

**MINUTES  
OF THE  
LA PAZ COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
Tuesday, June 14, 2016, 9:30 a.m.  
Worksession**

Chairman Irwin called the June 14, 2016, worksession of the La Paz County Board of Supervisors to order at 9:30 a.m. Elected Officials and Department Heads present were: Chairman Irwin, Supervisor Wilson, Supervisor Clapperton, County Administrator Field, Community Development Administrator Yackley; and Deputy Clerk of the Board Green. Others present were: Kelly Sarber, of Strategic Management Group; Rich Weiss, Project Manager from Ten West Link; Emilio Izquierdo and Jennifer Rouda, Team Members; and Ali Amirali, Senior Vice President of Starwood Energy Group and Team Member to the Ten West Link Project.

**Discussion regarding the development process of the 10 West Link transmission line project; and the proposed benefits and impacts to the County's residents and our environment**

Chairman Irwin read her June 14, 2016, letter to the Bureau of Land Management addressed to Joseph Incardine of the Arizona State Office relating to the expectations and impacts to La Paz County, for discussion.

Chairman Irwin expressed frustration that the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) had historically not notified the County regarding developing projects, or acknowledging the County's position as a "stake holder".

She added that she wished to see that La Paz County will benefit in some way on any projects developing in the County, and "seriously consider the negative impacts these developments could potentially have".

She asked that Kelly Sarber, of Strategic Management Group, take up the discussion. She stated that Ms. Sarber was County's primary consultant in landfill business, and an expert in environmental practice and renewable energy citing.

Ms. Sarber stated that she was assisting the County "navigate" through what would be the best economic value the Ten West Link Project might bring, as well as assist with the environmental impact assessment.

Rich Weis, Project Manager, of Ten West Link, a solar energy group, in the "energy structure business", noted some of their recent projects around the country; noting that part of the development they do is in transmission lines.

Ali Amirali, Senior Vice President of Starwood Energy Group; and Emilio Izquierdo, engineer for Ten West Link, introduced themselves.

Jennifer Rouda, also of Ten West Link, stated that her work was related to the environmental issues.

Ms. Sarber thanked the guests for their support and willingness to discuss the project and what it would mean for the County. She acknowledged that the present time was critical in moving to develop ways to tap into renewable energy assets.

She discussed at length the BLM's claims of jobs and revenue to this area for different projects, noting that the promises of jobs are not a reality for the most part because construction companies typically bring in their own crews, or they are bused in. She added that she was not overly concerned with that because this area has a very seasonal population; one that does not particularly support the hotel industry. She stated the County primarily wanted to discuss ways it can participate in the "explosion of interest in renewables", and how to be a "key player" in it.

Discussion ensued regarding the "interconnect points"; and ways the County could participate in the project, unlike other renewable energy projects that had come along; however, did not materialize because there was no "waffle line" for connection. In addition, most of the renewable developments locate to the state of California or areas very close to the border.

Mr. Amirali expounded on the efforts California is making to reduce energy use by 50% by the year 2030; and noted that one of the advantages of the line going through La Paz County is that it would incur less cost and be more competitive in the market; and explained how the process worked.

Supervisor Wilson stated that the ability to access California markets without the usual wheeling charges is "hugely significant from a competitive standpoint".

Jennifer Rouda, Team Member, stated that the overall impact would be less to the region if existing "footprints" are used in an area. She added that the County will have an opportunity to comment on this issue and where the County thinks is the best location.

Ms. Sarber stated that a "first letter" had been written to BLM regarding the socio-economic impacts to the County, and the Board would take more formal action on their position after some analyzation. She stated that "less risks" would be in following the Devers line as there were no service roads and domain issues, and already accepted into the environment. She added that the least impact to residents, businesses, environment and tourism, would make the most sense; with the line as far away from these elements.

She added that the "proponent", namely Ten West Link, was at the worksession voluntarily to work with the County to come up with ways, in the development of this project, that the County can receive benefits that would normally not be available.

She stated there were two ways the County could benefit, the first through what Ten West Link my offer through the interconnections; and secondly, in avoiding the negative impacts that would be shown through the socio-economic study, with the lack of jobs, lack of services used, and sales tax advantages in its construction. She added the services the County administers is not "commiserate" with the PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) taxes received from the State; but rather, a negative impact, and warrant a "mitigation fee".

Ms. Sarber stated she had discussed informally with Ten West Link, the “interconnect” factor, as well as the environmental analysis of the “study area”, which would include “disturbed” lands. She stated there was property that could possibly be obtained from BLM through the legislative process, for the location of the larger photovoltaic fields.

Discussion ensued at length regarding different areas of land that might be appropriate to use, considering environmental conditions.

Ms. Rouda stated that an “alternative report” was scheduled to come out from BLM, and suggested that the Board make known their preferences.

Chairman Irwin stated that a large portion of La Paz County is made up of Federal land; and her experience with the government and land did not invoke much faith in its ability to be “upfront and honest”. She added that she felt it was important that the County try to acquire what land it can, and is working with congressional leaders to that end.

Ms. Sarber stated that another way a County could benefit from solar projects was to ask that purchases of services, products and manufactured items dealing with the construction of a project come from the local vendors. She noted that most of the project’s line was located in La Paz County for approximately 100 miles; and expressed that the County would welcome the sales tax revenues from its purchases.

Supervisor Wilson asked when the projected “in-service” date be.

Discussion ensued noting that the in-service date would be approximately 4 years; noting the recent changes in California for the processes of renewable energy.

Ms. Rouda stated that it was very early in the process, and BLM was not scheduled to have a draft of the environmental impact statement until 2017; and opportunity to comment and make the County’s preference known, would be “extra-long” in this instance. She added if BLM did not address each of the comments that were submitted, it would not be following the legal process.

Chairman Irwin reiterated that this was not the first time the County had been in the position of being ignored; therefore, that was why the Board was reaching out for support. She stated she had no faith in BLM. She stated that previously BLM would not allow the County a place at the table on a project; it was common that these projects would go through when they had already made their decision. She stated that she “gets very angry because the County needs to be represented; we do have a say-so, and our voice should be listened to”.

Supervisor Clapperton stated that he would represent his constituents and their opinions of the project; and felt that it was important that all the information was “on top of the table”; and their voice heard.

Supervisor Wilson stated that he agreed with Ms. Sarber on the route of the line, that it made sense to put it adjacent to the Palo Verde Devers line to minimized visual impacts. He felt that one of the routes that BLM is considering is a “beautiful” area, adjacent to I10; and putting in 500kv line there would be detrimental to everyone concerned.

He added that, in his experiences with observing BLM energy corridors on its maps, no information is given in the city limit of Quartzsite, labeling it “private property”, and not their problem how to get across it; therefore, it is difficult to make a comment on an alternative “when half the alternative is not there; it’s not their problem; they don’t care”. He further added that he was looking forward to seeing “complete alternative” routes rather than the “ambiguous” types presented at the last siting meeting he attended.

He appreciated Ten West Links willingness to sit down with the Board, as the Board planned to be involved in the process; and looked forward to working with Ten West Link on this project.

Chairman Irwin thanked the representatives for coming and adjourned the worksession at 10:27 a.m.

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Holly Irwin, Chairman

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Dan Field, Clerk of the Board