

ITEM 6A

Energy & Sustainability Committee Meeting Minutes November 9, 2023



The audio file for this meeting can be found at: <http://www.cvag.org/audio.htm>

- 1. CALL TO ORDER** – The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Linda Evans, City of La Quinta, at 12:08 p.m. at the CVAG Conference Room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104, in the City of Palm Desert.
- 2. ROLL CALL** – Roll call was taken and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Members Present

Councilmember Nancy Ross
Councilmember Stephanie Virgen
Councilmember Russell Betts
Director JB Hamby (*arrived at item 4*)
Mayor Donna Griffith
Mayor Linda Evans, *Vice Chair*
Director Russ Martin
Councilmember Gina Nestande
Councilmember Ted Weill
Supervisor V. Manuel Perez (*left after 7A*)

Agency

City of Cathedral City
City of Coachella
City of Desert Hot Springs
Imperial Irrigation District
City of Indian Wells
City of La Quinta
Mission Springs Water District
City of Palm Desert
City of Rancho Mirage
Riverside County – District 4

Members/ Ex-Officios Not Present

Vice Chair Candace Patencio Anderson
Mayor Joseph DeConinck
Board Member Anthony Bianco
Mayor Oscar Ortiz, *Chair*
Councilmember Ron deHarte
Secretary Altrena Santillanes
Supervisor Yxstian Gutierrez

Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians
City of Blythe
Coachella Valley Water District
City of Indio
City of Palm Springs
Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians
Riverside County – District 5

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chair Evans led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Claudia Sall, with California Desert Coalition, spoke in opposition of Agenda Item 7A, with concerns about the recharge rate not being sustainable.

Chris Clarke, with nonprofit National Parks Conservation Association, spoke in opposition of Agenda Item 7A, including concerns of how the project would impact the regional aquifer.

Luke Basulto, resident of Joshua Tree, spoke in opposition of Agenda Item 7A, with concerns about the impact on the aquifer as well on the Tribal Nations and communities.

Joan Taylor, with the Sierra Club, spoke in opposition of Agenda Item 7A, stating it is not the solution to having clean water.

Mary Belardo, former Chairwoman of Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Indians, spoke in support of Agenda Item 7A and noted the work Cadiz has done with Torres Martinez to help address the unhealthy arsenic levels in their water.

Greg Cervantes with the Native Generations Group, spoke in support of Agenda Item 7A, citing the project's fresh water will benefit disadvantaged communities, farmworkers and their families.

Adonis Galarza, South Region Operations Officer for Farmworkers Institute Education and Leadership Development, spoke in support of Agenda Item 7A, stating this alone is not the solution to the problem, but is a step in the right direction.

Luis Lopez, with Audubon California, joined via Zoom to oppose Agenda Item 7A, noting independent studies showed the project would threaten significant damage to the environment.

Neil Desai, with the National Parks Conservation Association, joined via Zoom to oppose Agenda Item 7A, stating it is not a sustainable water supply and would cause environmental injustices.

John Monsen, member of the Sierra Club, joined via Zoom to oppose Agenda Item 7A, describing the project as an empty promise project that cannot meet the legal requirements.

Emily Buchi, Director at the Mojave National Preserve Conservancy, joined via Zoom to oppose Agenda Item 7A, citing findings published in scientific journals and confirmed by state and federal agencies.

Jennifer Lopez, resident of the Coachella Valley, joined via Zoom to oppose Agenda Item 7A, citing the project doesn't consider the environment and local communities.

Alicia Thomas, California Community Partnerships Manager with the Wilderness Society, joined via Zoom to oppose Agenda Item 7A, expressing concerns with the impact the Cadiz project would have on wildlife and plant species.

Ileene Anderson, California Deserts Director with the Center for Biological Diversity, joined via Zoom to express her opposition to Agenda Item 7A, stating environmental challenges.

Cassandra Pino from the Native American Land Conservancy, joined via Zoom to express opposition to Agenda Item 7A, citing it would have detrimental impacts on Tribal nations, local communities, and desert wildlife.

Elizabeth Paige, Education and Stewardship Program Manager with the Native American Land Conservancy and member of Torres Martinez Band of Desert Cahuilla Indians, joined via Zoom to express her opposition to Agenda Item 7A, citing concerns of drawing out water from the Tribal landscapes.

Management Analyst Elysia Regalado read an emailed public comment from Steve Bardwell, President of Morongo Basin Conservation Association, who expressed his opposition to Agenda Item 7A as it would damage the desert environment.

5. COMMITTEE MEMBER / DIRECTOR COMMENTS

Executive Director Tom Kirk updated the committee regarding a grant that the State was receiving via the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency related to extreme heat adaptation. Mr. Kirk announced that the grant provides CVAG with \$100,000 and the City of Coachella with \$60,000.

Mr. Kirk announced that a follow up on potential regulation of Mylar balloons was distributed to member jurisdictions' staffs, advising them of the Executive Committee's decision to provide options available as they consider local approaches on the issue.

6. CONSENT CALENDAR

A. Approve September 14, 2023 Committee Meeting Minutes

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER BETTS AND SECONDED BY MAYOR GRIFFITH TO APPROVE THE CONSENT CALENDAR ITEMS.

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 10 AYES AND 6 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Vice Chair Patencio Anderson	Absent
Mayor DeConinck	Absent
Councilmember Ross	Aye
Councilmember Virgen	Aye
Board Member Bianco	Absent
Councilmember Betts	Aye
Director Hamby	Aye
Mayor Griffith	Aye
Mayor Ortiz	Absent
Mayor Evans	Aye
Director Martin	Aye
Councilmember Nestande	Aye
Councilmember deHarte	Absent
Councilmember Weill	Aye
Supervisor Perez	Aye
Secretary Santillanes	Absent

7. DISCUSSION / ACTION

A. Presentation: Development of the Cadiz Water Project

Riverside County Supervisor V. Manuel Perez introduced Susan Kennedy, Executive Chair of the Cadiz Board, and spoke of the importance of addressing the different viewpoints, comments and concerns on the project.

Ms. Kennedy presented the details of the Cadiz project.

Member discussion ensued, including questions to Cadiz's team from members. Committee members stated that future presentations on controversial issues should

provide balancing viewpoints, and that a study session should be considered at a future date.

No action was taken as this was an informational item.

B. Dust Storms and Poor Air Quality Likely Resulting from Tropical Storm Hilary

This agenda item was deferred to a future agenda due to timing constraints.

C. Inland Regional Energy Network Program and Policy Development

Program Manager Jacob Alvarez presented the staff report.

IT WAS MOVED BY COUNCILMEMBER NESTANDE AND SECONDED BY DIRECTOR HAMBY TO:

- 1. PROVIDE CONCURRENCE WITH THE I-REN'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE'S APPROACH TO DISTRIBUTING PUBLIC SECTOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE RESOURCES AND**
- 2. AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO TAKE ANY NECESSARY STEPS TO AMEND I-REN AGREEMENTS AND ANY OTHER DOCUMENTS TO REMOVE SOCALGAS AS THE FISCAL AGENT**

THE MOTION CARRIED WITH 9 AYES AND 7 MEMBERS ABSENT.

Vice Chair Patencio Anderson	Absent
Mayor DeConinck	Absent
Councilmember Ross	Aye
Councilmember Virgen	Aye
Board Member Bianco	Absent
Councilmember Betts	Aye
Director Hamby	Aye
Mayor Griffith	Aye
Mayor Ortiz	Absent
Mayor Evans	Aye
Director Martin	Aye
Councilmember Nestande	Aye
Councilmember deHarte	Absent
Councilmember Weill	Aye
Supervisor Perez	Absent
Secretary Santillanes	Absent

D. Update on Coachella Valley Energy Commission and Ongoing Analysis of Regional Alternative Governance

This agenda item was deferred to a future agenda due to timing constraints.

8. INFORMATION – The following items were provided in the agenda for information only:

A. Attendance Record

B. Update on Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) Program

C. California Air Resources Board- Funding and Program Opportunities Update

D. Annual Review of CVAG's Legislative Platform

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None

10. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next meeting of the **Energy & Sustainability Committee** will be held on Thursday, January 11, 2024, at noon at the CVAG conference room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104, Palm Desert, 92260.

The next meeting of the **Executive Committee** will be held on Monday, December 4, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. at the CVAG conference room, 73-710 Fred Waring Drive, Suite 104, Palm Desert, 92260

11. ADJOURN

Vice Chair Evans adjourned the meeting at 1:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Elysia Regalado
Management Analyst