish with mercury. Where does it come from? It comes from coal-fired power plants.
2. There is an architect in New Mexico that says that there is a simple solution for the global climate change. It is no more coal-fired power plants. Now in California has terminated contracts for these types of power plants. They still get some power from some plants that use this type of power plant. One of the advantages of wind is that you won't have mercury in your fish, food, or your diet.

**Name:** Michael Cuff

134 Via de la Coyote

**Audio Start Time:** 1:24:40

### **Comment Summary**

1. Third time living in this town. I am worried about the FEMA wind map that doesn't match up with the slide presented. Up at the top of the hill where the other turbans are, FEMA has this labeled as a high wind area. But we live in a shadow where the wind blows over the top and then it drops down to plaster city. So what we have the thermal effect. He has a concern about the turban efficiency of 33% but there is study showing 22%. Federal government may be involved on the tax dollars going to this.
2. Border patrol is out here every day because they are in high smuggling zone and he is concerned about their safety with the transmission lines that will be out there. Concerned about military aircraft that fly lower to the ground over the project area and that is the normal flight traffic.
3. Concern about the end of life of the turban. If they are only going to be here until 2042, that is not much time, then why are they going to be here in the first place? The next generation will be here and is it monetarily feasible in Ocotillo for them to be here. Why should he put up solar panels if he is going to have turbans in his back yard?

4. The big horned sheep transferring from north to south and back and they are a part of the Ocotillo area. Also there was a question about noise and if the wind turbines make noise. They are being told no. But when you have a rotating propeller, you are going to have some frequency differences, so how is this going to affect our wildlife? They hear and sense things much differently than we do.
5. Hazardous materials and hazardous waste. You know about the aqua fir. It's federally protected, and there are only 3 in the United States, Ocotillo, Campo and Hawaii. So if there is a potential for hazardous material to end up in the aqua fir then we need to know and the potential is there. I have a picture of when a turbine tore apart, I am an ex-naval engineer and I am familiar with those things and hazardous materials. So I want to know what the plan is to capture things if that is to happen.
6. I don't understand why it needs to be generated here especially when we are in the shadow and I am not sure that the monitoring towers are providing you with accurate data because it is only half the distance. You have those only going up 200 feet, why not 400 feet or is that because of the acous and the flight pattern?

**Name:** Edie Harmon  
Ocotillo

**Audio Start Time:** 01:31:50

### **Comment Summary**

1. Lived here for more than 33 years. Was at the meeting last night and will be repeating those points. Mr. Childers and I were at the Boulevard Fire Station public meeting and we listened to SDGE about the wind energy in the mountains and that the wind energy is so unreliable because the wind doesn't blow all the time and that if you are developing a system based on wind energy you will have to build a gas-fired power plant that will produce an equal or greater generating capacity for the times when the wind is not blowing. There is a reason why Sempra Energy put an L&G pipeline on the Mexican side of the border. There is a reason why there are proposed gas-fired power plants on the Mexican side of the border. It's not just wind energy, there are other issues there. Is Aspen (consultant for the county) just doing work for the county or is it doing the EIS? Is BLM doing the environmental review or is Aspen going to be responsible for everything. Based on her decades of looking at EIRs and EIS, she has yet to see a biological review done for any EIR or EIS that was adequately done and that didn't have any significant problems with protocol, frequency, visits and what they were looking for. Were they just doing the minimum? Things are in bloom now, and you have to know when all these things are happening. You have to be responding at the right time for these plants. You can't do it on schedule, you have to know what's in bloom and when and where. She was asked last night about a field guide that would know where all the plants are. The Jepson manual might, but she has been the Coyote Mountains and have found plants out there that are not listed in there because botanists weren't there where they were in bloom.

2. She is being told that the information she is seeing on the public health impact that live close to turbans in Canada and the US are not real. She is going to decide which studies are credible and acceptable for her health. She doesn't want to be convinced of a study that a paid applicant has told her and she is willing to look at and listen to the stories of people that have been sick and their doctors. Some people have abandoned their homes. Some studies are saying to be a minimum of 2 kilometers away and others are saying to be even further away to prevent issues with the heart and other medical issues.
3. Traffic-to haul 99.9 acre feet of water when they were stopping the export of water from this area, it was going out in 5-7 gallon tank trucks. And the idea of hauling this water from Pine Valley is going to have a tremendous impact. It is not energy neutral at all and need to look at the environmental impacts on that. The Plan of Development has some difference in what is in writing and what they heard tonight. There were turbans off the I8 freeway by Acorn casino, and one of them blew up and then all of them started losing blades, they want to know what caused this failure. They were told it's confidential. People need to know if these turbans can have a problem. The blades have yet to be removed from the sight and they are being told that they can't because there is hazardous material in the blades.

**Name:** Dan Boten

**Audio Start Time:** 01:40:56

### **Comment Summary**

1. I own the water company off of Imperial Highway. Everyone in this room likes this freedom. Our country is broke and in debt. Everyone in this area needs the extra income that this project will bring in. I own a home improvement business and the thing that keeps me going is keeping peoples electric bills down. If we don't start doing renewable energy we will have more problems and this might help get this country back on its feet. What's our other choice, drilling for oil? No. I am for wind. Where else are we going to put this, over in china? My kids and your kids, kids will need income and energy. I don't understand why everyone in this room is against this. My one concern is the use of water. The aqua fir here is precious and if any bad water gets in there I would hate to see it destroyed. That is my only concern.

**Name:** Terry Weiner  
306 Front Street

**Audio Start Time:** 01:45:14

### **Comment Summary**

1. Works as the Imperial County Projects and Conservation Coordinator for the Desert Protective Council. Scoping comments: my mind is boggled on how to phrase the scoping issue of the total destruction of 15000 acres of land. 3% footprint or not, how do we analyze the impacts to lots of recreational qualities on the land, impacts to visitors to Anza Borrego state park, impacts to view shack, impacts to herders to big horn sheep and others, impacts to lizards and birds. There are so

many studies on impacts to birds from windmills and new ones come out all the time so I hope you are going to look into these findings. You mentioned the saving of water and carbon emissions as compared with natural gas or coal fire plants. We need to analyze the comparison of producing 500 megawatts of electricity from wind towers to impacts of rooftop solars and where the energy is going to go. There are studies that show this information. Maybe that is the alternative that should be addressed. When you scrap desert soil, you are destroying the natural plant communities. Everything that is on the ground will be gone, Native American artifacts, plants; all the beauty will be gone. We have an industrialization of a community, from what I understand, they value the desert life, dark skies and the recreation in the area. You have the economic impact of taxes of the hotel and restaurants. There are no hotels here and there are some places that can be considered restaurants but they can't handle that much business. What about the impacts to the noise and dust and fumes from the trucks that is going to go on for how many years. The desert plant habitat is carbon too by destroying you are going to be releasing carbon and that is not energy efficient either. We would like to see the release of the alternatives before you release the draft EIS so we know what the alternatives are. There are cumulative impacts. It's not just this project to our desert from the scrapping of the sunrise power ring, to the Tully wind project. This project is going to add to the cumulative project.

**Name:** Jack (Last name unknown)  
Ocotillo

**Audio Start Time:** 01:52:37

### **Comment Summary**

1. In the EIR I would like to know how the imperial county fire department will handle a potential fire that happens with these blades because they have seen where fire departments have not even been able to attack them. I do know that the blades are toxic when they catch on fire and they are made out of materials that when ignited will blow across the desert and cause problems and further burning.
2. Each one of these turbans motor contains oil to keep them cool. At times these things start leaking and catch fire sometimes the soil will catch on fire and send out a plume of black smoke. If that thing starts leaking, what will happen when it leaks, who is responsible for it and to ensure it does not get into our aqua fir.
3. The comment about wind energy and it being free, yet in the state of Montana they did a study with the electric coal-ops. Although wind energy is cool and its free but it is not apart from a footprint. If wind doesn't blow it doesn't generate electricity. If the people are on that line, some one will need to kick up the electricity. If they aren't on line it would take too long to fire up a coal plant that these windmills are suppose to produce. The other alternative that was mentioned was natural gas; yes this could fill the gap. So to believe that windmills are not a footprint in our environment is erroneous. These windmills are not full proof. Our backup is in Mexico
4. I have not seen a seismographic study on the towers. If we have another earthquake like we did last year, these things would have come tumbling down. This needed to be shown in the

environmental impact. It seems like EIS are about plants and animals but nothing about the people, this needs to be addressed. Everybody wants energy but not in my back yard. I am not that person.

5. Mention about site studies from Canada, Washington and Oregon on health conditions with individuals regarding this 2 kilometer. I would like to see this addressed.

**Name:** Fred Keagal  
Ocotillo

**Audio Start Time:** 01:58:45

### **Comment Summary**

1. I am a PHDPA. I am worried about the cumulative impacts. This is a nonattainment area for PN2.5-PN10. When you look at all the projects that are being approved in the area, you are looking at an enormous number of acres being cleared or devastated. I was on the phone today with the center of excellence for coccidioidomycosis at the University of Arizona, there are 63,000 coccidioidomycosis cases that have shown up and have cost approximately \$66 million in hospitalization last year costs alone. This is caused by disturbing the surface area of the sediment and causing large wind blowing. The problem with this disease is that it occurs in batches so you don't know where it will show up. When you look at the effects of this area, it's a real concern. Particularly looking at cardiovascular disease and PN2.5 and for pulmonary disease for PN10. That is not being addressed at this point and it needs to be addressed in this EIR and from the stand point of all projects in this area due to the air quality because you are affecting everyone down wind from this. Another concern is with Bats. Bats are a real problem with the generation of wind. There are so many of these solar system projects being proposed throughout the southwest, I wonder where is all the power going to go. We need to look at the cumulative is in the southwest on this.

**Name:** Ingrid Crickmore

**Audio Start Time:** 02:01:20

### **Comment Summary**

1. I am a tourist of Imperial County for 20 years. I love to hike in the desert and I have a lot of concerns about the solar and wind in the desert. It appears to be like a gold rush and I wondering how this is all really going to pan out. To me it seems like it is already obsolete as what the project is described as and when it finally gets built it will be obsolete and it will leave the desert in a wreck. From what I understand, countries like Germany that have been solar for some time now, they aren't in the desert and they have bad weather, so they are doing most all rooftop solar and they have more energy coming from that they do all these desert projects put together. For wind, it only delivers 4% of what the capacity is. They are putting up these huge structures and destroy prime beautiful habitat that we won't have left anymore. The wind has a really bad record of what it delivers. It isn't worth it to waste that mountainside. Why should the BLM be

hosting this? The BLM is supposed to be conserving the land not adding industrial to it. A view scape is not immaterial. We don't even know what will really be destroyed; we might not be able to survive if we do destroy all of this. Half of these projects aren't even tested, then they are brought out and put up, wreck the desert, and thinking that oh maybe it will work. Then it doesn't and then it goes a mess and it's just left behind in the desert into a wasteland.

**Name:** Pete Zeitler  
97 Palo Verde Road

**Audio Start Time:** 02:07:07

### **Comment Summary**

1. I just wanted to go on record saying that I am against it. Currently our house faces west onto the mountains and a day doesn't go by that we don't go out on our patio and look out on the mountains to watch the sunset. Now we are going to look out onto 280 windmills. Aesthetically it is an impact. Wondering whether Pattern Energy is a non-profit organization and it's being spun off as an environmental project. If I was a company, why would I invest a billion dollars and not make any money off of it. They say it's going to feed 300,000 homes so they must be making money. What is the benefit in ocotillo? There wasn't an armed ranger at the meeting but there was a gentleman at the meeting in Imperial Valley that had a sidearm and I would appreciate it if you would not have armed officers in attendance at the meetings. It seems like this procedure has been rushed through. You have had monitors out there for some time and then all of sudden we are told about this given very little time. It's as if this being done behind our backs.

**Name:** Juan Zaritia  
2630 West Avenue

**Audio Start Time:** 02:10:48

### **Comment Summary**

1. I have a sheet of paper here about a meeting that was held January 2<sup>nd</sup>. My concern is that I live 17 miles from here and between Donnaway which is the beginning of another project which encompasses 9000 acres, and to the south there are another couple of solar projects that are being presented and probably go through this process. And then this project which encompasses 15,000 acres and that is a lot of land that is going to be disturbed. Here recently, myself and friends of mine are having to go to the medical doctor because we have a continued cough. The air and the winds are kicking up continuously at 50mph. Again we need to know that the afternoon winds are going to have an effect on the community downwind. Also, the seismic effect. Everyday we get 1.5-2.3 seismic activity in Ocotillo. I would like to see some statistics and investigation on testing being done and your evaluation on that.

**Name:** Dennis Troficante

Santa Ysabel

**Audio Start Time:** 02:14:26

### **Comment Summary**

1. I have solar on my roof and I live in Santa Ysabel. We generate 150% of the energy we use and it goes back to the grid. You have to be tied to the grid in order to get the rebates. I am the president of a non-profit group called protect our communities foundation. We have fought successfully having the sunrise power plant run through the desert state park and fighting it to beat it down. Big wind and big solar, do not belong in the desert. Why do we want to build massive billion dollar project and spend 2 billion dollar transmission line to San Diego and really they want to take it to LA. Sempra wants to get fossil fuel power to LA. That's where the market is. They are saying that taking line to Alpine and then up to sub station in San Felipe. That substation was going to have 5 lines coming out going to LA. Why should we as rate payers be paying for these billions of dollars of transmission line? They make there money on the construction they don't care about if it goes to San Diego. They have a guaranteed 11-12% rate of return. We can create the same energy buy putting solar not on the roof tops but you can put it on the parking lots and trench it in. Schools are doing it, QUALCOMM, Kyocera is. Why run the all this into San Diego when you can do it right there. You guys in ocotillo don't need it; you have enough power out here. I would like to incorporate all people previous comments so that I don't have to repeat myself. So we are going to continue to fight.

**Name:** Tim Lambs  
No Mirage

**Audio Start Time:** 02:21:11

### **Comment Summary**

1. A very close friend of mine, an engineer is doing engineering at Nitson Karbiwatsinger, on the new wind blades and yes there is toxic material in them. Word definition when you are talking about impact, people in this room do not know the definition of impact and my concern is that if anyone understands the impact this will have on our community.
2. Second word association I have is a ticket that I have in my hand from the BLM on January 29, 2009 for riding in a wilderness area. The day I got this ticket, I took pictures of the wilderness area, grounds and the paths that are out there. Not only to find a border patrol agent dragging the very same road. So my concern is the definition of wilderness to people in this room and if they don't understand the definition of the words such as impact and wilderness, how are we suppose to trust them to make decisions for our community.
3. County mailed out a flyer that mentioned out the two meetings and an EC meeting that is scheduled for the 16<sup>th</sup>. We have an informational meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup>, next Thursday at 1:30 with a presentation for all to attend. 940 Main Street upstairs.

4. Can we get copies of the slides that you're presented and the charts? We will probably get something up on the website. What wasn't addressed was the USGS map for the earthquakes. They are putting seismic graphs everywhere. I want an updated map put up. And I would like to know how much we have sunk, our ground level. We have gone down and I would like that in the EIR.
5. Luncheon on Jan 19<sup>th</sup>, where Pattern would host to invite members of the community at the community center.