

**USFWS Virtual Public Meeting for the Fish Lake Valley Tui Chub
Proposed Listing**

Virtual Public Hearing Transcript

February 19, 2026, 5:00-7:00pm Pacific Time

00:00:08.520 --> 00:00:20.660

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello, everyone. I'd like to welcome you all to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's virtual public hearing for the Fish Lake Valley tui Chub proposed listing.

00:00:20.660 --> 00:00:40.450

Megan Stone - AECOM: We're going to give folks a few minutes here to join the hearing, and then we'll begin the PowerPoint presentation shortly, so please stay tuned. I do want to note that closed captioning is available by clicking the live transcript button on your Zoom toolbar and then selecting "Show Subtitles."

00:00:40.450 --> 00:00:44.730

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, everyone, for your patience as we give folks a moment to join.

00:01:21.840 --> 00:01:33.390

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, welcome everyone to this evening's hearing. We're going to give folks just another minute here to join the hearing, so please stay tuned and we'll start the presentation shortly.

00:01:33.470 --> 00:01:49.310

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, I do want to note that closed captioning is available by clicking the live transcript button on your Zoom toolbar and then selecting "Show Subtitles." Thank you, everyone, for your patience as we give folks a moment to join.

00:02:24.870 --> 00:02:29.910

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello, everyone. We're going to go ahead and get started with the meeting this evening.

00:02:30.950 --> 00:02:33.120

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll move to our next slide.

00:02:35.940 --> 00:02:44.740

Megan Stone - AECOM: On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, I would like to thank you all for joining us. We appreciate your time and participation.

00:02:44.790 --> 00:02:59.469

Megan Stone - AECOM: My name is Megan Stone with AECOM, a contractor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I'm going to be your hearing facilitator this evening. Additionally, I have members of the Service with me on the hearing tonight

00:02:59.470 --> 00:03:05.909

Megan Stone - AECOM: who will be introduced in a moment. On the screen is our expected agenda for the evening.

00:03:05.930 --> 00:03:13.030

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'll first go over a brief orientation to Zoom and some hearing ground rules for this evening's hearing.

00:03:13.200 --> 00:03:16.969

Megan Stone - AECOM: The Service will welcome you all and provide introductions.

00:03:17.100 --> 00:03:24.010

Megan Stone - AECOM: And then the Service will provide a presentation on the proposed listing, which will last around 20 minutes.

00:03:24.200 --> 00:03:34.520

Megan Stone - AECOM: For the remainder of the hearing, we will accept verbal public comments. After the public hearing portion, we'll close out the hearing. Next slide, please.

00:03:37.480 --> 00:03:44.190

Megan Stone - AECOM: Before we get started with the presentation, I'm going to go over some hearing ground rules for this evening.

00:03:44.400 --> 00:03:59.500

Megan Stone - AECOM: First, this hearing is being recorded and transcribed as part of the project record. Following the hearing, a transcript and copy of the presentation will be made available on the Reno Fish and Wildlife Office website.

00:03:59.860 --> 00:04:11.320

Megan Stone - AECOM: And you can see that here on the screen. We'll also post that in the chat for you guys. It's www.fws.gov

00:04:11.470 --> 00:04:22.529

Megan Stone - AECOM: [/office/Reno-fish-and-wildlife](http://office/Reno-fish-and-wildlife). And again, we'll post that in the chat.

00:04:22.750 --> 00:04:34.970

Megan Stone - AECOM: We do want to note that it may take time to post the transcript and the slides, as the Service works to ensure the materials meet compliance standards and are accessible to all.

00:04:35.600 --> 00:04:41.980

Megan Stone - AECOM: Second, your microphones and videos will be turned off for the duration of the public hearing tonight.

00:04:42.180 --> 00:04:50.399

Megan Stone - AECOM: You will only be unmuted if and when I unmute you during the verbal public comment session, if you are commenting.

00:04:51.120 --> 00:05:04.250

Megan Stone - AECOM: Third, we will move on to the public comment portion after the presentation. This is the time where we'll accept verbal public comments from participants who have joined this evening's hearing.

00:05:04.570 --> 00:05:21.199

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you registered before the start time of tonight's hearing and indicated that you wanted to offer verbal public comment tonight, you're on our list of pre-registered commenters. We will call on preregistered commenters in the order of registration.

00:05:21.290 --> 00:05:31.449

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you registered after the hearing started, we will do our best to reserve some time for you to have an opportunity to offer your verbal public comment today.

00:05:31.450 --> 00:05:42.119

Megan Stone - AECOM: Once we've worked our way through our pre-registered commenter list, if we have time remaining, we'll move on to those who registered after the start time of today's hearing.

00:05:42.120 --> 00:05:50.409

Megan Stone - AECOM: Who selected they wanted to offer comments. And then after that, we'll open the meeting up to anyone who would like to offer a comment

00:05:50.850 --> 00:05:56.429

Megan Stone - AECOM: who has not already done so. And then, if we still have time remaining after that

00:05:56.560 --> 00:06:01.200

Megan Stone - AECOM: we'll let people comment up to one more time. Additionally,

00:06:01.790 --> 00:06:11.160

Megan Stone - AECOM: if you do not get the opportunity to offer your verbal public comment tonight, written public comments can be submitted at regulations.gov.

00:06:11.440 --> 00:06:14.659

Megan Stone - AECOM: You can find that information on the screen here

00:06:14.800 --> 00:06:25.579

Megan Stone - AECOM: and you can also provide comments in writing via U.S. mail. We'll provide both of these methods of commenting in the chat as well.

00:06:26.800 --> 00:06:31.150

Megan Stone - AECOM: The Service will review all public comments, written and verbal.

00:06:32.280 --> 00:06:45.789

Megan Stone - AECOM: We did want to note this is a public hearing, which is part of a formal process to allow the public to comment, and will be included in the Service's administrative records and made publicly available as well.

00:06:45.970 --> 00:06:55.319

Megan Stone - AECOM: The focus of this hearing will be to listen to public comments. The Service will not be responding to the verbal public comments received this evening.

00:06:55.570 --> 00:07:07.479

Megan Stone - AECOM: The Service will review all written comments received on the Federal Register website during the public comment period, and all verbal public comments received during this public hearing.

00:07:07.770 --> 00:07:17.100

Megan Stone - AECOM: Comment responses will be included as part of the Service's final decision on whether to list the Fish Lake Valley tui chub

00:07:17.300 --> 00:07:24.499

Megan Stone - AECOM: under the Endangered Species Act. Additionally, this hearing will not include a question-and-answer session.

00:07:24.740 --> 00:07:44.279

Megan Stone - AECOM: While the Service will not be accepting questions this evening, if attendees wanted to talk with the field office representatives in more detail about the process, or if they have specific questions about the species or information in the proposed rule or the SSA, Species Status Assessment,

00:07:44.290 --> 00:07:56.849

Megan Stone - AECOM: we encourage you to contact the field office at 775-861-6300, and we'll put that information in the chat as well.

00:07:57.120 --> 00:08:03.120

Megan Stone - AECOM: With that, I'll now turn it over to Anne Mankowski with the Service to welcome you all.

00:08:09.310 --> 00:08:19.169

Anne Mankowski - USFWS: Alright, good evening and welcome. I'm Anne Mankowski, I'm an Assistant Field Supervisor at the Reno Fish and Wildlife Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

00:08:19.730 --> 00:08:25.439

Anne Mankowski - USFWS: We want to thank you for joining this public hearing for the proposed listing of the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

00:08:25.570 --> 00:08:29.329

Anne Mankowski - USFWS: We appreciate your time and we also look forward to hearing your comments.

00:08:29.690 --> 00:08:39.529

Anne Mankowski - USFWS: We'll move to an informational presentation shortly, but first, let me turn this over to Kristen Jule, the field supervisor for the Reno Fish and Wildlife Office. Kristen?

00:08:40.970 --> 00:08:53.180

Kristen Jule - USFWS: Thank you, Anne, and hello, everybody. Again, my name is Kristen Jule, and I am the field supervisor at the Reno Fish and Wildlife Office. Welcome. Welcome to today's hearing.

00:08:53.280 --> 00:09:01.659

Kristen Jule - USFWS: As Anne said, we appreciate everyone making time to attend this hearing, and we look forward to hearing and capturing your input.

00:09:01.840 --> 00:09:18.900

Kristen Jule - USFWS: Anne and I will go off-camera shortly and return, return you to our facilitator while she moves forward with the informational presentation. We want to reassure you that we will be here and listening throughout the entirety of the hearing. Thank you so much.

00:09:20.790 --> 00:09:26.499

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, Anne and Kristen. With that, we'll go ahead and get started with the presentation.

00:09:28.420 --> 00:09:38.489

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The Reno Fish and Wildlife Office is the lead field office responsible for producing a 12-month finding on whether the Fish Lake Valley tui chub warrants listing under the Endangered Species Act.

00:09:39.120 --> 00:09:45.410

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: We will be giving this short presentation, providing an overview of the timeline of the classification process

00:09:45.710 --> 00:09:52.560

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: and information about the Fish Lake Valley tui chub, including its biology and the threats evaluated in the 12-month finding.

00:09:53.020 --> 00:09:56.900

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: We will then move on to the public participation portion of the session.

00:09:58.450 --> 00:10:07.189

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: We, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, have issued a proposed rule to list the Fish Lake Valley tui chub as endangered.

00:10:07.610 --> 00:10:14.090

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Endangered is defined as being in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

00:10:14.690 --> 00:10:24.380

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: At this time, we conclude that the designation of critical habitat is not determinable due to a lack of sufficient data to perform the required analyses.

00:10:25.010 --> 00:10:33.779

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: As part of the proposed rule process, we held a required public comment period to solicit additional information to help inform a final decision.

00:10:34.220 --> 00:10:44.910

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: During the original comment period, May through July 2025, we received a request for a public hearing, which was originally planned for the fall of 2025.

00:10:45.520 --> 00:10:52.920

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: However, due to a lapse in appropriations, we entered a partial government shutdown, and the hearing was postponed.

00:10:53.610 --> 00:10:56.320

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Today, we are holding the public hearing.

00:10:56.620 --> 00:11:01.730

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The public comment period has also been reopened until March 4, 2026¹.

00:11:02.240 --> 00:11:05.809

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: We will review opportunities to comment on our last slide.

00:11:09.210 --> 00:11:10.760

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: In 2021,

00:11:10.880 --> 00:11:19.380

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: we received a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity to list the Fish Lake Valley Tui Chub as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

00:11:19.700 --> 00:11:28.949

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: In 2022, we completed a 90-day finding where we found that the petition presented substantial information indicating the listing may be warranted.

¹ Correction: The public comment period is open Feb. 4 through March 6, 2026, as announced in the Federal Register notice reopening the comment period (91 FR 5103).

00:11:29.950 --> 00:11:37.240

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: We then initiated the development of the Species Status Assessment, or SSA, for the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

00:11:37.690 --> 00:11:46.399

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: An SSA is a compilation of the best available scientific and commercial information to evaluate the current and future condition of a species.

00:11:46.630 --> 00:11:54.720

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: It assesses the species' needs, what factors are influencing those needs, and how potential threats are likely to change into the future.

00:11:55.530 --> 00:12:02.590

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Using the information in the SSA, we then evaluated the subspecies for the need to list under the Endangered Species Act.

00:12:03.060 --> 00:12:05.489

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: That resulted in the proposed rule

00:12:05.720 --> 00:12:12.819

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: that published on May 21st, 2025, that found that the subspecies is warranted for listing as endangered.

00:12:15.600 --> 00:12:19.690

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Now we'll review some information about the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

00:12:20.860 --> 00:12:31.319

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Wild tui chubs occur throughout the Great Basin watersheds in Nevada, Eastern Oregon, and Eastern California, as well as in the Columbia River system in Washington and Oregon.

00:12:31.480 --> 00:12:38.529

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The Fish Lake Valley tui chub is a distinct subspecies found only in Esmeralda County in southwestern Nevada.

00:12:41.100 --> 00:12:51.019

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The historical distribution of the Fish Lake Valley Tui Chub included six locations, including both lake and small spring systems in the Fish Lake Valley Basin.

00:12:51.410 --> 00:13:00.549

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The current distribution includes only one of the six historical occurrences, and one introduced location outside the subspecies range.

00:13:02.070 --> 00:13:07.430

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The figure on the left displays the Fish Lake Valley Hydrologic Basin in the shaded area.

00:13:07.990 --> 00:13:11.040

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: And the six historical and one introduced location.

00:13:12.330 --> 00:13:15.360

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: This subspecies has become extirpated

00:13:15.490 --> 00:13:24.019

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: from, meaning that it no longer occurs at five of the six historically occupied locations within Fish Lake Valley. These are depicted

00:13:24.170 --> 00:13:26.210

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: as open circles on the map.

00:13:27.520 --> 00:13:31.089

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The distribution of currently occupied location includes

00:13:31.450 --> 00:13:44.549

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: the one remaining naturally occurring population at the McNett Spring system, which is shown in the figure as a green oval on the map, and also shown as a photo on the upper right,

00:13:45.200 --> 00:13:55.560

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: as well as one introduced population at Lida Pond, about four miles outside the subspecies range, so shown on the map next to the green arrow

00:13:55.830 --> 00:13:57.910

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: and on the lower right photo.

00:13:59.640 --> 00:14:09.049

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The McNett Spring system is a natural thermal spring-fed marsh with relatively stable temperatures year-round, and occurring predominantly on private land.

00:14:09.390 --> 00:14:16.079

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: There's been some alteration of the wetland where the spring was impounded, causing an increase in the size and depth of ponded water.

00:14:16.430 --> 00:14:23.399

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: This gain of overall habitat area, including open water habitat, probably benefited the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

00:14:24.380 --> 00:14:33.610

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Surveys have reported stable numbers for tui chub here from 2002 to 2021, ranging from about 2,000 to 3,000 individuals.

00:14:34.990 --> 00:14:42.810

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Lida Pond is also fed by a natural spring that has been modified with an earthen berm to create a larger pond.

00:14:43.060 --> 00:14:46.930

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: This site is on Bureau of Land Management, or BLM, land.

00:14:47.030 --> 00:14:51.969

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The population was introduced here in the early 1990s by an unknown mechanism.

00:14:52.900 --> 00:15:05.640

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: There is some emergent vegetation at Lida Pond that limits open water availability, and there are invasive species present, such as goldfish and mosquito fish, that may be negatively affecting the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

00:15:08.330 --> 00:15:13.850

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Here we have some basic

biological information for the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

00:15:14.380 --> 00:15:26.690

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: There is limited information known about the life history and the biology of the Fish Lake Valley tui chub specifically, so we use the best available information from other tui chub subspecies living in similar habitats.

00:15:28.340 --> 00:15:39.990

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The Fish Lake Valley tui chub is a small minnow with adults measuring between four to five inches in spring habitats, while at the historical Fish Lake population, they measured up to eight inches.

00:15:40.660 --> 00:15:47.910

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The lifespan is typically seven years in small ponds and springs, and up to 35 years in large lakes.

00:15:49.060 --> 00:16:01.429

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: One of the most important habitat needs is the presence of aquatic vegetation, which serves as the base of their food chain and provides spawning substrate, refuge from predators, and thermal refuge.

00:16:01.640 --> 00:16:07.880

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Their diet includes algae, detritus, Zooplankton and aquatic invertebrates.

00:16:08.220 --> 00:16:15.870

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: They live in alkaline waters and need adequate spring flows and a spawning substrate, which can either be gravel or aquatic vegetation.

00:16:16.150 --> 00:16:24.660

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Spawning occurs within a narrow temperature range from 55 to 72 degrees Fahrenheit. Suitable habitat also requires

00:16:24.890 --> 00:16:30.939

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: sufficient water quality with adequate dissolved oxygen and limited amounts of dissolved solids.

00:16:32.290 --> 00:16:42.079

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: So now that we understand some of the needs of the subspecies, let's review how the Service evaluates

species for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

00:16:43.420 --> 00:16:54.160

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Under the regulatory framework of our evaluation, there are five factors, listed here as A through E, that we examine when we evaluate a species. These are

00:16:54.330 --> 00:17:00.510

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: A. Present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range.

00:17:00.730 --> 00:17:06.180

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: B. Overuse for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes.

00:17:06.310 --> 00:17:08.780

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: C. Disease or predation.

00:17:09.550 --> 00:17:19.960

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: D. Inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms, or E. Other natural or man-made factors affecting the continued existence of the species.

00:17:20.690 --> 00:17:27.399

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: For each factor, we review threats or protections that may influence the current and future condition of the species.

00:17:28.500 --> 00:17:47.170

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Under the analytical framework of our evaluation in our species status assessment, we use three conservation biology principles of resiliency, redundancy, and representation when evaluating the current and future condition and the viability of the subspecies.

00:17:48.390 --> 00:17:59.150

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Resiliency is the ability of a subspecies to withstand environmental and demographic stochasticity. For example, wet or dry, or warm or cold years.

00:17:59.320 --> 00:18:08.969

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Resiliency depends on having sufficient habitat quality and quantity that meets the needs of individuals at both the population and the subspecies level.

00:18:09.910-->00:18:14.279

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: In other words, supporting good population numbers and reproduction.

00:18:16.430 --> 00:18:30.720

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Redundancy is the ability of the subspecies to withstand catastrophic events, such as extended drought or a large pollution event. Redundancy depends on having multiple populations, which help mitigate localized threats.

00:18:30.990 --> 00:18:34.549

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Narrow endemics inherently have low redundancy.

00:18:36.250 --> 00:18:47.229

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Representation is the ability of the subspecies to adapt to both near-term and long-term changes in its environment. For example, climate conditions or pathogens.

00:18:47.840 --> 00:18:56.160

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Representation depends on having multiple highly resilient populations, which helps to maintain genetic diversity and adaptive capacity.

00:18:57.240 --> 00:19:10.650

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: In order to evaluate and determine the factors that may be influencing a species, we reviewed information provided in the petition, as well as the best scientific and commercial data available.

00:19:10.850 --> 00:19:24.709

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The factors and related primary threats that we identified for the Fish Lake Valley tui chub are Factor A. Specifically, the loss of aquatic habitat from diversion of surface water and groundwater declines driven by

00:19:24.800 --> 00:19:31.479

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: agricultural production or other land management practices, such as lithium mining and geothermal production,

00:19:32.840 --> 00:19:38.449

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: as well as effects of climate change and changes in habitat management.

00:19:39.980 --> 00:19:41.950

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Factors C and E

00:19:42.420 --> 00:19:51.940

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: or disease predation and other natural or man-made factors, we look specifically at predation by and competition with invasive species.

00:19:52.840 --> 00:19:56.659

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The next several slides present details about these threats.

00:19:57.740 --> 00:20:07.400

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Factors B and D are not considered to be the most important factors affecting the subspecies' current status and trend and therefore will not be discussed any further.

00:20:08.760 --> 00:20:16.820

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: For factor A, the loss of aquatic habitat, we reviewed diversion of surface water and groundwater declines.

00:20:17.780 --> 00:20:27.669

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Pictured here are a couple of examples demonstrating the groundwater declines and associated surface water decline and diversion that led to the loss of five historical sites.

00:20:28.090 --> 00:20:32.700

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The two historical Fish Lake Valley tui chub sites shown here are Fish Lake

00:20:32.850 --> 00:20:35.710

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: on the left, and the valley channels on the right.

00:20:35.930 --> 00:20:43.000

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Both that used to have perennial surface water and are now completely dry, except during episodic flooding events.

00:20:43.440 --> 00:20:52.100

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The primary threats here are agricultural water production, lithium mining, and geothermal production, and the effects of climate change.

00:20:53.180 --> 00:21:03.620

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: We analyze agricultural water production in the Fish Lake Valley Basin due to evidence of loss of historical populations resulting from loss of aquatic habitat and connectivity.

00:21:04.250 --> 00:21:06.500

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: As of the year 2019,

00:21:06.610 --> 00:21:18.129

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: 99% of groundwater pumped in Fish Lake Valley is devoted to crop irrigation and the decline in groundwater levels has been attributed to groundwater pumping that exceeds annual recharge.

00:21:18.270 --> 00:21:25.719

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: This has resulted in formerly occupied sites being completely desiccated for at least during certain times of the year.

00:21:27.360 --> 00:21:41.950

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Lithium mining and geothermal development are currently being evaluated for permitting in and near Fish Lake Valley, and we evaluated the potential for associated changes to groundwater availability that support habitat for Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

00:21:42.590 --> 00:21:56.819

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: In conjunction with the continued agricultural use, geothermal development and lithium mining will likely exacerbate the already over-allocated Fish Lake Valley groundwater basin that supplies water for the tui chub habitat in the McNett Spring system.

00:21:58.130 --> 00:22:16.090

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: For effects of climate change, we considered what has occurred and what is expected to continue to occur in the future based on projected increased temperatures and increased variability in precipitation events, which will place additional stress on groundwater resources and aquatic habitat availability.

00:22:17.770 --> 00:22:26.820

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: For Factor A, loss of aquatic habitat, we also reviewed the influence on the subspecies from changes in habitat management.

00:22:27.010 --> 00:22:37.329

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: For example, properly managed grazing may have a beneficial effect in preventing overgrowth of vegetation and maintaining open water habitat for the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

00:22:37.740 --> 00:22:48.400

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: However, improperly managed grazing may have a negative effect on the habitat quality through increased sedimentation, vegetation overgrowth, and bank erosion.

00:22:48.940 --> 00:22:59.120

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: These figures illustrate, on the lower left, the McNett Spring system, which is an example of good quality habitat with adequate open water and vegetation.

00:22:59.370 --> 00:23:06.770

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Whereas on the upper left and right, which, which depict Lida Pond, represents a

00:23:07.000 --> 00:23:14.930

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: lower quality habitat, with little open water, denser vegetation, and some bank erosion, and trampling.

00:23:18.970 --> 00:23:28.799

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: For factors C, disease and predation, and E, other natural or man-made factors, we reviewed the impact and threat from invasive species.

00:23:29.430 --> 00:23:34.190

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Invasive species which may depredate and or compete with native fish.

00:23:34.490 --> 00:23:40.640

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: They may be introduced to sites accidentally by either being moved between sites during flooding

00:23:41.160 --> 00:23:47.839

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: or unintended release or they could be intentionally introduced through purposeful release.

00:23:48.620 --> 00:23:52.659

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Invasive aquatic species are currently present at Lida Pond.

00:23:52.880 --> 00:23:59.820

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: As we mentioned, mosquito fish and goldfish, as well as they used to be present at historical sites.

00:24:00.420 --> 00:24:07.080

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Invasive species that have negatively influenced tui chub in the past include bullfrogs and predatory fish.

00:24:07.650 --> 00:24:15.790

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Because the Fish Lake Valley tui chub did not evolve with aquatic predators or competitors, the presence of these invasive species poses a threat.

00:24:16.720 --> 00:24:21.640

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: These figures show the proximity of invasive species to both extant sites.

00:24:21.790 --> 00:24:29.190

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: In both figures, the green circle represents the tui chub population, and the red triangle represents the invasive species threat.

00:24:29.800 --> 00:24:42.070

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: So, on the left, two miles away from the McNett Spring system is the Hotbox Well, which is a recreational thermal spring that hosts a population of invasive goldfish and bullfrogs.

00:24:42.550 --> 00:24:46.469

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: On the right, figure, Lida Pond is located

00:24:46.650 --> 00:24:57.790

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Right next to a state highway, similar to Indian Spring, which is about nine miles away, and houses predatory fish, including trout, as well as invasive bullfrogs.

00:24:57.970 --> 00:25:03.309

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: This proximity makes Lida Pond vulnerable to human introduction of invasive species.

00:25:05.090 --> 00:25:15.009

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: In addition to the threats acting upon the species, we also reviewed conservation efforts and other regulatory mechanisms.

00:25:15.670 --> 00:25:24.119

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: While surveys and monitoring have been done at the two occupied sites, very limited conservation has been done to date to benefit the species.

00:25:24.680 --> 00:25:37.210

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The Fish Lake Valley tui chub is designated as a protected fish species by the state of Nevada, which means that the fish are protected from being taken or hunted, but there are no protections for the habitat.

00:25:38.730 --> 00:25:43.959

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The current condition of the species relative to the 3Rs

00:25:44.300 --> 00:25:51.919

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: shows reduction in resiliency, redundancy, and representation, which combined indicates low viability.

00:25:52.930 --> 00:26:03.469

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The resiliency of the Fish Lake Valley tui chub has been reduced such that the subspecies occurs in only a single population within its historical range at the McNett Spring system.

00:26:03.700 --> 00:26:10.419

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The other five historical populations have been extirpated due to the threats outlined above.

00:26:10.900 --> 00:26:16.989

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The subspecies also occurs in an introduced location outside its historical range, at Leiden Pond.

00:26:17.790 --> 00:26:28.899

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: However, both sides currently face significant imminent threats, including groundwater declines at the McNett Spring system and invasive species at both the McNett Spring system and Lida Pond.

00:26:30.150 --> 00:26:48.910

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Redundancy has been reduced through the loss of populations. This leaves each remaining population vulnerable to catastrophic threats. For example, the extirpation of the historical populations has reduced the connectivity among the two populations such that they cannot disperse from one

00:26:49.090 --> 00:26:58.700

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: from either the drying of the spring or the introduction of an invasive competitor or predator. Nor can they recolonize after a catastrophic event has taken place.

00:27:00.190 --> 00:27:08.999

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Representation has been reduced through the loss of connectivity and loss of habitat types, which have reduced the subspecies' evolutionary potential.

00:27:09.180 --> 00:27:17.179

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: These losses compromise the ability of the subspecies to adapt to novel changes in the environment, which increases the risk of extinction.

00:27:17.590 --> 00:27:30.489

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Because the threats that have impacted populations of the past have not been abated, continued groundwater declines and the introduction of invasive species both present a high risk to the current viability of the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

00:27:33.160 --> 00:27:49.899

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Our analysis shows that due to threats under factors A, C, and E, and reduced resiliency, representation, and redundancy, the Fish Lake Valley tui chub is in danger of extinction, or meets the definition of endangered throughout all of its range.

00:27:53.790 --> 00:27:56.779

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: So, what happens if the species is listed?

00:27:57.410 --> 00:28:10.369

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Once a species is listed as endangered, it is afforded the full range of protections available

under the Endangered Species Act, including prohibitions on killing, harming, or otherwise taking of the species.

00:28:11.060 --> 00:28:13.849

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: So, some things that may be required would be

00:28:14.710 --> 00:28:18.300

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Endangered Species Act Section 7 Consultations

00:28:18.900 --> 00:28:28.439

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: may be required for actions that are federally funded, authorized, or implemented to ensure that those actions do not jeopardize the continued existence of the tui chub.

00:28:29.090 --> 00:28:35.420

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Endangered Species Act Section 10 Incidental Take Permitting may be appropriate for non-federal actions.

00:28:37.090 --> 00:28:51.249

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: The Service would initiate a recovery planning process that identifies actions to halt and reverse the species decline. Examples include habitat restoration, research, propagation, and reintroduction.

00:28:51.640 --> 00:28:56.930

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: And Service will identify criteria for when a species may be down-listed or delisted.

00:28:58.010 --> 00:29:13.470

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: Implementation of recovery actions generally requires the voluntary participation of a broad range of partners, including other federal agencies, states, tribes, non-governmental organizations, businesses, and private landowners.

00:29:17.720 --> 00:29:24.910

Audio shared by Liza Schill - AECOM: This concludes our informational presentation. The public hearing facilitator will now review how to comment. Thank you.

00:29:30.400 --> 00:29:33.759

Megan Stone - AECOM: Right. We're going to go ahead and

00:29:34.100 --> 00:29:47.830

Megan Stone - AECOM: go into our public hearing portion to receive comments this evening, so we'll go ahead and switch into our public hearing guidelines.

00:29:49.680 --> 00:29:51.990

Megan Stone - AECOM: Just give it a moment here..

00:29:55.560 --> 00:29:56.470

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright.

00:29:57.160 --> 00:30:08.549

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, again, my name is Megan Stone. I'm a contractor for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and I'm going to be the moderator for the public comment session this evening.

00:30:08.720 --> 00:30:33.270

Megan Stone - AECOM: Before I go over instructions on how to provide verbal comments, we wanted to thank folks for signing up to comment this evening. We did want to note, again, this hearing is a public hearing, which is part of a formal process to allow the public to comment, and will be included in the Service's administrative record and made publicly available as well.

00:30:33.700 --> 00:30:41.920

Megan Stone - AECOM: The focus of this hearing will be to listen to public comments. The Service will not be responding to public comments this evening.

00:30:42.340 --> 00:30:49.879

Megan Stone - AECOM: The Service will review all written comments received on the Federal Register website during the public comment period.

00:30:50.020 --> 00:31:05.280

Megan Stone - AECOM: and all verbal comments received during this public hearing. Comment responses will be included as part of the Service's final decision on whether to list the Fish Lake Valley tui chub under the Endangered Species Act.

00:31:05.510 --> 00:31:11.809

Megan Stone - AECOM: Additionally, we wanted to remind folks this hearing will not include a question-and-answer session.

00:31:11.880 --> 00:31:15.669

Megan Stone - AECOM: While the Service will not be accepting questions this evening,

00:31:15.670 --> 00:31:34.830

Megan Stone - AECOM: if attendees wanted to talk with the field office representatives in more detail about the process, or if they have specific questions about the species or information in the proposed rule or the SSA, we encourage you to contact the field office at 775-

00:31:34.830 --> 00:31:49.539

Megan Stone - AECOM: 861-6300. With that, we'll go ahead and get started officially with the verbal public comment portion of tonight's hearing to receive comments related to the proposed listing.

00:31:49.820 --> 00:31:55.629

Megan Stone - AECOM: It is currently 5:32 Pacific Time, so we'll go ahead and get started.

00:31:56.280 --> 00:32:04.340

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, this verbal public comment session, along with your comments, is being recorded as part of the official record.

00:32:04.690 --> 00:32:10.480

Megan Stone - AECOM: As a reminder, your camera and mic control settings are restricted during this time.

00:32:10.730 --> 00:32:16.070

Megan Stone - AECOM: You will only be able to unmute if and when you are prompted to unmute.

00:32:16.280 --> 00:32:19.740

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, we ask that you pay attention to that prompt.

00:32:20.520 --> 00:32:27.630

Megan Stone - AECOM: The Service wants to hear from all members of the public, so we'll be using the following guidelines today.

00:32:28.210 --> 00:32:34.140

Megan Stone - AECOM: First, please be mindful of the length of your comment, so that everyone wants to speak

00:32:34.300 --> 00:32:38.129

Megan Stone - AECOM: who wants to speak has an opportunity to do so this evening.

00:32:38.380 --> 00:32:48.800

Megan Stone - AECOM: We ask that you keep your comment limited to 3 minutes today. We'll have a timer on screen so that everyone can see where they're at with their comment.

00:32:49.470 --> 00:32:58.149

Megan Stone - AECOM: As I noted before, we will be accepting additional comments, up to one additional comment per person, if time allows.

00:32:58.600 --> 00:33:04.289

Megan Stone - AECOM: Second, we ask that you please be respectful of others and their viewpoints.

00:33:04.460 --> 00:33:23.529

Megan Stone - AECOM: Third, please refrain from using profanity. While passion is welcome in your comment, policy requires that we mute anyone who uses inappropriate language, because we are recording this hearing, and others may be livestreaming, so please avoid inappropriate language.

00:33:23.630 --> 00:33:32.249

Megan Stone - AECOM: If that does happen, we'll provide a reminder before unmuting the person to try again using words acceptable to all ages.

00:33:32.560 --> 00:33:33.810

Megan Stone - AECOM: Next slide.

00:33:35.420 --> 00:33:37.159

Megan Stone - AECOM: Oh, we're on that slide.

00:33:37.790 --> 00:33:43.010

Megan Stone - AECOM: Comments will be accepted in the order that people registered.

00:33:43.160 --> 00:33:50.250

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, if you registered before the start time of tonight's hearing, you're on our pre-registered commenter list.

00:33:50.420 --> 00:33:58.899

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you're on the commenter list, when it's your turn to provide your comment, we'll read your name aloud from the list and display your name on the screen.

00:33:59.090 --> 00:34:03.129

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll also display the name of the commenter who is next in line.

00:34:03.310 --> 00:34:10.840

Megan Stone - AECOM: When you hear your name called out, please use the raise hand feature so that we know you are available and ready to offer your comment.

00:34:11.310 --> 00:34:22.230

Megan Stone - AECOM: You can access the raise hand feature by clicking on either the reactions icon or the Participants List icon, which are both located at the bottom of your Zoom screen.

00:34:22.460 --> 00:34:35.209

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you wave your mouse back and forth across the bottom of your Zoom screen, these icons should appear. You may need to exit out of your full screen view in Zoom to see these icons.

00:34:35.610 --> 00:34:51.870

Megan Stone - AECOM: You can then select the raise hand button located on the bottom of your Zoom screen, or you can find that button through the participants list. Or, if you're calling in through the phone, please press *9 to raise your hand.

00:34:51.969 --> 00:34:56.960

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, that's *9 to raise your hand if you're calling in on the phone.

00:34:57.830 --> 00:35:03.499

Megan Stone - AECOM: Once you've raised your hand, you'll be unmuted so that you can provide your verbal public comment.

00:35:03.700 --> 00:35:23.349

Megan Stone - AECOM: You may be double muted. If that is the case, we'll prompt you to unmute yourself on your end so that we can hear you. We ask that you please spell out your first and last name for the record before providing your verbal public comment, and if you are representing an organization or group, please say so during your comment.

00:35:23.890 --> 00:35:36.230

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, we'll display a comment timer on screen, and if we have any attendees joining this virtual hearing with

multiple people in the same room, please send a message to hosts and panelists.

00:35:36.370 --> 00:35:48.450

Megan Stone - AECOM: I do know we have one individual joining from a community center, and we have their message, but if there's anyone else with multiple people in a room, please do send us a chat.

00:35:49.340 --> 00:35:59.209

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you're signed up to comment when registering for the hearing, please also raise your hand when you hear your name called and spell your first and last name for the record.

00:35:59.650 --> 00:36:05.060

Megan Stone - AECOM: After you've provided your comment, we will mute you and move on to our next commenter.

00:36:05.220 --> 00:36:13.779

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, once we've worked our way through my current list, if we have time, we'll move on to those who registered after the start time of the hearing.

00:36:13.900 --> 00:36:16.560

Megan Stone - AECOM: Who selected they wanted to offer a comment.

00:36:16.670 --> 00:36:31.669

Megan Stone - AECOM: If we still have time remaining, we'll open up to anyone who would like to comment, regardless of whether you signed up when you registered. And after that, we will move on to anyone who would like to provide one additional comment if they've already spoken.

00:36:32.440 --> 00:36:34.410

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go to the next slide.

00:36:38.760 --> 00:36:43.890

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, on the screen here, we just have a graphic of where you can find the raise hand feature.

00:36:44.000 --> 00:36:47.099

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'll pause here to give everyone a moment to look at that.

00:37:00.570 --> 00:37:02.869

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright, we'll move to the next slide.

00:37:07.160 --> 00:37:18.559

Megan Stone - AECOM: All right, with that, we'll go ahead and get started with our public comment session this evening. Our first pre-registered commenter is Chris Crookshanks.

00:37:18.940 --> 00:37:25.359

Megan Stone - AECOM: I don't see that we have Chris Crookshanks on our list of participants this evening.

00:37:26.010 --> 00:37:32.160

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, we'll go ahead and circle back to them later on and see if they join.

00:37:32.260 --> 00:37:38.290

Megan Stone - AECOM: And with that, we'll move on to our next pre-registered commenter, Joseph Dunn.

00:37:39.410 --> 00:37:46.569

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi, Joseph, I see your hand raised. I've prompted you to unmute. You should be able to unmute now.

00:37:47.760 --> 00:37:49.519

Megan Stone - AECOM: Are you able to hear us?

00:37:53.220 --> 00:37:54.650

Joseph Dunn: Can you hear me now?

00:37:55.000 --> 00:37:56.710

Megan Stone - AECOM: Yes, we can.

00:37:56.960 --> 00:37:57.550

Joseph Dunn: Okay.

00:37:57.550 --> 00:38:00.510

Megan Stone - AECOM: Will you spell your first and last name for the record, please?

00:38:00.510 --> 00:38:06.759

Joseph Dunn: Yes, this is Joseph Dunn, J-O-S-E-P-H.

00:38:07.110 --> 00:38:14.119

Joseph Dunn: Dunn, D-U-N-N, and I'm here speaking on behalf of Esmeralda County Government.

00:38:14.340 --> 00:38:28.539

Joseph Dunn: And I appreciate you, taking the time to let me address the Esmeralda County concerns regarding the potential listing of the tui chub fish found at the McNett Ranch in Fish Lake Valley.

00:38:28.820 --> 00:38:44.890

Joseph Dunn: Fish Lake Valley is not only a small farming and ranching community on the western edge of Esmeralda County, but it's a vital contributor to Nevada's agricultural economy, and a region with growing opportunities in mining and renewable energies.

00:38:45.190 --> 00:38:55.849

Joseph Dunn: Any decision that impacts this area must carefully balance environmental considerations with the economic sustainability and future growth of the community.

00:38:55.960 --> 00:39:04.509

Joseph Dunn: Protecting local livelihoods while fostering responsible development is essential to ensuring that Fish Lake Valley continues to thrive.

00:39:05.190 --> 00:39:21.810

Joseph Dunn: As I mentioned before, tui species has, are possibly going to be listed as endangered. While conservation is important, this action could have serious economic and community consequences for our county.

00:39:22.110 --> 00:39:25.360

Joseph Dunn: Some of our key concerns include

00:39:25.430 --> 00:39:42.629

Joseph Dunn: economic harm, listing would restrict development, agricultural, ranching, and renewable energy projects, major revenue sources for our county, reduced property tax base, and job losses threatening essential public services that we offer;

00:39:43.210 --> 00:39:56.389

Joseph Dunn: the community impact, approximately one-third of our county residents live in the affected area. This creates a disproportionate burden on... on our small rural population;

00:39:56.970 --> 00:40:02.730

Joseph Dunn: limits on farming and ranching could affect local food supply and livelihoods;

00:40:03.870 --> 00:40:12.840

Joseph Dunn: renewable energy setbacks, restrictions could derail solar, wind, and geothermal projects critical for state and national clean energy goals.

00:40:13.530 --> 00:40:20.629

Joseph Dunn: You know, the county requests clear evidence of population decline and habitat threats before listing

00:40:21.150 --> 00:40:32.560

Joseph Dunn: and alternative solutions, We're always willing to work on a collaborative agreement, you know, to balance conservation and economic growth. I think we need both.

00:40:33.010 --> 00:40:41.580

Joseph Dunn: Why it matters to us is fairness. Rural communities lack resources to absorb economic shocks compared to the urban areas.

00:40:41.840 --> 00:40:51.220

Joseph Dunn: And the ESA mandates considerations of economic impacts during critical habitat designations. I hope that's all considered.

00:40:51.680 --> 00:40:59.740

Joseph Dunn: Our position is, we support responsible conservation, but urge the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to

00:40:59.940 --> 00:41:04.530

Joseph Dunn: make sure they're conducting a thorough economic impact analysis,

00:41:05.340 --> 00:41:22.900

Joseph Dunn: you know, and explore non-listing alternatives that protect the species without harming our community. I think we've mentioned that in the past, that our community is definitely willing to do what it takes to help the species without it being listed.

00:41:23.020 --> 00:41:31.180

Joseph Dunn: Anyway, I thank you for taking the time to hear us out, or hear me out, and I'll return it over to others for comments at this time.

00:41:31.320 --> 00:41:32.290

Joseph Dunn: Thank you.

00:41:33.410 --> 00:41:44.520

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Joseph. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute and lower your hand. And we'll move on to our next pre-registered commenter, who is Ralph Keyes.

00:41:47.920 --> 00:41:57.009

Megan Stone - AECOM: I don't see that we have Ralph on our participants list at the moment, so we'll make a note and see if they join us later on.

00:41:57.310 --> 00:42:05.060

Megan Stone - AECOM: And with that, we'll go ahead and move on to our next preregistered commenter, who is Kristene Fisher.

00:42:06.110 --> 00:42:10.090

Megan Stone - AECOM: And I know Kristene has multiple people

00:42:10.380 --> 00:42:20.959

Megan Stone - AECOM: in the community center room, so we'll go ahead and just move through all of the folks in the community center room who would like to comment.

00:42:21.600 --> 00:42:24.160

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi, Kristene, are you able to hear us?

00:42:24.470 --> 00:42:27.429

Kristene Fisher: Yes, I can hear you, can you hear me?

00:42:27.750 --> 00:42:29.990

Megan Stone - AECOM: Yes, we can hear you, Kristene.

00:42:30.050 --> 00:42:33.719

Kristene Fisher: And so, our first commenter is Ralph Keyes. I'm right here.

00:42:34.400 --> 00:42:43.030

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi, Ralph, could you please spell your first and last name for the record, just so it gets picked up on the transcript?

00:42:43.030 --> 00:42:48.460

Kristene Fisher: Yes, absolutely. My name is Ralph Keyes, spelled R-A-L-P-H K-E-Y-E-S.

00:42:48.740 --> 00:42:55.659

Kristene Fisher: And these are my comments on the Fish Lake Valley tui chub to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding the possible listing as an endangered species.

00:42:56.490 --> 00:42:58.010

Kristene Fisher: Can you hear me?

00:42:59.720 --> 00:43:02.540

Megan Stone - AECOM: Yes, you sound great, and you can begin your comment.

00:43:02.540 --> 00:43:06.499

Kristene Fisher: Okay, and that's K... R-A-L-P-H K-E-Y-E-S.

00:43:07.390 --> 00:43:26.580

Kristene Fisher: Okay, and as a former Esmeralda County Commissioner for 12 years, I know how Esmeralda Valley County relies on a very small tax base to provide the minimal services that the county can afford. If the water for irrigation was shut off in Fish Lake Valley as proposed by an environmental group, this would have devastating effects on the quality of life for the Fish Lake Valley residents.

00:43:26.600 --> 00:43:37.320

Kristene Fisher: The dried-up farmland would cause a huge fugitive dust problem, leading to serious health problems such as silicosis to people living in the Fish Lake Valley community. How would that problem be addressed?

00:43:37.850 --> 00:43:53.359

Kristene Fisher: The tax revenue would decline due to the listing of the fish. Property values would plummet, as would the tax base, and Esmerald County would have to cut what little funding we have for emergency services, law enforcement, road maintenance, and other vital needs of this community and the county as a whole.

00:43:53.910 --> 00:43:57.270

Kristene Fisher: The tui chub fish has been around for a long time.

00:43:57.420 --> 00:44:03.800

Kristene Fisher: I have questions on how the fish actually ended up in the basin. Was it transplanted by in

00:44:04.530 --> 00:44:10.349

Kristene Fisher: Native Americans, indigenous people, many, many years ago, before the Europeans arrived here.

00:44:10.520 --> 00:44:14.529

Kristene Fisher: Where did it originate? Is it truly a native to Fish Lake Valley?

00:44:14.840 --> 00:44:30.760

Kristene Fisher: I know there are many other areas in the Great Basin that have tui chub populations. Is the Fish Lake Valley tui chub genetically similar to the other chubs in the Great Basin? These are questions that need to be answered before any consideration to listing the Fish Lake Valley to each other as an endangered species.

00:44:31.010 --> 00:44:43.640

Kristene Fisher: There are other locations where the Fish Lake Valley tui chub lives in Esmeralda County, even in different habitat with different environmental factors. It seems that the tui chub could live in many different habitats if the populations needed protection.

00:44:44.890 --> 00:44:53.410

Kristene Fisher: It also seems like the Endangered Species Act is used as a tool by some environmental organizations to stop any and all economic use of the federal lands.

00:44:53.730 --> 00:45:03.410

Kristene Fisher: The Federal Lands Policy Act of 1976 needs to be followed since it states that federal lands are meant for multiple uses, including grazing, mineral extraction, recreation, and many other uses.

00:45:03.580 --> 00:45:19.740

Kristene Fisher: Although one of these locations tui chub is on private property. As you must consider all the consequences of a listing of the Fisher Lake Valley tui chub as an endangered species, it appears that the listing would have major negative effects that will have to be mitigated, and how would this mitigation be funded?

00:45:24.210 --> 00:45:34.530

Kristene Fisher: In closing, I believe that there's an answer that will accommodate the fish and the historic way of life for the residents and business owners of Fish Lake Valley and all of Esmeralda County.

00:45:37.090 --> 00:45:47.570

Kristene Fisher: Sincerely, Ralph Keys, concerned citizen, former Esmeralda County Commissioner of 12 years, and District 3... of District

3, Fish Lake Valley, and local business owner. Thank you for accepting my comments.

00:45:48.060 --> 00:45:57.229

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Ralph. We'll go ahead and move on to the next commenter who's ready in the room.

00:45:57.470 --> 00:45:58.590

Kristene Fisher: Okay.

00:46:00.940 --> 00:46:04.689

Kristene Fisher: The next commenter will be Tamara Charley.

00:46:06.010 --> 00:46:12.190

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, and Tamara, if you could spell your first and last name for the record, that would be great.

00:46:12.190 --> 00:46:20.150

Kristene Fisher: Yes, Tamara, T-A-M-A-R-A, Charley, C-H-A-R-L-E-Y. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

00:46:20.580 --> 00:46:23.510

Kristene Fisher: So, Ralph Keys, just

00:46:23.620 --> 00:46:32.320

Kristene Fisher: raised a valid point on how it became, listed as a sub-species, and how it was introduced.

00:46:33.540 --> 00:46:35.810

Kristene Fisher: There's no proof that it's a subspecies.

00:46:36.150 --> 00:46:40.540

Kristene Fisher: There are many tui chub across the state of Nevada and, in fact, across the Southwest.

00:46:40.870 --> 00:46:42.290

Kristene Fisher: And in California?

00:46:43.050 --> 00:46:45.769

Kristene Fisher: And I'd like to bring this to your attention.

00:46:48.230 --> 00:47:03.179

Kristene Fisher: Start with. "The concept of a species..." I'm quoting. This is a microbiologist, published in July 13, 2020. "The concept of

species is vague,” and it is, and I have supported documentation for that. “The concept of subspecies is almost arbitrary.”

00:47:04.010 --> 00:47:06.389

Kristene Fisher: Published scientist, microbiologist

00:47:06.750 --> 00:47:10.110

Kristene Fisher: with the American Council of Science and Health.

00:47:12.520 --> 00:47:31.410

Kristene Fisher: Empirically, recent studies have shown that the level of intraspecific genetic divergence does not predict speciation rate, indicating structured populations often fail to become species. What you get is variation within species instead, and this is supported a 2016 article, Long and Moltz, [inaudible] et al, 2018.

00:47:33.660 --> 00:47:38.360

Kristene Fisher: And this is a very interesting one, more recent, 2024, published July 5th.

00:47:39.770 --> 00:47:50.690

Kristene Fisher: Subspecies happens... this is the title of the article. Subspecies happens in company, not in isolation. One of the reasons it's considered a possibility of being a subspecies, which has not been proven,

00:47:51.010 --> 00:48:00.609

Kristene Fisher: is because of its isolation here in Fish Lake Valley, but according to these very respected scientists, despite

00:48:01.020 --> 00:48:17.930

Kristene Fisher: the spatial and ecological separation of population speciation never happens in absolute isolation. Interspecific interactions promote the selection of the best adapted offspring. Specifically, the community and ecosystem matrix constitute the complex biotic framework which facilitates evolution. Again,

00:48:17.930 --> 00:48:23.450

Kristene Fisher: the title of this, Speciation Happens in Company not in Isolation. This has not been proven to be a subspecies.

00:48:23.650 --> 00:48:24.859

Kristene Fisher: the tui chub.

00:48:25.110 --> 00:48:33.499

Kristene Fisher: And while I do appreciate that we do need to manage our resources, absolutely, and we need to support our wildlife, and everybody hears for that.

00:48:33.700 --> 00:48:37.810

Kristene Fisher: I'm going to go back to my first quote.

00:48:42.100 --> 00:48:59.460

Kristene Fisher: "The concept of species is vague, and it is. The concept of subspecies is almost arbitrary." There is no proof that this is a subspecies, and this needs to be forefront for considering or listing as an endangered subspecies. Thank you.

00:49:03.040 --> 00:49:04.570

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment.

00:49:04.960 --> 00:49:11.449

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go ahead and move to the next commenter in the room, who I believe is Fred Perez.

00:49:11.820 --> 00:49:15.999

Kristene Fisher: Fred is not going to speak. We're going to move on to John Maurer.

00:49:16.850 --> 00:49:17.970

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you.

00:49:18.530 --> 00:49:29.399

Kristene Fisher: Good evening, ma'am, my name is John Maurer, it's J-O-H-N M-A-U-R-E-R. I'm 54 years old, I've lived in Fish Lake Valley for 51 years.

00:49:29.550 --> 00:49:46.429

Kristene Fisher: My family started here with very little piece of property, and now I'm honored to continue that tradition, but not only that, that I have 3 children here with me that also want to be farmers and are actively involved in this operation. Little bit of history.

00:49:46.780 --> 00:49:53.450

Kristene Fisher: I've been involved with, obviously, with agriculture all my life, and have a lot of knowledge on wells.

00:49:53.570 --> 00:49:55.970

Kristene Fisher: At one time, I managed,

00:49:56.190 --> 00:50:09.290

Kristene Fisher: 33 wells for the operation that I was on, but I have experience with up to 50 in this valley. The first thing that I can tell you about water levels in these basins is

00:50:09.290 --> 00:50:19.400

Kristene Fisher: this isn't one basin. Even though we recognize it as Basin 117, according to the Division of Water Resources, it's more than that. There's sub-basins within these basins.

00:50:19.430 --> 00:50:29.740

Kristene Fisher: And I'll draw your attention to the Nevada Division of Water Resources, water level inventory for Basin 117, specifically site number 117,

00:50:29.780 --> 00:50:33.620

Kristene Fisher: S01E35,

00:50:33.700 --> 00:50:47.389

Kristene Fisher: 21DAAA1. This well has a depth of 125 feet, and it's the closest well that I can find that's near the McNett Springs.

00:50:47.600 --> 00:50:56.489

Kristene Fisher: The high point of this well, the water level was 15.8 feet in 1969. Last year,

00:50:56.780 --> 00:51:07.630

Kristene Fisher: October 22nd of 2025, it was 38.91 feet. That's 23.1 foot decline in a 56-year span. That's 5 inches a year.

00:51:07.630 --> 00:51:17.859

Kristene Fisher: Also, to note in that chart is that the water level has been fairly stable since 2015. It's not continued to decline, it's running pretty stable.

00:51:18.180 --> 00:51:28.310

Kristene Fisher: Another site a few more miles away from that, site number 117, S01E35, 34CB1,

00:51:28.450 --> 00:51:32.210

Kristene Fisher: an irrigation well with a depth of 263 feet.

00:51:32.490 --> 00:51:39.649

Kristene Fisher: I also had a high point in 1969 of 38.69 feet, and

00:51:40.000 --> 00:51:45.340

Kristene Fisher: the lowest point was recorded in 2022 at 80.95 feet.

00:51:45.470 --> 00:51:58.239

Kristene Fisher: So again, a 42-foot decline over a 60-year span, or 8 and a half inches. Also note that that well is an irrigation well, and so when they take their test, you could be actively pumping at that time.

00:51:58.360 --> 00:52:01.760

Kristene Fisher: Or just quit pumping, so it might not be that accurate.

00:52:02.070 --> 00:52:15.850

Kristene Fisher: So, I don't know that there's a loss of habitat, per se, because of declining groundwater levels. I think that where the spring is, is a completely different water field than even what we're pumping here in the Valley.

00:52:16.040 --> 00:52:23.649

Kristene Fisher: To address the other thing of invasive species, geography shows that McNett is above

00:52:23.730 --> 00:52:37.319

Kristene Fisher: where the hot box is, that's... the hotbox is downstream, and the same thing at Lida, Indian Springs is on the other side of the divide, of the... of the mountain summit. So, just... I don't know how one's going to run to the other. Thank you.

00:52:39.340 --> 00:52:45.119

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment. We'll go ahead and move on to the next commenter in the room.

00:52:45.890 --> 00:52:48.870

Kristene Fisher: So, I will be the last commenter in the room, no?

00:52:49.310 --> 00:52:50.780

Kristene Fisher: Okay, go ahead and

00:52:50.940 --> 00:52:55.929

Kristene Fisher: All right, we'll go to the next commenter. I'm sorry, there is one more. Mary Jane Zakas.

00:52:58.110 --> 00:53:03.239

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, Mary, and if you could spell your first and last name for the record, that would be great.

00:53:06.550 --> 00:53:09.879

Kristene Fisher: My name is Mary Jane Zakas.

00:53:10.000 --> 00:53:25.639

Kristene Fisher: M-A-R-Y J-A-N-E Z as in zebra, A-K-A-S. I am a county commissioner, and I would like to present 3 points.

00:53:26.440 --> 00:53:40.540

Kristene Fisher: First of all, in your PowerPoint, you presented that there are 5 areas that this fish formerly inhabited that no longer will support them.

00:53:41.500 --> 00:53:47.150

Kristene Fisher: Scientifically missing is when they were established,

00:53:47.430 --> 00:53:52.010

Kristene Fisher: How long they were there, and why they disappeared.

00:53:52.210 --> 00:53:55.560

Kristene Fisher: Perhaps this was a flooded area

00:53:55.790 --> 00:54:09.449

Kristene Fisher: that made a pond, and some fishermen tossed extra bait in there, and it lasted a year or two. I would think that that would be critical scientific information.

00:54:10.310 --> 00:54:11.800

Kristene Fisher: Number 2.

00:54:12.390 --> 00:54:24.150

Kristene Fisher: The groundwater defined does not include, I believe, deep, geothermal, natural water.

00:54:24.590 --> 00:54:35.199

Kristene Fisher: There is no danger where this fish is at the moment, because it is fed by subterranean continual water supply.

00:54:35.830 --> 00:54:40.719

Kristene Fisher: I think that is not listed, you're just calling it groundwater.

00:54:41.310 --> 00:54:51.079

Kristene Fisher: And my final thought, which nobody seems to be considering, is this was private property.

00:54:51.490 --> 00:55:03.170

Kristene Fisher: Was it legal the way that this has been brought to the public's attention? Or do we need to throw this out because laws were broken?

00:55:04.130 --> 00:55:06.210

Kristene Fisher: That's all I have to say.

00:55:08.690 --> 00:55:10.709

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Mary.

00:55:11.020 --> 00:55:14.119

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go ahead and move on to Kristene.

00:55:14.820 --> 00:55:27.749

Kristene Fisher: Okay, anything else? Bill? Okay, so this is Kristene Fisher, K-R-I-S-P-E-N-E F-I-S-H-E-R. I'm a Central Nevada County Farm Bureau President.

00:55:27.980 --> 00:55:45.820

Kristene Fisher: I will be making a much lengthier written comment, but I did want to say thank you for listening to us and for taking the time. I also think that it seems like there are some scientific information that hasn't been considered.

00:55:45.920 --> 00:55:58.790

Kristene Fisher: Through a conversation with the state water engineer just not too long ago, he said that there was no information that the state engineer's office has which identifies that over-pumping is taking place

00:55:58.790 --> 00:56:08.430

Kristene Fisher: even though the water levels in some wells are dropping on an annual basis. Based on withdrawal information, the amount of water pumped is within the perennial yield of the basin.

00:56:08.540 --> 00:56:17.929

Kristene Fisher: So, I think that needs to be considered. And we also know that the level of the spring where the fish are located hasn't declined, and the population of the fish

00:56:17.980 --> 00:56:30.319

Kristene Fisher: are stable based on Nevada Department of Wildlife survey, so I think we need to look into those things. Thank you very much for accommodating our group. I appreciate it. Thank you.

00:56:32.660 --> 00:56:36.510

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute.

00:56:37.150 --> 00:56:47.609

Megan Stone - AECOM: And if we have time remaining, and anyone in the meeting room would like to provide additional comments, just let us know in the chat, and we can

00:56:48.120 --> 00:56:50.239

Megan Stone - AECOM: replicate this process again.

00:56:50.870 --> 00:56:58.630

Megan Stone - AECOM: With that, we'll go ahead and move on to our next pre-registered commenter, who is Linda Williams.

00:57:02.700 --> 00:57:10.400

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright, I see Linda has her hand raised. Hi, Linda, I've gone ahead and prompted you to unmute.

00:57:11.060 --> 00:57:12.830

Megan Stone - AECOM: Are you able to hear us?

00:57:17.250 --> 00:57:24.090

Megan Stone - AECOM: It looks like you're unmuted, but we're unable to hear you, Linda. I'll give it a second here.

00:57:28.870 --> 00:57:29.860

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright.

00:57:30.270 --> 00:57:35.500

Megan Stone - AECOM: It looks like we are not able to hear any audio.

00:57:35.920 --> 00:57:44.510

Megan Stone - AECOM: One thing that I'll try and troubleshoot really quick, and then if we can't get it addressed, we'll get you some help in the chat.

00:57:44.700 --> 00:57:58.540

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you have headphones, or if you're on the computer, sometimes the microphone can select the wrong microphone. If you go to the microphone button at the bottom of your screen, there's an arrow.

00:57:59.050 --> 00:58:06.660

Megan Stone - AECOM: And that has different options for different microphones, so the wrong one can be selected sometimes.

00:58:08.400 --> 00:58:10.509

Megan Stone - AECOM: Give me a second here to..

00:58:11.580 --> 00:58:14.369

Megan Stone - AECOM: to try and troubles- troubleshoot that one.

00:58:15.880 --> 00:58:19.160

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'll go ahead and prompt you to unmute to see if that.

00:58:20.150 --> 00:58:21.220

Megan Stone - AECOM: helped.

00:58:23.320 --> 00:58:24.490

Linda Williams: Can you hear me now?

00:58:24.790 --> 00:58:26.589

Megan Stone - AECOM: Yes, we can.

00:58:26.590 --> 00:58:27.740

Linda Williams: Great, thank you.

00:58:29.090 --> 00:58:31.930

Megan Stone - AECOM: Please spell your first and last name for the record.

00:58:32.490 --> 00:58:37.829

Linda Williams: My name is Linda Williams, L-I-N-D-A W-I-L-L-I-A-N-S.

00:58:38.680 --> 00:58:40.750

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, you can begin your comment.

00:58:41.470 --> 00:58:48.859

Linda Williams: Well, first of all, I want to thank everybody who spoke ahead. Everything that has been brought up is

00:58:49.330 --> 00:58:52.370

Linda Williams: critical information.

00:58:52.560 --> 00:59:10.869

Linda Williams: I'm going to be redundant to a point, but yet I don't want to go back and state everything that all of the other people have stated, because everything they said is very critical to everything that we've been fighting for for the last year and a half.

00:59:11.030 --> 00:59:23.599

Linda Williams: So, I'm going to go on to also say that my parents moved to the Valley in the late 50s, so I've been there a long time as a farmer, as a business owner.

00:59:23.730 --> 00:59:27.539

Linda Williams: But prior to that, I'm also the historian.

00:59:27.670 --> 00:59:37.279

Linda Williams: And since the 1850s, the farmers and the miners have been the stewards of all the lands, the roadways and the waterways.

00:59:37.450 --> 00:59:49.990

Linda Williams: And yes, there were five or six pools in the 1948s, per some of the documentation.

00:59:50.310 --> 01:00:02.529

Linda Williams: And then later, surveys were done in the 1985, showing a little bit of change in the pools. Other pools have been created, but

01:00:02.880 --> 01:00:09.299

Linda Williams: when you think about everything that all the previous commenters have stated,

01:00:09.760 --> 01:00:13.439

Linda Williams: it hasn't been because of the farming. The farming

01:00:13.680 --> 01:00:25.209

Linda Williams: has—has actually improved in its technology and its—its ability to use less water, because we've been hammered on for decades

01:00:25.360 --> 01:00:45.140

Linda Williams: by DWR to change our practices or lose our water. And we have complied. We have changed our practices. We do-nothing is dissipated in the air anymore. We don't flood irrigate, unlike many other areas, with farming.

01:00:45.330 --> 01:00:53.300

Linda Williams: We take it seriously, we pay attention, and we do what we're told when we're at risk of losing our assets.

01:00:54.960 --> 01:01:04.150

Linda Williams: I plan on writing a comment, and I realize you would prefer scientific, but I also know that in your,

01:01:04.290 --> 01:01:08.810

Linda Williams: in your survey, you still state that you have

01:01:09.060 --> 01:01:24.730

Linda Williams: several surveys you have to do before you can actually make a final decision on this, and I understand the reasons why after reading, your executive summaries.

01:01:25.000 --> 01:01:29.600

Linda Williams: I believe there's a lot more that has to be done, and I do believe solely that

01:01:30.350 --> 01:01:42.049

Linda Williams: FWS, as well as all the residents of Fish Lake Valley, could come up with a viable plan that would enable these fish to survive without being listed as endangered.

01:01:42.340 --> 01:01:43.909

Linda Williams: Thank you, I yield back.

01:01:46.740 --> 01:01:53.140

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Linda. We'll go ahead and move on to our next pre-registered commenter.

01:01:53.440 --> 01:02:08.180

Megan Stone - AECOM: I do know, that we heard from Tamara in our, community center room, so I think we'll go ahead and move on to our next preregistered commenter, who is Dennis Bradley.

01:02:11.770 --> 01:02:19.770

Megan Stone - AECOM: Dennis, I do see you in our participants list. If you'd like to comment this evening, please do raise your hand, and we'll get you-

01:02:19.950 --> 01:02:24.280

Megan Stone - AECOM: Oh, it looks like you did note in the chat that you

01:02:25.040 --> 01:02:29.750

Megan Stone - AECOM: were going to forego commenting this evening. Thank you for letting us know that.

01:02:30.130 --> 01:02:40.020

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go ahead and move on to our next pre-registered commenter who is Patrick Donnelly.

01:02:41.960 --> 01:02:47.020

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi, Patrick. We'll go ahead and prompt you to unmute now.

01:02:47.780 --> 01:02:49.309

Megan Stone - AECOM: Can you hear us?

01:02:49.870 --> 01:02:50.900

Patrick Donnelly: Yes, hello.

01:02:51.800 --> 01:02:55.580

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi there, could you please spell your first and last name for the record?

01:02:55.970 --> 01:03:00.580

Patrick Donnelly: Yeah, this is Patrick Donnelly, P-A-T-R-I-C-K.

01:03:00.700 --> 01:03:04.170

Patrick Donnelly: D-O-N-N-E-L-L-Y.

01:03:04.630 --> 01:03:08.820

Patrick Donnelly: And I'm the Great Basin Director with the Center for Biological Diversity.

01:03:09.070 --> 01:03:15.850

Patrick Donnelly: We wrote the petition to protect the Fish Lake Valley tui chub, and we sued the Service when it failed to meet the statutory deadlines.

01:03:15.960 --> 01:03:20.060

Patrick Donnelly: And a settlement of that litigation led to this proposed rule.

01:03:20.690 --> 01:03:32.110

Patrick Donnelly: The Endangered Species Act says that the Secretary shall make listing determinations solely on the basis of the best scientific and commercial data available to him after conducting a review of the status of the species.

01:03:32.430 --> 01:03:38.440

Patrick Donnelly: The Act does not allow for exceptions of listing species due to economic or social considerations.

01:03:38.730 --> 01:03:45.859

Patrick Donnelly: The question before the Service is not, is it politically popular to list this subspecies, or could listing have a

01:03:46.000 --> 01:03:59.200

Patrick Donnelly: economic ramifications. The question is, does the science support that the subspecies is in danger of extinction across all or a significantly—a significant portion of its range? And the answer to that is unequivocally yes.

01:03:59.500 --> 01:04:12.049

Patrick Donnelly: You know, it's disappeared across most of its range because its habitats disappeared. You know, as we've heard, it was in many more locations than it is today. So, you know, even absent

01:04:12.850 --> 01:04:23.520

Patrick Donnelly: current trends, it would already qualify for the Endangered Species Act protection, simply because it's disappeared across most of the places it used to exist.

01:04:23.770 --> 01:04:39.340

Patrick Donnelly: But there are current threats. You know, groundwater levels are continuing to decline across Fish Lake Valley. Groundwater aquifers are in connection with one another and declines in one area can affect other places in the basin.

01:04:39.680 --> 01:04:50.560

Patrick Donnelly: And there are additional threats compounding the risks to the subspecies. Ioneer's Rhyolite Ridge Lithium Mine will

pump groundwater from along the flow path to the springs from the White Mountains.

01:04:51.150 --> 01:04:53.759

Patrick Donnelly: And it will increase overall pumping in the basin.

01:04:54.260 --> 01:05:03.140

Patrick Donnelly: There's also other lithium mining operations that are proposed, which would rely on pumping brines for mining, which could be connected to the thermal waters that supply McNett Ranch.

01:05:03.710 --> 01:05:10.689

Patrick Donnelly: Geothermal energy also poses an acute risk to this subspecies, and the Service already found, when they listed the Dixie Valley Toad,

01:05:10.800 --> 01:05:15.880

Patrick Donnelly: that geothermal energy poses a risk to adjacent surface thermal water features.

01:05:16.060 --> 01:05:19.940

Patrick Donnelly: And there's a geothermal power plant proposed for, right nearby.

01:05:20.730 --> 01:05:25.139

Patrick Donnelly: And climate change and invasive species also remain significant threats.

01:05:26.100 --> 01:05:42.799

Patrick Donnelly: You know, there's been discussion that somehow listing this fish would cause the end of agriculture in Fish Lake Valley, and that's just not what would happen. There are dozens of federally listed endangered species all across the state of Nevada, and they haven't shut down agriculture basically anywhere in the state, other than in a limited radius around Devil's Hole.

01:05:42.970 --> 01:05:51.840

Patrick Donnelly: That notorious example is a big outlier, and in reality, there are listed fish swimming around next to farms, from Jarbidge to Moapa and all points in between.

01:05:52.340 --> 01:05:58.389

Patrick Donnelly: Listing could result in reasonable curbs put on new demands to water, like mining or geothermal energy.

01:05:58.500 --> 01:06:01.340

Patrick Donnelly: But it's not going to shut down agriculture.

01:06:01.450 --> 01:06:08.010

Patrick Donnelly: So, in conclusion, we support the proposed listing rule and long live the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

01:06:10.430 --> 01:06:16.660

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Patrick. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute and lower your hand.

01:06:17.020 --> 01:06:33.730

Megan Stone - AECOM: And we did get confirmation from Sean Pringle that they would forego commenting this evening. So, with that, we'll move on to our next pre-registered commenter, who is Karl Moller.

01:06:40.360 --> 01:06:47.429

Megan Stone - AECOM: And at this time, we're transitioning into people who indicated they potentially wanted to offer a comment

01:06:47.430 --> 01:07:03.190

Megan Stone - AECOM: when they signed up for the meeting, so all of these, names that we're calling on, if you no longer like to provide a comment, just let us know. I don't see that we have Karl on so we'll go to Teresa, who has their hand raised.

01:07:03.550 --> 01:07:09.370

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi there, Teresa. You should be able to unmute now. Are you able to hear us?

01:07:17.560 --> 01:07:20.980

Megan Stone - AECOM: It looks like we don't have audio coming in yet.

01:07:22.150 --> 01:07:26.310

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go ahead and give it a moment here.

01:07:30.740 --> 01:07:34.979

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright, I'll kind of walk you through a potential

01:07:35.170 --> 01:07:44.229

Megan Stone - AECOM: troubleshooting thing. Sometimes the wrong microphone can be selected. So, if you go down to your audio button-

01:07:44.230 --> 01:07:46.920

Theresa Moller: button. How... how's that?

01:07:47.270 --> 01:07:47.700

Megan Stone - AECOM: We got... we got you

01:07:47.700 --> 01:07:52.830

Theresa Moller: Yeah, oh, good. Okay, well, thank you for having us this evening.

01:07:52.830 --> 01:08:16.770

Theresa Moller: And I just want to make a short comment. There were so many wonderful people that were on today, and I just want—my comment is, when I see the—what they did in Death Valley, where they fenced off the area, I think that would be a really easy solution, and not take the water. I mean, if you listen to the experts in the water, then this person, Patrick Donnelly, doesn't know what the [profanity] he's talking about.

01:08:16.770 --> 01:08:34.980

Theresa Moller: So, when you talk to people that know about water, and how the wells are, and the level of the water, and instead of stifling business and people's lives are in jeopardy because of these people over a fish, it just makes me just furious that they would—

01:08:34.979 --> 01:08:59.709

Theresa Moller: they would put people's lives and put a fish, a four-inch fish, ahead of people's lives. So, I'm very passionate about this, that what Patrick is doing is just a way to take people's property and ruin their livelihoods, and it's just wrong what he's doing. So I suggest, if we could make a, like, a decision on maybe fencing off... I've been there at that little pool.

01:08:59.710 --> 01:09:16.489

Theresa Moller: Fence it off, and monitor it, and leave the people alone, and let them farm, and do what they've been doing here for two to three hundred years without people like Patrick Donnelly ruining their lives. And so that's my comment, and I pray for you guys to do the right thing. Thank you.

01:09:18.430 --> 01:09:24.690

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute and lower your hand.

01:09:25.240 --> 01:09:35.339

Megan Stone - AECOM: And, we will move on to our next pre-registered commenter, who is Anita Tianhaara.

01:09:38.460 --> 01:09:42.750

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright, I do see we have Anita in our participants list.

01:09:42.979 --> 01:09:56.310

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, we'll go ahead and see if you'd still like to provide a comment this evening. You can raise your hand by pressing the raise hand button at the bottom of your Zoom toolbar.

01:10:03.990 --> 01:10:05.090

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright.

01:10:06.750 --> 01:10:11.879

Megan Stone - AECOM: just in case you're having trouble, accessing that, I

01:10:12.000 --> 01:10:16.269

Megan Stone - AECOM: allowed you to unmute, Anita, if you'd like to provide your comment.

01:10:16.600 --> 01:10:23.749

Megan Stone - AECOM: You can go ahead and unmute yourself, and if not, we'll go ahead and move on to our next pre-registered commenter.

01:10:28.320 --> 01:10:29.470

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright.

01:10:30.330 --> 01:10:35.719

Megan Stone - AECOM: Looks like we will move on to our next pre-registered commenter, Kathleen Keyes.

01:10:41.640 --> 01:10:54.570

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alrighty, I don't see that we have a Kathleen in our participants list this evening, so we'll go ahead and move on to our next pre-registered commenter, who is Dan Peterson.

01:10:55.080 --> 01:11:06.830

Megan Stone - AECOM: Dan, I do see you on our participants list. If you'd like to provide a comment, please do, access that raise hand feature, and we'll go ahead and get you unmuted.

01:11:13.570 --> 01:11:20.489

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright, just in case you're having trouble with the raise hand button, I'll go ahead and allow you to unmute now, in case you.

01:11:20.490 --> 01:11:21.650

Dan Peterson: Can you hear me now?

01:11:22.220 --> 01:11:23.709

Megan Stone - AECOM: Yes, we can hear you.

01:11:23.710 --> 01:11:26.510

Dan Peterson: Okay, this is Dan Peterson, D-A-N.

01:11:26.610 --> 01:11:43.090

Dan Peterson: Capital P-E-T-E-R-S-O-N. I hadn't really planned on making a comment. I did written comments in the first round, but just looking at your presentation today, I think some of your information

01:11:43.120 --> 01:11:50.519

Dan Peterson: seems to be a little inaccurate on the McNett Pond, but that's a-

01:11:50.520 --> 01:12:10.430

Dan Peterson: I've been down there many times, and there's a live spring there that's been running... I've been in the valley. I live within about four miles of where this, where the fish are, and this spring has been running

01:12:10.440 --> 01:12:14.690

Dan Peterson: constantly, for as long as I've been there. I've been there since 19

01:12:14.730 --> 01:12:27.049

Dan Peterson: 79, and so I think you've got a little bit of misinformation on... I think you got to go back and re-look at what you have there for that, for the McNett,

01:12:27.050 --> 01:12:44.659

Dan Peterson: property, and incidentally, McNett... there's two McNett properties. There's an upper McNett and a lower McNett, and this... this... this fish is on the lower McNett. So, and I back up all the people that commented beforehand. Thank you.

01:12:46.130 --> 01:13:02.099

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Dan. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute, and we'll move on to our next individual who indicated they'd like to potentially provide a comment when registering for this evening's meeting, and that is Justin Fike.

01:13:02.480 --> 01:13:13.780

Megan Stone - AECOM: I do see Justin in our participants list. If you would like to, go ahead and provide your comment, please do raise your hand, and we'll get you unmuted.

01:13:24.990 --> 01:13:26.080

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright.

01:13:27.800 --> 01:13:44.690

Megan Stone - AECOM: I don't see that we have a raised hand from Justin. I've allowed you to unmute just in case you're having trouble accessing that. And if not, we'll go ahead and move on to our next preregistered commenter, who is Patricia Rippie.

01:13:46.870 --> 01:13:47.700

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright.

01:13:49.170 --> 01:13:54.539

Megan Stone - AECOM: Patricia, if you would like to provide a comment, we ask that you please raise your hand.

01:13:54.760 --> 01:13:58.869

Megan Stone - AECOM: You can find that button at the bottom of your Zoom toolbar.

01:14:02.340 --> 01:14:04.940

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright, I do see your hand raised.

01:14:05.200 --> 01:14:07.750

Megan Stone - AECOM: Let's go ahead and prompt you to unmute.

01:14:07.860 --> 01:14:10.290

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi, Patricia, are you able to hear us?

01:14:10.290 --> 01:14:11.000

Patricia Rippie: Yes.

01:14:12.640 --> 01:14:16.119

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you. Could you please spell your first and last name for the record?

01:14:16.740 --> 01:14:21.940

Patricia Rippie: P-A-T-R-I-C-I-A R-I-P-P-I-E.

01:14:24.460 --> 01:14:26.599

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, you can begin your comment.

01:14:26.600 --> 01:14:29.799

Patricia Rippie: Okay, I go by Trish Rippie,

01:14:30.160 --> 01:14:38.420

Patricia Rippie: This property at Lower McNett belonged to Dirk Pearson and Sandy Shaw in their LLC, HRH Nevada Resources.

01:14:39.370 --> 01:14:43.390

Patricia Rippie: I'm the executor of their estate, and I would..

01:14:44.390 --> 01:15:00.260

Patricia Rippie: love if we could carry on their point of view. They would be very much opposed to anything to do with Center for Biological Diversity, and I hope no one from that organization has ever set foot on this property, because they've never asked permission.

01:15:00.880 --> 01:15:05.159

Patricia Rippie: This is private property, as Mary Jane pointed out.

01:15:05.390 --> 01:15:14.290

Patricia Rippie: And there shouldn't be anyone on that property without permission from the owners. That's all I have to say. Thank you.

01:15:15.970 --> 01:15:19.989

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute.

01:15:20.290 --> 01:15:24.970

Megan Stone - AECOM: And we'll move on to our next individual.

01:15:25.100 --> 01:15:28.030

Megan Stone - AECOM: Who... well, it looks like we have...

01:15:28.200 --> 01:15:31.310

Megan Stone - AECOM: Moved through our list of people who indicated
01:15:31.480 --> 01:15:40.959

Megan Stone - AECOM: they potentially wanted to comment when they registered for this evening's meeting. So, with that, we'll go ahead and open it up

01:15:41.000 --> 01:15:54.839

Megan Stone - AECOM: To anyone who would like to provide a comment, regardless of whether they signed up to comment when they registered. But at this time, we'll focus on people who have not yet had the chance to comment.

01:15:55.080 --> 01:16:01.769

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, if you would like to provide a comment at this time, we ask that you raise your hand.

01:16:01.880 --> 01:16:11.700

Megan Stone - AECOM: If you're on the computer, you can find the raise hand button at the bottom of your screen. If you're on the phone, you can press *9 to raise your hand.

01:16:12.020 --> 01:16:19.739

Megan Stone - AECOM: And again, we'll go ahead and focus right now on people who, have not had the opportunity to comment yet.

01:16:38.260 --> 01:16:48.720

Megan Stone - AECOM: All right, I'm going to give it a moment here to just see if we have any hands raised from folks who have not yet had the opportunity to provide a comment.

01:16:48.900 --> 01:16:58.700

Megan Stone - AECOM: And then we'll give it a few minutes and move on to folks who would like to comment up to one more time who have already commented.

01:16:59.120 --> 01:17:09.429

Megan Stone - AECOM: We will be accepting verbal comments this evening until 7pm Pacific time, so we'll be on for another

01:17:09.560 --> 01:17:22.279

Megan Stone - AECOM: 40 minutes or so, ready to listen to comments, and we'll keep an eye out for anyone who may join later on, who we called on earlier, but wasn't at the meeting yet.

01:17:23.410 --> 01:17:29.970

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, thank you, everyone, for your patience as we just give it a moment for folks to potentially raise their hands.

01:17:33.800 --> 01:17:38.670

Megan Stone - AECOM: And if anybody is having, issues accessing

01:17:38.780 --> 01:17:48.740

Megan Stone - AECOM: the raise hand feature or tech issues at any point, you can go ahead and send a chat to hosts and panelists, and we'll get you some support.

01:17:49.250 --> 01:18:01.100

Megan Stone - AECOM: We also do have the phone number to call in to this meeting up on the screen, if you'd like to call in if your audio

01:18:01.280 --> 01:18:06.509

Megan Stone - AECOM: is having any trouble at any point, that's a great backup option as well.

01:18:17.150 --> 01:18:18.080

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright.

01:18:18.380 --> 01:18:29.350

Megan Stone - AECOM: I don't see that we have any hands raised from folks, who haven't had the opportunity to comment yet, so with that, we'll go ahead and let

01:18:29.560 --> 01:18:39.750

Megan Stone - AECOM: individuals who have already commented have one opportunity to comment another time. So, we'll move to Linda Williams first.

01:18:41.790 --> 01:18:50.270

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hi, Linda, you should be able to unmute now, and if you could spell your first and last name again, just so that the transcript picks it up, that would be great.

01:18:51.150 --> 01:18:56.750

Linda Williams: Linda Williams, L-I-N-D-A W-I-L-L-I-A-M-S.

01:18:58.060 --> 01:19:00.139

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, you can begin your comment.

01:19:02.820 --> 01:19:10.450

Linda Williams: I want to kind of backtrack a little bit and talk about water being pumped, supposedly excessively by farmers.

01:19:12.220 --> 01:19:19.619

Linda Williams: If they were truly able to shut down all the agricultural water in the valley, the valley wouldn't exist.

01:19:20.380 --> 01:19:24.430

Linda Williams: if-it would just be a dust bowl. It may-

01:19:25.030 --> 01:19:29.309

Linda Williams: zero water pumped in the valley would result in alkali soils.

01:19:29.440 --> 01:19:38.149

Linda Williams: seen through the valley in areas currently that are old farms that have sat dormant for 15 to 20 years. New farmers have come in and turned the useless

01:19:38.310 --> 01:19:42.669

Linda Williams: health hazardous soils into crops for humans and animals.

01:19:43.050 --> 01:20:00.560

Linda Williams: In your statements, you have declared that you need to have proper foliage and sustenance for the tui chub, and there has to be some sort of ecological balance for them.

01:20:00.710 --> 01:20:07.680

Linda Williams: Without water, these areas are going to turn to clay, as in many spots, not all spots, of course.

01:20:07.790 --> 01:20:13.530

Linda Williams: But the-the salt flats that we all refer to going out through the back end

01:20:13.670 --> 01:20:16.390

Linda Williams: of the valley past the Hot Box.

01:20:16.790 --> 01:20:20.069

Linda Williams: That's a classic example of what could happen.

01:20:20.250 --> 01:20:24.620

Linda Williams: It will become a wasteland in wildlife.

01:20:25.490 --> 01:20:30.469

Linda Williams: One more thing I'd like to say that-that,

01:20:31.090 --> 01:20:40.049

Linda Williams: I may have misunderstood what Patrick commented on, stating just now that we have no intention of turning off the farmers' water.

01:20:40.630 --> 01:20:48.780

Linda Williams: Yet, he was quoted on May 21st, 2025 by the Inside Climate News

01:20:48.900 --> 01:20:51.400

Linda Williams: that what we need, this is quote

01:20:51.630 --> 01:20:55.370

Linda Williams: "What we need is for farmers to turn off their pivots.

01:20:55.510 --> 01:20:59.620

Linda Williams: But not for a year, comma, forever." End quote.

01:21:00.440 --> 01:21:04.530

Linda Williams: If that was an incorrect statement by

01:21:04.740 --> 01:21:10.800

Linda Williams: Inside Climate News, Patrick, you need to get it Rescinded.

01:21:12.420 --> 01:21:14.329

Linda Williams: Thank you. I yield back.

01:21:18.340 --> 01:21:25.149

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, Linda. We'll go ahead and place you back on mute and lower your hand.

01:21:27.050 --> 01:21:35.870

Megan Stone - AECOM: And I'll just do another reminder, in case we have any phone callers on. To raise your hand, you can press *9

01:21:36.240 --> 01:21:37.969

Megan Stone - AECOM: to

01:21:38.480 --> 01:21:50.170

Megan Stone - AECOM: let us know that you're on and would like to provide a comment. And then at this time, we'll be continuing to listen to comments for another

01:21:50.320 --> 01:22:08.659

Megan Stone - AECOM: 35 minutes or so, and we ask that if anybody hasn't had the opportunity to speak at this time, that they raise their hand. And if not, we'll continue to move through folks who have commented and allow them one additional opportunity to comment.

01:22:08.980 --> 01:22:13.270

Megan Stone - AECOM: I did want to provide a reminder that we asked that

01:22:13.280 --> 01:22:31.350

Megan Stone - AECOM: folks, please be respectful of others and their viewpoints. Refrain from using profanity this evening, and from, personal comments. The Service wants to hear from everybody, and in order to,

01:22:31.740 --> 01:22:35.430

Megan Stone - AECOM: have, the-

01:22:36.170 --> 01:22:43.509

Megan Stone - AECOM: the meeting runs smoothly, we'd like to just, stick to those ground rules. So just wanted to provide that reminder.

01:22:44.180 --> 01:22:50.849

Megan Stone - AECOM: All right, with that, we'll go ahead and move to Kristene Fisher with the Community Center.

01:22:51.460 --> 01:22:54.120

Megan Stone - AECOM: I'll prompt you guys to unmute there.

01:22:55.370 --> 01:22:57.870

Megan Stone - AECOM: You should be able to unmute now.

01:22:59.920 --> 01:23:02.430

Kristene Fisher: Hi! Ralph Keyes is back!

01:23:03.510 --> 01:23:13.589

Kristene Fisher: And we'll have another after. Yeah, just... this is Ralph Keyes again, I spoke earlier. I would just like to make a little more comment about the Fish Lake Valley tui chub.

01:23:13.740 --> 01:23:26.039

Kristene Fisher: And I believe it seems to be a very resilient species. It lives here in Fish Lake Valley, and it lives in a habitat outside the valley, in a whole different ecological system, where the water's colder, different..

01:23:26.140 --> 01:23:32.460

Kristene Fisher: types of water and so on. I think, with many, many sources of water in Esmeralda County.

01:23:32.850 --> 01:23:48.040

Kristene Fisher: suitable habitat could be found in other areas. We have many seeps and springs and ponds within Esmeralda County that may be suitable habitat for, preserving the species. So I think that really needs to be looked at, without, you know, having to..

01:23:48.460 --> 01:23:57.549

Kristene Fisher: and economically attack the valley and its residents here in the county's finances. So, I think other alternatives need to be looked at, you know?

01:23:58.090 --> 01:23:59.990

Kristene Fisher: I just feel that,

01:24:00.450 --> 01:24:08.650

Kristene Fisher: you need to look in a bigger, wider area for habitat for this, just to, maintain the species.

01:24:09.180 --> 01:24:10.619

Kristene Fisher: That's all. Thank you.

01:24:13.140 --> 01:24:18.200

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, and I think I heard we have another commenter in the room.

01:24:18.470 --> 01:24:20.670

Kristene Fisher: Yes, Mary Jane Zakas?

01:24:20.930 --> 01:24:27.039

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, and Mary, if you could spell your name again for us so the transcript picks it up, that would be great.

01:24:28.010 --> 01:24:30.350

Kristene Fisher: Yes, I see that you misspelled

01:24:30.650 --> 01:24:40.780

Kristene Fisher: my last name, let me give it to you again. M-A-R-Y J-A-N-E Z-A-K-A-S.

01:24:41.860 --> 01:24:50.890

Kristene Fisher: So, as we're going along here, everything seems to need to be connected to scientific reality.

01:24:51.130 --> 01:24:56.289

Kristene Fisher: And I would like to point out that Mr. Donnelly's premise

01:24:56.450 --> 01:25:01.430

Kristene Fisher: seems to be begging the question, with a lot of

01:25:01.580 --> 01:25:10.700

Kristene Fisher: could, should, and in the future. Those things are not scientific, and they should be tossed out.

01:25:11.170 --> 01:25:28.070

Kristene Fisher: Secondly, I would just like to say that tui chub lived here for enough of their generations to develop their own local color. This does not make them a separate species, and I failed to see the

01:25:28.670 --> 01:25:35.809

Kristene Fisher: evidence that it has, something you might want to add to your consideration. Thank you.

01:25:37.920 --> 01:25:39.780

Kristene Fisher: We do have one more.

01:25:41.910 --> 01:25:45.140

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment, and we'll move to our next commenter.

01:25:46.050 --> 01:25:47.210

Kristene Fisher: John Maurer.

01:25:47.490 --> 01:25:57.590

Kristene Fisher: Thank you, ma'am. My name's John Maurer, J-O-H-N M-A-U-R-E-R. First, I'd like to point out that Mr. Donnelly said that, Mineral Ridge

01:25:57.900 --> 01:26:09.290

Kristene Fisher: if they came into operation, would pump more water out of this valley, and that's not how Division of Water Resources works, and I think, actually, if you're going from an agricultural use

01:26:09.320 --> 01:26:23.780

Kristene Fisher: to a mining use, there's actually a curtailment in the amount of water that they could take as far as what they bought versus what they could take. So, there's always a balance, and the Division of Water Resources is critical to that.

01:26:23.890 --> 01:26:38.699

Kristene Fisher: Furthermore, in the 80s, my dad and some other folks here were having a meeting with the then water engineer, and geothermal was just coming into play here, the first wells were being drilled, and there was a lot of concern about those wells

01:26:38.910 --> 01:26:43.120

Kristene Fisher: affecting the farmers and the water that was being pumped

01:26:43.270 --> 01:26:52.170

Kristene Fisher: and the Division of Water Resources said that--told these guys here in the Valley that this water in the geothermal field

01:26:52.360 --> 01:26:57.610

Kristene Fisher: is Jurassic water, meaning it was old water coming from deep.

01:26:57.740 --> 01:27:10.609

Kristene Fisher: Obviously, their wells are a lot deeper than what we're using around here, but that's what they said, and so then my dad asked that question, so does that mean that we can just drill down deep ourselves and get into this different water? What's to stop us?

01:27:10.710 --> 01:27:27.009

Kristene Fisher: And they said, no, you can't do that. The point is, there is different waters, there's different water sources, and again, that hot box, that McNett area, is a different water source that's got water coming from who knows where, and you really don't

01:27:27.730 --> 01:27:36.959

Kristene Fisher: it seems like Division of Water Resources hasn't been contacted about any of this stuff in regards to water, too. Anyway, those are my thoughts. Thank you for your time.

01:27:38.680 --> 01:27:40.229

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you for your comment.

01:27:40.920 --> 01:27:45.509

Megan Stone - AECOM: And is there anyone else in the room who would like to provide a comment?

01:27:46.780 --> 01:27:48.770

Kristene Fisher: No, I think we're done, thank you.

01:27:49.470 --> 01:27:55.849

Megan Stone - AECOM: Okay, thank you, Kristene. We'll go ahead and mute you and move on

01:27:56.440 --> 01:28:06.599

Megan Stone - AECOM: to, just taking a look at our participants list. I don't see at the moment that we have any hands raised from individuals we haven't heard from yet

01:28:06.990 --> 01:28:26.490

Megan Stone - AECOM: this evening, so we'll go ahead and take a look and see if we have any hands raised. As a reminder, we'll be accepting comments for another 30 minutes. At this time, we'll be accepting comments from those who haven't had a chance to provide a comment, and

01:28:26.670 --> 01:28:30.489

Megan Stone - AECOM: and or people who have only commented once thus far.

01:28:31.350 --> 01:28:38.870

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll also keep an eye out to see if we have any new folks join us this evening. And..

01:28:39.140 --> 01:28:46.080

Megan Stone - AECOM: until then, I'll go ahead and go on mute and keep an eye out on the hands raised list, and we'll keep this slide up

01:28:46.260 --> 01:28:51.450

Megan Stone - AECOM: for folks to see how they can raise their hand. Thank you, everyone.

01:36:37.050 --> 01:36:52.039

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello, everyone. Just a reminder that we'll be on for another 25 minutes or so, ready to listen to any verbal public comments that you might have related to the proposed listing.

01:36:52.350 --> 01:37:10.250

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go ahead and continue to monitor the attendee list to see if we have any new attendees join us this evening, or any folks who would like to provide a comment that we haven't heard from, or have only heard from once. With that, we'll go ahead and switch to our last slide.

01:37:10.320 --> 01:37:14.609

Megan Stone - AECOM: And put some information up on the screen about where you can provide

01:37:14.710 --> 01:37:21.189

Megan Stone - AECOM: comments, and how you can provide those comments. We have the comment deadline here,

01:37:21.750 --> 01:37:33.279

Megan Stone - AECOM: information about how you can submit your comments on regulations.gov electronically, and then how hard copy written comments can be submitted by U.S. mail.

01:37:33.380 --> 01:37:36.979

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll also go ahead and paste this information in the chat.

01:37:38.650 --> 01:37:42.350

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, everyone, and we'll keep an eye out for hands raised.

01:43:06.380 --> 01:43:08.130

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello, everyone.

01:43:08.360 --> 01:43:17.439

Megan Stone - AECOM: I wanted to come on and make an announcement that we're still accepting verbal comments. We'll be accepting them for another 17 minutes or so.

01:43:17.440 --> 01:43:34.510

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, if you'd like to provide a comment this evening, please do raise your hand, and we'll get you unmuted. If

you're joining us through the phone, you can press *9 on your phone keypad to get your hand raised, and we'll then get you unmuted so you can provide your comment.

01:43:35.040 --> 01:43:48.070

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll go ahead and continue to leave this slide up with information on how you can provide comments electronically or hard copy through mail, and we'll keep an eye out for anyone who might join us

01:43:48.200 --> 01:43:52.220

Megan Stone - AECOM: late, or anyone who has their hand raised. Thank you.

01:50:34.710 --> 01:50:42.880

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello again, everyone. We'll be accepting verbal public comments for another 10 minutes this evening.

01:50:43.350 --> 01:50:49.590

Megan Stone - AECOM: So, if anyone would like to provide a comment, we ask that you please raise your hand to let us know you're ready

01:50:49.730 --> 01:50:57.290

Megan Stone - AECOM: and able to offer that comment this evening. If you're joining on the phone, you can press *9 to raise your hand.

01:50:57.420 --> 01:51:11.130

Megan Stone - AECOM: We'll continue to keep an eye out for any hands raised, or any folks who might join us, this evening, and we'll leave this slide up that has information on the different methods for commenting. Thank you.

618

01:55:33.330 --> 01:55:45.659

Megan Stone - AECOM: Hello again, everyone. We will be on, accepting verbal public comments for another 5 minutes, so if you'd like to provide a comment, please do raise your hand, and we'll go ahead and get you unmuted.

01:55:45.800 --> 01:55:50.040

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, if you're a phone caller, you can press *9 to raise your hand.

01:55:50.280 --> 01:55:58.279

Megan Stone - AECOM: And we'll go ahead and continue to leave the information up on this slide about the different methods for commenting. Thank you.

01:58:23.270 --> 01:58:38.619

Megan Stone - AECOM: All right, we do have a couple minutes here left in our virtual public hearing this evening, so if anyone would like to provide a comment, we do have time for one, please do raise your hand if you would like to provide a comment, and we'll get you unmuted.

01:58:40.490 --> 01:58:53.490

Megan Stone - AECOM: Again, we have the information up on the screen and in the chat about where public comments can be provided in writing, if you'd prefer to provide them in writing rather than verbally this evening.

01:58:53.750 --> 01:58:57.830

Megan Stone - AECOM: Thank you, everyone. We'll give it just another moment here before closing out.

02:00:01.820 --> 02:00:14.179

Megan Stone - AECOM: Alright, with that, we've reached the scheduled end time of this evening's virtual public hearing. A reminder that the comment period closes on March 6, 2026.

02:00:14.180 --> 02:00:25.160

Megan Stone - AECOM: On behalf of the Service, we want to thank everyone for attending, listening in, and providing comments. We appreciate you taking the time out of your evening to participate in this process

02:00:25.160 --> 02:00:29.480

Megan Stone - AECOM: and look forward to receiving your input. Thank you and have a great evening.