

1 BEFORE THE ARIZONA POWER PLANT LS-404

2 AND TRANSMISSION LINE SITING COMMITTEE

3

4 IN THE MATTER OF THE )  
 APPLICATION OF RANEGRAS PLAINS )  
 5 ENERGY CENTER, LLC, OR ITS ) Docket No.  
 ASSIGNEES, IN CONFORMANCE ) L-21344A-24-0273--00243  
 6 WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF ) Case No. 243  
 A.R.S. § 40-360, ET SEQ., FOR A )  
 7 CERTIFICATE OF ENVIRONMENTAL )  
 COMPATIBILITY AUTHORIZING THE ) NOTICE OF HEARING  
 8 RANEGRAS PLAINS ENERGY CENTER )  
 500 KV TRANSMISSION LINE. )  
 9 \_\_\_\_\_)

10

11 At: Phoenix, Arizona

12 Date: December 18, 2024

13 Filed: December 30, 2024

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16 REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

17 (Pages 1 through 18)

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INDEX TO EXHIBITS MARKED

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Prefiling Exhibit 1 Project Map .....5  
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Locations  
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1           BE IT REMEMBERED that the above-entitled and  
2 numbered matter came on regularly to be heard before the  
3 Arizona Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting  
4 Committee, commencing at 3:02 p.m. on December 18, 2024,  
5 with all participants appearing via videoconference.

6

7 BEFORE: Adam Stafford, Chairman

8

9 APPEARANCES:

10 For the Applicant:

11           BY: Meghan H. Grabel, Esq.  
12           BY: Elias J. Ancharski, Esq.  
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20 Also present:

21           Richard Knox, Wood Consulting, PLC  
22           Jennifer Skulstad, Wood Consulting, PLC  
23           Patty Varra, Savion, LLC  
24           Tod Brewer, Assistant to Chairman Stafford  
25

1 CHMN STAFFORD: Let's go on the record. Now is  
2 the time set for the prefiling conference for Ranegras  
3 Plains Energy Center. Am I pronouncing that correctly?

4 MS. GRABEL: I believe so. I've been calling  
5 it Ranegras, but I think it is Ranegras.

6 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. Ranegras. Okay. All  
7 right. Let's start with appearances.

8 MS. GRABEL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.  
9 Meghan Grabel from Osborn Maledon on behalf of Ranegras  
10 Plain Energy Center, LLC.

11 With me from my firm is Elias Ancharski. And  
12 also on the phone, or on the call, are Richard Knox and  
13 Jennifer Skulstad, who are both with Wood Consulting.

14 CHMN STAFFORD: All right. And has there been  
15 much public interest in the case so far?

16 MS. GRABEL: No. There's been very, very  
17 little. It's in a very remote "deserty" area right by the  
18 10 West Link.

19 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. And we've got four  
20 prefiling exhibits?

21 MS. GRABEL: Yep. That is correct. Number 1  
22 is the project map. Number 2 is the proposed notice of  
23 hearing sign. Number 3 is the map of the notice of  
24 hearing -- of hearing sign locations. And Number 4 is the  
25 proposed notice of hearing.

1 (Exhibits 1 - 4 were admitted.)

2 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. Those are admitted.

3 Now, for the notice of hearing, we'll be doing this at the  
4 commission, correct?

5 MS. GRABEL: Correct.

6 CHMN STAFFORD: And the project is -- it's a  
7 500 kV line approximately 11 miles, and it's going to  
8 connect a 700-megawatt solar project?

9 MS. GRABEL: Yes, that's correct.

10 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. It looks like it  
11 mentioned storage, but I -- I have haven't seen an amount  
12 for the storage.

13 MS. GRABEL: It does have a battery -- a  
14 battery energy storage system connected to the solar  
15 facilities.

16 CHMN STAFFORD: And what's the size of that?

17 MS. GRABEL: I don't know what the megawatt is.  
18 Richard, can you chime in? It's on about 4,700 acres.

19 MR. KNOX: Right. So, it will be 700 megawatt  
20 hours for four hours at -- at build -- at complete  
21 build-out.

22 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. All right. Now, we've  
23 got the draft notice of hearing. You sent the Word copy  
24 already. For the notices, where will you be publishing?

25 MS. GRABEL: We will be publishing in the

1 Arizona Republic and in the Parker Pioneer. And with  
2 holidays, we have calculated the publication deadline to  
3 be January 7th, 2024.

4 CHMN STAFFORD: You mean '25?

5 MS. GRABEL: I'm sorry, yes, 2025. Otherwise,  
6 we've really missed it.

7 CHMN STAFFORD: Yeah. Let's see. Now, your  
8 Exhibit 3 is the sign locations?

9 MS. GRABEL: Correct. We have three proposed  
10 signs. Because this is such -- kind of a remote area, we  
11 have two signs on Vicksburg Road. It's not on the 10.  
12 It's almost a mile away from the I-10. It's about  
13 4,000-some feet.

14 And then the other location is at a -- kind of  
15 a high recreational-type area. So, we thought that those  
16 would be the two areas with the most potential passersby.

17 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. So, it was impractical  
18 to put one on the 10?

19 MS. GRABEL: It's just so far away, no one  
20 would see the signs.

21 CHMN STAFFORD: Well, yeah. Plus, if you're  
22 moving by at 75 miles an hour, that's the site, you'd have  
23 to have a billboard-sized sign --

24 MS. GRABEL: Right.

25 CHMN STAFFORD: -- to even be legible.

1 MS. GRABEL: Correct.

2 CHMN STAFFORD: And what are the affected  
3 jurisdictions besides -- you've got La Paz County?

4 MS. GRABEL: La Paz County, the Arizona State  
5 Land Department, and the Arizona Department of  
6 Transportation.

7 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. So, we're doing this at  
8 the commission, correct?

9 MS. GRABEL: That is correct.

10 CHMN STAFFORD: And what was the -- what was  
11 the anticipated file date for the application?

12 MS. GRABEL: This Friday, so December 20th.

13 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. What is -- and our  
14 hearing date is -- pull it up here. We're looking to  
15 start on February --

16 MS. GRABEL: 10th. 10th, correct.

17 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. All right. And we have  
18 it set for that Monday and Tuesday. It looks like we're  
19 starting Monday at 10. Tuesday. And then the Wednesday,  
20 I think the hearing was booked for something else. So  
21 then, we have Thursday, and possibly Friday.

22 MS. GRABEL: We can wrap it up in those first  
23 two days.

24 CHMN STAFFORD: Well, Thursday afternoon, and  
25 then Friday morning. Okay. It's in the notice of

1 hearing. All right. And you'll have lodging for  
2 out-of-town committee members?

3 MS. GRABEL: We have accommodations set up at  
4 the Embassy Suites, Phoenix, downtown on Thomas Road. And  
5 I believe Patty Palmer, my assistant, has sent the contact  
6 information to Tod, but if we need to do that again, just  
7 let me know.

8 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. All right. Well, I  
9 guess, we won't be doing a tour, so I guess, you won't  
10 need to submit a plan.

11 MS. GRABEL: Yeah.

12 CHMN STAFFORD: I'll make sure I change the  
13 procedural order to reflect that.

14 MS. GRABEL: Okay.

15 CHMN STAFFORD: Because it doesn't make sense  
16 to have you prepare a plan for a tour that's going to be  
17 50 miles away.

18 MS. GRABEL: Right. Probably not going to  
19 work. We'll have a good virtual tour for you.

20 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay.

21 MS. GRABEL: The question I have for you real  
22 quickly, Chairman, is I've never done a committee hearing  
23 at the commission. I assume we're not going to be  
24 providing lunch and snacks for committee members, just  
25 because you typically don't do that at the commission, but



1 I -- I guess, I just want to ask you that question.

2 CHMN STAFFORD: No, I don't -- I think -- yeah,  
3 they haven't done that in the past. It's -- it's usually  
4 not set up for that. So, typically, everyone is set to  
5 grab it on their own and then submit for reimbursement  
6 through the commission.

7 Okay. So, Tod, what's our prehearing  
8 conference date?

9 MR. BREWER: Just a moment, Mr. Chairman. I'm  
10 sorry. It would be February 4th at 3:00.

11 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. And have the draft CEC  
12 by the time of the prehearing conference.

13 MS. GRABEL: We will do that.

14 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. The public comment will  
15 be 5:30 on the 10th. Do you anticipate any public  
16 officials wanting to make public comment?

17 MS. GRABEL: I do not, no.

18 CHMN STAFFORD: And what's the permit area?  
19 You're crossing BLM land, aren't you? So, you got --

20 MS. GRABEL: Correct.

21 CHMN STAFFORD: -- the process?

22 MS. GRABEL: The -- the only permit that will  
23 not be finalized is the EIS, but we should probably have a  
24 record of decision, a draft EIS, at least, by the time of  
25 the hearing. Richard, please correct me if I'm wrong.

1           MR. KNOX: And that's correct. DEIS, the  
2 notice of availability, gets published latest,  
3 January 17th. And there'll be a 30-day review. There  
4 will also be a public meeting for the draft EIS in  
5 February. So, the draft will be completed in -- and out  
6 for agency and public review by the hearings for the CEC.

7           CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. And you're -- you're  
8 crossing some state trust land, and it's all inside La Paz  
9 County. There's no cities involved. What are -- you  
10 don't need a permit for the county, do you?

11          MR. KNOX: So, we received -- yeah.

12          MS. GRABEL: Go ahead, Richard.

13          MR. KNOX: We -- we received conditional use  
14 permit and a major comprehensive plan amendment just this  
15 last Monday. The board of county supervisors for La Paz  
16 County approved the conditional use permit, as well as a  
17 major comprehensive plan amendment. And to answer your --

18          CHMN STAFFORD: And that's -- and that's for  
19 the solar facility, not the transmission line, though,  
20 correct?

21          MR. KNOX: It's -- it's for both. It's for the  
22 transmission and for the solar facility and access roads  
23 onto the solar facility from Vicksburg Road.

24          CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. And you said those  
25 are -- you've already received all those?

1 MR. KNOX: We -- we received approval on  
2 December 16th. And there's -- there's no local  
3 municipality. There's no city. No towns.

4 CHMN STAFFORD: Right. Okay. Now, for the  
5 hearing itself, typically, you guys provide tablets with  
6 the exhibits on it for the members. Are you going to be  
7 doing that for this or are you going to bring in hard  
8 copies?

9 MS. GRABEL: I think we'll be bringing in hard  
10 copies for the members this time, since we don't have the  
11 AV team that has those. And we don't have tablets, just  
12 on stock, for applicants that don't -- don't routinely  
13 appear.

14 CHMN STAFFORD: All right. So, you'll have  
15 those in binders then?

16 MS. GRABEL: We'll have some of the more  
17 voluminous studies. Like, we have an environmental study,  
18 for example, that's 2,500 pages long. We'll have that on  
19 a USB drive, rather than printing out 2,500 pages. But  
20 the application and all of the exhibits required by  
21 statute and regs will be in hard copies in a binder.

22 CHMN STAFFORD: Now, that exhibit you're  
23 talking about, that's going to be a hearing exhibit, not  
24 an attachment to the -- to the application, then?

25 MS. GRABEL: Also being delivered in USB drives

1 as an attachment to the application. We're not going to  
2 print that out. That --

3 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay.

4 MS. GRABEL: -- was the intention.

5 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. So, that -- the  
6 2,500-page environmental study is an exhibit to the  
7 application, not just a hearing exhibit?

8 MS. GRABEL: That's correct.

9 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. Put that on several  
10 thumb drives, I guess?

11 MS. GRABEL: That was the thought.

12 CHMN STAFFORD: I guess, how are you going to  
13 get that to the members? Are you going to -- I guess,  
14 you're going to mail out the thumb drives to them?

15 MS. GRABEL: That's what we intend to do.

16 CHMN STAFFORD: You can't e-mail something that  
17 big.

18 MS. GRABEL: Right. No, no, no. Absolutely.  
19 We can mail them hard copies.

20 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. Well, you're going to --

21 MS. GRABEL: Probably mail them to Tod, and  
22 have Tod send them on to the committee members. I don't  
23 know that I have the committee members' addresses.

24 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. Well, if you take them  
25 to the commission, they'll send them out to the committee

1 members.

2 MS. GRABEL: Okay.

3 CHMN STAFFORD: So, you'll have to send those  
4 in a -- and get -- they have to get the -- the hard drives  
5 for -- one for each member to look at.

6 MR. ANCHARSKI: If I could just kind of  
7 clarify, we have the application that has the actual  
8 application. It will be in a binder, kind of in a pocket  
9 part.

10 We have the -- the USB drives will be inserted  
11 in there that include, kind of, those -- those large  
12 environmental studies. So, that's how we will file it.

13 And then, you know, as you mentioned, we'll  
14 give that to the commission, and then they send those out  
15 to the committee members.

16 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. And so the amount of  
17 filing fee, this was \$1,000, correct?

18 MS. GRABEL: That's correct.

19 CHMN STAFFORD: All right. So, the commission  
20 is obligated by statute to pay the cost of reporting and  
21 transcribing any application hearing, as well as the  
22 actual and necessary expenses incurred by the committee  
23 members in connection with their participation in  
24 committee meetings from the filing fee.

25 Costs and fees exceeding that amount may, with

1 the applicant's consent, be incurred by the committee and  
2 charged to the applicant.

3 Does the applicant consent to pay the  
4 commission those costs in excess of the filing fee?

5 MS. GRABEL: Yes.

6 CHMN STAFFORD: All right. So, we'll do the  
7 three-day turnaround on the transcripts. Is there  
8 anything else that we haven't covered?

9 MS. GRABEL: I just wanted to note that social  
10 media, this applicant doesn't really have, like, a  
11 Facebook page or anything like that. And so the only  
12 social media we're using for the notice of hearing and  
13 communications is the project website.

14 So, I know sometimes in your procedural order,  
15 you require notification by social media, but I'm not sure  
16 that that's going to be possible in this case, other than  
17 the website.

18 CHMN STAFFORD: Well, I'd suggest the applicant  
19 create a Facebook page and send out the ads to the -- to  
20 anybody in the study area. What's the nearest residence  
21 to the project?

22 MS. GRABEL: I'm not sure there are any.  
23 Richard, can you help me out with that one?

24 MR. KNOX: So, at Vicksburg Road and  
25 Interstate 10, there's a group of -- of five -- they're --

1 they're trailers. It's a community that is -- is behind  
2 the Pride truck stop. They run a tire changing business  
3 there. And some other -- some other structures are out  
4 that way as well. So that's --

5 CHMN STAFFORD: Is that on the map?

6 MR. KNOX: Yeah, it -- on the -- on your base  
7 map, it is. So, the Pride truck stop is on the southwest  
8 corner of Interstate 10 and Vicksburg Road.

9 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. I'm looking at -- I'm  
10 looking at the map. It looks like townships 35 and 02.

11 MR. KNOX: Uh-huh, that's correct.

12 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. That's the area right  
13 there?

14 MR. KNOX: It is. And there's lots of trees  
15 and lots of other out structures and, you know.

16 CHMN STAFFORD: But it's on the other side of  
17 the I-10?

18 MR. KNOX: North side of I-10 is -- you have  
19 industrial commercial facilities. You have a feedlot.  
20 You have an egg farm. Up further on Ranegras Plains, you  
21 have agricultural fields, until you get up to, kind of,  
22 Hope, which is -- you know, I think Hope is maybe 10 or  
23 12 miles north of the project.

24 Brenda is probably 10 or 12 miles. Those are,  
25 you know, residential communities. They're trailer parks

1 up in through there. They're pretty far removed from  
2 the -- the centerline.

3 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. All right. Well, yeah.  
4 When it comes to social media, it's probably best that  
5 they create a Facebook page and reach out to people  
6 through it, or have somebody do that because that's --

7 MS. GRABEL: We can do that.

8 CHMN STAFFORD: Apparently more and more people  
9 get even their news from social media these days. I don't  
10 understand it, but it's apparently how a lot of people  
11 operate now so --

12 MS. GRABEL: We can do that.

13 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. Is there anything else,  
14 Tod?

15 MR. BREWER: No, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

16 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. All right. Anything  
17 else from the applicant?

18 MS. GRABEL: I guess, I just want to note for  
19 the record that Ms. Patty Varra did join us. She's a  
20 project developer with the applicant.

21 CHMN STAFFORD: Okay. And Mr. Gage, do you  
22 have everything you need?

23 THE COURT REPORTER: I do. Thank you. I have  
24 copies of the exhibits and everyone's names, so, thank you  
25 very much.



1                   CHMN STAFFORD: Excellent. Okay. Well, with  
2 that, everyone have a happy holiday, and we are adjourned.

3                   MS. GRABEL: You too.

4                   (The proceedings concluded at 3:53 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF ARIZONA )  
 ) ss.  
2 COUNTY OF YUMA )

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4 BE IT KNOWN that the foregoing proceedings were  
taken before me; that the foregoing pages are a full,  
5 true, and accurate record of the proceedings, all done to  
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8 I CERTIFY that I am in no way related to any of  
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10 I CERTIFY that I have complied with the ethical  
obligations set forth in ACJA 7-206(F)(3) and  
ACJA 7-206(J)(1)(g)(1) and (2).

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12 Dated this 22nd of December 2024 at Yuma,  
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