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BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

DOCKET NO. 24A-0442E

REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION OF PUBLIC SERVICE
COMPANY OF COLORADO FOR APPROVAL OF ITS 2024 JUST
TRANSITION SOLICITATION.

Pursuant to notice to all parties of interest,
the above entitled matter came on for an in-person
public comment hearing in Pueblo, Colorado, before
Chairman Eric Blank, Commissioner Megan Gilman, and
Commissioner Tom Plant commencing at 4:00 p.m. on
Thursday, April 17, 2025, said proceedings having
been reported in shorthand by Tracy Boulais.

1 Afternoon Session

2 PROCEEDINGS

3 CHAIRMAN BLANK: We are now on the record.

4 It is 4:10 on Thursday, April 17th, 2025. Again,
5 this is a public comment hearing in Proceeding No.
6 24A-0442E, Public Service Company of Colorado's Just
7 Transition Solicitation filing or JTS. Again, I'm
8 Eric Blank, the PUC Chair.

9 I just want to start off thanking the
10 community for hosting us. It's great to be back
11 here. Appreciate everyone coming out. And I'm very
12 much looking forward to hearing your comments.

13 I will have more to say in a few minutes,
14 but first, can my colleagues introduce themselves for
15 the record?

16 COMMISSIONER GILMAN: Good afternoon. My
17 name is Megan Gilman. I'm a member of the Colorado
18 Public Utilities Commission. Happy to be here in
19 Pueblo with you all and to take your comments today.
20 I'm really happy to see a lot of turnout and very
21 interested to hear the comments that you all have on
22 this proceeding.

23 So thanks so much for coming and for
24 sharing with us in advance. Appreciate it.

25 COMMISSIONER PLANT: And my name is Tom

1 Plant, Commissioner on the Public Utilities
2 Commission. I also want to thank everybody for
3 coming out. I know there is a lot of things you
4 could be doing tonight, and I appreciate you making
5 the time to come out and participate in this public
6 hearing.

7 As Ms. Castle read off, you can hear there
8 is an awful lot of different organizations that are
9 intervening, and we hear from them through their
10 testimony and through the course of the hearing. But
11 this is our unique opportunity to hear directly from
12 the community. And so I really appreciate you coming
13 out and participating today.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Before we
15 begin taking comments, I want to briefly explain how
16 a public comment hearing works.

17 There is a court reporter who is listening
18 to this proceeding taking down what you say for the
19 record. This comment hearing is formal like a court
20 proceeding, and we ask that the audience be
21 respectful of the speakers that comment today. The
22 hearing also has simultaneous interpretation for
23 Spanish language speakers tonight.

24 In our role as Commissioners at this stage
25 of the process, we are here to listen and learn and

1 to make sure your comments are reflected in the
2 record. We will not answer questions or respond to
3 statements. Like a judge, we cannot engage in
4 dialogue on a case pending before us. The case is
5 ongoing, and we will not make any decisions until
6 after the evidentiary hearing in June.

7 I'll call on speakers based on when people
8 signed up. If you have not signed up, please find
9 the PUC staff in the lobby to get signed up if you
10 would like to speak. But I will also give an
11 opportunity for anyone to just come up to the
12 microphone. And it will be at that microphone right
13 in front of us.

14 There are many speakers here today. To
15 allow time for everyone, I have requested each
16 commenter try and limit themselves to roughly three
17 minutes.

18 In addition, there is another in-person
19 meeting in Hayden on May 1st from 4:00 to 6:00. And
20 virtual comment hearings will be held April 28th from
21 11:00 to 1:00 and on Thursday, June 5th, from 5:00 to
22 7:00.

23 The Commission equally weighs public
24 comments received whether written or orally. So to
25 the extent you would like to, we would encourage you

1 to file written comments. They can be filed through
2 the Commission's e-filing system, submitted by the
3 Commission's online comment forum, or e-mailed to
4 dora_puc_website@state.co.us. In each case, please
5 specify this proceeding as 24A-0442E.

6 As I said before, we very much look
7 forward to hearing from everybody. We certainly
8 don't have all the answers, which is why this process
9 and hearing from everybody is so important. With
10 that, I want to thank everyone again for taking the
11 time to be here and share your comments.

12 And we will start with County Commissioner
13 Miles Lucero if you are here. And then Nick
14 Gradisar, Sal Pace, and Alyssa Bellany if you would
15 like to offer comments. And we will keep going from
16 there.

17 SPEAKER LUCERO: Good evening, everybody.
18 Good evening, Commissioners.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANK: You are off to a good
20 start.

21 SPEAKER LUCERO: Thank you all very much
22 for being here tonight. I really appreciate it.

23 I am Miles Lucero, and I serve as Pueblo
24 County Commissioner. I'm very proud to represent
25 this community where I was born, raised, and now

1 raising my own children.

2 As we plan for life after Comanche 3,
3 Pueblo County stands united around a core set of
4 values; creating good-paying local jobs, protecting
5 our tax base, and building a sustainable, resilient
6 energy future.

7 Comanche 3 has long been a pillar of our
8 economy supporting hundreds of workers and generating
9 over \$31 million annually in property tax revenue.
10 Its retirement marks a turning point, but it is also
11 a chance to invest in something better. Not just
12 replacing what we are losing, but building a
13 stronger, more sustainable foundation for the
14 generations to come.

15 One of the most critical pieces of this
16 conversation is the payment in lieu of taxes. These
17 payments are not just a line item in our county
18 budget. They are central to how we fund our schools,
19 fire districts, libraries, and countless other
20 services Pueblo families rely on.

21 The proposed payments from PSCO must
22 reflect the scale of what our community is losing.
23 If we don't replace that revenue through jobs, new
24 generation, or both, the consequences won't be
25 abstract. They will be felt in classrooms,

1 libraries, and public health clinics across our
2 county.

3 There is a broad agreement across our
4 community on a few key principles. First, whatever
5 generation replaces Comanche 3 should be sited
6 locally.

7 Second, it should be built by local
8 workers compensated fairly and protected under the
9 standards of Senate Bill 23-292 which includes
10 prevailing wage and apprenticeship utilization.

11 These are not just policy boxes to check.
12 They are a way to ensure that this transition creates
13 family-sustaining careers and uplifts working
14 Puebloans.

15 I also want to acknowledge that I've heard
16 clearly from many Pueblo residents. Pueblo wants a
17 clean energy future. People are proud of the
18 projects we have made, the projects like a
19 solar-powered steel mill. And they also see us
20 continuing building on that momentum.

21 In that spirit, I believe the Pueblo
22 Renewable Energy Park represents a practical
23 near-term step for addressing our generation needs.
24 It leverages resources we already have; solar, wind,
25 and battery storage, and can be deployed on the

1 timeline that meets the urgency of the Comanche
2 transition. I believe it is a credible part of the
3 solution, and I fully support the consideration.

4 Ultimately, the thing that we must -- the
5 most important thing is that we must stay grounded in
6 the present with a vision on the future. A clean
7 energy future that creates economic opportunity right
8 here in Pueblo. We need to lead with vision, not
9 just forecast. And we need to ensure that every step
10 we take puts working families, long-term prosperity,
11 and local control at the center of that transition.

12 Thank you very much genuinely for being
13 here. We appreciate your time. Have a great
14 evening.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you, sir.
16 Mr. Gradisar.

17 SPEAKER GRADISAR: Good afternoon,
18 Commissioners. My name is Nick Gradisar. And
19 between 2019 and 2024, I had the pleasure of serving
20 as the mayor for the city of Pueblo. Thank you for
21 having this hearing in Pueblo tonight on a matter of
22 great importance to the citizens of this community.

23 During my time as mayor, we received our
24 first Just Transition's grant from the Colorado
25 Department of Energy. And while I was the mayor, we

1 focused on replacing the jobs and the taxes and not
2 the generation. Because Pueblo wasn't receiving
3 energy from Xcel Energy at that time.

4 Now, before I became the mayor, I served
5 on the Water Board for 14 years. And I was on the
6 Water Board when Comanche 3 was commissioned. And we
7 entered into a long-term lease of water for Comanche
8 3 in its operation.

9 Shortly -- and at that time, Comanche 3
10 provided energy to our power provider. But shortly
11 after that lease was entered into, they made a
12 determination not to sell power to us any longer.
13 And we ended up building the Pueblo Airport
14 Generating Station.

15 In view of recent events, I don't have to
16 remind you that the high cost of energy in Pueblo has
17 been a hindrance to our economic development efforts
18 here. I know you've heard testimony, ad nauseam
19 probably, from people in this community about the
20 effect of those high energy prices.

21 You know, as a young man going to college,
22 I worked at CF&I Steel. My grandfather worked there.
23 My dad worked there. And in 2022, Pueblo received
24 worldwide attention when EVRAZ and Xcel Energy
25 commissioned the world's largest solar-powered steel

1 mill ending 140 years of fossil fuel reliance. We
2 received a lot of attention from around the world.
3 And that helped us retain 300 jobs here. That was an
4 innovative solution to a problem.

5 I want to make it clear that I don't
6 oppose nuclear power, per se. What I do oppose is a
7 Just Transition Plan that relies on small modular
8 reactors technology that is not yet perfected. We
9 don't have time to wait for that technology to be
10 perfected in the city of Pueblo.

11 Instead, Pueblo should implement
12 forward-thinking solutions to replace Comanche 3 by
13 2031. And I think the Renewable Energy Park project
14 is such a proposal. It could generate up to \$40
15 million annually in property taxes and create 300
16 jobs in the community, help us diversify our
17 employment base here.

18 I think the Public Utilities Commission
19 can help Pueblo diversify its economy by somehow
20 allowing -- and I know it would take some
21 finessing -- some of the cheaper energy from a
22 Renewable Energy Park to be used in Pueblo for new
23 industries that would be flexible energy users here
24 in this community.

25 This would help us create permanent jobs

1 in engineering, business operations, and industry as
2 envisioned by the energy park. And it could start
3 operations and begin before 2030.

4 As mayor, I supported Xcel Energy's pilot
5 battery storage project on the grounds of Comanche 3.
6 I think they got the grant for working on that. But
7 with extensive storage at Comanche 3, that can make a
8 big difference as that technology continues to
9 develop.

10 A Pueblo Renewable Energy Park will
11 address economic challenges from Comanche 3's closure
12 and position Pueblo as a leader in industrial
13 innovation once again. A lot of work, obviously,
14 needs to be done on the concept of the Renewable
15 Energy Park, but it represents a large step towards a
16 Just Transition for the city of Pueblo.

17 Thank you very much for being here this
18 evening.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

20 Mr. Sal Pace. Ms. Alyssa Bellany. And
21 then Mr. Dennis Obduskey.

22 SPEAKER PACE: Thank you, Commissioners.
23 My name is Sal Pace. Thanks for coming to Pueblo.
24 You know, Pueblo often feels like we are not heard up
25 north. And when you come down here, you show that

1 you are here to listen to us, and we appreciate that.

2 My name is Sal Pace, and I served a couple
3 terms in the statehouse. And I served as the
4 minority leader there. And a couple terms as a
5 Pueblo County Commissioner. Today I am a citizen,
6 which is probably the most important position.

7 I have two of my kids here. I just want
8 to introduce them, Alana Pace and Wyatt Pace. I made
9 them come from school to come over here to see some
10 democracy in action. So you better not disappoint.

11 So Comanche has been really critical for
12 our community for a long time. And commissioners who
13 preceded me in the Board of County Commissioners
14 actually provided a substantial tax abatement to
15 encourage Xcel to build Comanche 3. And the reason
16 was we would have a long-term, sustainable tax
17 revenue and jobs from Comanche.

18 And when I was a county commissioner, I
19 actually ran a deep roots that looked at all of our
20 repealing tax abatements. Comanche, the cement
21 plant, and a few others captured the retiring tax
22 abatements and put them in a fund to fund a bunch of
23 special projects around the county. We called that
24 1-A. And it funded everything from the Riverwalk,
25 and now it's going for the new jail, to downtown

1 redevelopment, and a lot of money that was really
2 relied on from some of our biggest taxpayers.

3 And Comanche continues to be our number
4 one tax-paying entity in the community. And if you
5 think about it, from everything from law enforcement
6 to schools to libraries and the Water Board. So
7 Comanche is a really important part of our community.
8 And not just because of the tax revenue -- nearly 25
9 percent of all of our local tax revenue, but also the
10 good jobs that come along with Comanche.

11 And so that is why you see a good crowd
12 here today is this is a critically important issue as
13 we consider what is a Just Transition for the future
14 of Comanche.

15 And so I'm really excited about the
16 proposal that's coming forward from Energy Innovation
17 to propose the Renewable Energy Park concept, a
18 concept that would partner with neighboring
19 communities on the energy generation with solar
20 outside of Pueblo -- or wind outside of Pueblo, solar
21 inside of Pueblo, and bring all the energy into
22 Pueblo. The concept of massive storage as well as a
23 flexible load and the jobs that it can support.

24 And Pueblo is a unique position,
25 especially with the PuebloPlex, because PuebloPlex is

1 not beholden to the franchise agreement. So it is a
2 unique sort of spot that can -- this is the old Army
3 Depot north of town. And it is gigantic. And it is
4 an opportunity. It's been transitioned over from
5 feds to local control.

6 It is an opportunity to build a lot of
7 manufacturing jobs there and then start to generate
8 energy from someone other than Black Hills whose
9 prices are really driving a lot of business and jobs
10 out.

11 And so I fully support and fully
12 understand the focus and concern of our labor
13 friends, our electrical worker friends. And I think
14 that anything that happens must be done with a
15 Project Labor Agreement.

16 This can be done with your assistance. It
17 can be done with the assistance of the Board of
18 County Commissioners as they permit these projects.
19 It can be done with bringing Xcel to the table in
20 critical negotiation.

21 And so not only should all these projects
22 move forward with Project Labor Agreement in a strong
23 union town. And the reason it is a strong union town
24 is because 111 years ago, John D. Rockefeller
25 massacred our neighbors and friends because they were

1 fighting for better living conditions.

2 And that is why we continue to fight for
3 good-paying jobs in the poorest large county in the
4 state, but also because we need to create a long-term
5 sustainable future for our kids and our next
6 generation.

7 And so thank you for coming to Pueblo.
8 These are important issues that are critically
9 important to our kids, my kids, to make sure that we
10 have a strong future here. And I hope you will
11 consider this proposal.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

13 Alyssa Bellany, Dennis Obduskey,
14 Mr. George Samaras, Mr. Thomas Kelley.

15 SPEAKER BELLANY: Hello. My name is
16 Alyssa Bellany. I am a mother, an educator, and a
17 resident of Pueblo. I am also a community advocate.
18 And I am tired of Pueblo getting the waste of Denver
19 without any of the benefits.

20 I'm also a little stressed out that we all
21 have to come here to ask for people to take notice of
22 us down here and think about the safety and the risks
23 of people in Pueblo.

24 So I want to talk about the safety and the
25 risks. Nuclear reactors can fail catastrophically

1 leading to disasters like Chernobyl and Fukushima.
2 We all remember Chernobyl. Solar and wind do not
3 pose such risks. There is no risk of meltdown.

4 There is no radiation exposure when we are
5 talking about clean energy, so there is no such
6 hazards. Nuclear energy exposes workers and
7 surrounding communities to radiation risks. That's
8 us. That's our children. That's our grandchildren.

9 It is also less vulnerable to terrorism.
10 Because nuclear plants are prime targets for attacks
11 due to their hazardous materials, while wind and
12 solar installations are far less risky.

13 Again, we want to protect our hometown.
14 There is no risk of fuel shortages. Uranium supply
15 is finite, but sunlight and wind are abundant and
16 free. There is no risk of waste and leaks. Nuclear
17 waste must be stored safely for thousands of years.
18 Thousands of years. While clean energy does not have
19 this issue.

20 And as an English teacher, I have a little
21 limerick. In Pueblo, our plan is looking smart. We
22 want an energy park with some heart. No nukes in the
23 mix, just clean modern tricks. Less risk and a much
24 greener style.

25 Thank you so much for coming.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

2 Mr. Dennis Obduskey. Mr. George Samaras.
3 Mr. Thomas Kelley.

4 SPEAKER OBDUSKEY: Thank you for coming.
5 My name is Dennis Obduskey. I'm a second generation
6 Pueblo native.

7 And our focus today is on Just Transition
8 around plant shutdown and the nuclear plant. But two
9 major topics that haven't really gotten a lot of
10 attention involve insurance ramifications and
11 property value ramifications of any potential new
12 development.

13 Homeowners and business -- we all have
14 experience with insurance companies and are all
15 thrilled with how that works, right? Homeowners and
16 businesses pay higher rates because their threat for
17 hail damage is higher in Pueblo and Southern
18 Colorado.

19 Wildfire risks relate to climate change.
20 And insurance companies have pulled back to not
21 interview -- to not renew contracts. Well, those are
22 things that, in theory, we don't have a choice about.
23 But we have a choice about the kind of businesses
24 that we build here in Pueblo.

25 So Medicare and health insurance providers

1 have allowed different companies to provide different
2 products depending on even the zip code that you
3 wear -- that you live in. And Pueblo suffers higher
4 rates of respiratory ailments than the state average.
5 And my mom passed away decades ago from COPD, no
6 doubt related to some of the health concerns here.
7 My mom was born during the 1921 flood.

8 Any new generation is going to have its
9 own liability issues. But those costs are all going
10 to be passed on to consumers. And any new industries
11 will impact property values as well.

12 So the insurance is still going to be an
13 issue, and our choice here is going to impact
14 everybody on their insurance, both homeowners and
15 health insurance, especially.

16 Though it is not openly discussed -- you
17 know, Comanche provides power and plenty of negative
18 impacts. But not openly discussed, it is clear that
19 the federal Department of Energy is pushing nuclear
20 power here for more than a decade, even creating a
21 train to nowhere to eliminate nuclear waste that they
22 started here in Pueblo.

23 The NRC requires hundreds of millions of
24 dollars in on-site property insurance related to
25 full-sized operating plants required to cover the

1 licensee's obligation -- this is out of their cite --
2 to stabilize and decontaminate the reactor and site
3 after an accident. Now, this is a big plant, but
4 it's all about scale.

5 Those costs, too, are going to be passed
6 on to the consumers. And the insurance rates from
7 building a nuclear plant here aren't going to make
8 things cheaper for anybody. It is another
9 opportunity to get stuck by the insurance industry.

10 So as a low-income community, Pueblo has
11 continued to be marginalized. And this is an
12 opportunity for the PUC to lift up Southern Colorado
13 by supporting renewable energy and more -- and move
14 toward a less toxic energy -- and less toxic
15 industries.

16 Just Transition requires Just Transition
17 for everyone. And insurance is a big deal that will
18 impact everybody. And it is not something that I
19 think has been dug into to get the actuarial numbers
20 that the bean counters I know will have.

21 So, thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

23 Mr. George Samaras. Mr. Thomas Kelley.
24 Ms. Chivonnie Gius. Ms. Roxy Pignanelli.

25 SPEAKER SAMARAS: Thank you for coming

1 down and hearing our comments.

2 As a former energy advocate for Pueblo and
3 one of the first that was hired by city council to
4 educate the community in energy conservation and
5 renewables, I have this position as a citizen now.
6 This was back in 1980 that I served the city.

7 My vision for Pueblo's future; innovation,
8 sustainability, and economic growth. And several of
9 the topics that were mentioned previously will come
10 up in my discussion here.

11 Good afternoon. I present a vision for
12 Pueblo's future, one that embraces clean energy,
13 economic innovation, and cultural expansion. Our
14 city has a unique opportunity to position itself as a
15 leader in sustainable industries creating new jobs,
16 revitalizing infrastructure, and fostering a thriving
17 community.

18 Green hydrogen electrical generation. I'm
19 kind of a futurist, so I talk about hydrogen a lot.
20 Pueblo is ready to lead in hydrogen energy production
21 aligning with global clean energy advances such as
22 Germany's Hydrogen Valley initiative and Europe's
23 REFHYNE refinery integration.

24 By investing in hydrogen-powered
25 industrial growth, our city will reduce reliance on

1 fossil fuels and create an economic hub for green
2 energy development.

3 Strategic EVRAZ Steel acquisition and
4 steel manufacturing. That is a big one. EVRAZ Steel
5 currently serves as a major employer and industrial
6 resource for Pueblo. However, with its ownership
7 under foreign investors and currently under labor
8 challenges, transitioning the facility into local
9 hands would provide strategic control over steel
10 production -- and given the tariffs coming in --
11 ensuring alignment with regional sustainable goals.

12 The facility's existing 240 megawatt
13 photovoltaic solar assist presents an opportunity to
14 integrate hydrogen-based processes mirroring Sweden's
15 HYBRIT and Germany's SALCOS green steel innovations.
16 Through green steel and carbon neutral concrete
17 manufacturing, Pueblo will drive industrial
18 modernizations and eco-conscious construction.

19 Education and research collaboration.
20 Through partnerships with CSUP's metallurgical
21 engineering and solar hydrogen battery R&D, Pueblo
22 can become a center for energy and materials science
23 innovation. Increased collaboration fosters new
24 workforce training programs, attracting talent and
25 investment into our emerging green industries.

1 Community transportation initiatives.
2 Investing in Front Range Light Rail and Amtrak
3 station modernization enhances regional transit
4 connectivity while developing hydrogen fuel stations
5 set the stage for zero emission transportation.
6 Transportation modules, Europe modules such as
7 Germany again, hydrogen transport systems demonstrate
8 how sustainable transit reshapes economies.

9 The revitalization of residential and
10 commercial development strengthens Pueblo's
11 infrastructure ensuring that our urban expansion
12 reflects green energy planning and economic
13 sustainability.

14 Pueblo's commitment to composting,
15 nematode cultivation, and hydrogen-based ammonia
16 production follows the success of Norway's carbon
17 capture cement initiatives and Denmark's Amager Bakke
18 waste-to-energy plants. By implementing carbon
19 capture concrete manufacturing, we reduce emissions
20 and drive industrial efficiency contributing to a
21 circular economy.

22 All the points don't stick to Xcel, but
23 they include their -- they are part of the bigger
24 picture, and that is necessary.

25 Cultural expansion and tourism growth.

1 Major events like Sunshine Banks of the Arkansas'
2 50th anniversary -- and people don't know what that
3 is. Sunshine Banks of the Arkansas is a theme song
4 for Pueblo. Probably very few people know. It's
5 been around for 50 years, also. CSUP cycling expo
6 position -- let me begin that paragraph again,
7 please.

8 Major events like Sunshine Banks of the
9 Arkansas' 50th anniversary, dragster competitions,
10 and CSU cycling expo positions Pueblo as a vibrant
11 cultural tourism destination. European cities have
12 leveraged landmark anniversaries and large-scale
13 festivals to generate economic activity. Pueblo can
14 do the same with strategic community engagement.

15 My conclusion is: This plan transforms
16 Pueblo into a leader in sustainable industry, clean
17 energy innovation, and community-driven development.
18 By embracing smart economic strategies, green
19 technology, and local industry partnerships, we shape
20 a thriving future. I invite the city and the county
21 to support these initiatives to help build the next
22 chapter for Pueblo.

23 Thank you.

24 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

25 SPEAKER KELLEY: Good afternoon. My name

1 is Thomas Kelley. I've been a resident of Pueblo for
2 over 30 years, and I've raised three children here.
3 I currently have the privilege of being a business
4 manager for IBEW Local 12. We represent 300
5 electrical workers who are inside wiremen and
6 linemen.

7 With the proposed closure of Comanche Unit
8 3 by 2031, you need to consider the loss of
9 high-paying jobs with good benefits, the annual loss
10 of a projected \$30 million in tax revenue, and the
11 annual loss of a projected \$200 million in economic
12 impact.

13 The PUC must support a bidding process
14 that will allow Xcel flexibility to meet power
15 commitments by exploring all options including
16 natural gas with carbon capture and advanced nuclear.

17 We need to support economic development in
18 Pueblo and Pueblo County, not stifle it. We also
19 need to encourage the use of union labor which builds
20 good-paying jobs and good apprenticeships that
21 develop lifelong careers.

22 Thank you for allowing me to comment.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

24 Ms. Chivonnie Gius, Ms. Roxy Pignanelli
25 and Eric Frankowski and Jim Neblick.

1 SPEAKER GIUS: Good afternoon. My name is
2 Chivonnie Gius. Very close. Thank you for being
3 here, Commissioners.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANK: I'm trying.

5 SPEAKER GIUS: You did wonderfully, thank
6 you.

7 So I am Chivonnie Gius, an environmental
8 and health advocate, third generation Bessemer born.
9 My mother was raised on Spruce and recalls some of
10 her earliest memories are of the freshly laundered
11 white sheets hanging out to dry. Ten, fifteen
12 minutes later are now red with the dust and the
13 waste.

14 My grandmother, my grandfather, and my
15 uncle have all lost their battle to COPD. Nearly all
16 of our families suffer with respiratory challenges to
17 this day, as you can kind of hear my labored
18 breathing. Thank you for your patience.

19 I am an ambassador for the implementation
20 of a Renewable Energy Park for a clean energy future.
21 I stand with many when saying the most responsible
22 option for replacing Comanche is a Renewable Energy
23 Park supporting industrial decarbonization with clean
24 hydrogen and thermal batteries.

25 We have a great responsibility. We have a

1 great opportunity to continue leading the nation in
2 best practices to reduce and eliminate -- eventually
3 eliminate emissions not only from Comanche, but from
4 other -- excuse me, not only from Comanche, but also
5 from other --

6 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Take your time.

7 SPEAKER GIUS: Thank you. It's so close
8 to home. And I was called upon to speak and give my
9 testimony in the last moments before coming today.
10 So thank you.

11 All of that being said, yes, we do have
12 this great opportunity, right? Let us continue to
13 lead our world with these best practices, right? So
14 Pueblo, as we know, is an incredibly special place, a
15 space of resilience and strength of spirit like
16 steel. We have diverse and unique cultural roots and
17 courageous communities.

18 And did you know that the majority of
19 Puebloans ethnically identify as nonwhite or
20 multiethnic? We know that nuclear waste is often the
21 problem of the poor, the disenfranchised, and
22 communities of color. This is environmental justice
23 at its core if we are not taking a real look at that.

24 So Commissioners, I invite you, I invite
25 all of you who are with me today, take a moment. If

1 you feel comfortable, close your eyes. Or just
2 simply take a deep breath and hear these words. I.
3 Can't. Breathe.

4 We all know that call for justice far too
5 well. Clean energy is not only our birthright, it is
6 our great responsibility that we hold as stewards of
7 this planet. I urge you to keep center of mind the
8 quality of air that our next seven generations are
9 going to inherit. Their cry? May it be: I. Can.
10 Breathe.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

13 SPEAKER PIGNANELLI: Hi. I'm Roxy
14 Pignanelli. And thank you for being here. And thank
15 you to this beautiful community for this turnout.
16 This hall is huge. There is actually a lot of people
17 here. It never reads that way because of the size of
18 the hall.

19 I am a Puebloan. I left Pueblo for many,
20 many years. Lived all over the continent. Came back
21 several years ago. And I'm an advocate for children,
22 for mental health, arts, education, a former
23 educator, and a former labor union leader. I was
24 the -- thank you.

25 We are a union town. I ran the -- proudly

1 ran the union for District 70, which is one of two
2 wall-to-wall unions in the state and probably very
3 few in the country where all of the people in the
4 district, teachers throughout, kitchen workers,
5 everyone, is in one union.

6 I support jobs, and I support unions that
7 provide working families good pay and dignity in the
8 workplace. Some in the labor movement and some who
9 feel this disposition about nuclear that we don't
10 support the jobs if we don't support nuclear. That
11 is not true.

12 Jobs would come in 20 years long after
13 Comanche closes, and if they come at all, if we look
14 at it from that C-3 perspective. If we want to
15 create jobs immediately, then we need to support the
16 Renewable Energy Park.

17 The energy park can build incrementally
18 now that would provide those jobs now in the
19 succession and progress of the Just Transition. The
20 energy park would be repurposing the current existing
21 Comanche plant. The existing turbines are slated to
22 be used to create energy with thermal batteries that
23 will be on-site.

24 When implemented, the energy park helps
25 keep jobs at the existing Comanche plant while

1 powering it via clean energy. Also providing the
2 energy that Pueblo can begin to recruit and sustain
3 new industry that can provide even more jobs for our
4 people. Union jobs.

5 Finally, because so much of the technology
6 will be Xcel assets, they will be built with PLAs and
7 with union labor. And the PUC and Pueblo County
8 could mandate that everything built be built in the
9 energy park have those union agreements.

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

12 Mr. Eric Frankowski, Mr. Jim Neblick,
13 Mr. Dave DeCenzo, Mr. Michael Wenzl.

14 SPEAKER FRANKOWSKI: Thank you. My name
15 is Eric Frankowski. I'm the executive director of a
16 group called the Western Clean Energy Campaign. I'm
17 not a Pueblo resident. And as of last December, I am
18 no longer an Xcel customer.

19 I am, however, as part of my organization,
20 been deeply involved in energy issues in Colorado for
21 the past two decades. And this proceeding may be the
22 most important one you guys oversee during your
23 tenures on the PUC.

24 I'm grateful to the Commission for hosting
25 today's public comment hearing, and especially for

1 scheduling three more of these. In particular, I
2 would like to thank you for going the extra mile and
3 scheduling a hearing on June 5th.

4 Despite the opposition of civic leaders in
5 Pueblo who are intervening in this case, it is
6 critically important for the public to be able to
7 make comments after they see what Xcel's final
8 rebuttal testimony is going to present.

9 I want to make three main points with my
10 time today. Point number one: Xcel is projecting a
11 huge amount of new demand for power. And the
12 majority of that is due to load growth in data
13 centers. Those projections are completely
14 speculative at this point. And we have seen how
15 easily the industry can be disrupted with the recent
16 announcement of DeepSeek.

17 The Commission must take an extremely
18 conservative approach to evaluating Xcel's plans so
19 that customers aren't stuck paying billions of
20 dollars for a huge build-out of new generation that
21 may never be needed.

22 Furthermore, assuming the data center
23 build-out does turn out to be real, then let the data
24 centers pay proportionately for the full cost of new
25 generation and transmission that they need.

1 Point number two: Much has been made by
2 the folks on PIESAC about the need for an SMR reactor
3 or advanced nuclear plant as being the only option
4 for replacing jobs and property tax revenue in
5 Pueblo. That is incredibly myopic.

6 And I'm sure, as you've already heard and
7 will hear from more folks today, the concept of an
8 energy park as proposed by the smart people at Energy
9 Innovation has all and more of the benefits of a
10 nuclear plant and none of the downsides.

11 A Renewable Energy Park is dynamic. It
12 could be built in phases including starting now, not
13 waiting 15 years or more. It would be far less
14 expensive to build, far better for customers' bills.
15 It would take advantage of Colorado's vast renewable
16 resources.

17 It's collaborative with other industries
18 that could be co-located on the plant site. It would
19 create 300 jobs and bring in \$40 million in annual
20 property tax revenue. And the best part is there is
21 no pollution or radioactive contamination.

22 If you look at all these kind folks behind
23 me in orange, these people and many more in Pueblo --
24 they deserve good, family-supporting jobs. They may
25 never get it with a nuclear power plant. They will

1 get it with an energy park. And I know lots of
2 people in an organization that would be happy to sit
3 down with labor and start to hash out this concept
4 even more.

5 My last point: Xcel has asked the
6 Commission to authorize what amounts to two slush
7 funds totalling \$600 million; one for the company to
8 throw things against the wall to see what sticks, and
9 the other down payments on equipment that may never
10 be needed.

11 Xcel claims it needs new tools for
12 planning around decarbonization, load growth,
13 reliability, and Just Transition. That's just not
14 accurate. What they are proposing is simply to shift
15 the cost for risky business decisions from
16 shareholders to customers. The truth is, they have
17 all the tools they need.

18 Like any businesses, there are risks that
19 should be assumed by the company before costs are
20 passed onto customers. What they are asking for,
21 \$600 million from customers now upfront, is way
22 outside the bounds of what should be considered by
23 the Commission. And those proposals should be
24 rejected outright.

25 Thank you for your time today. I really

1 appreciate you coming to Pueblo.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

3 Mr. Jim Neblick. Mr. Dave DeCenzo.

4 Mr. Michael Wenzl. Mr. Ean Tafoya.

5 MR. TAFOYA: Hello. My name is Ean Thomas
6 Tafoya, and I'm down here from Denver. And I'm here
7 today to agree with a lot of what I've heard about
8 what the future of Pueblo is and a Renewable Energy
9 Park and the opportunity for jobs.

10 I come from a family in PWA. I believe
11 you can have great union jobs that also protect the
12 community. But really, there are a --

13 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Get closer to the mic.

14 SPEAKER TAFOYA: There are really a couple
15 other pieces that I think are really important to me
16 and why I came here from Denver to personally speak
17 today. And that's there is a part of this Just
18 Transition case that I haven't heard a lot of people
19 talk about that would extend the life of Cherokee gas
20 plant which I can see from my mother's front door.

21 I think a lot of people know I went on to
22 be the chair of the Colorado Environmental Justice
23 Task Force because I grew up on a Superfund site. I
24 lived next to one with 189 businesses violating
25 federal environmental law. There is Title V air

1 permits including the Cherokee gas plant that are
2 belching in my community.

3 And when I moved there as a kid, my mom
4 was a social worker who bought her first home in her
5 30s as a single mother on a Superfund site next to
6 189 businesses violating law. This redline of
7 affordable housing is real here in Pueblo. It's real
8 here in my community and across Colorado. It's
9 communities like mine that are next to these plants
10 that are experiencing high asthma rates among so many
11 other things.

12 So I am here to ask to not allow that, to
13 not allow them to continue. It was bad enough it
14 went from a coal plant to a gas plant. My mother
15 lives next to Suncor, which has had more than a
16 thousand violations plus on top of it highway
17 expansions. It is just too much cumulative impact.
18 And so I would ask you to not allow that.

19 Another piece I think is really important
20 that I want to talk about -- I know that it's been
21 handled in some of these other PUC regulatory cases,
22 but I want to talk about the actual deconstruction
23 and remediation of this plant and what that means for
24 the community.

25 Why my mom's house was a Superfund site is

1 because they chose to blow up the ASARCO tower, and
2 all it did was spread heavy metals and dust over
3 miles and miles and miles. And when they came to
4 widen I-70, after the EPA 1990 cleanup, they only did
5 residential properties. They didn't do the
6 commercial properties.

7 So the dirt that our children play in, the
8 food that we love to grow to have our own food
9 security, is not possible because of the heavy metals
10 that are in the soil.

11 And so what I really want to talk about is
12 as we are talking about the transition, we cannot
13 forget -- we cannot forget about what it really means
14 to deconstruct and protect the communities because we
15 already know where the air toxics travel. That's
16 where the dust will travel. And these are jobs to
17 deconstruct it safely.

18 There is coal ash that needs to be cleaned
19 up. What does this mean for the Arkansas Valley?
20 What does this mean for people all the way into
21 Kansas if we don't clean this stuff up properly?
22 These are also jobs. These are jobs for communities
23 that we need to make sure these people are protected
24 and safe.

25 So again, I know people didn't hear it in

1 the beginning. I want to echo the importance to
2 protect the tax base. Personally, I feel like Xcel
3 is paying out a huge amount of money to their profit
4 shareholders instead of helping the Pueblo County fix
5 their tax base for the next 40 years. They should be
6 responsible for this. They built the lemon. But we
7 need to make sure that we are protecting these
8 communities.

9 And again, I just implore you, please do
10 not let east Pueblo become what north Denver was, a
11 massive Superfund site, because we didn't think these
12 things through.

13 Thank you.

14 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Jim Neblick, Dave
15 DeCenzo, Michael Wenzl, Dawn Tripp-Sena.

16 SPEAKER DECENZO: My name is Dave DeCenzo,
17 and I'm a relatively newcomer to Pueblo. I only got
18 here in 2001. So that's pretty new.

19 But I tell you what, I have two sons here.
20 And they grew up, and they left town. And they left
21 town because there is not enough high-paying jobs,
22 enough development here to keep them here. So I
23 think that Pueblo has a demographic problem. And if
24 we want to keep our children here, we have to have
25 high-paying jobs.

1 The way we do that is with power and
2 electric power for data centers. So my feeling is
3 that Comanche 3 should not be decommissioned or
4 demolished. It is set up to last until 2070. It's
5 supposedly, from what I hear, the third best
6 environmental-wise coal plant in the nation out of
7 200. So let's not make it be one of the first to be
8 decommissioned.

9 President Trump has issued an executive
10 order -- I don't know if there is any money involved,
11 but he has at least issued a direct support for
12 coal-powered plants in the last week or so. And data
13 centers are an example of why he did that.

14 And we could have data centers here in
15 Pueblo, but we need the power. We don't want to be
16 shipping it up north. We want to keep it here if we
17 can. So if Xcel decides they want to take that power
18 plant out to meet some state mandates on carbon
19 dioxide emissions, we need to be able to purchase it
20 from -- in Pueblo. I'm not sure who would do it, but
21 perhaps PEDCO has enough money to put a down payment
22 on it so that we can, you know, support it here.

23 So let's see what else I missed. Oh, and
24 I read this report on renewable energy that people
25 have talked about, and that should be entered into

1 the record if it hasn't been already.

2 So I don't believe Colorado, not just
3 Pueblo, should be decommissioning a working power
4 system, especially Comanche 3. We need power. Xcel
5 should focus on additional power before it
6 decommissions Comanche 3.

7 In other words, let's make sure we have
8 got the power, then talk about decommissioning 3
9 after the additional work has been done. Whether
10 they are sited in Pueblo, I don't know.

11 But I would say that if Comanche 3 can run
12 for a week in each of the four seasons without
13 dispatching power, then that would mean that the
14 other resources that are in the state or in Xcel's
15 area are functioning.

16 This report, *Renewable Energy Parks: An*
17 *Economic Development Strategy for Pueblo*, is kind of
18 pie-in-the-sky, if you ask me. I don't think it is
19 going to come in the timeframes of January 1st, 2031,
20 just to meet the projected decommissioning date.

21 So taking Comanche 3 out of Xcel's fleet
22 to meet statewide CO2 emissions mandates is not
23 consistent with current projections for AI. Elon
24 Musk just built a large power-consuming data center
25 in Memphis. And what he had to do is bring in gas

1 lines and gas power stations.

2 And we have already got the power
3 production here. So if we want to actually get
4 economic development so that we can keep our kids
5 here, we need to keep that power plant, in my
6 opinion.

7 Wyoming is getting a new data center. And
8 they can do it. And they are going to be, I think,
9 burning gas up there just over the border out of
10 Colorado. They are not subject.

11 So the last thing, I would like to see the
12 PUC push our legislature to either move the dates for
13 these mandates or reduce the mandates or eliminate
14 them entirely because we need economic development
15 here in Pueblo. And we are going to get it from
16 power.

17 Thank you.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

19 Mr. Jim Neblick, Mr. Michael Wenzl,
20 Ms. Dawn Tripp-Sena, Ms. Salina Cummings,
21 Ms. Elizabeth Weston, Ms. Kathy Sahagian. Please
22 feel free to step up.

23 SPEAKER WENZL: Mr. Neblick has left the
24 meeting.

25 So I'm Michael Wenzl. I've been a

1 resident of Pueblo for the last 30 years. And I
2 wanted to mention some of the things that aren't
3 working with nuclear power here to begin with. And
4 that's from a clean air perspective, any nuclear
5 radiation leak -- thank you.

6 Any nuclear radiation leak would -- from
7 any nuclear power facility would cause evacuation of
8 this community and possibly beyond for how long
9 before people could come home to clean homes.

10 Another is there's been earthquakes
11 reported as close as Walsenburg. That is within 50
12 miles of Pueblo. So if that can happen there, it can
13 happen to Pueblo, too. I acknowledge there's been no
14 earthquakes in Pueblo, but, you know, we are talking
15 how many years down the road if there was a nuclear
16 facility.

17 So that could -- what earthquakes could
18 cause is, again, with the small nuclear reactors,
19 there is water that is involved that would be
20 contaminated that helps keep the reactors cool. And
21 you add cooling water for spent energy.

22 And if there is some sort of disaster,
23 something that could crack those containers, then you
24 are talking a groundwater situation that would
25 contaminate the aquifers. And now where are we going

1 to get the water that we are currently getting from
2 aquifers? These are considerations we want to
3 consider because that could happen.

4 Also, I want to follow up on
5 Mr. Obduskey's comment about insurance. I spoke with
6 my insurance agent here last year about what his
7 company would do in a case of a nuclear disaster from
8 a nuclear power facility. He said currently, they
9 would not cover. There is no coverage at all for any
10 type of nuclear radiation leak or disaster right now
11 from the nuclear power facility.

12 So someone else also mentioned the current
13 proposals. Right now, it is like there is time and
14 cost overruns. The cost, everyone knows, is in terms
15 of billions of dollars. Where does this money come
16 from? Must be tax money. We are talking billions of
17 dollars.

18 And the cost overruns and the time
19 involved that we are talking about here, you know, to
20 cover the tax benefits that the community needs,
21 that's just not -- I don't foresee that happening
22 with a nuclear power plant.

23 So, in conclusion, I want to ask that you,
24 this Commission -- that you vote no for the proposal
25 to build a nuclear power plant not only in Pueblo,

1 but in the state of Colorado.

2 And also, I want to ask that you do
3 propose -- support a Pueblo Renewable Energy Park. I
4 know there may not be much information about it, but
5 it is a wonderful replacement for anything that has
6 come up to this point that would help labor and all
7 involved and cover the tax revenue.

8 That's all I have. Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

10 Ms. Dawn Tripp-Sena, Ms. Salina Cummings,
11 Ms. Elizabeth Weston, Ms. Kathy Sahagian, Mr. Jose
12 Soto. You don't have to come up in order.

13 SPEAKER TRIPP-SENA: Good evening. My
14 name is Dawn Tripp-Sena. And I am a social worker.
15 I'm an adjunct professor here at this University. I
16 teach social work. Social work is a profession that
17 is known to fight the injustices that are often
18 perpetrated against marginalized people.

19 I was shocked when they started having the
20 town halls about this issue that the energy from
21 Comanche 3 didn't even power Pueblo. So a
22 marginalized community is getting all the pollution
23 but none of the benefit. I'm tired of Pueblo being a
24 dumping ground for northern Colorado.

25 My children and grandchildren live here in

1 Pueblo, and you can see Comanche 3 from their front
2 yards. So they are very close to this area, and they
3 receive more of the pollution than other parts of
4 Pueblo. My younger son has asthma, and it's due to
5 being -- the air in Pueblo.

6 I don't want my grandchildren or my
7 children to live out the rest of their lives in a
8 place that has dirty air. I want it to be clean. I
9 support the Renewable Energy Park. And I hope that
10 you will, too. If it was in your backyards, what
11 would your decision be?

12 Thank you for coming.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

14 Mr. Jose Soto, Eppie Griego.

15 SPEAKER CUMMINGS: Good evening. My name
16 is Salina Cummings. And I stand before you today as
17 a concerned resident and mother of Pueblo.

18 While I understand the desire for clean
19 energy and economic development, I urge you to
20 reconsider the proposal to bring a nuclear power
21 plant to our community.

22 Supporters often highlight that nuclear
23 energy produces fewer carbon emissions and creates
24 jobs, but at what cost to our families, our safety,
25 and our future? A nuclear power plant may be low in

1 emissions, but it produces high radioactive waste
2 that remains dangerous for thousands of years.

3 The US still has no permanent solution for
4 this waste. There was a study in 2023 that over
5 90,000 metric tons of nuclear waste is being stored
6 at over 70 sites across the country, most of this
7 temporarily near rivers, cities, and neighborhoods
8 just like ours.

9 In 2014, there was a leak at the Waste
10 Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico which released
11 radiation exposing workers and costing over \$2
12 billion in clean-up. Closer to home, what would a
13 similar incident mean for our families?

14 They say it's safe. However, there has
15 been studies published in the *European Journal of*
16 *Cancer Care* that children living near nuclear plants
17 had a higher risk of leukemia.

18 Yes, nuclear plants bring jobs, if any,
19 for locals. However, so does renewable energy
20 projects like solar and wind which are already
21 growing across Colorado. These options are cleaner,
22 safer, and don't burden future generations with
23 radioactive waste.

24 Why gamble with Pueblo's safety? Let's
25 lead with smarter, safer energy without putting our

1 families at risk. Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

3 SPEAKER WESTON: My name is Elizabeth
4 Weston. And I am standing here not as a politician,
5 not as a scientist, but as a member of this
6 community, somebody who loves Pueblo and who wants
7 the best for our families, our kids, their kids, and
8 our future.

9 We have all heard the pitch, nuclear power
10 plant coming to Pueblo. And on paper, yeah, it
11 sounds promising. Clean energy, good-paying jobs, a
12 step forward. But I'm here to say that those
13 promises are not worth the risks. Not for us, not
14 for our children, and not for the city that we have
15 all worked so hard to build.

16 Talk about the risk. Nuclear energy isn't
17 something that you can afford to get wrong. One
18 accident, just one, can poison our air, our soil, and
19 our water. And it doesn't just go away. Radioactive
20 waste lasts for tens of thousands of years.

21 If something goes wrong, we are not just
22 talking about a temporary disaster. We are talking
23 about entire generations living with the consequences
24 of our choice today. I would like to think about our
25 children, the little ones that are playing outside in

1 the backyards, walking to school, drinking water from
2 the taps, drinking water from the hoses.

3 Imagine looking at them in the eye and
4 knowing that we signed off on something that could
5 put their health, their future, and their lives in
6 danger all for a paycheck or a promise of economic
7 growth that might not even last.

8 And where would the nuclear waste go?
9 Because no one seems to have a clear answer. Is it
10 going to be stored here, right in our backyards?
11 Near our homes? Near the Arkansas River? What
12 happens if there is a leak, if our water gets
13 contaminated?

14 We already deal with high utility bills,
15 rising grocery costs, and inflation. Are we really
16 prepared to deal with a radioactive clean-up, cancer
17 risks, and evacuations, too? Because I am a member
18 of the working class. I would not be able to
19 evacuate. My family would have to stay. We can't
20 afford to go to another city.

21 I'm not ignoring the benefits. We all
22 want clean energy. We all want jobs. We all want
23 Pueblo to move forward. Let's be real, Pueblo has --
24 already has what it takes to lead in renewable
25 energy.

1 Again, wind, solar, even battery storage.
2 These are industries that grow with the community,
3 not at the cost of the community. They create jobs,
4 good ones, and they don't come with nuclear warning
5 labels.

6 This city is built on working-class pride.
7 We built steel, railroads, farms. And we have done
8 it with our hands, our sweat, and our hearts. We
9 have sacrificed enough. We should not have to
10 sacrifice our safety now just to get ahead. And
11 again, it goes to economic classism. We are a poor
12 community.

13 And I am asking you guys, the
14 decision-makers, to not allow this because once that
15 reactor is here, once the waste is buried, and not if
16 but when something goes wrong, we don't get a
17 do-over.

18 I have heard the argument that nuclear
19 energy has come a long way since Chernobyl; that
20 modern technology is safer; that the risks are low.
21 And yes, it's true that safety measures have
22 improved, but that does not mean the danger is gone.
23 It just means we are better at containing it until we
24 are not.

25 Take Fukushima, the disaster that happened

1 in 2011 in Japan. Japan is very technologically
2 advanced, and they couldn't even prevent a failure
3 when disaster struck. Over 1.25 million tons of
4 radioactive water is still being stored at that site.
5 And now it is being slowly released into the ocean
6 sparking protests across the globe.

7 Even in the US, we have had close calls.
8 The San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station in
9 California. That was shut down permanently in 2013
10 due to safety issues and radiation leaks. And now
11 3.6 million pounds of radioactive waste is sitting
12 there in the Pacific Ocean. No permanent storage
13 solution.

14 And about that it-is-safe-now claim, the
15 Nuclear Regulatory Commission in 2021 found that 88
16 of the 93 US reactors were still not in full
17 compliance with the updated safety standards
18 following Fukushima. So no, this isn't behind us.
19 We are still catching up.

20 Then there is the waste. I know Salina
21 mentioned that in the US there is 90,000 metric tons
22 of nuclear waste and not a singular permanent storage
23 facility. Waste from a plant can remain radioactive
24 for up to 250,000 years, longer than any civilization
25 has ever even existed. Right now, nearly all of it

1 is sitting in temporary sites including near rivers,
2 fault lines, and communities.

3 And yes, some say this will help our tax
4 base. But at what cost? Nuclear projects are some
5 of the most expensive infrastructure investments out
6 there. A local plant in Georgia, the newest project
7 in the US, ran \$17 billion over budget and took over
8 a decade to finish. That is taxpayer money. And
9 those bills land on the backs of working families
10 like ours.

11 We deserve better. Pueblo deserves
12 better. Safer energy, smarter investments, and a
13 future that does not leave our children, their
14 children, and their great grandchildren paying for
15 the prices of the promises we make today.

16 Let's not gamble with our kids' future.
17 Let's invest it in energy that builds us up. Say yes
18 to a Pueblo that is safe, strong, and proud. Thank
19 you.

20 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

21 SPEAKER GRIEGO: Thank you for coming to
22 Pueblo, Chairman Blank, Commissioners Gilman and
23 Plant.

24 My name is Eppie Griego. I've lived in
25 Pueblo for 66 years. I helped build and do all the

1 work out there at the Comanche plant. I built the
2 substation, did all the transmission lines out there.

3 Solar and wind is not going to cut it.
4 You know what I mean? Now, it will cut it if we give
5 all the jobs to Pueblo and they go union and good
6 PLAs and good-paying jobs. Other than that, I've
7 been out in the parking lot, and all these people are
8 not from our community. But I am someone who cares
9 about my community, my neighbors, and our future.

10 We all know Comanche Unit 3 is closing by
11 2031. That is 750 megawatts of power and a major
12 part of our local community. It supports good-paying
13 jobs, over \$30 million in taxes every year, and
14 countless small business and nonprofits. A Just
15 Transition means don't lose all of that. We need to
16 keep those jobs here in Pueblo.

17 We need energy infrastructure that
18 replaces what is going away. Not just in power, but
19 in people, paychecks, and purpose. That means giving
20 Xcel the flexibility to bring in technologies that
21 are ready now like natural gas and carbon capture and
22 the options that are coming fast like advanced
23 nuclear. Don't close the door on those. We need
24 every tool available.

25 So I'm here to ask, support real

1 investment in Pueblo, keep the jobs, keep the tax
2 base, and give us a future. Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

4 Jose Soto, Mr. Ken Danti, Ms. Dianne
5 Danti, Mr. Jason Munoz, Ms. Susie Jagd.

6 SPEAKER SAHAGIAN: I'm Kathy Sahagian.
7 And I moved here in 2015 by the skin of my teeth. I
8 found a town where housing was affordable. I was
9 living in Austin. I sold the mobile home I bought
10 and came here and bought a house with that money.

11 And if I had to sell it and move, it's
12 just too hard. I'm sick. You know, it's too hard.
13 It takes years for someone in my income to move. I'm
14 on disability. I've got eosinophilic asthma. I've
15 got fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue.

16 You know, I just -- I can't do it. But if
17 it comes, I'll do it. I'll go live in my sister's
18 attic, you know? I'm not going to die from cancer.
19 I'm 62, but I'm not ready to die yet, you know?

20 We have -- they call this town the banana
21 belt because the -- I mean, you know, through -- a
22 Colorado city through here, they call that the banana
23 belt because we have 300 days of the year of sun.

24 And the wind is just nuts. I mean, when I
25 was sitting out in my car in the parking lot, my car

1 was rocking out there today. And they are making
2 windmills that don't even have to have the big
3 propellers. And they just -- you know.

4 And why not put the solar panels on
5 people's houses? I'm on LEAP and BHEAP. And I don't
6 trust the mayor here to give me any assistance at
7 all. She wants it in her control so she can make
8 money off of it.

9 I just put it together. Somebody said,
10 oh, yeah, we got to produce all this energy for the
11 tech brokers up north for their electric cars and
12 their AI, et cetera. And if you put a solar panel on
13 every roof in this town who would take it -- not
14 forcing anybody, but everyone who wanted one, we
15 would have enough energy.

16 And that would create jobs. And they
17 would take maintenance. You would have to maintain
18 them. Somebody would have to go and maintain them
19 and make sure that they are still up and working and
20 replace them if they are not.

21 And that park I just heard about, you
22 know. I mean, I'm old enough to remember Love Canal.
23 Okay? And I remember Chernobyl and Fukushima. And
24 it just spewed and spewed and spewed and spewed. Two
25 years later, they are still spewing. They are still

1 spewing, you know.

2 And there is all these die-offs of fish.

3 And suddenly in California, they don't see any babies
4 with the whales. How come? Oh, scientists are
5 looking into it. How come? What do you think?
6 Major die-offs of starfish, you know. We have no
7 right.

8 And then if we have an accident here, what
9 is it going to do, pollute the Arkansas River? You
10 know? You got to store the shit. That's the
11 problem. It might not, you know, release carbon, but
12 it's the stuff, you know. Where are you going to
13 store it?

14 And, you know, containers corrode. And
15 things leak into the ground. I have a beautiful
16 garden here. I keep adding compost to it every year,
17 every year, every year. And I rely on that food to
18 survive.

19 I live on \$930 a month. Take that in for
20 a second. Can you imagine it? Can you imagine
21 yourself living on \$930 a month? I can't afford to
22 move. You know? And I need the help I get from
23 Black Hills and Xcel.

24 Let them build solar and wind. We have
25 plenty of it. If it works anywhere, it should work

1 here. They can make it happen if they want to make
2 it happen. I just think somebody is not going to
3 make a large amount of money on it. That's why they
4 want to bring it in. They want to make a lot of
5 money. You know?

6 I don't want to sell back any of my energy
7 or anything like that. Just, you know, put it on my
8 roof and let me survive. I don't have a lot of, you
9 know, needs, you know, as far as energy goes. Do you
10 really think they should do this? I don't think
11 they --

12 CHAIRMAN BLANK: We can't answer.

13 SPEAKER SAHAGIAN: You can't answer that.
14 Wow.

15 I used to write for a newspaper in
16 Milwaukee called the *Shepherd Express*. It's a
17 wonderful town. I really miss it. I miss my
18 friends, you know. But I can't live there because of
19 my asthma and my allergies. There is too much clay
20 in the soil, too much mold.

21 Here, I test, I'm only allergic to cats
22 and dogs. In Austin, I was allergic to trees, grass,
23 weeds. They have high pollinating trees, you know.
24 So I had to move. You know, I had to leave. It took
25 me -- I was there 15 years. I suffered for 15 years.

1 And I couldn't keep a job. I worked sick
2 selling my jewelry on the weekends. And I got sinus
3 infections. And, you know, it took me five days to
4 recover and then go back and do it again before I
5 finally got on SSI. Because I just didn't want
6 people in my life like that, you know? But I had to.

7 So now, if I have to move, it's going to
8 take me years. Please let me know ahead of time if
9 you are going to do this so I have time to sell my
10 house before all the property values go down.
11 Because that's what I think will happen.

12 Who wants to move to a town with a nuclear
13 reactor? Nobody is going to move here. Right now,
14 we have influx of people all the time. It's a
15 wonderful town. We get people from all over the
16 place. It's great.

17 I like it here. I don't want to leave.
18 But I will. I'll sell my damn house. I won't be
19 able to afford to buy another one for the price I'll
20 get for it. I won't be able to afford to buy a house
21 in Milwaukee. But, you know, I have to.

22 I can't breathe that shit. I don't want
23 to end up with cancer. We had -- my mom, my grandma,
24 and my great grandma all had breast cancer. That's
25 all I need. And it wasn't genetic. I was tested.

1 It was nongenetic. It was environmental. You know?
2 So every year -- this is like -- this is
3 like when you get food, and there is something in it
4 that's not good for you like high fructose corn
5 syrup. The company will get rid of it real quick.
6 And then they will put another thing in there that
7 sucks really bad, you know. Let's take that out, and
8 we'll put in, I don't know, Aspartame or whatever
9 that's even worse. People getting diabetes.
10 People -- you know. More autism, you know. What the
11 heck? Come on.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

13 SPEAKER SAHAGIAN: Don't do this to us,
14 okay?

15 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

16 SPEAKER SOTO: Hello. Welcome to Pueblo.
17 Good afternoon, Chairman Blank and Commissioners. My
18 name is Jose Soto. I am a construction craft laborer
19 and a resident of Pueblo.

20 I am here today representing Laborers
21 Local 720. We represent hundreds of workers
22 throughout the state employed on utility construction
23 projects. LIUNA acknowledges and appreciates Xcel
24 Energy's commitment to Project Labor Agreements on
25 its construction projects as detailed in Exhibit A,

1 Scope of Work for Solar, Wind, and Battery Energy
2 Storage Projects.

3 This demonstrates a recognition of the
4 value of skilled labor in assuring the timely and
5 cost-effective completion of critical infrastructure
6 projects.

7 However, we firmly believe that this
8 commitment to high quality labor standards must
9 extend beyond construction and apply equally to power
10 purchase agreements. Xcel's own subsidiary in
11 Minnesota requires union labor on its power purchase
12 agreements setting a strong precedent that should be
13 followed here in Colorado.

14 The state of Colorado, through legislation
15 such as Senate Bill 23-292, has clearly demonstrated
16 its support for the creation of high quality jobs for
17 Colorado residents. Applying a union labor
18 requirement to power purchase agreements is the most
19 direct and effective way to meet this important
20 policy priority. It ensures that renewable energy
21 projects developed in our state provide
22 family-supporting wages and benefits to local workers
23 contributing to a stronger Colorado economy.

24 This proceeding presents a historic
25 opportunity for Colorado. Xcel Energy's Just

1 Transition Solicitation calls for the acquisition of
2 nearly 14 gigawatt. That's 14,000 megawatts of new
3 generation and storage resources to meet Colorado's
4 future electricity needs. This massive build-out
5 represents one of the largest energy transition plans
6 in Colorado's history. And it is crucial that we
7 establish the right labor standards from the onset.

8 In the past, we have witnessed a troubling
9 trend where out-of-state workers are brought in to
10 build Colorado's renewable energy infrastructure,
11 often paid minimal wages, provided with few or no
12 benefits.

13 This practice directly undercuts both the
14 intent of best value employment metrics legislation
15 and the progress made by workers' unions to establish
16 and maintain high quality jobs for construction
17 workers in the state.

18 Xcel proposes using a labor economist to
19 score bids based on best value employment metrics
20 providing individual projects and accumulative
21 portfolio best value employment metrics scores.
22 While this proposal has the potential to provide
23 useful insight, it does not go far enough, and its
24 limitations are evident.

25 Despite the existence of best value

1 language for nearly a decade, Colorado has yet to see
2 any utility scale unionized renewable energy
3 projects. This clearly indicates that the past and
4 current best value employment metrics scoring methods
5 are inadequate to ensure that the projects
6 prioritizes and deliver good jobs.

7 Finally, we must not forget the workers
8 who will be impacted by the energy transition. As we
9 retire coal plants, it is our responsibility to
10 ensure that the new jobs created in the renewable
11 energy sector offer the same, if not better,
12 standards of employment.

13 Requiring union labor on both power
14 purchase agreements and south build projects is
15 essential for a Just Transition that provides high
16 quality family-supporting union jobs for Colorado
17 workers.

18 LIUNA urges the Commission to mandate that
19 Xcel Energy apply union labor standards to all power
20 purchase agreements mirroring their practice in
21 Minnesota and aligning with Colorado's policy goals.
22 This is not just about construction. It's about
23 creating a sustainable and equitable energy future
24 for all Coloradoans.

25 Thank you for your time and appreciate

1 your consideration.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

3 SPEAKER SOTO: I could also enter this
4 into the record as well. Our Pueblo County Board of
5 County Commissioners adopted a resolution partially
6 supporting the labor -- our comments here this
7 morning as well. I will have that submitted as well.
8 So thank you, sir.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Please. Thank you.

10 Ms. Dianne Danti, Mr. Jason Munoz, Susie
11 Jagd.

12 SPEAKER DANTI: Hello. I'm Ken Danti. I
13 grew up in Pueblo. But for my career, I went away
14 because of the jobs -- the limited jobs in Pueblo.

15 These are not designed for somebody over
16 6 feet.

17 I grew up in Pueblo. I'm third
18 generation, but I left for my career. But I'm back,
19 and I live in Pueblo.

20 I represent the Renewable Energy Owners
21 Coalition of America. We must address the climate
22 issue by using renewable energy combined with
23 storage. We support the Renewable Energy Park
24 proposal.

25 This approach will substantially maximize

1 good union jobs and property tax while improving our
2 citizens' health and environment. This approach
3 addresses all issues, unlike the others who seek only
4 the most expensive way to generate power.

5 An energy park looks for ways to help
6 local economy by producing businesses -- or by
7 providing businesses with lower energy costs, a
8 specific concern for the Pueblo area which is
9 burdened by high electric costs. A Renewable Energy
10 Park can serve our needs with much less delay.

11 REOCA conducted a professional poll
12 published in 2022 about renewables versus nuclear for
13 a Comanche replacement. Pueblo residents prefer
14 nuclear -- or I got that wrong. Pueblo residents
15 prefer renewables over nuclear 65 percent to 34
16 percent. And I think we are even hearing a bigger
17 difference about renewable in this auditorium.

18 Today, nuclear proponents don't want
19 others to speak because they have a losing
20 proposition of too expensive, too late. Their
21 approach is to attack the person, not the facts.
22 Let's take the innovative approach of a Renewable
23 Energy Park and make it happen for a truly Just
24 Transition.

25 Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

2 Ms. Jagd.

3 SPEAKER JAGD: Thanks. Hi, my name is
4 Susie Jagd. And thank you for coming down to hear
5 our comments.

6 You know, I worked in a solar factory
7 where we produced solar cells for NASA. And I worked
8 there when I was a very, very small little kid. And
9 I always dreamed that every house in America would
10 have solar. And because the sun is free, it doesn't
11 contaminate the air.

12 And so in 2010, I put solar on my house.
13 In 2020, I put better solar on my house. And so I
14 believe that we should stand here. And any new
15 construction should have renewable energy included or
16 not be allowed to build.

17 I think that when people come in and say
18 that they can build this house or that house, they
19 better have a renewable energy source included in
20 that build because we need houses. We need people to
21 come and live. But we need to have a place to put
22 them. And if we can't support the electrical, the
23 water that requires that, then we are missing the
24 boat.

25 And here today -- when I went up to the

1 capital and talked to the guy -- one of the senators
2 that produced that bill that said we should include
3 nuclear power as a clean energy source, he was a
4 little bit misleading.

5 He talked about having nuclear energy that
6 would not have waste, and that is not quite true.
7 The nuclear power isotope that he was talking about
8 needs a nuclear -- needs like uranium to give a
9 kick-start. So there is waste.

10 And so I say that when I look at all the
11 corporations in the United States and around the
12 world that have spilled oil in our land and sea and
13 said, oh, well, we will clean it up; or don't do
14 anything in regards to the environment -- one small
15 little leak in that little crack is going to
16 contaminate this whole area.

17 And I don't want nuclear power. I was
18 upset that they included it as clean energy because
19 it is clean energy in the sense that it has no carbon
20 emissions, but it's not clean energy in the sense
21 that once it spills, you are devastated. I don't
22 care. You have -- you can't take it back.

23 You have places -- you know what they told
24 me? He said we are going to have it here in
25 Colorado. He said we are going to ship it to New

1 Mexico. We are not going to have any waste. And
2 that is kind of a figment -- a little lie.

3 And then he told me that they are going to
4 store it in the Carlsbad Caverns. Oh, great, so
5 let's destroy some natural beautiful place, you know,
6 because we can store it there.

7 And as far as I'm concerned about
8 corporations honoring their reliability of not
9 dumping here or there or anywhere, as we have seen in
10 the past, unless they get caught -- unless they get
11 caught, they are not going to do anything about it.

12 So I say let's use solar. Let's use wind.
13 Let's develop the things that need to be developed.
14 Start today. Don't put it off. And just remember
15 that you can't take back nuclear energy once it's on
16 the ground and spilled. It's there forever.

17 Like everybody else that says in this
18 room, you know, it's not the way to go. It's not the
19 future. And I want to leave Colorado for my
20 grandkids to enjoy, for my grandkids' children and
21 whoever else.

22 I'm a nurse. I'm a retired nurse. And
23 cancer is not a pretty picture. It really isn't.
24 And if you live near nuclear plants and you can get
25 more -- you know, the people that are making the

1 money are not the people that are living right next
2 door to those plants and stuff. And their kids and
3 their grandkids and nobody else -- you know, they are
4 not living there. We are.

5 So I say no to nuclear just on the chance
6 that, you know, you can't trust anybody to sit there
7 and say, oh, yeah, we are going to maintain it.
8 Don't worry. Yeah. That's what they said, you know,
9 when they spilled the oil all over and destroyed our
10 seas and said oh, yeah, we are going to clean it up.
11 And then no, because we are a corporation.

12 Nobody sat there and cleaned up our lands
13 and our seas. And we had oil all over. Well,
14 nuclear will last longer than oil. It will last
15 forever. We will die with nuclear waste poured on
16 our cities, our land, and our air.

17 So that's all I have to say. Thanks.

18 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you, Ms. Jagd.

19 Dianne Danti, Ms. Sara Blackhurst,

20 Ms. Barbara Ripperger, Mr. Jimmy Duffner.

21 SPEAKER DANTI: Thank you for listening to
22 the testimony.

23 My name is Dianne Danti. And I chair the
24 Bring Power Home Pueblo grassroots issue campaign.

25 It is a grassroots issue campaign to terminate Black

1 Hills' franchise agreement.

2 As I have spoken before, we are not a
3 toxic dumping site. The Army Depot has just finished
4 the last of the destruction of the mustard agent.
5 Now they are doing clean-up, and there will be areas
6 that will be unusable. We still have the EPA
7 Superfund sites that are still being cleaned up.
8 Even with Comanche 3 retiring, we will have the
9 groundwater and Saint Charles River's coal ash to
10 deal with.

11 We can look at having a Renewable Energy
12 Park that has more renewable energy than just solar
13 panels. It will have thermal batteries, hydrogen
14 electrolyzers, and Intersect Power. It will cost the
15 bill payers less and will not produce the radioactive
16 waste that the SMR nuclear plant produces. And it
17 will not generate greenhouse gases. The park will
18 also use less of our valuable water.

19 Pueblo will be able to diversify its
20 economy by keeping cheap energy in the community to
21 power not only Denver, but also local industry. It
22 will generate property tax payments that pays at \$40
23 million annually and creates hundreds of permanent
24 jobs in engineering, business operation, and
25 industrial plant operation.

1 Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

3 SPEAKER MUNOZ: Good evening,
4 Commissioners. My name is Jason Munoz. Thank you
5 for being here today to listen to our public
6 comments.

7 I come to you today as a fourth generation
8 Coloradoan, a native son of Pueblo, and a proud
9 father to two school-age children here in Pueblo.

10 And, you know, all this discussion of
11 nuclear power sort of brings back that imagery of *The*
12 *Simpsons* with their nuclear power plant and the
13 three-eyed fish. And, of course, that is fiction.
14 But we all know, how often has *The Simpsons* stories
15 come to real life? And I would not want any
16 three-eyed fish to be floating around in Pueblo.

17 You know, thinking of long-term
18 sustainability for Pueblo, we should be planning for
19 long-term sustainability here in Southern Colorado,
20 but God forbid an accident happened to this nuclear
21 power plant that is proposed that would essentially
22 put an end to our future here.

23 You know, the Colorado state motto is nil
24 sine numine. I hope I said that correctly. I'm not
25 brushed up on my Latin. But it means nothing without

1 providence. So I believe that we, as good
2 Coloradoans, owe it to be good stewards, too, in
3 nature that we are surrounded with here in Colorado.

4 And although I understand that this power
5 plant -- which essentially wouldn't be prepared to go
6 into operation for 20-some years from now. But
7 should it come into existence, I think that although
8 it must have updated technologies, the risk is far
9 too great to subject any of our residents or nature
10 to any type of potential leaks or accidents.

11 You know, as it relates to, you know, Just
12 Transition, I absolutely believe that we need to work
13 in every way possible to make sure that the workers
14 who are providing this energy that we all need, that
15 they do have a Just Transition into getting new
16 good-paying jobs, labor jobs after we transition away
17 from Xcel.

18 I just hope that it's not going to be a
19 nuclear power plant. The risk of pollution is high.
20 You know, God forbid an accident happened. I
21 mentioned that. After the fact of the uranium has
22 been spent, is it going to be stored in Pueblo? What
23 will happen to it? As we heard tonight, there is
24 really no storage facilities for it.

25 And I don't know if we can like do like a

1 *Superman IV* where we fling it back into the sun, but
2 I don't think that is really likely. So it is really
3 dangerous to have this spent uranium sitting in
4 Pueblo because for so long we have been abused by
5 corporations environmentally. And I think it is time
6 that that should come to an end.

7 I also think it is really important -- you
8 know, we have the abundance of the Arkansas River.
9 We have a lot of water here in Pueblo. And I love to
10 take my kids out on the lake and the river and enjoy
11 all of that.

12 But, you know, if we are 20 years down the
13 road -- climate change, I think, it is a real thing.
14 And I am concerned that should we install a nuclear
15 power plant or a big data center that it is going to
16 suck up a lot of our water here that should be used
17 for our own recreation, our own crops, our economy,
18 and to be able to flow downstream. And, of course,
19 these plants will use and taint a lot of our pristine
20 Colorado water we have here in Pueblo.

21 And so I just really want to show my
22 support for a renewable energy plant. You know, God
23 gave us the sun and the wind. I would love for us to
24 harness that to the best of our abilities. Let's
25 increase the battery storage. Let's get all hands on

1 deck and come together as a community to find every
2 solution possible to provide our growing community
3 here with the power needs that have power for
4 generations to come.

5 I just hope that you decide that nuclear
6 power is too dangerous for Colorado. Thank you so
7 much.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

9 SPEAKER BLACKHURST: Good evening,
10 Chairman Blank, Commissioners Gilman and Plant.
11 Thank you so much for coming to Pueblo to hear
12 directly from those who are most affected from a Just
13 Transition proceeding.

14 My name is Sara Espinoza Blackhurst. I'm
15 the president of Action Colorado. On my other side,
16 my sons are the seventh generation living here in
17 Pueblo County. On my father's side, the border
18 crossed us twice in Southern Colorado. So I'm as
19 invested as anybody that you could ever imagine in
20 the future of Colorado because my past is so deeply
21 rooted here.

22 I'm also representing a coalition of local
23 governments, labor, business, and community leaders
24 in transition-impacted regions across the state. I
25 also served on the Pueblo Innovative Energy Solution

1 Advisory Committee better known as PIESAC.

2 So let me begin with this: Pueblo didn't
3 wait. We organized. We planned. We led. This Just
4 Transition proceeding is no small thing to us. We
5 understand very well it is the formal public process
6 meant to guide how Colorado moves away from coal in a
7 fair and equitable way for impacted workers,
8 communities, and utilities.

9 It is where the rubber meets the road on
10 the state's promises how the transition will be
11 timed, how costs will be shared, how local economies
12 will be supported, and how reliability will be
13 maintained.

14 It's important to us because we understand
15 it's the state's commitment to fairness and action.
16 It is about sequencing and integrity. And it's about
17 how we reshape outcomes.

18 The Just Transition Solicitation you are
19 considering today -- I would like to point to Exhibit
20 101 -- acknowledges that, as Jack Ihle's testimony
21 made clear, the PIESAC report shaped this plan. This
22 is a win for collaborative, community-driven
23 policymaking.

24 Well, the plan only matters if it is
25 implemented with integrity. We cannot allow a paper

1 promise of inclusion to replace the lived reality of
2 follow-through. Replacement must deliver tax base
3 and not displace labor.

4 The Commission has a chance to set
5 precedent that is really, truly Just Transition. And
6 this is being watched across the country, as you well
7 know, because everyone in the country is trying to
8 figure out the best way to transition away from coal
9 communities that will be deeply impacted for the rest
10 of time.

11 It's a commitment to the people who
12 powered this state for generations. We support the
13 JTS, but it only comes with enforceable mechanisms to
14 make communities whole. It is really important. You
15 are going to hear us talk about that a lot. How do
16 we make these coal transition communities whole? And
17 that's what the Just Transition is all about, how we
18 make these communities whole.

19 That means real investment, not short-term
20 payouts. A few weeks ago -- less than two weeks ago,
21 actually, the Governor signed HB 1040 that designates
22 nuclear as clean energy. This was on the tail of
23 President Biden last summer signing the ADVANCE Act
24 into law that acknowledges not only that it's clean,
25 but paving the way for these technologies -- these

1 new technologies. Not 40, 50, 60, 70-year-old
2 technologies, but the new technologies to be put in
3 place.

4 Long-term energy infrastructure that
5 anchors our economies includes advanced nuclear and
6 advanced new natural gas with carbon capture
7 facilities in Pueblo. This is ground zero for this
8 transition.

9 We need dispatchable, reliable, scaleable
10 power to support both our local grid and our economic
11 future. And ongoing community involvement is how
12 this transition unfolds with labor, labor front and
13 center in this transition. Not just today, but
14 through every phase.

15 We don't want a seat at the table after
16 decisions are already made. We want to build this
17 table with you because you are the decision-makers on
18 this. We urge you to approve the JTS with clear
19 expectations for execution and the accountability to
20 match because Pueblo has done its part. And now it's
21 time to make good on the promise.

22 Thank you for your time.

23 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

24 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hello. I want to
25 read a --

1 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Can you get closer to the
2 microphone?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I want to read an
4 article from *Interesting Engineering: China Builds*
5 *World's First Working Thorium Reactor Using*
6 *Declassified US Documents*. "In the Gobi Desert,
7 China has powered up the world's only working thorium
8 reactor.

9 "Chinese scientists have completed a major
10 breakthrough in clean energy by reloading fresh fuel
11 into a working thorium molten salt reactor.

12 "They did this while the reactor continued
13 running, marking a significant step forward in the
14 global push to use thorium as a safer and more
15 abundant alternative to uranium nuclear power."

16 So, yeah, I don't want to see a
17 uranium-based nuclear power plant, but thorium -- in
18 300 years, thorium is no longer a waste. You don't
19 need, you know, the diesel backup to cool the plant
20 down with thorium. They can just shut the reaction
21 down, and it will stop.

22 Now, you know, they built this in China.
23 It's running 2 megawatts. So, you know, they can do
24 the same thing here. Now, I know, you know, there is
25 a lot of talk about trade wars in China and all this

1 other good stuff.

2 So we could possibly get some money from
3 the federal government to do a research project on
4 this. You know, get our power nonvisionable nuclear
5 and possibly get the federal government to pay for
6 it.

7 I just wanted to make the Commission aware
8 that thorium is an alternative for nuclear power
9 plants. So that's all I got to say.

10 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

11 SPEAKER DUFFNER: Thank you for coming.
12 My name is Jimmy Duffner. And I'm an environmental
13 kind of nut. And I think this is my third or fourth
14 protest against nuclear energy here in Pueblo,
15 Colorado. And it has been overwhelmingly, at least
16 90 percent or better, against any kind of nuclear
17 power here in Pueblo.

18 I believe in this country. And I believe
19 in Pueblo, Colorado. And to think that nuclear
20 energy is the only viable solution for the Comanche
21 plant is just silly. There is no way in the world
22 you can convince me that the nuclear power plant is
23 our only alternative.

24 Like I said, 90 percent or more of us have
25 been up here not wanting a nuclear power plant in

1 Pueblo. The people we haven't heard from is you. We
2 are up here trying to make an argument against a
3 nuclear power plant, and we don't know how you feel
4 about it.

5 We don't know what investigations you've
6 done. We don't know any kind of background
7 information you might have that would give us some
8 kind of a fighting chance to battle this thing. And
9 we would really like to hear from the Public
10 Utilities Commission on the viability of having a
11 nuclear power plant here.

12 And we all know the waste is going to be
13 stored on site. That was discussed two years ago.
14 We all know plutonium and uranium are going to be
15 used to kick off the reaction. That is going to be
16 stored on-site.

17 We all know that the energy that it is
18 going to produce is going to be super, super
19 expensive. And thank God we are not going to have to
20 pay for it. We just have to put up with the
21 pollution.

22 The people up north are going to have to
23 pay for this electricity. And I really think you
24 ought to ask them if they think we should have a
25 nuclear power plant producing their energy that they

1 are going to have to pay for in Pueblo, Colorado.

2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

4 Anybody who wants to talk, just come on
5 down.

6 SPEAKER RIPPERGER: Good evening. My name
7 is Barbara Ripperger. And I am a very proud resident
8 of Pueblo and Pueblo County.

9 I am against a nuclear power plant in
10 Pueblo, Colorado. I worry. I worry about the water.
11 I worry about the waste. I'm told that there is
12 plenty of water and that water is not an issue. Yes,
13 there is water right now and probably tomorrow and
14 probably ten years from now. But what happens when
15 the drought comes? And it will.

16 If there is a problem, an accident -- and
17 don't say that won't happen. I've been told that
18 nuclear accidents happen more often than we are told.
19 And we are not God. We are humans, and we make
20 mistakes.

21 Huge amounts of water will be needed to
22 cool those watts. Are we going to dry up our
23 farmland and the whole Arkansas Valley? What are the
24 plans for the contaminated water? Will it be slowly
25 dumped into the lands and the rivers?

1 And that brings me to the second worry,
2 the nuclear waste. It is not supposed to be -- it is
3 now supposed to be liveable, but waste is cumulative
4 over the months, over the years.

5 And what is to keep Pueblo from becoming a
6 nuclear waste dump for other states and agencies?
7 And then with the current federal administration's
8 plan to cut the EPA and environmental protections,
9 what will happen?

10 I support renewable energy. I support the
11 energy -- excuse me, the Renewable Energy Park and
12 with solar, wind energy transmission, and energy
13 storage batteries.

14 Thank you for hearing me, and thank you
15 for come coming to Pueblo.

16 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

17 SPEAKER PURCHASE: Thank you so much for
18 coming to Pueblo today. I'll try and keep it short
19 and sweet. Under a minute, hopefully.

20 I'll start off with my name is Nic
21 Purchase. I'm farmer/rancher in Avondale, Colorado,
22 first generation. I'll start my statement off by
23 saying as well that I'm not for or in opposition of
24 what is being presented today, but I do want my
25 statement to reflect basically the workers and the

1 families here in Pueblo County.

2 So I thank you for letting me speak today.
3 I may not be Pueblo born, but after living here, I
4 witnessed something extraordinary; a fierce pride and
5 resilience that runs as deep as the Arkansas River
6 basin which I have resided upon for 24 years.

7 I've seen firsthand how Denver treats this
8 community with neglect and indifference. For over
9 140 years, Pueblo steel mill has been the backbone of
10 this community. They didn't just forge the steel
11 here. They forged the railroads and bridges that
12 built this nation.

13 When I first arrived, many of the
14 old-timers I met told me stories of how their
15 grandparents and parents built America from this very
16 spot. That legacy matters. We were once considered
17 the Ellis Island of the middle of the country.

18 Now Governor Polis and his Denver elite
19 want to destroy the livelihoods of nearly over 400
20 Colorado working families that reside in Pueblo. At
21 Comanche Station alone, we are talking about 170
22 direct workers and their families. Add to that the
23 65 workers that reside at the Hayden Station and 150
24 at the Craig Station.

25 I've met some of these workers. I've sat

1 at their kitchen tables. And they are not just
2 numbers. They are our neighbors who coach our kids'
3 baseball games, basketball games, and volunteer at
4 food banks.

5 We don't have to be born here to see how
6 Denver has never cared about Pueblo. I watched from
7 my new home as Denver politicians make promises they
8 never kept. When our steel industry struggled here,
9 they watched them build high-rises. When our
10 unemployment rate soared, they shrugged.

11 And now they are making decisions about
12 power plants and what should come here next which
13 generate over 25 million in annual tax revenue for
14 our county without understanding what it means to be
15 a working-class community.

16 What struck me most when I moved here was
17 how Pueblo takes care of its own. Not only have the
18 power plants and the families that have worked there
19 been the lifelines for this place, but they've all
20 been for generations. They represent the history of
21 Pueblo, a city of real people doing real work
22 building real things.

23 We are talking about some of the last
24 remaining jobs that can support a family on a single
25 income, jobs that provided stability and dignity to

1 our community for decades. And if they are not in
2 the forefront of these conversations of what happens
3 in the future, there is a problem.

4 I may be a transplant, but I've grown to
5 love this city's grit and determination. We can't
6 wait for Denver to save us. They never have, never
7 will. It is time for Pueblo to fight back just like
8 we have always done.

9 Our history now and then shows that we
10 have been survivors. And we will survive this, too,
11 but not quietly accepting the destructive policies
12 that threaten the way of life.

13 And so I thank everyone that showed up in
14 this room today and for your time.

15 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

16 SPEAKER HENDRICH: Good evening. I guess
17 it's good evening now. Thank you for coming to
18 Pueblo. My name is Mary Ellen Hendrich, and I'm a
19 citizen of Pueblo. I'm newly retired.

20 I'm not sure who cooked up the nuclear
21 power idea for Pueblo. I would like to have been a
22 part of the commission on that. But it didn't seem
23 like it was very open, which immediately alarmed me.
24 I'm definitely not for nuclear power. You've heard
25 plenty of warnings tonight, today, about nuclear

1 power. And they are pretty well-known.

2 I did go on the Xcel website and read
3 about what Xcel is proposing, or at least the
4 proposal that was listed under them for this plan.
5 So I'll be talking about that.

6 Also, they had meetings with the community
7 over a year ago. And I did attend one of those.
8 They had four separate ideas with nice, big charts
9 that were informative.

10 I talked to three separate engineers from
11 Xcel that was at the meetings. Each one of them told
12 me that they were not for nuclear power. And they
13 had these four different proposals that they went
14 over with the people that had attended the meeting.

15 But I am definitely for renewable energy.
16 And the plan that I came across that they said Xcel
17 was working on was wind, solar, battery storage, and
18 natural gas. And that is to hit the equivalent of
19 12.7 gigawatts or 14 gigawatts. They would need to
20 add the gas to that.

21 And this is something that I haven't heard
22 addressed today, but I would like to point out that,
23 for one thing, the coal-fired power plant only
24 generated 1 gigawatt of power. And what has been
25 listed that would be necessary for electricity needs

1 for this community is only 4.3 gigawatts. So we
2 don't really need a 12- to 14-gigawatt plant.

3 And there is other reasons, it appears,
4 that there is a big push for 14 gigawatts. I
5 understand one of them is definitely the tax base.
6 But personally, I would rather have less taxes. I
7 believe that other ways can be made to generate
8 taxes.

9 Pueblo has been very successful in other
10 engineering. Of course, our steel plant for many,
11 many years. There is many more industries that are
12 in Pueblo and continue to come to Pueblo.

13 But let me just briefly go over this plan
14 with the wind and the solar. Xcel had the report in
15 2023 on the price of these things. And they said
16 that wind plus solar plus battery storage and solar
17 alone plus storage is cheaper than if the gas --
18 natural gas is added. So that's a point to be taken.

19 And the amount -- okay. So 19 percent of
20 the projected growth of needed power for electric
21 vehicles -- okay. What is causing the drive for a
22 14-gigawatt plant? Not what you think. Nineteen
23 percent of the growth is for electric vehicles.
24 Twelve percent is for electrification of homes and
25 businesses.

1 So that is the total of the 4.3 that
2 really is only needed for the community. The other 9
3 gigawatts would be for large loads, which would be
4 predominantly data centers. And I'm against data
5 centers, but especially for our community.

6 Also, it doesn't make sense to me for
7 Colorado to have data centers. The average data
8 center uses 300,000 gallons of water a day. And it's
9 also listed that they can be between 300,000 gallons
10 of water a day up to 500,000 gallons of water a day.

11 Where is Colorado going to get that water?
12 And water storage and having a water bank. Pueblo
13 has very good water rights, but I want us to save
14 them and put them in a Pueblo water bank and not give
15 them to Xcel Energy to build the huge plant that
16 isn't really needed here.

17 Now, I know there is a huge thrust for tax
18 money and for jobs. But personally, if they want a
19 14-gigawatt plant, my belief is for them to go and
20 build it somewhere else since they won't even share
21 the power that is generated in the plant with us. So
22 that is a lot of gall, as far as I'm concerned, to
23 place the plant here and then expect us to take the
24 hit of the water and possibly pollution.

25 And also, in terms of the gas plant, gas

1 produces a lot of pollution. And Xcel Energy already
2 has six large gas plants in the state of Colorado.
3 And they put out quite a bit of pollution. I have the
4 statistics here, but I can't find it. And I don't
5 really want to take too much more of your valuable
6 time.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. And I guess
9 given the number of people that are going to speak in
10 the hour, I think maybe let's really try and keep it
11 to three minutes.

12 And if you want to hold up a sign when
13 people are getting close to three minutes.

14 SPEAKER BURCH: Feel free to cut me off.
15 My name is Barbara Burch. I grew up here. When I
16 was young growing up, the big things was the steel
17 mill. And everybody's parents and grandparents
18 worked there. And when I was in high school in the
19 '80s, the bottom fell out of that.

20 And now I'm hearing that the big thing
21 that we have hung our hats on is Xcel and that we are
22 depending on this company for an enormous amount of
23 very important tax money which we need for things
24 that we need in this lower income, under-resourced
25 community.

1 And I say that -- I don't really think we
2 are under-resourced. We have vast resources. But
3 this is a community that does experience a lot of the
4 environmental racism of other -- you know, that we
5 know exists in this world.

6 I spoke at the town hall -- the first town
7 hall for PIESAC. I spoke at the second town hall.
8 And I know you can't answer my questions, so I'm just
9 going to ask you this question that maybe you might
10 find out or -- I would love to ask this question of
11 the room.

12 And I've asked it twice before, and no one
13 could answer. It's kind of like gasping because you
14 are like, oh, my gosh, I keep asking the same
15 question. It seems kind of simple. No one can
16 answer it. Francis Koncilja couldn't answer it. The
17 brothers and sisters from the union couldn't answer
18 it. The head of the union could not answer it. No
19 one in the room could answer.

20 How many jobs were the people in Idaho
21 promised when they made the decision to advance the
22 SMR reactors there? How many jobs were they
23 promised? It seems like a very simple question.

24 And the issue is we need the tax base. We
25 need the good union jobs. But time after time after

1 time, this community, along with many others, has
2 been dangled a shiny object that turns out to be even
3 maybe work for a while. But when we put all our eggs
4 in one basket, it turns out time and time again to be
5 economic disaster.

6 Communities should not have to choose
7 between those good jobs and their health and the
8 future of their children. I was very excited to hear
9 about the new Renewable Energy Park proposal because
10 when I went to both of those town halls, I begged the
11 county commissioners, please don't do this again. We
12 have done this over and over and over where we put
13 all our eggs in one basket. Please spend your time
14 and energy searching for real broad-based economic
15 development realities for Pueblo, Colorado.

16 And the problem with pursuing this
17 thing -- I cannot believe we are still talking about
18 the nuclear SMR plants. They are not going to
19 materialize. They are too expensive. No communities
20 will buy that energy at that cost.

21 And we will not see it in time to either
22 create the jobs we need or, you know, stop climate
23 change. It's like Steinbeckian out there. I don't
24 know what it was like when you all drove in. It is
25 like the Dust Bowl. It is like 1930s out there.

1 We are going to keep seeing more and more
2 environmental devastation, more and more drought,
3 more and more forest fires which are impacting all of
4 Colorado. If we don't do something about the climate
5 change, we are going to be in trouble.

6 So we need to build jobs. We need
7 renewables. Pueblo has the ability to be an
8 international leader on this issue. We should be
9 very proud of that. And we should do it. But we
10 should stop talking about some nuclear reactors that
11 are not going to happen in this country any time
12 soon.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

14 SPEAKER BLACKHURST: Thank you for coming.
15 I'm TJ Blackhurst. I'm a -- wasn't born here. I'm a
16 newbie. I've been here since 2000. But I've been an
17 educator for 25 years, 24 in District 70 in Pueblo.
18 Science teacher.

19 And I guess one of the things -- and I
20 apologize. I'm shooting from the hip a little bit
21 here. I have just heard a lot of the other comments,
22 and a lot of them I did not disagree -- or a lot of
23 them I didn't agree with, so I felt like I needed to
24 say something.

25 So anybody -- like looking at energy, like

1 you talk to experts who listen, and it is always all
2 of the above, right? So nuclear, coal -- like, let
3 me back up.

4 We have got one of the cleanest
5 coal-powered plants in the country. Lights are on
6 from that coal. And thank these gentlemen behind me
7 for the work that they have put in. Lights are on.
8 We have got that baseload power. As windy as it is
9 today, it is too windy too actually run those
10 windmills. We have got to shut them down.

11 So looking at -- we have got to keep our
12 options open. I'm not against an energy park. I
13 think it would be a great supplement to whatever
14 baseload power we decide to go with. And the thing
15 is, we have to have that baseload power behind it.

16 And the truth of the matter is, there is
17 no perfect solution. When we do windmills -- we have
18 talked about where we put the nuclear waste. Where
19 are we putting all these fiberglass blades that we
20 are having to recycle? They have a 20-year lifespan,
21 at the most. Who do we do with all of those? That
22 is not perfect.

23 All the concrete that it takes to put
24 those in, that's calcium carbonate. We have to cut
25 that off. That puts a lot of carbon in the air. A

1 lot of carbon used in that heating process as well.

2 Solar. That is far from a perfect
3 solution, too. We talk about environmental justice
4 and everything else. Nobody is talking about cobalt.
5 We need that for the batteries. We need that for the
6 solar panels. We have got little kids in Africa
7 doing that.

8 And we talk about environmental justice.
9 Like absolutely devastating what those kids go
10 through. You don't see very much of that, but that
11 is where the cobalt is. And you've got corrupt
12 governments running that. That is a dirty secret
13 that we don't talk about, but I think about that when
14 I see solar panels. It is not perfect.

15 And we also need those other precious
16 metals, lithium, all those for that battery power.
17 China produces most of those. I'm not going to get
18 into the politics of it. They just cut us off from
19 our precious metals. That is going to be a huge
20 blow.

21 When we are talking about solar and wind,
22 I love solar and wind. How did that work for north
23 Texas in 2021? No baseload power. Two hundred
24 forty-six people died.

25 Modern nuclear is much cleaner. We have

1 nuclear submarines. We have aircraft carriers going
2 all around the world with zero leakage. You know,
3 some people don't trust the source, but we need to go
4 with what we know, what we can do, and what is
5 actually equitable.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

8 SPEAKER RAMIREZ TORRES: Hola. My name is
9 Julion Ramirez Torres. And I'm going to be talking
10 about -- oh, by the way, these are my friends. I
11 grew up with them since middle school, Pete and
12 Bryson.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Can you speak into the
14 microphone?

15 SPEAKER RAMIREZ TORRES: We grew up in
16 Bessemer. And we lived in a part of town that is
17 closer to Comanche. So we breathed more sulfur
18 dioxide and nitrogen oxide and mercury than other
19 people in Pueblo, especially living near the steel
20 mill.

21 And we are here because we have our whole
22 life ahead of us. And we want to live in a cleaner
23 Pueblo. Just a cleaner sustainable environment so
24 our generations -- the generations ahead of us as
25 well could also live.

1 And we think that the energy park is a
2 great idea because it will create more jobs and
3 opportunities for us when we are older. And we need
4 more opportunities since there is not really much
5 now.

6 And I think Pueblo students can be part of
7 a green economic engine from techs to trades. Plus,
8 an energy park will offer a safer, cleaner
9 alternative to nuclear. No radioactive waste or
10 health risk because we want to be healthy. And we
11 hope you support the energy park concept.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

14 SPEAKER MORGAN: Those kids were cute.

15 My name is Suzanne Morgan, and I'm a
16 Pueblo resident. And, you know, I'm going to talk a
17 little bit about social justice and this crazy thing
18 called nuclear power.

19 You know, Pueblo has borne the burden of
20 the rest of the state. And I hope you hear us. And
21 I hope you heard everybody talking here about how
22 tired the citizens of Pueblo are about being lied to.
23 About how tired we are to be living in waste. And
24 how tired we are of what the woman said, the next new
25 shiny thing.

1 And I hope you understand and I hope you
2 hear us that we want great jobs. We want all these
3 union guys and gals to have fantastic jobs. But at
4 what risk? And there shouldn't be a risk. And we
5 shouldn't be talking about social justice. And we
6 shouldn't be talking about how Pueblo has been the
7 utility closet for the rest of the state.

8 You know, Comanche is clean. They have
9 worked so very hard to do that. And with the
10 disconnect with politics somehow or another, you
11 know, that has been deemed bad.

12 But where is our social justice? You
13 know, we have 51,000 acres of solar in Pueblo County.
14 51,000 acres. How many union men and women were on
15 those jobs? Well, that's a lie. Where is the social
16 justice in that? How come our union guys and gals
17 didn't get those jobs?

18 We talk about fair and equitable. When we
19 bear the burden of the waste, we bear the burden of
20 it down here so communities in more affluent
21 neighborhoods in Aurora can have cheap power. Where
22 is the social justice there?

23 Where was the social justice with Rocky
24 Flats? I'm old enough to remember it. I drove by it
25 going to school in Boulder. Where was the social

1 justice? Where was the nuclear regulatory committee
2 that is supposed to be the whole end-all be-all for
3 the nuclear power? They are the watchdogs.

4 And it took environmentalists flying
5 around to figure out that they were burning plutonium
6 in the middle of the night. So where was the social
7 justice there?

8 In 2012, there was an article in the AP,
9 and it said that tritium, which is a radioactive form
10 of hydrogen, has leaked out of the 48 out of 65
11 sites. What about those communities? What about
12 those communities? How were those communities made
13 whole? Where is the social justice for those people
14 living in those communities? Thirty-seven of those
15 facilities contain concentrations exceeding the
16 federal drinking water standard, and sometimes at
17 hundreds of the limits.

18 I don't think that there is anybody in
19 this room, I don't think that there is anybody in the
20 city of Pueblo or the county of Pueblo, maybe even
21 this nation, that trusts our government. I don't
22 think that there is anybody here that trusts a
23 governmental organization at this point to keep us
24 safe, to keep us healthy, and especially in Pueblo
25 where you know now our demographics.

1 You know how we have been lied to. You
2 know because you just heard it tonight. And you know
3 we desperately still want jobs. And we want our
4 community to thrive. But we don't need to have it
5 thriving at the risk of anything nuclear at this
6 point.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

8 SPEAKER KERN: Good evening,
9 Commissioners. I'm Wendi Kern. I spoke at two of
10 the meetings last year -- or last winter.

11 I hope you hear us. I hope you see us.
12 We are not the baby in the bath water, right? We
13 can't be thrown out and disposed of.

14 In 2024, Pueblo is the fifth poorest city
15 in the state of Colorado. And it is because of our
16 demographics. And it is because of what goes on here
17 in Pueblo.

18 And I think the state, the feds, everybody
19 looks at us as a place that's disposable. You know,
20 it's not a big risk to get rid of us if something
21 happens because of our poor people that live here,
22 our elderly people that live here, our economy that
23 just doesn't seem to want to grow very much here. So
24 I think that's a really important issue to look at.

25 Last year after one of the meetings, I

1 spoke with Mayor Graham after the meeting. And I
2 said, I don't understand. We are going to
3 decommission in eight years, but it is going to take
4 you ten years to build it? Where is our energy going
5 to come from? She goes, oh, that's not a problem.
6 Our energy comes into Pueblo. This energy will go
7 out of Pueblo. Once again, we provide somebody else
8 something else.

9 And then she really got down to it -- and
10 I heard several people speak to this tonight is the
11 revenue to the county and to the city. Our county
12 commissioners said 10 percent is going to be the
13 revenue loss there.

14 So I said, if we build a hamster farm
15 there and it produces that kind of revenue, is that
16 what we need? It is not the site. It's not nuclear.
17 It's what that land in Pueblo generates for revenue
18 here in Pueblo. And I think that's what our
19 government here in Pueblo is so concerned about.
20 It's not that we are going to get a nuclear power
21 plant.

22 My friend Suzanne talked about the 51,000
23 acres. It is actually 57,000 acres of solar here in
24 Pueblo. I live near 10,000 of those acres. Try
25 living there. The dust storm that we saw today is

1 nothing. The waste and devastation of the
2 environment is nothing.

3 I ran into a gentleman on Monday that was
4 plotting out another gas line from a company out of
5 Louisiana. We started talking about the electricity.
6 He said those overhead high tension power lines
7 actually deteriorates gas lines underground faster.

8 I think something that nobody has really
9 touched upon is, are we a target of opportunity?
10 Twenty years ago, a target of opportunity was a crazy
11 notion. And in this day and age, a target of
12 opportunity for a terrorist group, for somebody that
13 wants to do some mass devastation in our community, I
14 think is a real factor.

15 We are at 57,000 acres of solar, and we
16 are growing. We have major, major gas lines that run
17 through Pueblo. We are now talking about having a
18 nuclear power plant. All the solar facilities that
19 have come in have been installed. Battery storage
20 facilities.

21 I have a marijuana grow half a block down
22 the street from me, and it was owned by multiple --
23 they transferred it in two years -- Asians out of New
24 York. It is a solid building. They could have
25 easily destroyed something. We can't put all of this

1 energy in Pueblo and think we are going to be safe
2 because it's not going to happen.

3 And Rocky Mountain Arsenal. I had a
4 friend that worked on the board up there for years.
5 There were two-headed frogs, five legs. They brought
6 in a new herd of deer every single year. And they
7 told the community it was safe.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

10 SPEAKER STIMMEL: Hello. My name is Logan
11 Stimmel, and I go to Central High School.

12 These are my friends Caden and Aaron. And
13 we have known each other since elementary school.
14 And we are very worried for our future because
15 nuclear energy isn't as safe as it could be or as the
16 solar power and other types of power.

17 And the Pueblo energy park thing is more
18 than 350 permanent jobs across the clean energy
19 industry. And it will pay up to \$40 million a year
20 in total taxes that could fund schools and libraries.
21 It keeps clean energy local for local benefit.

22 It is safer than nuclear energy. And it
23 has no radioactive materials. And it provides no
24 long-term risks built step by step with community
25 input and economic fairness in mind. Choose Pueblo's

1 future and go with the Renewable Energy Park.

2 And thank you for your time.

3 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

4 SPEAKER PACE: Hello. My name is Alana
5 Pace. I have lived in Pueblo my entire life. When I
6 came here tonight, I didn't know I would speak. But
7 after listening tonight, I felt like I needed -- it
8 was needed.

9 I think it is important what they said
10 here today that as I and many more grow up here, we
11 want a clean and healthy community and not to be hurt
12 or sick by a nuclear power plant.

13 When people have a solution but all we
14 need is support of the Renewable Energy Park, I hope
15 you take this into consideration and support the
16 Renewable Energy Park. Thank you for listening to me
17 and everyone who spoke and came here tonight.

18 Thank you very much.

19 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you

20 SPEAKER SANDOVAL: Good evening. I'm Sol
21 Sandoval. I am not representing any organizations
22 today. I'm here because I am a mother who is raising
23 two children, and I want a healthy future for my
24 children and my grandchildren.

25 I'm here to support an energy park. It

1 will create permanent high-skilled jobs and
2 renewables and manufacturing that can open up
3 opportunities for students who usually pack their
4 bags and leave upon graduation because there are no
5 opportunities here.

6 I do not support radioactive waste and
7 more health risks in my community. The energy park
8 will support families and trade education. Pueblo
9 experiences an average of over 300 sunny days each
10 year. And you saw how windy it gets on the way in.

11 But on a serious note, while I share great
12 reasons to support an energy park, the most important
13 reason is people. Our communities matter. Our
14 children matter. Our families matter. Pueblo is not
15 a dumpsite.

16 To all the investors, stop praying on us.
17 Nuclear is too risky. Let's work towards an energy
18 portfolio. Pueblo deserves better than nuclear. And
19 when you are making a decision, think about all the
20 children that were here today before you because
21 that's why we are here today.

22 Thank you.

23 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Hi. Thank you for
24 coming to Pueblo. I hope you have a nice stay here.

25 I just wanted to share that I've lived

1 here for six years. I moved here from Fort Collins
2 where I had lived for 35 years. And at one point,
3 after 35 years of paying rent, I was given 30 days to
4 get out.

5 And I remember that at the city council,
6 somebody talked about Pueblo being a thing with the
7 solar energy. And I thought, I'm going to have to go
8 see Pueblo. So I came down here and drove around for
9 eight hours that day to see if I wanted to live here.
10 And I was so impressed by the people and the history.
11 This town -- this city has a wonderful historic
12 heritage, diversity, farming history.

13 So I really would like to say that if we
14 put the nuclear plant here, nobody would want to --
15 not many people would want to move here. I know it
16 would have been a definitely no, no. And you
17 probably can imagine that nobody would want a nuclear
18 plant up in Fort Collins or that area, so why here?

19 We are a poor community. We already have
20 a lot of problems. But there is a lot of beauty here
21 and a lot of wonderful people. And please support
22 the Renewable Energy Park.

23 And also, we are going to have a Leonardo
24 da Vinci museum, the only one in North America. And
25 I think that would work great with the idea of future

1 technologies and support the skills and the vision
2 that people have in this community and that have had
3 for so many years. There is a lot of beauty and
4 history.

5 And so anyway, thank you for coming. I
6 hope you enjoy your stay here.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you.

8 Is there anyone else who would like to
9 offer comments?

10 SPEAKER EWING: My name is Peter Ewing. I
11 waited -- I actually came on oxygen, so I'll be very
12 brief.

13 I wanted to support Commissioner Griego
14 with what he said. I met him in the spring at the --
15 there was something called the Pueblo Energy Summit
16 last year. And it was also right here at CSU-Pueblo.
17 So I want to align my remarks with his.

18 And the House Bill 25-1040 -- I was able
19 to listen to that testimony. There were
20 representatives from advanced nuclear companies.
21 Also the IBEW Local workers spoke. And Sara
22 Blackhurst spoke. And she's already spoken.

23 So I found out later -- sorry. I've only
24 been in Pueblo three years. I found out about the
25 PUC hearings and the PIESAC document just within the

1 last year. So I read the PIESAC document. And Sara
2 Blackhurst is one of the authors.

3 What I want to say about that was it's --
4 I guess it took ten months to complete. It had more
5 than a dozen authors. So that would be like a
6 graduate class here at CSU-Pueblo taking two
7 semesters on one project. So I want to thank all the
8 people that completed the PIESAC document.

9 The bottom of Page 22, advanced nuclear is
10 the clear alternative. It's cheaper and safer than
11 conventional nuclear. Just like anybody who has any
12 question at all, please just Google advantages of
13 advanced nuclear.

14 Moving on. All states surrounding
15 Colorado except Oklahoma -- they already use or plan
16 to use nuclear. Arizona, Utah, and Wyoming plan to
17 use advanced nuclear.

18 Solar uses 75 times more land than
19 nuclear, and wind uses 300 times more land. So those
20 will be large scenic obstructions in the beautiful
21 Colorado scenery that everybody loves.

22 On the mining side, solar and wind have a
23 larger mining footprint than uranium because of the
24 rare earth elements required for wind and solar.
25 Anybody who wants, please just Google that, too.

1 What is the money footprint of wind and solar versus
2 uranium mining?

3 So to end as positively as I can, cleanup
4 of the Cotter Uranium Mill in Canon City by the
5 Colorado Legacy Land Corporation has begun. And I
6 don't mean to stray from this hearing. Public
7 comments for that clean-up effort are still being
8 accepted by the CDPHE through next Thursday. And I
9 have the website if anybody wants it.

10 My name is Peter Ewing. And I thank the
11 PUC Commissioners for letting me speak. Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Anyone else
13 who would like to speak?

14 SPEAKER DYPL0D: My name is Douglas
15 Dyplod. I was signed up to speak when we first came
16 in here, but those lists seem to have gotten lost.
17 My thoughts have not.

18 And that is that in stark contrast to many
19 of the people here that you've heard today, we came
20 here seven years ago. Many things drew us here.
21 One, the climate. When we visited here, we got to
22 see the Arkansas Riverwalk. Went down and took many
23 of the Arkansas River trails that go between Lake
24 Pueblo and Runyon Lake.

25 The other thing that I was fascinated

1 because my life was spent as a union contractor as a
2 plumber. I was a member of 143 out of Madison,
3 Wisconsin, and later the Local 75 out of Milwaukee.
4 The last 15 years of my life, I devoted to renewable
5 energies doing solar thermal projects.

6 And it is a great disappointment to me to
7 see that the solar thermal field has not been
8 explored here in Pueblo at all. And so when I heard
9 about this park that is proposed, I thought this is
10 it. This is inspiring.

11 Because the other thing that inspired us
12 when we moved here was to go out to EVRAZ and see the
13 only steel mill in the world powered by solar fields.
14 I don't find those solar fields ugly. I find this is
15 something that we are going to need to exploit more
16 and more.

17 The great thing to me about supporting an
18 energy park here is the innovation that will happen.
19 Because when you put creative people together, it
20 inspires more. And suddenly, instead of having 10
21 times the return, you get 50 times the return because
22 the energy builds on itself.

23 And I certainly hope that you will keep
24 this in mind when you do make a decision. I love
25 this city. I've been very, very happy here. And I

1 think it will attract a lot more people if you just
2 put the right thing in place.

3 Thank you for your time.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Anyone else?

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: So not to beat this
6 horse to death, but is nuclear safe? Well, yes and
7 no. As long as nothing goes wrong. And something
8 always goes wrong.

9 Fifty-seven accidents and severe incidents
10 have occurred since Chernobyl. And there were 56 of
11 those have occurred in the United States. Fully
12 two-thirds of the world's nuclear accidents have
13 happened in the US.

14 Pueblo will be a permanent -- temporary
15 storage site for waste. And I say temporary because
16 it has no plans to deal with 100,000 tons of
17 radioactive waste or how to dispose of it.

18 You know, Xcel should really put this
19 plant in someplace where the recipients of the power
20 are. For them to put this down here and have us deal
21 with the problems and then get the electricity is a
22 little bit disingenuous. I think if it was a good
23 idea, they would be putting this up in Denver County
24 or somewhere up there.

25 But obviously, after Rocky Flats, I think

1 they have got a taste of what nuclear accidents are
2 like. And that one was swept under the rug until FBI
3 agents raided Rocky Flats and exposed the problem.
4 And there is still radiation blowing up out of there
5 during dust storms being collected in test samples
6 around the periphery. So to say that nothing could
7 go wrong is a fallacy.

8 The other thing is if we just set that
9 aside and we say nothing will ever go wrong, we will
10 have a perfect safety record, no screw-ups. Nothing
11 spells bad for business like nuclear. Pueblo has had
12 a dark cloud over its skies for the last 130 years.

13 And the last thing we need down here when
14 we are trying to get more tourism -- and that is the
15 thing we get most of our money from -- is to have
16 something like a nuclear power plant down here. It
17 is just a bad vibe, and nobody wants to be around the
18 things.

19 So whether it is safe or not is one
20 argument. And whether we want it here is another
21 argument. The construction jobs are not going to
22 happen for Pueblo. That is pretty obvious. They
23 will bring in an outside contractor. And the jobs
24 around the plant won't happen in any of these guys'
25 working lifetime. So we can write that off, too.

1 We all know about the costs and how those
2 can escalate completely out of control. So nuclear
3 far outpaces the other energy in costs, and it is a
4 nightmare for the taxpayer. So anyway, these costs
5 just blow up and get completely out of control.

6 That's about all I have to say. Thanks.

7 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thank you. Anyone else
8 like to speak? Going once, going twice.

9 Well, thanks so much for coming out. It's
10 a pleasure to be here and hear from you all. It's a
11 critical part of what we are doing. Again, hearings
12 in June and a decision late summer or early fall.

13 Commissioner Gilman? Anything you would
14 like to say?

15 COMMISSIONER GILMAN: Thank you all for
16 sharing your afternoon and now part of your evening
17 with us. And it really was a pleasure coming down
18 here and hearing, first of all, all of your pride in
19 Pueblo, your passion, and really hearing your voices.
20 We very much appreciate this as part of the process.
21 And we hear you.

22 And thank you so much for coming out
23 tonight. Really appreciate it.

24 COMMISSIONER PLANT: I just want to echo
25 my thanks as well. It's fantastic to get to see

1 folks in the community face-to-face and to hear your
2 stories and to hear your positions. So I really
3 appreciate you taking the time to share with us.

4 CHAIRMAN BLANK: Thanks so much for
5 sharing. And with that, we are adjourned. Thank
6 you. Have a good evening. Thanks for coming out.

7 (Thereupon, the proceedings concluded.)

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