1	STATE OF NEBRASKA						
2	NEBRASKA POWER REVIEW BOARD						
3							
4	IN THE MATTER OF THE )						
5	CENTRAL NEBRASKA PUBLIC ) CHARTER AMENDMENT 6 POWER AND IRRIGATION )						
6	DISTRICT'S PETITION TO ) AMEND ITS CHARTER ) TRANSCRIPT OF						
7	) HEARING IN THE MATTER OF THE )						
8	DAWSON PUBLIC POWER ) DAY 1-TESTIMONY DISTRICT'S PETITION FOR )						
9	DISSOLUTION )						
10							
11							
12	Proceedings had before TIMOTHY J. TEXEL,						
13	HEARING OFFICER, 1st Floor Hearing Room, 301						
14	Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska, on						
15	February 15, 2023.						
16							
17	BOARD MEMBERS:						
18	Mr. Frank J. Reida - Chair (Via WebEx)						
19	Mr. Chuck Hutchison - Vice Chair						
20	Mr. Greg Moen						
21	Ms. Bridget Peck (Via WebEx)						
22	Ms. Kristen Gottschalk						
23							
24							
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1	I-N-D-E-X									
2	STIPULATIONS Page Combined Board Bound by POC 36									
3	Calling of Protestants Witnesses 38									
4	Reciprocal Stip, RE: Exhibits 42 Use of PPA Excerpt									
5	Hieden Expected Testiomony 1142 Waller Expected Testimony 1142									
6		NITI C		Dogo						
7	OPENING STATEME Mr. Brashear Mr. Degan									
8	CNPPID									
9	WITNESSES	Direct	Cross	Redirect						
10	WITNESSES D. Rowe S. Dicke D. Brundage	197	230 456	257 554						
11	D. Brundage	200	450	554						
12	CNPPID/DAWSON WITNESSES									
13	G. Kautz D. Muhlbach	559 663	610 677	653 707						
14	T.P. Schenken	714	756	762						
15	PROTESTANTS WITNESSES									
16	D. Wendell G. Robison			906 977						
17	B. Jundeen	988		9 /  / 						
18	J. Yahn D. Nelson	1054	1069	  1111						
19	T. Schwarz	1073	1090	1111						
20	CNPPID/DAWSON REBUTTAL	1100	1120							
21	D. Batie	1123	1139							
22										
23										
24										
25										

1	EXHIBITS Mar	kad	R Offere	uled	
2	Exhibit 19. Birkett Memo	8	26		
3 4	Exhibit 20. Third Prehearing Conference Order	8	22	22	
5	Exhibit 21. Public Presentation at Joint Meeting 2/3/22	8	39	41	
6	Exhibit 22. PSE Phase 2 Report	8	416	417	
7	Exhibit 23. Sonju CV	8	39	41	
9	Exhibit 24. Subdivision Alternatives considered	8	39	41	
10	Exhibit 25. Public Presentation by GMs and Counsel, Kearney 8/31/22	8	39	41	
12	Exhibit 26. Public Presentation by Brundage 9/6/22	8	39	41	
14	Exhibit 27. Hammel Article, 10/24/22	8	39	41	
15	Exhibit 28. Public Presentation by GMs, Elwood 10/24/22	8	39	41	
16 17	Exhibit 29. Lexington Clipper- Herald Article 1/4/23	8	39	41	
18	Exhibit 30. Kearney Hub Article 1/9/23	8	39	41	
19 20	Exhibit 31. 2019-E65 Water Service Agreement	8	39	41	
21	Exhibit 32. 2019-E67 Water	8	39	41	
22	Service Agreement Exhibit 33. 2019-Supply Canal	0	33	<b>4</b> T	
23	Water Service Agreement	8	39	41	
24	Exhibit 34. 2019-Phelps Water Service Agreement	8	39	41	

1	EXHIBITS Marked		Ruled	
2	Exhibit 35. 12 Values of Merger 8			
3	Exhibit 36. Revenue Sources Chart 8	39	41	
5	Exhibit 37. Groundwater Level Changes Map 8	39	41	
6	Exhibit 38. Dawson's Debt Assumption Plan 8	39	41	
7	Assumption Plan 8  Exhibit 39. Letter from Schenken	39	41	
8	to Power Review 12/13/22 8	764	765	
9   10	Exhibit 40. Dawson Form 7 2022 (Unaudited) 8	39	41	
11	Exhibit 41. Combined Entity Territory Map 7/1/23 8	39	41	
12	Exhibit 42. Advisory Opinion 205 8	39	41	
13	Exhibit 43. Subdivision Map with Director Residences as of 7/1/23 8	39	41	
14	Exhibit 44. Plan of Consolidation 8	39	41	
15	Exhibit 45. Joint Phase I Presentation 3/31/21 8	39	41	
17	Exhibit 46. 2007 Fax Letter from Central Water Users 1097	1097	1098	
18	Exhibit 47. Central Letter to Irrigators 528	533	533	
20	Exhibit 48. Dahlgren 2/16/22 Comments to Board 610	610	610	
21	Exhibit 49. Dahlgren 12/29/21			
22	Comments to Board 610			
23	Exhibit 50. Survey Comments 610	610	610	
24	Exhibit 51. Water Users Group Letter 610	610	610	

1	EXHIBITS Ma	arked		ıled
2	Exhibit 52. Gosper Farm Bureau Letter		610	
3				
4	Exhibit 53. Heiden 3/31/22 Email	610	610	610
5	Exhibit 54. McCormick 3/11/22 Email	610	610	610
6	Exhibit 55. Hydro PPA 11/3/11	610	610	610
8	Exhibit 56. Revised Ex. B to Wendell Report	610	610	610
9	Exhibit 57. Central Board Meeting Minutes 12/27/22	610	610	610
10	Exhibit 58. Tri-Basin Resolution 2/8/23	610	610	610
12	Exhibit 59. NTV News 2/9/23		610	610
13	Exhibit 60. Water Users Group			-10
14	Letter	610	610	610
15	Exhibit 61. Accountability and Disclosure Commission Advisory Opinion 205		610	610
16	Opinion 205	010	010	010
17	Exhibit 62. Wendell Report	610	919	920
18	Exhibit 63. Wendell Resume	610	610	610
19	Exhibit 64. Yahn Resume	610	610	610
20	Exhibit 65. (W/D)		610	610
21	Exhibit 66. (W/D)		610	610
22	Exhibit 67. Central's Answers 1st Set of Interrogatories	to 610	610	610
23	Exhibit 68. Central's Answers 2nd Set of Interrogatories	to 610	610	610
24 25	Exhibit 69. CNPPID Brief History	610	610	610
	-			

1	EXHIBITS	Marked		Ruled ed On
2	Exhibit 70. 12 Values of Merger	610	610	610
3	Exhibit 71. Dep-Roger Olson	1122	1143	1143
5	Exhibit 72. Dep-Robert	1100	1112	1140
	Dahlgren		1143	1143
6	Exhibit 73. Flash Drive-2/8 Tri-Basin Meeting Audio		1144	1145
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
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20				
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Page 8 (At 9:07 a.m., the following proceedings a time. The court reporter can't put down what <sup>2</sup> everybody is saying if we talk over each other. were had:) (Exhibits 19 through 45 marked It happens once in a while. But try to keep that in mind that if two people are talking, for identification.) one of them has to stop or both so we can get HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: All everything said. right. This hearing is hereby reconvened at 7 9:07 a.m. on Friday, February 15th, 2023. So I am going to go through a few 8 We are, again, in the first floor hearing preliminaries before we get to the parties' room, Nebraska State Office Building, 301 attorneys. But to remind everyone for purposes of this hearing, the Nebraska Power Review Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, Nebraska. Board, I and, I assume, the parties will refer The hearing will address whether the Nebraska Power Review Board will approve the to it as the Board or the PRB. 13 And Central Nebraska Public Power and Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation <sup>14</sup> Irrigation District will be referred to as District's Petition for Charter Amendment 6. 15 15 Central or Petitioner. My name is Timothy Texel. And I'm the 16 16 hearing officer in this matter. And Dawson Public Power District will be 17 <sup>17</sup> referred to as Dawson. The hearing was previously convened for purposes of determining whether Protestants had 18 Citizens Opposed to the Merger, Greg and Linda Heiden and Richard and Susan Waller, will standing to bring a protest opposing the 20 <sup>20</sup> be referred to collectively as Citizens or approval of the petition. 21 21 The board found that the Heidens, the Protestants. <sup>22</sup> Wallers and the Citizens group had standing, 22 And the Citizens Opposed to the Merger, 23 the nonprofit corporation, will be referred to which means that they have the right to 24 participate in this proceeding. as the Citizens group, at least by me. I would note that we have to speak one at 25 So I will use those shortened versions so Page 10 Page 11 <sup>1</sup> you know the -- for the record what I'm them. They'll be part of the record for the referring to. merits also. And those will not have to be Central's petition, I believe everybody reintroduced. We do have some additional 4 here knows, would merge Dawson Public Power documents to put into the record. District into Central. I think at this point, Mr. Degan, you 6 indicated you had an objection you wanted to Dawson separately filed a petition for dissolution, conditioned on the PRB's approval raise. I think this is probably a good point 8 to do that. of Central's Petition for Charter Amendment 6. 9 As part of the proposed dissolution, the MR. DEGAN: Yes. Thank you, 10 board must conduct an investigation into the Tim. 11 reasons for the dissolution of a district. And On behalf of the Protestants, we would 12 the board consolidated its investigation with 12 request Commissioner Gottschalk to recuse <sup>13</sup> Central's proceeding that we're here today for herself from these proceedings. due to the integral nature of the two 14 And that's based on two issues, the first proceedings. And although Dawson is a being that because she was not a seated member 16 necessary part of the merger, it is not of the board, nor participated in the earlier 17 technically a part to the proceeding regarding session of this hearing, her knowledge of this Central's Petition for Charter Amendment 6. will necessarily be truncated because she did 19 not have the opportunity to hear the arguments So that's, I know, getting a bit 20 that -- that were made on the prior day of the technical, but I wanted to put that into the record. hearing. 22 22 All the exhibits introduced at the last I will concede that they are distinct 23 <sup>23</sup> issues. But, nevertheless, since it is one portion of the hearing where we dealt hearing, we have concern with somebody coming withstanding are part of the ongoing record for in essentially part way through the process and purposes of this merit. So we might refer to

Page 12 Page 13 <sup>1</sup> then deliberating or voting on the ultimate the evidence at the standing portion of the <sup>2</sup> merits issue. <sup>2</sup> arguments. 3 I believe that is correct; right? Secondly, we have concerns that there's a 4 <sup>4</sup> potential bias here in light of Commissioner BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: That's 5 <sup>5</sup> Gottschalk's prior affiliation with the correct. 6 <sup>6</sup> Nebraska Rural Electric Association and the HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So I <sup>7</sup> just would point out that, that she actually <sup>7</sup> advocacy that she did on behalf of that -- that 8 8 organization, which includes Dawson as a did. 9 <sup>9</sup> member, may color her version -- or her I also would point out, we in the past <sup>10</sup> decision in this matter. 10 have allowed board members that couldn't be at 11 a portion of a hearing to either read the So for those two reasons, we would respectfully request Commissioner Gottschalk to 12 transcript or, if we have a WebEx, they go back 13 recuse herself. 13 and watch the WebEx recording of the 14 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I would <sup>14</sup> proceedings or that portion of the proceedings. 15 iust note that board member -- you can refer to 15 We may have to do that with members here 16 because we have another member appointed by the as commissioner, but technically we're a board, 17 not a commission -- but that Ms. Gottschalk was governor that will probably be -- well, that 18 present at the hearing on standing. nomination will come up for legislature, 19 19 She didn't sit as a board member. She anyway, prior to the final decision on this. <sup>20</sup> wasn't a board member yet. But she had been 20 So depending what happens with the 21 appointed by the governor. She hadn't been nomination at the legislature -- I won't make <sup>22</sup> confirmed by the legislature yet. So she knew 22 any assumptions -- but that member would <sup>23</sup> replace Chairman Reida on our board and be a or suspected she, you know -- at least hoped 24 she would be approved by the legislature, so necessary part of the board. she was present. So she was -- she did hear 25 So I would just point out those factors Page 14 Page 15 1 for the recusal. meetings in anticipation that this hearing was The recusal itself is up to the board going to be moving forward and I would be <sup>3</sup> member. So I won't, you know, make any call on seated during the decisionmaking process. So 4 that. But I wanted to point out those -- those it was important for me to hear both sides of 5 points. the issue. And I guess I would also point out that I 6 And with my separation from NREA being two <sup>7</sup> believe Ms. Gottschalk hasn't been with the years, more, one of the things that I did for NREA for two years? them, I was their government relations 9 BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: Two director. I did their lobbying efforts. 10 10 years. I did not work for Central or for Dawson. 11 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So there <sup>11</sup> I advocated on behalf of a collective group. 12 is some separation. 12 Now, having said that, now that I no 13 longer work for the Rural Electric Association, I'd also point out that the Nebraska <sup>14</sup> Supreme Court has said that board members have my opinions are my own, and my ability to 15 a presumption of -- I'm trying to think of the analyze the data that's presented before me, I exact word but that they are not biased, that think I can do very well in an unbiased manner. they will fairly carry out their duties without 17 I feel very comfortable staying in my seat. 18 18 any bias and keep an open mind unless there is MR. DEGAN: Okay. Thank you. 19 reason to show otherwise. 19 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So your 20 And with that, I'll turn it over to decision is to --<sup>21</sup> Ms. Gottschalk to analyze it or make her 21 BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: Not 22 decision. 22 recuse myself. 23 23 BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: I HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- not 24 guess Tim covered a lot of points that I would 24 recuse yourself? 25 25 cover myself in that I did attend those MR. JARECKE: Mr. Texel, if I

	P 16		D 17
1	can add one comment to Director Gottschalk's	1	weren't a dues-paying, voting member, as you
2	comments.	2	said, of the NREA?
3	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Yes.	3	MR. JARECKE: That is correct.
4	MR. JARECKE: I would I would	4	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
5	certainly parallel those comments. But I think	5	So I guess I don't say it and you say it, your
6	it's also been pointed out that Central was not	6	decision is?
7	a member of the Nebraska Rural Electric	7	BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: I'm
8	Association at any point during Kristen	8	going to stay and not recuse myself for the
9	Gottschalk's tenure nor presently. And the	9	issue.
10	pending application is up, of course, for	10	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
11	Central.	11	Okay. Noted for the record.
12	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Central	12	MR. DEGAN: Noted. Thank you.
13		13	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Tim, this
14	they? Or were they a not a member at all?	14	is Frank.
15	BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK:	15	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Yes.
16		16	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: I have two
17	MR. JARECKE: Maybe an associate	17	questions. First of all, if Kristen and
18	member, which is but in terms of a voting	18	she's not recusing herself, if she is involved
19	delegate, they were not.	19	with our deliberations and we're wrong, is that
20		20	reversible error?
21	_	21	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm not
22	Shay. Tyuse uney re I wanted to charmy	22	sure exactly what the court would do because
23	my recollection was they might be an associate	23	there's other members.
24	member, but they weren't a and I don't know	24	I'm guessing that the party that's unhappy
25		25	with the decision could claim that she swayed
	Page 18		Page 19
1	the vote one way or another. Otherwise, she is	1	not through the full legislature for
2	one member and not a majority of the board.	2	confirmation yet.
3	And if you know, if it's a unanimous	3	So depending when in the process that
4	decision, the court could find that it's	4	would be in relation to the decision on this,
5	harmless error because there's many other votes	5	it would be up to him if he wants to simply bow
6	for it.	6	out and not participate in the decision so it's
7	Probably the argument would have to be	7	four board members.
8	that she was a leading factor that swayed the	8	Or he could either watch the WebEx of this
9	other board members to her belief.	9	or read the transcript or both, depending on
10	So I tillik that's the analysis the court	10	what he would want to do.
11	would use. There would need to be some kind of	11	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay. But
12	evidence or indication of that. But I don't	12	clearly I would not have a vote; is that
13	unini necessarily resite entere entere aut	13	correct?
14	and court court productly arrive to that,	14	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Not if
15	depending on the argument.	15	the legislature had confirmed your replacement
16	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: My second	16	by that point. And I
17	question is, in the event that my replacement	17	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay.
18	is named and goes through the natural resources	18	Thank you.
19	of the legislature and we have not yet reached	19	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: don't
20	a decision, does that then my replacement	20	know. That's a timing issue we'd have to
21	would then read the transcript and be the	21	address at that point.
22	person who would vote; is that correct?	22	MR. JARECKE: Mr. Texel, is
23	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: It would	23	there an opportunity for the legislature to
24	be up to him. He's named. He's not gone	24	allow Director Reida to complete this task?
25	through the committee process yet, obviously	25	Could that be a condition of the appointment?

Page 20 Page 21 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: They --So there's a lot of factors that come into <sup>2</sup> play. But it's up to -- mostly up to the chair <sup>2</sup> they either vote on -- up or down on the <sup>3</sup> nomination. So they don't -- they don't put of the natural resources committee and the <sup>4</sup> any conditions on it. I've never heard of the speaker how the timing works. <sup>5</sup> legislature putting a condition on anything. Is that clear? 6 The only way we could do something like MR. JARECKE: Yes. 7 that would be to ask them not -- to ask the 7 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I don't 8 speaker or the committee not to place it on the have any more information than that because agenda to vote on until after this decision. it's up to them. 10 I don't know what the speaker's reaction MR. JARECKE: Yes. would be to that. We could ask if it's 11 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 12 necessary. But we've never asked them for 12 All right. 13 13 something like that. So I'm going to go through a few more 14 14 The committee right now is thinking about preliminary things here if you will indulge me. 15 March 1st or 2nd for the committee portion of 15 And after holding a third prehearing conference 16 the nomination process. I have no idea how 16 in this proceeding, as the hearing officer, I <sup>17</sup> long after that the full legislature would put issued a prehearing order. Parties are well 18 on the agenda. That's up to the speaker. 18 aware of this. 19 Usually it goes on about a week or so Under the scope of the hearing section, <sup>20</sup> after the committee acts on it. And if the 20 the order identified five core issues or <sup>21</sup> committee does an executive session after their findings that the board will need to address in <sup>22</sup> nomination hearing, they could take a week or 22 this proceeding. <sup>23</sup> two to decide. And then it would go to the 23 And I will -- after I'm done, I will offer <sup>24</sup> full legislature. And then the speaker 24 that third prehearing conference order into the 25 decides. record. The parties have already indicated --Page 23 Page 22 1 well, I guess at this point, why don't I just going to go through them now. <sup>2</sup> offer this. 2 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: All 3 We have the third prehearing conference right. 4 <sup>4</sup> order. I already told the parties I planned to HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I was <sup>5</sup> offer this. I know it would be part of the deciding whether or not to put it in before or 6 record if there's an appeal. But I want to be after the evidence. That's why I said if 7 able to cite to this at the order because it you'll indulge me, I'm going to go through the 8 has exact language in it. five core issues identified and then the Neither party objected to that. So I do stipulations that are in the order. 10 have a certified copy of the third prehearing 10 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay. <sup>11</sup> conference order that I issued that set out 11 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I know 12 some stipulations and core issue findings. 12 they're in the order. The board will see them. 13 It's been marked as Exhibit 20. 13 But I kind of wanted the board's mind set 14 14 because I'm not sure the board has seen them so So without any objection -- and I think 15 both parties indicated there wasn't any -- I that the board members can hear these while will accept Exhibit 20 into the record. they're looking at the evidence. That's why 17 17 (Exhibit 20 is made a part of I'm going through them now --18 18 this record and may be found BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Thank 19 19 separate.) you. 20 20 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Tim? HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- even 21 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Yes. 21 though they're in the order. 22 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Can you So first of the core findings is whether <sup>23</sup> summarize for us what those five issues are, or <sup>23</sup> approval of Central's Petition for Charter 24 is there another time where we can do that? <sup>24</sup> Amendment 6 would be contrary to the best <sup>25</sup> interests of the district pursuant to Neb. Rev. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I was

Page 24 <sup>1</sup> Stat. Section 70-664. Second, whether approval of Central's <sup>3</sup> Petition for Charter Amendment 6 would <sup>4</sup> ieopardize and impair the rights of creditors <sup>5</sup> of the district or of other persons under Neb. <sup>6</sup> Rev. Stat. Section 70-664. Third, in order to approve the petition, 8 the board must find that either more than 50 percent of Central's customers are rural or <sup>10</sup> that Central engages in furnishing electric 11 light and power and is in the business of owning and operating irrigation works pursuant 13 to Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 70-612(1)(b), 14 small b. 15 Four, whether the interests of rural users of electricity or users of irrigation water service will be prejudiced by approval of petition -- I did not put the citation down for that -- and what effect, if any, does the <sup>20</sup> exclusion of the statement that the district lacks the power to issue general obligation bonds have on the -- on the board's decision regarding approving or denying the petition pursuant to Section 70-605(5). So that's the core findings. Page 26 <sup>1</sup> issue general obligation bonds. The memo explains that the statute was <sup>3</sup> enacted in 1933 and that the original version 4 did not include the language regarding general obligation bonds. I believe the statute in 1933 only addressed that they did not have the power to tax. That -- the new language dealing with general obligation bonds was added to the statute in 1937. 12 The memo also tells the executive director 13 the total number of districts' charters that <sup>14</sup> currently do not contain the required language regarding general obligation bonds. That's a recap summary of that memo. And 17 I would offer the memo, which has been marked as Exhibit 19, into evidence.

And the parties already indicated to me

MR. DEGAN: No objection.

HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. I

they do not object to that as to its

will accept Exhibit 19 into the record.

Page 25 There are other findings. Those aren't an <sup>2</sup> exhaustive list. There's other issues brought up by the Protestants the board will have to find, but those are findings that, regardless of whether there's objections or even if there's opposing parties, the board has to find in a matter like this. 8 And the parties already agreed with those core issues that are in the order. 10 And then the stipulations section of the 11 third prehearing conference order, it sets out 12 six additional stipulations. 13 First, the parties stipulated to the admissibility and contents of a memo dated January 12th, 2023, written by Sara Birkett, 16 the board's staff paralegal, addressed to

The memo detailed her research findings <sup>20</sup> regarding the background facts concerning Neb. Rev. Stat. Section 70-604(5).

board's executive director and general counsel.

That statute requires public power districts and public power and irrigation districts to include a statement in their charter that they do not have the power to

myself, Tim Texel, in my capacity as the

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Page 27 (Exhibit 19 is made a part of this record and may be found separate.)

HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: The parties are free to use that memo to argue as they will on the repercussions of that. But that sets out the foundation of facts.

Second stipulation, the parties stipulated that since Central's Petition for Charter Amendment 6 would configure its subdivisions following county and/or precinct boundaries, the requirement to ensure that the district subdivisions as proposed in its Petition for Charter Amendment 6 contains substantially equal -- equal population set out in Neb. Rev. Stat. Sections 70-604(6) and 70-612(1)(a), do not apply in this proceeding.

Instead, the provisions of Section 70-612(1)(b) are controlling. And that -- so that stipulation is in the record, too.

Third, the parties stipulated pursuant to the requirements of Section 70-612(1)(b) that Central's charter territory, both currently and as proposed, in the petition includes all or part of two or more counties. That's a finding

admissibility and contents.

19

22

23

Г	Dago 20		Page 29
1	the board has to make.	1	lawsuit filed in the Phelps County District
2	The parties fourth, the parties	2	Court. And those issues are not before our
3	stipulated pursuant to Section 70-612, again,	3	board. That's for the court to decide.
4	(1)(b), that more than 50 percent of Central's	4	So those are the stipulations that I
5	customers, both currently and as proposed, are	5	wanted to go through.
6	rural customers.	6	I would note for the record that Board
7	Fifth, the parties stipulated pursuant to	7	Members Vice Chair Hutchison and Mr. Moen and
8	Section 70 and this is the same statute,	8	Ms. Gottschalk are here in person in the
9	70-612(1)(b) that Central, both currently and	9	hearing room.
10	as proposed in the petition, is in the business	10	Board Members and Chairman Reida and
11	of owning and operating irrigation works.	11	Board Member Bridget Peck are participating via
12		12	WebEx videoconference today.
13	assuming there was no Open Meetings Act	13	And the parties were informed of that
14	violation involved, that the motion to file the	14	prior to today and did not object to this
15		15	procedure.
16		16	I also wanted to let the parties know that
17	vote of three-fifths or more of all the	17	Board Member Peck will need to step away from
18		18	the hearing for a short time this morning, we
19		19	believe less than an hour. Her employer
20		20	somewhat unexpectedly required her to attend a
21	the parties' positions on the validity of the	21	work meeting today. And we will announce when
22	underlying vote or whether there was a	22	she leaves and when she returns.
23	violation of the Open Meetings Act.	23	But she will either watch the WebEx
24	It is the board's understanding that the	24	recording of the proceeding when she's absent
25	_	25	or read the official transcript or both before
1	Page 30	,	Page 31
2	participating in the decision in this matter.	1	just with regard to the whether or not they
	So she will get caught up to speed with	2	can issue GO bonds, with I think what you
3	anything she would miss during that time period	3	said was that they agreed that the memo exists
5	she steps away.	4	but they can have witnesses present evidence as
6	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Tim, this	5	to what that means; is that correct?
7	is Frank.	7	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: They can
΄ ۵	Say, can you, by any chance, take that	8	argue as as to the relevance, significance,
9	preconference order and make a copy of it and	9	impact of that.
10	email it to me?	10	But they stipulated to the admissibility
	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I can.	11	and the contents of the memo, as far as the
11	Thave it on my computer. Thus have to go	12	background facts.
12	down to my office and send it to you.	13	And then I'm sure the parties will make
14	MS. BIRKETT: I can do it.	14	their arguments based on those facts.
15	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: If you can	15	Does that answer your question, Chairman?
16	have resected do it of something.	16	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Right. So
17	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: You	17	they all they stipulated to was that the
18	going to ask Rebecca through the chat to do	18	memo exists. They can call witnesses or
19	that?	19	whatever to provide their their position as
	MS. BIRKETT: It's the third	20	to what that means; is that correct?
20	prehearing conference order; correct?		HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Yes. I
	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Yes.	21	don't know if they're calling any witnesses on
22	MS. BIRKETT: It's done.	22	that. But they can certainly make legal
	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And	23	arguments on the significance of the language
24	there's BOARD MEMBER REIDA: And then	25	not being in the charter, whether it needs to be at this point or what what their
25	. PIINPIINAPPPPPPPINA And than	. 4.0	De actors point or what What their

Page 32 Page 33 <sup>1</sup> arguments will be. Yes, they could call stipulation reached between the parties that I <sup>2</sup> witnesses, certainly make legal arguments based <sup>2</sup> will read that was part of our prehearing <sup>3</sup> on what's in the memo. conference. 4 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And I'm BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay. <sup>5</sup> Thank you. 5 going to interrupt you just a moment, 6 Mr. Jarecke. I apologize. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And 7 there is a -- why don't we go off the record 7 But I just thought I think the board <sup>8</sup> for just a moment. members remember -- it's been a little while, (An off-the-record discussion was held.) the board members remember which counsel is 10 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: We'll go whose? Or do you want them to introduce 11 <sup>11</sup> back on the record. themselves again for today's hearing? 12 All right. All right. That is the 12 Okay. I wasn't sure because it's been a preliminaries. So I know there were quite a 13 couple of months. And I'm sorry to --14 <sup>14</sup> few to go through. MR. JARECKE: Sure. 15 15 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- break Anything else from the parties? 16 in, but if the board members were unsure to I think the -- before we go to opening statements, the parties indicated you were <sup>17</sup> remember who represents whom, I wanted to 18 going to put in some exhibits at this point. address that. 19 19 MR. JARECKE: Yes. Ms. Peck or Chairman Reida, do you need 20 20 MR. DEGAN: And, also, Counsel, the attorneys to reintroduce themselves? 21 <sup>21</sup> do we have additional stipulations? You want BOARD MEMBER REIDA: No. I'm 22 to get that at this stage or --22 fine. 23 23 MR. JARECKE: Yes. Prior to HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. <sup>24</sup> And I see Ms. Peck shaking her head no. So 24 going to the exhibits -- thank you, <sup>25</sup> Mr. Degan -- there was an additional we're good to go. I'm sorry, interruption. Page 34 Page 35 MR. JARECKE: Not a problem. court. You cannot put anything in the chat <sup>2</sup> Maybe for the benefit of the audience and those that we will read. It won't be read to the <sup>3</sup> listening, I'm Dave Jarecke. board members or me. And you won't be unmuted. 4 The only participants today, like in a Seated next to me is Ellen Kreifels. <sup>5</sup> We're both from the Blankenau Wilmoth Jarecke <sup>5</sup> court -- this is an administrative tribunal, <sup>6</sup> Law Firm. Our law firm is here representing 6 but like a court, you can't speak unless you're <sup>7</sup> both the Central Nebraska Public Power and an attorney, board member, hearing officer or a 8 Irrigation District and Dawson Public Power 8 witness. 9 9 District with respect to its petition to So the members of the public, unlike a public hearing, can't just say their peace. dissolve. 11 This is a formal evidentiary hearing. Kurth Brashear is here of the Rembolt <sup>12</sup> Ludtke Law Firm representing solely Central 12 So I want to draw that distinction. If 13 somebody watching on WebEx is confused by that, <sup>13</sup> Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District. 14 14 think of it like a courtroom, you can't just But thank you for that. 15 MR. DEGAN: Mike Degan on behalf 15 raise your hand and speak in the middle of it of Kutak Rock. I'm all by my lonesome here on unless you're a party or have some relationship 17 17 to it. So wanted to avoid any confusion on behalf of the Protestants. 18 that. 18 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And I 19 would just announce next to Mr. Brashear is 19 So with that, I think we're ready for 20 <sup>20</sup> Sara Birkett, our staff paralegal for the board exhibits. <sup>21</sup> that is operating the WebEx. 21 MR. JARECKE: The -- actually, 22 22 And, also, I wanted to clarify, again, we'll read the stipulation. 23 <sup>23</sup> if -- if members of the public are on --**HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:** <sup>24</sup> watching by WebEx, since this is a formal <sup>24</sup> Stipulations, I'm sorry. <sup>25</sup> evidentiary hearing, it operates similar to a 25 MR. JARECKE: And I -- again,

Page 36 Page 37 <sup>1</sup> this was agreed upon between counsel at the this Power Review Board. <sup>2</sup> pretrial hearing. However, again, that newly consolidated <sup>3</sup> district, the Platte River Public Power and The parties stipulate that the two boards <sup>4</sup> of directors are bound today and intend to be <sup>4</sup> Irrigation District, would have -- and we <sup>5</sup> bound as a combined board upon Power Review recognize that it would have the authority to modify that agreement if it so felt necessary. <sup>6</sup> Board's approval but recognize that the Platte 7 MR. DEGAN: Well, I would just <sup>7</sup> River Public Power and Irrigation District 8 clarify. It's more than modify. They would 8 board has to take additional action to <sup>9</sup> implement and effect the terms of the Plan of have to -- once the new board is constituted, <sup>10</sup> Consolidation. they'll have to enact bylaws that would 11 incorporate those elements. So until that HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So when 12 you say that's -- that they're bound, they're 12 happens --13 bound to follow what's in the -- or they intend MR. JARECKE: I think that's an 14 14 to be bound what's in the Plan of accurate statement, ves. <sup>15</sup> Consolidation? Is that what that stipulation 15 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And I'm 16 references? sorry to -- but what I wanted to -- and I think 17 17 you answered my question. What I wanted to MR. JARECKE: I'll speak to my interpretation, and Mr. Degan can clarify. clarify was if it was referencing the Plan of Consolidation or broader than that. I believe the stipulation was that the <sup>20</sup> present boards, which are still independent 20 And I think I have that answer. So thank <sup>21</sup> today, both the Central board and the Dawson 21 you. board, are presently bound by that Plan of 22 MR. JARECKE: Okay. <sup>23</sup> Consolidation and have the intention to 23 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And was <sup>24</sup> continue to be bound as they move forward, 24 there another stipulation? <sup>25</sup> assuming that there is, in fact, an approval by 25 MR. JARECKE: The only -- if you Page 38 Page 39 wish to address your witnesses, we could ready for exhibits. <sup>2</sup> clarify that. And so the Petitioners -- or effectively <sup>3</sup> Central will be offering Exhibits 20 -- excuse 3 MR. DEGAN: Yes. Thank you, <sup>4</sup> Counsel. me, 21 -- 21 through 45, I believe, without Just in the interest of expediency, I exception -- as to that collective group, with <sup>6</sup> believe we have a stipulation that it is not 6 a single exception. necessary for me to call each of the individual Exhibit 39 is a letter from Parker Protestants. Schenken who will be called as an expert One was seriously injured in a car witness on behalf of Central. And Mr. Degan accident and is unable to testify. will be reserving all objections with respect 11 to Exhibit 39. But in the interest of avoiding duplicative testimony, we will have a 12 MR. DEGAN: Yes. I mean, it -representative from the Citizens who will 13 and in general, well, we're reserving all 14 testify and that in -- in light of this objections to expert reports. <sup>15</sup> agreement, that the Petitioners won't raise any 15 MR. JARECKE: That's -- his 16 issue that the individual Protestants have 16 letter's the only document that addresses that. 17 17 MR. DEGAN: Oh, potentially the defaulted or waived any of their positions in 18 Phase 2 report. this protest by not -- by not testifying. 19 MR. JARECKE: That is agreed. 19 MR. JARECKE: Okay. Add that if 20 20 vou wish. MR. DEGAN: Is that fair? 21 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Which is MR. JARECKE: Yes, it is. 22 22 the Phase -- which exhibit is the Phase 2 MR. BRASHEAR: That's fair. 23 23 report? HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 24 Thank you. MS. KREIFELS: 22. 22. 25 MR. JARECKE: Now I think we're HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.

1	MR. DEGAN: But, yeah, with that	1	MR. JARECKE: You could say
2	clarification, we have no objections to the	2	they're collectively both, yes.
3	exhibits. But we reserve the right to object	3	MR. BRASHEAR: Central and
4	to any of the expert reports based on	4	Dawson.
5	testimony.	5	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Well
6	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And	6	I Central and
7	there's only one expert report, Mr. Jarecke?	7	MR. JARECKE: Yes. Central and
8	MR. JARECKE: Arguably there are	8	Dawson.
9	two. Exhibit 22 will be it	9	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: are
10	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	10	the
11	MR. JARECKE: is titled the	11	MR. JARECKE: Correct.
12		12	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: There's
13	Engineering, the consultant utilized by Dawson	13	a separate list from the Citizens then; right?
14	and Central in this matter.	14	MR. DEGAN: Yes.
15	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And	15	MR. JARECKE: That is correct.
16	we've already pointed that one out so	16	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
17	MR. JARECKE: We have. In fact,	17	So I can accept Exhibits 21, 23 through 38 and
18	it was yeah, I believe it's been referenced	18	40 through 45 into the record then; right?
19	several times.	19	MR. DEGAN: Yes.
20	And then Exhibit 39 is a letter from	20	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I will
21	Parker Schenken. But I believe that letter	21	exempt 22 and 39.
22	will essentially mirror his testimony.	22	MR. JARECKE: That is correct.
23	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	23	MR. DEGAN: That is right.
24	Those are those are Central's exhibits or	24	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Excuse
	both parties'?	25	me. Okay. So I'll accept Exhibits 21, 23
1.	Page 42		Page 43
1	through 38 and 40 through 45 into the record.	l .	that to the extent that we use a Power
2	(Exhibits 21, 23-38 and 40-45	2	Purchase Agreement that was disclosed pursuant
3	are made a part of this record	3	to a confidentiality agreement with the
4	and may be found separate.)	4	districts, that we will not use that document
5	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And then	5	in its entirety but we've agreed only to submit
6	Citizens have exhibits?	6	three pages if we do offer if we do end up
	MR. DEGAN: So at this stage,	′	using it with any testimony.
8	because of the exhibits that have been marked	8	Is that fair.
10	today, we're going to need to renumber our	10	MR. BRASHEAR: That is fair.
11	exhibits.	11	That is correct.
12	So I would suggest just at this time that		HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So are
13	we record that we have a stipulation that, of	12	we going to renumber are you going to
14	the exhibits that we have marked on our exhibit list or identified on our exhibit list, that	14	renumber them later, then we'll put them in the
15	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	15	record after after a break
16	there's reciprocal stipulation from the	16	MR. JARECKE: We will, right.
17	Petitioners that there's no objection to those	17	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: or
18	exhibits with the exception of the expert	18	something like that or after lunch or
19	report, which is Don Wendell's report.  So, Counsel, do we have that stipulation?	19	something?
20	MR. JARECKE: We do.	20	MR. JARECKE: Right. The
21		21	stipulation is correctly stated.
22	And just to clarify, the the other	22	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
23	agreement is a the hydro is the redacted version.	23	Just wanted to make sure we remember to
24		24	MR. DEGAN: Mark them and get
	MR. DEGAN: Oh, yes. So with that stipulation, we also have a stipulation	25	them in.
دعا	mai supuration, we also have a supuration	ديا	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: to

Page 44 Page 45 <sup>1</sup> re-mark them and get them into the record the building's, I believe, locked, and if <sup>2</sup> before we would adjourn today. Even if we somebody leaves, you can't get in. It's not a 3 continue tomorrow or Friday, I'd like to get public building. 4 them into the record today --We can stay past 5:30. If we need to, let MR. DEGAN: Okay. me know when it gets close because I need to HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- so we notify security that we are going to be in here <sup>7</sup> don't overlook that. past 5:30 when the building's no longer public. MR. DEGAN: Absolutely. We can do that. But they ask to be notified. MR. JARECKE: On that point, So with that, let the parties know. And 10 10 Mr. Texel, and, really, for the benefit of the so the public that's here, if you'd leave after 11 <sup>11</sup> directors, regrettably, I do believe this will 5:30, you can't get back in. You have to have 12 be a three-day hearing. one of us let you back into the building. So 13 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: We have you don't really want to leave after 5:30. 14 the room reserved for all day today, tomorrow That's the main point of that. 15 till approximately one to two, depending on the 15 All right. So --16 16 board members' schedules, and then Friday from MR. JARECKE: I think we're 17 9:30 to 5. 17 ready to proceed. 18 18 We do have a hard break Friday at five. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: All <sup>19</sup> The -- so we have to stop at five o'clock on 19 right. The parties have agreed at our <sup>20</sup> Friday. That's the only hard stop we have. preconference hearings that we would have 21 somewhat open, depending on the board members opening statements. 22 tomorrow. So that's -- that's the schedule. 22 The board typically does that in all 23 23 We can go past five today, depending on contested proceedings where there's opposing <sup>24</sup> counsels, court reporter and the board members. 24 parties. After 5:30, I would want it to be known 25 We agreed to have it be limited to 15 Page 46 <sup>1</sup> minutes. said, with Rembolt Ludtke Law Firm representing Central, joined today by Dave Jarecke and Ellen There will be closing statements, too. <sup>3</sup> The board and counsels, after seeing how much <sup>3</sup> Kreifels, who are also representing Central and <sup>4</sup> evidence there is, will decide on the time representing Dawson. <sup>5</sup> limit for that. We won't set that now. It is a privilege to address you on behalf of the Central Nebraska Public Power and So with that, I would let Central have Irrigation District as Central, with the their opening statements. MR. BRASHEAR: With permission, support of Dawson Public Power District, asks given WebEx, I'll move to the witness stand, if you to approve its Petition for Charter that's all right. Amendment 6 merging Dawson with Central to 11 create the Platte River Public Power and HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Sure. 12 That's fine. 12 Irrigation District. 13 13 BOARD MEMBER PECK: Tim. this is In asking for your approval, the leaders 14 of these public entities, their elected board <sup>14</sup> when I have to step out to go to my meeting. <sup>15</sup> So I'll be back just as soon as I can. members and general managers follow the 16 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okav. visionary path of those who at the start of the 17 <sup>17</sup> And that's Ms. Peck, one of the board members. last century desired a prosperous and fertile 18 And it's 9:45. And she will be stepping out. south central Nebraska and undertook the work 19 19 And we'll announce when she comes back. necessary to make that a reality. 20 20 Since its organization in 1933, Central Thank you. 21 has achieved everything those involved in its BOARD MEMBER PECK: Thank you. 22 MR. BRASHEAR: Mr. Chairman, establishment, as well as those who first <sup>23</sup> conceived of the project decades before that, Members of the Power Review Board, Counsel, <sup>24</sup> hoped for. good morning. My name is Kurth Brashear, as previously It has reliably and consistently delivered

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Page 48 <sup>1</sup> vital water for irrigation to benefit <sup>2</sup> agriculture, our state's most important <sup>3</sup> industry, not to mention the families,

4 communities and institutions of south central <sup>5</sup> Nebraska that are so reliant upon it.

As expected of a public entity, Central 7 has done this at low cost to its irrigation 8 customers because the majority of its revenues from the start have been derived from <sup>10</sup> hydropower generation.

Central is achieving what it was established to do and much, much more. Today <sup>13</sup> Central partners with producers who now use <sup>14</sup> surface water irrigation not as their primary means of irrigation but to supplement the center pivots they have, technology that did not exist when Central was created.

Central generates clean hydropower, a concept unknown in the 1930s, and supplies that power to the needs of the people, throughout Nebraska, not just locally.

Central engages with hundreds of lake leaseholders who have homes and cabins around its reservoirs.

It facilitates millions of visits to its

Page 50 Make no mistake, this is a significant <sup>2</sup> moment, one with long-lasting impact. These proposed charter amendments reflect a bold <sup>4</sup> course fully in keeping with the visionary idea <sup>5</sup> opposed by some at the time that resulted in <sup>6</sup> Central being organized at another significant moment.

As you'll hear today in 2020, the district's leaders saw an opportunity which started as informal conversations about the sale of power amongst neighbors turned into exploring ways that the districts could work more comprehensively together, resource their operations for a strong future, benefit their customers more fully and enhance the region.

There were certainly elements that made sense from the start. Both districts have 18 customers in Dawson, Gosper and Lincoln 19 Counties.

Dawson's charter territory essentially overlaps Central's, meaning the workforces and facilities of the districts are in close proximity.

24 They share a common interest in the <sup>25</sup> region. They know its needs. They're invested reservoirs every year that produce major economic benefits to area communities.

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And it ensures environmental benefits are recognized and realized throughout much of the Platte River Basin.

Central impacts the daily life of over 80,000 Nebraskans who reside in its six counties, families who are sixth-generation ag producers and people who don't know the difference between field corn and sweet corn, bankers and business owners, feedlot operators and teachers, pastors and bartenders.

Central manages our second most precious 14 resource, water, for the benefit of our most 15 important resource, our people.

The charter amendments being presented to you today and the merger with Dawson that these amendments, with your approval, will implement both reflect the comprehensive nature of what Central is, a public power and irrigation district and, with the addition of power distribution to its operations, will enable this consolidated district to benefit the entirety of south central Nebraska in a <sup>25</sup> similarly comprehensive way.

in its success, and they're aware of its history.

3 True Nebraskans, the respective directors <sup>4</sup> of the districts, were interested in the concept but also skeptical. This is certainly fitting because, make no mistake, these are strong public districts with over 450 million in book value assets and additional -- annual revenues approaching \$90 million combined.

Both could continue to operate as they 11 have since the beginning with success. But 12 could they be stronger together? Could they do 13 more together?

Central and Dawson have much in common. Both are integral to daily life, providing resources for economic prosperity.

Both are focused on the needs of rural <sup>18</sup> Nebraskans, their primary customers.

Both place a high value on irrigation and the availability of water.

Both are led by boards with demonstrated commitment to their mission, deep knowledge of the industries they operate in, years of wisdom gained from experience and with clear-eyed <sup>25</sup> focus on what matters for their districts.

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The districts are financially prudent. <sup>2</sup> They take seriously their obligation as public <sup>3</sup> entities accountable to the public and <sup>4</sup> transparent with the public. And they value <sup>5</sup> doing what's right, not what's easy.

These commonalities and the shared desire <sup>7</sup> to strengthen south central Nebraska provided a <sup>8</sup> foundation. From that, with intentionality and prudence, the leaders of Central and Dawson explored what was possible.

They established, as you'll hear, a 12 four-phased process that had public check-in 13 votes of both boards throughout, ensuring that, 14 at key intervals, each district's board would vote to determine if it made sense to continue 16 discussions or if their time was better spent on their own mission.

Relying on their own experience in water and their own expertise in water generation and <sup>20</sup> distribution, the districts engaged outside consultants to evaluate the issues involved <sup>22</sup> with a district that would generate and <sup>23</sup> distribute power about governance and operations, about facilities and finances and 25 to identify potential benefits to the

Page 54 <sup>1</sup> conversations, facilitated comments and conducted open houses.

The leaders of Central and Dawson resolved <sup>4</sup> the foundational topics, all of them, and <sup>5</sup> designed an exciting new district opportunity <sup>6</sup> built on their shared foundation.

The district they proposed for your approval is one that will deliver surface irrigation, distribute electrical power, generate hydropower for use locally and for sale beyond, recharge groundwater, enhance the environment, provide recreational opportunities and facilitate economic development.

The district envisioned is every bit as bold as the plans that led to the formation of Central 80 years ago.

Make no mistake, the vision that resulted in Central was not unanimously supported in the 1920s when it was proposed.

In fact, there were producers in Phelps and Kearney Counties who vocally opposed the 22 project. 23

Today, once again, some passionate voices oppose the proposed charter amendments before 25 **vou**.

Page 53 constituents and customers, as well as identifying challenges they'd need to address.

The districts determined what was required legally to join together and what the parameters of doing so were, including this hearing today.

Then starting in the spring of 2022, representatives began to discuss, explore, debate if and how Central could actually come together.

As you'll hear, they took on critical topics, each of which by itself without agreement would have ended the conversations, the territory of this new district, governance of this new district, representation on the 16 board of this new district, financial matters for the new district. 18

And they discussed what name could best represent a combined district and the public it will be accountable to, to reflect a new chapter of work together.

Throughout the nearly two years of work done by the districts, their leaders engaged with their constituents, made presentations to the public, received feedback, welcomed

Page 55 And what do they object to? Well, they've publicly speculated about potential effects on surface water. Their primary concerns -concern seems to be a fear that they are losing local control.

These voices will tell you that irrigation is Central's primary purpose. Some might even say it's its only purpose. But that wasn't true in the 1930s any more than it is today.

From the beginning, it was understood that irrigation delivery would not financially support the district, that power generation would.

14 It is power generation that is Central's primary source of revenue annually and has been since the start.

And while irrigation customers were the primary focus at the start, Central's operations have created additional stakeholders.

Presumably no one in the 1930s considered the possibility of groundwater recharge and the connection between surface water and groundwater that it reflects, a concept that <sup>25</sup> was not legally recognized in Nebraska until

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the early 2000s.

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In fact, some opposing this petition have <sup>3</sup> publicly acknowledged that it is the groundwater recharge provided by Central that <sup>5</sup> they want to ensure continues unchanged, a benefit which they do not pay Central for.

Likewise, no one in the 1930s contemplated 8 the interests and opportunities for recreation that would arise from the creation of Lake <sup>10</sup> McConaughy and other reservoirs, nor were environmental concerns an important <sup>12</sup> consideration; whereas, today, they are front of mind.

In reality, I believe an incorrect 15 assumption underlies the small number of opponents. And that incorrect assumption is this: That irrigators own the water and that irrigators control Central.

They do not.

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As the state constitution makes clear, the public, the people own the water, and it is the public, the people who reside in Central today to whom Central is accountable.

The irrigators are Central's customers and, for those who have surface water rights,

Page 58 <sup>1</sup> County and who both use groundwater irrigation <sup>2</sup> do not have the same interest in recharge. <sup>3</sup> You'll see today the common interest of those producers.

Second, as you will hear, the combined 6 district, when fully implemented, will be governed by a 14-member board of directors with 2 directors elected from each subdivision.

The Protestants tend to refer to proposed Subdivisions 2, 4 and 6 as the irrigation counties. So using their reference but without <sup>12</sup> accepting its validity, it is worth noting that 13 the geographic subdivisions that will be fixed 14 in the charter if you approve it of Central's petition will be fixed in that charter and no <sup>16</sup> subsequent changes can be made to them with at least one director from those subdivisions voting in favor of those changes.

19 Similar requirements will exist for any provisions requiring a three-fifths majority.

Consequently, the irrigation counties <sup>22</sup> effectively have a veto on actions requiring any supermajority, including changing representation on the board of directors. Third is you will hear irrigators don't

the trustee of those rights. But Central is owned by and accountable to the public.

And it is this public who elects the directors of Central, who elects those that they -- the voters determine in their judgment will best protect the interest of the district.

In electing these directors, the voters are giving them the authority and discretion to do what is best in their judgment for Central.

Given this authority and discretion, it must be noted that no less than on 5 separate occasions over a period of 23 months, at least 75 percent of Central's directors voted to authorize the study, discussion, negotiation and ultimately approval of the proposed merger with Dawson that these amendments would implement. Five times.

It is ironic that the protestants claim to be losing local control due to such an overwhelming demonstration of exactly that, local control. Nevertheless, I want to address their claim directly.

First, it is incredulous to assert, as <sup>24</sup> Protestants do, that producers who live on both sides of the line dividing Dawson and Phelps

have control on the board of Central today. An opinion from the Nebraska Accountability and Disclosure Commission prohibits any Central director who is an irrigation customer of Central from voting on irrigation-specific matters, including the setting of irrigation rates and the terms of standard agreements.

In short, the opponents don't seem to recognize the current reality, nor the future reality that would be embedded in the amended charter.

The two district boards, however, were cognizant of these and, through discussion, negotiation and compromise, achieve a governance model that takes into account all interests, including that of the irrigators.

Central has been an incredibly successful district, fully realizing the original vision behind it and surpassing that.

Dawson has been an incredibly successful district.

Today you are being asked to approve a 23 plan that will further a larger vision, one that ties these districts together.

As you will hear, these amendments are in

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the best interest of Central.

In January 1941, as George Norris flipped <sup>3</sup> the switch to bring Central's Jeffrey hydro

<sup>4</sup> plant online, he said, "Here for the first time <sup>5</sup> we are going to put the Platte River's wastewater to use for the benefit of us all, to <sup>7</sup> moisten our soil and produce cheap electricity."

The leaders of Central and Dawson are 10 looking to fulfill Norris' prediction, provide water for agriculture, provide affordable electricity and benefit all of the people of south central Nebraska. During this hearing, you'll hear how they plan to do so.

Named after the river that has been and will continue to be central to the -- both the 17 region and the state, the time is right for this combined district to deliver for future generations the promised benefits Senator <sup>20</sup> Norris so accurately described, moistening the soil, producing cheap electricity, benefiting the people of south central Nebraska.

23 Today Central and Dawson ask you to approve a new chapter in their history, their 25 combination as Platte River Public Power and

<sup>1</sup> of about 30 percent.

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My clients like Central the way it is. <sup>3</sup> There's no need for this merger. There's no <sup>4</sup> benefit from this merger. And that's why <sup>5</sup> they're here. They're here for the water.

Now, where I disagree with counsel is <sup>7</sup> characterizing my clients as customers. The <sup>8</sup> Protestants are citizens. They are residents <sup>9</sup> of the counties that currently form the <sup>10</sup> chartered territory of Central. And, as such, 11 they very much have an interest in how the <sup>12</sup> district is managed.

They elect the directors. And ultimately 14 they have a direct interest as to whether or 15 not this consolidation should be approved by 16 this board.

17 So they are here as residents. And they 18 are here in support of the water.

19 I further disagree with counsel that our only interest here is as surface water <sup>21</sup> irrigators. Although, I would note that the <sup>22</sup> Kingsley Dam and most of the irrigation systems that currently are managed by Central were built, constructed and are operated for the <sup>25</sup> purpose of surface water irrigation for

Page 61 Irrigation District commencing on July 1st, 2023.

Thank you.

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MR. DEGAN: Good morning. As I noted earlier, my name is Mike Degan. I'm the attorney for the Protestants in this matter, which consists both of the Citizens Against the Merger and the individual Protestants.

I do agree with a couple of points that 10 counsel pointed out, and the primary one is being that Central has reliably and consistently delivered water. In fact, they've done so for over 80 years.

All of the great things that counsel 15 alluded to in his opening statement about what 16 Central has accomplished has and is currently being accomplished.

They are delivering water. They're doing 19 it effectively within their financial parameters.

In fact, they've been so successful in operating the district that they've accumulated a large reserve surplus approaching \$100 million.

They have an operating margin on the order

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agriculture.

The hydro units were constructed to provide supplemental revenue streams to reduce the cost of delivering water to the surface water irrigators.

Now, over time, there have been additional stakeholders that have an interest in the water. Those include those that are interested in the recreational use of Lake McConaughy.

There are those that have an environmental interest in how those water flows are managed. And, in fact, Central currently is obligated to 13 release certain flows in order to comply with 14 its FERC license.

So there are many stakeholders that have an interest in the use of this water, which would also include Central's wholesale power customers. But it's about the water. It's not just about water irrigators.

But before I leave that point, they're not just customers. They're ratepayers. And ultimately that's going to be a key issue for this board is to look out for the interests of the ratepayers.

And, secondly, the water rights that

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Page 64 <sup>1</sup> Central manages belong to my clients. They're the ones with the appropriated interest in the 3 water. They're held in trust and managed by <sup>4</sup> Central. But that's ultimately where those <sup>5</sup> water rights stem from.

So counsel stated that the ultimate issue <sup>7</sup> that my clients have is local control. It's 8 not just local control. It's control. Who controls the water?

Now, this board is ultimately going to <sup>11</sup> have to decide whether or not this <sup>12</sup> consolidation is in the best interest of <sup>13</sup> Central. And we're going to be focusing over <sup>14</sup> these next three days on Central's interests, 15 not the combined entity. That's putting the cart before the horse.

Before we start talking about the combined entity, the primary issue we have is how does any of this make sense from Central's <sup>20</sup> standpoint as we sit here today.

Secondly, this board needs to determine whether or not any of the rights of other persons, which would include the residents within the chartered territory, are being <sup>25</sup> prejudiced.

Page 66 As a result of this consolidation, that <sup>2</sup> will instantly change. So instead of having a <sup>3</sup> board consisting of 100 percent directors that <sup>4</sup> are managing Central for purposes of water use <sup>5</sup> and water use only -- and that includes the 6 hydros, but the hydros are being -- the energy <sup>7</sup> from the hydros is being sold simply to generate revenue to support the irrigation system.

After consolidation, the boards are going 11 to be merged. All of the existing board members of Central, all of the existing board members of Dawson are going to to become 14 directors of a combined entity.

So from my clients' perspective, we go 16 from having a board that's 100 percent managed and directed and controlled by persons solely having an interest in water, the day after this <sup>19</sup> consolidation, they will have to share management of that water with directors that <sup>21</sup> have no experience with irrigation and whose primary purpose up until the day of the consolidation is to protect the interest of their ratepayers who are retail electric 25 customers.

Page 65 We believe the evidence that you will hear over the next two to three days will establish that it's not only not in the best interest of Central -- and when we say Central, we mean all of the stakeholders in Central, all of the -the parties that are interested in water, how that water is managed, how that water is either released or stored and how the reservoir and the canals are maintained.

And, secondly, we believe that this consolidation will be prejudicial to the interest of surface water irrigators.

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Now, I step back from the first point of contention that we have, which is the loss of control.

There is no dispute here that the current board is answerable only to water users. Okay, whether they're recreational water users, whether they're surface water irrigators, whether it's wholesale power production from the hydro units.

They currently have no retail electric customers. So they don't have to take into consideration how any particular decision will <sup>25</sup> impact a retail electricity customer.

Page 67 And that is the inherent conflict that we <sup>2</sup> have a significant problem with because we believe the evidence will show over the next three days that those interests aren't always going to align.

In fact, we will argue at the conclusion of the evidence that this board is going to be inherently conflicted from day one because practically any decision is going to either be more of a benefit for a -- water users or more of a benefit for an electric retail utility customer.

And it's because of that inherent tension that it is going to be, in our estimation, if not impossible, extraordinarily difficult to manage that board in a manner that's fair to both sets of ratepayers because we have two entirely different sets of ratepayers.

Dawson has no surface water irrigators. Central has no retail electric customers.

Central sells electricity. And Dawson buys electricity.

In addition to that, you'll hear testimony that from the specific interest of surface water irrigators, when Central was first

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Page 68 <sup>1</sup> formed, it was primarily the three core <sup>2</sup> counties that are known as the Tri County area, <sup>3</sup> Kearney, Phelps and Gosper.

That's where the majority of Central's surface water irrigators reside. And in recognition -- in recognition of that fact, the <sup>7</sup> Tri County area currently has 9 of 12 seats on 8 the current Central board. So the surface water irrigators currently have roughly a supermajority of the board.

After the -- if the consolidation goes 12 forward, eventually, after both sets of <sup>13</sup> directors are combined, as those directors 14 stagger off, there will eventually be a permanent 14-member board. And of that 14-member board, only 6 will come from the Tri County area.

So from the perspective of surface water irrigators, they go from having a supermajority <sup>20</sup> control of Central to being in a minority position moving forward.

And when it comes to the conflicts that <sup>23</sup> we've talked about, whether it's conflicts over <sup>24</sup> water use -- and you'll hear testimony that <sup>25</sup> irrigation turns on decisions whether to

Page 70 going to manage this combined district with the <sup>2</sup> two different legacy sides of the house, all of <sup>3</sup> those protections are contained in a <sup>4</sup> consolidation plan that, frankly, are nothing <sup>5</sup> more than a plan. They're not binding.

And the point here is, is that these purported protections, which we do not believe adequately protect us, but they weren't put in the charter. And they certainly could have put these protections in the charter if they were serious about protecting the water users.

So we have to trust them. And the problem with having to trust them is this is my clients' only chance to convince this board not to allow this merger to go forward because if 16 they don't follow through on what they say they're going to do in their consolidation plan, my clients will have no recourse because 19 this board's jurisdiction is simply to approve or deny this application. There's no residual <sup>21</sup> jurisdiction to go back and police the merger.

22 An additional problem that we have with this proposed merger and the reason we do not believe it's in the best interest of Central is that there's practically no value here to

Page 69 release water or decisions whether to store water, and there are times when those align. And you'll hear lots of testimony about, in the peak of the summer months, there is some alignment certainly between releasing water in order to irrigate and releasing water at the same time which will also benefit hydropower.

But there are also periods where there aren't those complementary situations. For example, during off-season in winter months when there is no need to release water for surface irrigation but there's still going to be a need to keep the hydros turning if this consolidation goes forward.

So clearly it is not true that they will always be complementary. And it's these invariable conflicts that will arise that we are concerned about.

In addition to the conflicts -- oh, one 20 last point on the protections. One of the issues that we have and you heard counsel allude to the fact that they're going to build in certain protections with respect to the substantial reserve fund that Central has and certain protections with respect to how they're

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If you look at this from a value proposition, Central is contributing Lake McConaughy, a reservoir that's worth 10s of billions of dollars.

It's contributing four hydro units. It's contributing the irrigation canals. 8 It has nearly \$100 million in reserve fund 9 and no debt.

Dawson's contributing very little. Dawson 11 has debt. 12

Dawson's contributing its distribution 13 system. Dawson generates more revenues than 14 Central.

But at the same token, Dawson generates very little margin between gross revenue and net income.

So from Central's perspective, we see very little here in terms of a value proposition. And we note that no value proposition or no value assessment or valuation or fairness opinion was done here.

There appears to be very little analysis, if any, that was done independently by Central <sup>25</sup> which would simply justify, hey, does this make

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Page 72 <sup>1</sup>|sense, does it make sense that we're <sup>2</sup> contributing all of these assets and all of <sup>3</sup> these benefits and getting practically nothing <sup>4</sup> in return.

And these -- you know, these benefits, <sup>6</sup> these assets, they're not just water <sup>7</sup> irrigators. It's all water users. These have <sup>8</sup> been built up over 80 years of prudent 9 management of Central and the management of these facilities that now have substantial value and prudent management of the operations that's allowed Central to set aside nearly \$100 13 million for maintenance of its systems and <sup>14</sup> looking forward to a future FERC renewal.

So the purported benefits of this merger have very little value to Central. And counsel alluded to the study that was done by the PSE group. And you'll hear a lot about this. We 19 will simply point out that the report itself <sup>20</sup> reflects practically no consideration of water management issues, no consideration of potential conflicts or potential management difficulties between a retail utility and an <sup>24</sup> irrigation district.

Instead, the study focused on financial

<sup>1</sup> favorable pricing.

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So the PSE study suggests that by -- by integrating this Jeffrey unit into Dawson's utility, it will create an asset that it can use its power to serve a portion of its native 6 load.

Now, currently Dawson purchases all of its power from NEG and T. But they have a 10 percent carveout.

So they're going to use that carveout. 11 They're going to use the energy from this <sup>12</sup> 20-megawatt Jeffrey unit, and because they're no longer buying power, those cost savings are going to generate a little over \$10 million, which are most of the savings, most of the <sup>16</sup> financial benefit of the consolidation.

17 But that's coming at the expense of Central. Right now Central sells that power and gets revenues that it uses to offset its irrigation costs. 21

So that margin is going to now be gone because it's simply going to be operated for the benefit of Dawson and Dawson's retail customers. So that's no benefit to Central.

There will also be testimony about a

matters. It focused on employee benefits, administration costs and a great deal of discussion of integrating the electric systems between the two systems but nothing about

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water.

In fact, the only testimony you'll hear is that Central relied on its own expertise with respect to water management without ever setting out in writing either identifying these potential conflict or identifying how they will be managed in a consolidated entity. 12

The PSE study, the Phase 2 study as it will be referred to, highlights potential savings of a little more than \$11 million. And those are primarily derived from one hydro unit. It's known as the Jeffrey unit.

Right now Central sells all of its hydropower via a PPA. That's how they've always sold their power. They sell it on the market on contracts that they can negotiate. Those are coming due this year. They were 10-year contracts.

And the -- one of the justifications for this consolidation is that when they put those contracts out for an RFP, they're not seeing

Page 75 purported rate stabilization. Well, we submit Central doesn't need rate stabilization.

For 80 years, Central has effectively managed its resources and has delivered low-cost power. And they have plenty of tools in the toolbox to continue doing that into the future.

And we will submit and you will hear testimony that there is nothing in any of the financials or in any of the financial modeling provided by Central which would suggest that there's any need for rate stabilization.

And it's not just my clients who are 14 concerned, that -- it's not just my clients 15 that have huge questions and are having difficulty understanding how this merger makes any sense from Central's standpoint. It includes the dissenting members of Central's board that were not in favor of this merger, dissenting members of Dawson's board.

But, also, you'll hear testimony from members of a adjacent NRD and that that NRD has, in fact, voted against this merger because of the concerns that we have raised. In <sup>25</sup> addition to a water group user that has long

Page 76 Page 77 <sup>1</sup> worked in partnership with -- with Central is MR. DEGAN: That was in <sup>2</sup> also opposed to the merger. reference to the Phase 2 study. 3 At the end of the day, while this merger HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 4 may make sense for Dawson, it doesn't make Did you state what that is, a PSE? <sup>5</sup> sense for Central. And for that reason, we MR. DEGAN: It is a --6 6 would ask that you find that it's not in the MR. BRASHEAR: Power Systems <sup>7</sup> best interest of Central and it's not in the Engineering. MR. DEGAN: Power Systems 8 best interest of Central's stakeholders and 8 <sup>9</sup> it's not in the best interest of surface water Engineering. It's the name of the consulting <sup>10</sup> irrigators. In fact, it's prejudicial to them. group that was hired jointly by the two --11 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Oh, And for those reasons, we would ask you to <sup>12</sup> deny the application. 12 that's a company, PSE? 13 13 Thank you. MR. DEGAN: Correct. 14 14 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Couple HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. <sup>15</sup> points I would note, just for the record. 15 MR. DEGAN: And I believe --16 just for the board's edification, I believe <sup>16</sup> Mr. Degan mentioned FERC. I don't think you <sup>17</sup> said it's the Federal Energy Regulatory there will be testimony, are you calling --<sup>18</sup> Commission. Just so we put that in the record. 18 certainly the report. 19 19 And you mentioned NEG and T, which is the MR. JARECKE: The report will be <sup>20</sup> Nebraska Generation and Transmission 20 utilized. I don't know that Mr. Sonju will <sup>21</sup> Association, Inc. Just wanted to put in for 21 necessarily be called. those unfamiliar with those or for the purpose 22 MR. DEGAN: Okay. of appellate review, we have those entities 23 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. I 24 listed, not just the acronyms. <sup>24</sup> just wanted to clarify the acronyms so we have those in the record. 25 I think you might have said a PRE or PSE? Page 78 Page 79 With that, I don't have anything further. what factually transpired at that board <sup>2</sup> So we are ready for Central? meeting. But they will not be testifying on MR. BRASHEAR: Call our first behalf of the NRD. That I will agree and <sup>4</sup> witness. 4 concede. 5 MR. JARECKE: Yeah. And, HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 6 <sup>6</sup> Mr. Texel, if I could just make one further MR. DEGAN: They'll be <sup>7</sup> clarification and put it on the record, the testifying solely in their individual <sup>8</sup> references made by counsel are obviously his capacities. 9 opinion, his argument, his opening statement. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 10 But I think it's a misstatement on the With that, it's Central's first witness. <sup>11</sup> record that there will be any representation of 11 MR. BRASHEAR: We would call any authorized representative from an NRD 12 Dave Rowe to the stand, please. <sup>13</sup> speaking on behalf of that NRD before this 13 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Dave? <sup>14</sup> board. There's no such resolution that's been 14 MR. BRASHEAR: Rowe. 15 authorized. DAVID ROWE, 16 16 Called as a witness on behalf of CNPPID, being MR. DEGAN: Well, I -- I don't 17 17 believe that was the representation I made. first duly sworn, was examined and testified as 18 18 The representation I made is there will be follows: 19 testimony that the NRD had a meeting and voted HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 20 and passed a resolution. And could you state your full name and address 21 MR. JARECKE: There's no NRD for the record. 22 representatives that will be able to testify THE WITNESS: It's David Rowe, before this board in that capacity. <sup>23</sup> R-0-W-E. My address is 16 Bass Bay Drive, 24 24 MR. DEGAN: They will be Johnson Lake. 25 testifying in their individual capacity as to 25 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.

Page 80 Page 81 Thank you. Q. How many years have you served as a director of Central? THE WITNESS: Yes. 3 3 DIRECT EXAMINATION A. I've been on the board for 18 years. <sup>4</sup>BY MR. BRASHEAR: Just was elected to the next six-year term. Q. Just selected in November of '22? Q. Mr. Rowe, good morning. 6 6 A. Good morning. A. That is correct, yes. 7 Q. And your current -- you mentioned Q. Would you please share your occupation that you're currently engaged in. you're board president. That's your current 9 A. I'm an ag producer, have irrigated office? <sup>10</sup> corn, soybeans, alfalfa. 10 A. That is my current office. 11 11 Q. And where -- where are you -- you've Q. How long have you been board given your address. But where are you from 12 president? 13 13 originally? A. I've been board president for four 14 A. I graduated high school in Lexington. 14 years and just elected to the next two-year 15 I grew up on a farm near Darr. We go back 120 15 term. 16 16 years, I guess. Q. Have you held any other offices 17 Q. So you live in -- this is your area during your time on the board of directors? 18 you grew up in that you live in now? A. I was vice president for six years. 19 19 A. It is, yes. Q. Mr. Rowe, what is your understanding 20 20 Q. What is your relationship to Central? of Central's purpose? 21 21 A. I'm the current president of the A. Central's purpose is to provide <sup>22</sup> Central board. Also, obviously a board member. 22 surface water irrigation, to provide 23 Q. So you are a director of Central? groundwater recharge, to take care of public 24 A. I am a direct member -- or director interests all across the district. <sup>25</sup> of Central, yes. It's to take care of Kingslev Dam. Page 83 Page 82 Q. And I'm sorry, I didn't ask, what It is recreation. It is environmental issues. area of Central do you represent? 3 3 A. I represent Dawson County. I'm the It's future possible economic development. 4 4 only director in Dawson County. Central is the lifeblood of central <sup>5</sup> Nebraska. 5 Q. In your view or in your opinion, what are the strengths of Central's board over these O. During your time as director, how well would you say Central has carried out that last several years? purpose? A. Well, I would say that the directors combined have over 200 years' worth of A. I think Central has done a fantastic 10 experience and history on this board. job. I'm very proud to be a member of Central. 11 <sup>11</sup> I'm very excited for the future of Central. That -- this board knows water. I mean, 12 12 they know what they're doing. They are Q. Why would you say it's done a 13 fantastic job? 13 successful in their own endeavors. They're 14 very forward thinking. I'm proud to be a A. You know, we live and breathe <sup>15</sup> irrigation. We've -- to both of your points, member of this board. we've -- have -- the district has brought in Q. Would you view Central's board as 17 17 committed to the protection of water? groundwater recharge. 18 18 Everyone in the state has something to A. Absolutely. It's like breathing. We 19 smile about with Central. It affects all of 19 just -- that's what we do. It's innate to us. 20 our lives, particularly the ones in central We've been up against NRDs. We've been up <sup>21</sup> Nebraska. against other people to protect our water. 22 22 Q. Who in your opinion are the directors That's what we do. 23 23 of Central accountable to? Q. When you look ahead as a board member 24 for Central, what issues do you -- do you see A. The -- the public, the people who

<sup>25</sup> elected them.

are top of mind for you?

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Page 84 A. Well, I feel that if we're not moving <sup>2</sup> forward, we're moving backwards.

I feel that we can't be stagnant. I think <sup>4</sup> we were very blessed with a lot of water in the <sup>5</sup> mountains these last few years.

I look for opportunities. You know, we've -- as a board, have told Devin, open 8 doors, go find things, go -- go explore, see what else is out there.

We have to move forward or maybe we don't -- you know, maybe we don't survive.

- Q. When you say Devin, you mean Mr. Brundage?
  - A. Mr. Brundage, yes.

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- Q. When you say open doors, open -- I -open doors to what?
- A. Any opportunity that's out there. 18 You know, if it's solar, if it's low-head <sup>19</sup> hydros, if it's a potential merger or <sup>20</sup> acquisition of a power company, just whatever, <sup>21</sup> just bring us back something, just keep your <sup>22</sup> eves open, look, be aware of what's out there.
- Q. Would you view this proposed merger <sup>24</sup> with Dawson Public Power as an opportunity in 25 that vein?

Page 86 <sup>1</sup>|through conversations? Was there any <sup>2</sup> conversation about that?

A. Yeah. I believe Devin came to a <sup>4</sup> board meeting or a committee meeting and --<sup>5</sup> which we have two of each month, open to the public, and said, hey, this is a possibility, what do you think.

And so conversations went on. And we decided to -- yeah, this makes sense, let's hire a consultant.

And so we hired a consultant. And kind of the rest is history.

- Q. What were the issues that the district thought it needed to have outside consultants on at that time?
- A. Well, we wanted to see if it was even viable, see if it made sense to anyone outside of our boardroom and just see if -- if there's any reason to look forward.
- 20 O. Did the board think it needed a water consultant?
  - A. No. We have engineers, water engineers, the directors.
- 24 We -- I would argue that the Central <sup>25</sup> District are the professionals. When people

A. Absolutely, absolutely.

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2 Q. When did you first learn about the concept of even studying a combination of some kind?

A. Around 2-1/2 years ago. We were looking for power contracts. And we thought we should talk to our neighbors.

Q. And what was your reaction when you first learned about this possibility or at least the idea was raised with you?

A. I was very, very excited. We would 12 have local -- local control, local generation, 13 local consumption. We'd have jobs for our <sup>14</sup> future -- future kids, our grandkids. It's --<sup>15</sup> it's very exciting for central Nebraska.

16 Q. I think you indicated your testimony was 2-1/2 years ago perhaps you first heard about that; is that correct?

- A. Around that, yes.
- O. Would that be true for the board <sup>21</sup> overall, in your view?
  - A. Yes. The entire board.
- O. And what was the board's view in <sup>24</sup> terms of how this should be explored and whether that should be made public or done

Page 87 come from out of state or out of the country, they come to Central to learn about water and how to use water.

- Q. What would you say, Mr. Rowe, was -where would governance fall on the list of issues that the board was focused on at the beginning?
- A. We knew that we were going to have to, you know, tackle that one, we were going to have to tackle the color of pickups.

We had a whole bunch of stuff that, you 12 know, how is this going to go forward, let's work through this, let's talk about it, let's see if there's any traction here.

- Q. Were there any issues in your view, <sup>16</sup> Mr. Rowe, that, if they had been proposed, would have been an absolute nonstarter? Or were there any nonnegotiables for Central, in your view?
  - A. At the beginning, our minds were wide open.

Water and the delivery of was key. Like I said before, that is innate in all of us on the board. I mean, that goes without saying.

Q. So would you view water as a

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Page 88 Page 89 <sup>1</sup> nonnegotiable -- impacting -- water is a we've heard a lot of surface water irrigation. <sup>2</sup> nonnegotiable? Or what do you mean by that? <sup>2</sup> Could we define that term for the record and A. Absolutely it's a nonnegotiable. what we mean by surface water irrigation? 4 And I do believe that Dawson understood THE WITNESS: Sure. Well. 5 <sup>5</sup> that, too. There's -- many of their directors surface water irrigation is water that is not pumped out of the ground in -- in reference to 6 are irrigators as well. this. It's water that could be stored in I might add, I am a surface water 8 irrigator; though, I do not get surface water McConaughy. It has appropriation. It's water <sup>9</sup> from Central. But I have a cabin lease with that is attached to the ground. <sup>10</sup> Central. And we benefit from the mound, the 10 So in my case, I have water rights that <sup>11</sup> recharge that Central has created and so do the 11 are surface water rights. And so I call it up. <sup>12</sup> Dawson irrigators and directors. And I go ahead. And I put it on my crops. 13 13 Q. In your view, how involved was the HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So it's <sup>14</sup> board during this roughly two-year period that 14 where the water comes from? 15 led up to today? 15 THE WITNESS: That is correct. 16 A. Very. Every meeting we had on the ves. <sup>17</sup> agenda a discussion about it. We talked about 17 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: On the 18 it. We voted whether to go forward to new surface as opposed to the aquifer or 19 phases. And every phase as we voted, we went underground? It's not -- it's not based on how 20 20 you use it? It's based on where it comes from? forward. 21 21 Q. Did you have conversations --THE WITNESS: Correct. Yes, 22 22 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okav. ves. 23 Can I interject just for a moment? HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 24 24 THE WITNESS: Sure. THE WITNESS: In this instance, 25 <sup>25</sup> absolutely, yes. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Could --Page 91 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. want their water to leave the area. Why <sup>2</sup> Thank you. I wanted to define that term so we change, it's been good forever. know. Those are pretty much the main issues that <sup>4</sup>BY MR. BRASHEAR: people would bring up. They'd have questions, Q. Mr. Rowe, did you -- did you engage you know, governance questions and just -- just 6 with constituents, either that you represent across-the-board questions. directly or constituents of Central, during Q. Did -- was there engagement with constituents throughout the two-year process, those two years? A. I did. My Dawson County folks were or did it vary, or when did you have these curious and very, very supportive and said, conversations? 11 hey, why haven't you guys done this a long time A. We had these conversations, like I <sup>12</sup> ago. 12 said, at every board meeting, every committee 13 13 And I received phone calls from all around meeting. the area, I presume because I'm president of 14 We had open houses. 15 the board. We had meetings with water users. 16 16 We've met with the NRDs. And there were some folks that were --17 were opposed to it. And they may or may not We've met with a lot of different 18 have listened. But they continue to be opposed 18 individuals. The door is always open. 19 to it, which is fine. You know, we all have 19 I told my board and Devin's staff that 20 opinions. from day one, we were going to be 100 percent transparent, the door is always open, everyone Q. What reasons did, if you recall, 22 those -- those who said they were opposed to has my phone number, Devin's phone number is it, what reasons did they give you for posted everywhere -- I can't believe he does opposition? 24 that, but it is -- and just let's talk this through, let's try to figure out what your

A. Control, their water. They did not

Page 92 Page 93 <sup>1</sup> concerns are and we will work through them. shave the peaks off of the irrigation loads, <sup>2</sup> the expensive peaks, the expensive times that **HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:** <sup>3</sup> Before -- before the next question, I want to water is or -- expensive electricity, which <sup>4</sup> announce that Board Member Peck is back on. <sup>4</sup> matches right up with the time that the water <sup>5</sup> She came back on at 10:34. So she is on WebEx is used. 6 again. So we have the bookends for when she You had mentioned that there is wintertime <sup>7</sup> releases. Well, yes, there are. There's --<sup>7</sup> left and when she has returned to watch this proceeding. everything that gets released out of McConaughy BY MR. BRASHEAR: is spinning the wheel and producing power. Q. Mr. Rowe, how important is hydropower O. Mr. Rowe, counsel made a comment in generation to Central? opening, if I -- I believe I'm close to right 12 on this, saying that Central's board today is A. Very important. 13 Q. And why is that? Why do you say 100 percent managed, directed and controlled 14 that? and solely has interest in irrigation today. 15 Not a perfect paraphrase but I think somewhat A. That's the majority of their income. 16 16 close. O. Do you have any concerns about using <sup>17</sup> hydropower generation within this new Platte 17 Would you agree with that statement? 18 River Public Power District internally? A. No. 19 A. No. Zero concerns. Q. Would you consider Central's board 20 20 today controlled by irrigators? O. And why is that? 21 A. Well, the profitability beyond just A. Controlled by irrigators? <sup>22</sup> power sales contracts matches water 22 Q. Yes. 23 consumption, irrigation, surface water A. No. 24 <sup>24</sup> irrigation consumption perfectly. Q. Why do you say that? And what -- what will happen is we will 25 A. Well, I think some people are under Page 94 Page 95 <sup>1</sup> the misconception that Phelps, Gosper and 1 MR. JARECKE: We do. 2 <sup>2</sup> Kearney County which has nine directors between MR. BRASHEAR: -- need to give 3 <sup>3</sup> the three of them have the ability to set rates Mr. Rowe? 4 <sup>4</sup> and discuss and work with irrigation. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Is that And in reality, we were told a few years No. 205? 6 ago that we can't do that because we're too MS. KREIFELS: Yes. 7 <sup>7</sup> close, anything that has to do with irrigation, HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: If my 8 if you're a part of it, that would affect your 8 memory is right. 9 bottom line, you're out. 9 MR. JARECKE: I think it is, 10 Similar to me, I am a leaseholder at ves. <sup>11</sup> Johnson Lake. And so when lease negotiations 11 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 12 or anything like that come up, I'm out of 12 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I wanted 13 there. 13 to clarify one point, too. I think -- I don't 14 want to go back and forth on it, but the --HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: When you <sup>15</sup> Mr. Brashear said that all or almost all the were told that, is that pursuant to the 16 Accountability and Disclosure Commission's members of the board were irrigators. Is it a 17 17 Opinion -majority of the board that are irrigators on 18 18 THE WITNESS: Yes. With Frank Central? 19 Daley, yes. 19 THE WITNESS: Yeah, I would say 20 20 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- I the majority of the board is. <sup>21</sup> think 205. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Is it a 22 MR. BRASHEAR: At this time, supermajority, like, a three-fifths or --23 <sup>23</sup> we'd like to refer to, I think, Exhibit 42, two-thirds or three-fifths? 24 which is in here. THE WITNESS: I would say --<sup>25</sup> yeah, I would say it is, yes. And do we have a copy we --

	D 06		Davis 07
1	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	1	irrigator. But I'm not a Central customer.
2	Because my recollection is that's what	2	I have surface water. But I have surface
3	Mr. Degan had said in opening. As opposed to	3	water from other irrigation districts.
4	the entirety of the board, I just wanted to	4	And so when we want to talk about the nine
5	clarify exactly what the numbers are.	5	that are in the core counties of the district,
6	THE WITNESS: But the difference	6	in the charter counties, I believe there's
7	is is some of them are Central surface water	7	five, probably six of them that are surface
8	users as opposed to irrigators that use	8	water Central customers. Therefore, they're
9	groundwater.	9	not allowed to have any discussion or any
10	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	10	results pertaining to irrigation.
11	THE WITNESS: Does that make	11	MR. DEGAN: I'm going to object
12	sense?	12	to the conclusion as to what Opinion 205
13	Okay. No?	13	requires. I think the I think 205 speaks
14	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: No.	14	for itself.
15	Can you clarify the difference, please? I just	15	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Well, to
16	to want make sure I understand who the board	16	the extent he gave an opinion as to what the
17	you know, what their relationships besides	17	conclusion of the opinion is, I'll sustain
18	being board members are to the district. And	18	that.
19	can you just kind of go through what you're	19	We can draw the arguments from that based
20	alluding to and making sure I understand that?	20	on the opinion itself.
21	THE WITNESS: Okay. So the	21	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Can
22	three counties Gosper, Phelps and Kearney	22	so my understanding
23	County have nine directors. And there's one	23	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: What
24	director from Dawson, Keith and Lincoln County.	24	what exhibit number would I be looking at from
25	So in terms of irrigators, I'm an	25	the list you sent me?
1	MS. KREIFELS: 43.	1	objection. But I want to make sure that I
2		2	understand how in practice does Central
3	MS. KREIFELS: Three.	3	District has basically you know, who
4		4	under what conditions do board members recuse
5	advisory opinion, and on the easel is Exhibit	5	themselves from consideration or votes, what
6	_ · · · · ·	6	kinds of factors have historically occurred as
7	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: 42 and 43?	7	you understand it as president of the board?
8	MR. BRASHEAR: Correct.	8	THE WITNESS: Irrigation rates,
9	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And do	9	the time the schedule so when they would
10			deliver water.
11	MR. JARECKE: Yes.	11	We such things as if we want to do a
12		12	recharge project that would have something to
13		13	do with irrigation, those directors typically
14	<u> </u>	14	would recuse themselves.
15	MR. JARECKE: And	15	Just anything that pertains that would
16	MS. KREIFELS: They also have	16	affect your financial wherewithal in terms of
17	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	17	irrigation.
18		18	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And
19	I don't want to interrupt. You were asking	19	let me go back to my notes here.
20	questions.	20	Did I understand you to say that no.
21	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Yes.	21	It was in the Protestants' counsel's opening
22		22	comments that 9 out of 12 seats today are
23	to interrupt whatever questions you might have.	23	represented by those three counties, Gosper,
24	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So I	24	Phelps and Kearney?
25		25	THE WITNESS: That is correct.

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1	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And so	1	three counties are not irrigation users; some
2	how many of those directors typically have to	2	of them are?
3	recuse themselves? Because you don't have a	3	THE WITNESS: That is correct.
4	majority of the board anymore if all of them	4	Central customers.
5	recuse themselves; is that correct?	5	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.
6	THE WITNESS: As I that is	6	THE WITNESS: Direct customers.
7	correct.	7	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: They
8	As I understand it, it is only the members	8	may be irrigation
9	present. And so you have the the members	9	THE WITNESS: Yes.
10	that are eligible to vote are the members of	10	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON:
11	the board while that vote is going on, if I	11	users, but they're not customers of Central?
12	understand it correctly.	12	THE WITNESS: Yeah, that's the
13	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So are	13	distinction.
14	there times at which you only have three board	14	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.
15	members that are voting?	15	Thank you.
16	THE WITNESS: Well, back to our	16	MR. BRASHEAR: So
17	original one. So of the nine in those	17	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I want
18	chartered counties, there will be there has	18	to ask, too, board members have white notebooks
19	been five or six that were unable to vote.	19	with exhibits. Is that from I I'm not
20	So of the nine, four or five of them plus	20	aware where that came from, what's in it.
21	the other three so there would be a total of	21	MR. JARECKE: Yeah. I
22	seven-ish that would be able to vote on	22	apologize. I should have mentioned that.
23	irrigation issues.	23	On behalf of the Petitioners, we have
24	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So, in	24	delivered before each director present a
25	other words, some of the directors from those	25	collection of all of the exhibits previously
	Page 102	_	Page 103
1	offered, including the two that were not yet	1	MR. JARECKE: As were his.
2	received. But all of those exhibits are before	2	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Did you
3	you, just for convenience. They are not part	3	receive those?
4	of the official record.	4	MR. DEGAN: We do.
5	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	5	MS. KREIFELS: Yes.
6	So has 22 and 39 in that	6	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I don't
7	MR. JARECKE: That is correct.	7	have them. So I can't follow along very
8	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: list.	8	easily
9	Bo the board members keep—need to keep in	9	MS. KREIFELS: Hold on.
10	mind, those two are not in the record at this	10	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:
11	point.	11	without those but
12	Do you have one for the hearing officer,	12	MS. KREIFELS: Hold on. I have
13	one of those notebooks?	13	one for you.
14	MS. KREIFELS: I have the	14	MR. JARECKE: Oh, we have it.
15	official.	15	Yes, we do. Yes, we do. Gwen was holding it
16	MR. JARECKE: You have the		for you.
17	official.	17	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Mr. Rowe?
18	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And	18	THE WITNESS: Yes, sir.
19	opposing counsel?	19	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Yeah, this
20	MS. KREIFELS: They were		is Frank Reida.
21	delivered to opposing counsel via the share	21	So you're going to have to educate me.
22	file.	22	Even though I was a former employer of NPPD,
23	MR. JARECKE: Electronic.	23	which is both an electrical and an irrigation
24	MS. KREIFELS: Electronically,	24	district, I know a lot about electricity. I
25	yes.	∠5	know nothing about irrigation.

Page 104 Page 105 THE WITNESS: Okay. <sup>1</sup> legislature. 2 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: How do In terms of delivery, if they're short of <sup>3</sup> you -- does the district have a duty to serve water, then the board would have the -- they <sup>4</sup> with respect to water? Or are there contracts? would figure out how to allocate that water. 5 <sup>5</sup> Or how exactly -- how exactly do the entities And so if we would go back into the prior 6 6 that are receiving this water -- are there drought, which was quite a drought, we <sup>7</sup> contracts? Or how do they get it? What's allocated our irrigators -- we went down to 6.7 8 the -inches of delivered water, surface water. 9 9 THE WITNESS: Exactly like BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So you 10 NPPD -- exactly like NPPD does. 10 receive it by contract -- or by the fact that 11 you own the land, that -- that you then have a I'm a customer of NPPD as well. And so 12 there are water rights that attach to my water right which Central delivers -- well, not <sup>13</sup> ground, and Dawson -- or Central or NPPD in necessarily to you but delivers to its this case hold those contracts. customers who are water customers? 15 15 I might note that that's the -- the state THE WITNESS: As I understand 16 it, that is correct. 16 is in charge of that. So it's the -- it's the people's water. And we are allowed to use it 17 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay. Now, 18 at this point in time. second question that I have, I have a little 19 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So do you bit of cognitive dissidence on this. When do 20 get that by contract? Or is it a duty to irrigators typically irrigate? 21 THE WITNESS: Typically we start serve? Or if there's a deficiency of water <sup>22</sup> availability, how does that work? 22 at the beginning of July. Typically when you 23 turn your air-conditioner on and you have to THE WITNESS: So in my case, I <sup>24</sup> have a water right. So I have the right to have it is when we irrigate. 25 that water as currently stated with the BOARD MEMBER REIDA: No. I'm -time of day. What time of day do you irrigate? Page 107 you're getting electricity. I'm trying to THE WITNESS: We typically correlate your -- it seems to me is -- if I was irrigate 24/7. an irrigator, I would want to irrigate at <sup>4</sup> night. And so that would be when you'd be But in the morning, we will go to a thing <sup>5</sup> called Code Red. And Code Red was -- is really <sup>5</sup> releasing the water and so -- but that would <sup>6</sup> expensive electricity. And so if we sign up not be coincident with an electrical peak. <sup>7</sup> for cheaper electricity in the spring, then we I mean, my understanding is the reason 8 can buy cheap electricity because they will 8 this is beneficial is that you're going to cook automatically shut off our wells during the off the demand load. 10 Code Red. THE WITNESS: It is but --11 11 Well, there are some people who choose not BOARD MEMBER REIDA: And so --12 to shut off their wells or they are 12 and so you -- you would -- wouldn't an 13 irrigator be irrigating at a time when you manufacturers or they're businesses, and they get charged that higher rate. would not have a demand? 15 And so that's what makes this marriage so THE WITNESS: That's a great <sup>16</sup> wonderful is the fact that when that's -- when 16 question. 17 17 there's high draws and high energy bills, the BOARD MEMBER REIDA: If you're 18 water is flowing because of irrigation. irrigating at night, you're not -- it's not 19 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So what going to be coincidence with your electrical 20 you're -- I guess the -- I'm trying to think of demand, the peak. 21 21 the correlation. THE WITNESS: That's a great 22 22 So, for instance, if you're in -- let's question and great comment. 23 <sup>23</sup> say, in California, and you have solar power, So the way Central is set up is that they it coincides with air-conditioning load. So 24 can store that water until it needs to be when the sun is out, it's hot, at the same time released behind the hydros. And then they can

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Page 108
                                                                                                         Page 109
 1 hold 8, 10, 12 hours' worth of water in their
                                                                 So it's -- we're going to take a 5- to
                                                          <sup>2</sup> 10-minute break at this point. And then we'll
 <sup>2</sup> system. So when you're ready to turn on water,
 <sup>3</sup> it's sitting there, ready to go.
                                                            come back on the record. So we are in short
             BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So they've
                                                            recess.
                                                          5
 <sup>5</sup> already -- it's already gone through the hydros
                                                                    (10:51 a.m. - Recess taken.)
                                                          6
 6 as far as producing the electricity and, yet,
                                                          7
 <sup>7</sup> it's then available for irrigation; is that
                                                          8
   what you're saying?
                                                          9
             THE WITNESS: That is -- that is
                                                         10
<sup>10</sup> correct. It can sit in the -- you know, the
<sup>11</sup> voids, the canal systems or the lakes or the
                                                         11
12 other reservoirs. So it's like a three- or
                                                         12
<sup>13</sup> four-tier -- step tier.
                                                         13
14
                                                         14
       And I would also say that a lot of times,
<sup>15</sup> surface irrigation, they don't have the ability
                                                         15
16 to turn water on and off like groundwater would
                                                         16
because of the electrical rates.
                                                         17
18
                                                         18
             BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay.
                                                         19
   Thank you. That makes sense.
20
             THE WITNESS: I hope I answered
                                                         20
                                                         21
21
   your question.
22
                                                         22
             HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: At this
                                                         23
<sup>23</sup> point, I've had a request from the board
                                                         24
<sup>24</sup> members, we're going to take a short break
<sup>25</sup> for -- facilities break.
                                                         25
                                               Page 110
                                                                                                         Page 111
        (At 11:09 a.m., with parties present as
                                                             going to supply water for surface water
   before, the following proceedings were had:)
                                                            irrigation or are we going to generate power?
             HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: All
                                                            Is that in conflict sometimes and you have to
 <sup>4</sup> right. We're going to go back on the record.
                                                            decide that?
 5 And you may continue.
                                                                        THE WITNESS: Is it in conflict?
             MR. BRASHEAR: Okay. Thank you.
                                                            I would say no, because we deliver for
 <sup>7</sup>BY MR. BRASHEAR:
                                                            irrigation. And we are able to generate power
                                                            through the irrigation. And we have been on
       Q. Mr. Rowe, before we went on break,
 <sup>9</sup> there had been some mention to a variety of
                                                            contracts. And so the contracts just stay --
  things. And I just want to refer back to that.
                                                             you just -- the power that comes in is the
11
       So first of all, sir, I believe you have
                                                            power that goes out.
                                                         12
<sup>12</sup> Exhibit 42 in front of you. Oh, I'm sorry.
                                                                 The -- what was your first question? I'm
13
                                                         13
             BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Yeah, can I
                                                            sorry.
                                                         14
14 ask my questions?
                                                                        BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Does the
15
             MR. BRASHEAR: Yes. I
                                                             water supply to the surface -- does it come
<sup>16</sup> apologize.
                                                            downstream of the -- 100 percent of it to the
17
                                                         17
             BOARD MEMBER MOEN: This is a
                                                             irrigation customers comes downstream of the
18 followup to Chairman Reida's question.
                                                            hydro plants? Or is some of it coming from
19
                                                         19
       So are -- the surface water irrigators, do
                                                            upstream of the hydro plant?
                                                         20
20 they get -- for Central's, do they get their
                                                                        THE WITNESS: So I think they
<sup>21</sup> water downstream, 100 percent it comes
                                                             will probably bring that in later. But the
22 downstream of hydro plants or some from
                                                            North Platte water comes through Lake
23
                                                         <sup>23</sup> McConaughy, which is the first dam. But there
  upstream?
24
                                                            is sometimes South Platte flows that will come
       Second part of that is, does the Central
<sup>25</sup> board sometimes have to make a decision are we
                                                         into the -- some of the other generators in
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1	Gothenburg, in J-1 and J-2 south of Lexington.	1	that a is that a correct summary? Or is
2	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: What's	2	that incorrect?
3	J-1 and J-2?	3	THE WITNESS: Well, I would say
4	THE WITNESS: Johnson Generator	4	that is correct by default.
5	1 and Johnson Generator 2. They're the hydro	5	You know, we always have irrigation
6	plants near Lexington.	6	priority in the back of our minds. But it also
7	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	7	produces power as it comes through. So the
8	MR. JARECKE: Director Moen, I	8	power is generated to irrigate.
9	think the next witness can clarify that for	9	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
10	you.	10	All right.
11	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Okay. And	11	THE WITNESS: Does that make
12	•	12	sense?
13	doesn't have to make a decision on are we going	13	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Well,
14	to surface irrigate or generate power? That's	14	you put it it goes through, but its purpose
15	not a conflict	15	is for irrigation, but you're getting
16	THE WITNESS: No, that's not a	16	hydropower by that water
17	conflict.	17	THE WITNESS: As a sideline.
18	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: question	18	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Right.
19	that you have for a the board that you have	19	That's why I said kind of a by-product.
20	to decipher?	20	And doesn't the Corps of Engineers have
21	THE WITNESS: No.	21	something to say about how much water has to or
22	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Based on	22	can be released out of Lake McConaughy, too?
23	what you were saying, is it fair to say that	23	THE WITNESS: You're getting
24	the surface irrigation needs have priority and	24	past my pay grade.
25		25	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
	Page 114		Page 115
1	That's another witness. That's fine. If you	1	we're done with our questions, Mr. Brashear.
2	don't know, it's perfectly fine to say you	2	MR. BRASHEAR: No. Okay. Thank
3	don't know. And we'll see if another witness	3	you, Mr Mr. Texel.
4	can address that.	4	BY MR. BRASHEAR:
5	THE WITNESS: I don't believe	5	Q. Mr. Rowe, I want to return to Exhibit
6	the Corp has much to do with that. I think it	6	42 that's before you, which was being discussed
7	would be more of a Fish and Wildlife.	7	before the break. You have that in front of
8	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	8	you; is that correct?
	Wrong federal entity. Maybe Fish and Wildlife	9	A. That is correct.
	for threatened and endangered species can tell	10	Q. You were testifying before the break
11	you how much you have to release or restrict	11	that there are times when Central directors
12	is, depending on not it directs the difficulty that	12	cannot vote on certain matters; is that
13	plants?	13	correct?
14	THE WITNESS: That is correct.	14	A. That is correct.
15	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	15	Q. And you referred to an Accountability
16	Okay.	16	and Disclosure Commission, I believe, in your
17	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Maybe	17	testimony. Were you referring to Exhibit 42?
18	another way to ask the question is, would	18	A. I was, yes.
19	there there would be a time where you would	19	Q. Are you familiar with this exhibit?
20	have to say, no, we can't provide surface water	20	A. A few years ago, I was. It's been a
21	irrigation because we used it to generate	21	while since I've read it.
22	power?	22	Q. And what is I'm not trying to give
23	THE WITNESS: No.	23	you an interpretation, but what can you
24	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Okay.	24	again state what is your interpretation or
25	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I think	25	understanding of what this opinion how that

Page 117 Page 116 1 governs Central's board when it considers Q. And, Mr. Rowe, I'd have you turn to <sup>2</sup> matters related to irrigation? <sup>2</sup> page 7 of that opinion, if you would. 3 A. So if you are an irrigation customer Are you on page 7? 4 of Central, you do not have the ability to vote 4 A. I am. 5 <sup>5</sup> on any irrigation matters, anything pertaining Q. Do you see the section entitled 6 summary? 6 to irrigation. 7 O. And --A. Yes. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: I have Q. Could you just read that first -- or, <sup>9</sup> I'm sorry, could you read the first and second 9 a followup question to that last statement. paragraphs, please, there? Did irrigation customers of Central vote 11 on this petition amendment -- or the -- the --A. "Central's board members without 12 veah, the --<sup>12</sup> contracts with Central leases or Water Service 13 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Advisory Agreements may participate in discussions and 14 opinion? 14 vote on all issues relative to Central's 15 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: No, no, standard form leases and standard form Water 16 16 the -- the core -- the governing document of Service Agreements. However, board members who the district. <sup>17</sup> have present or proposed leases may not 18 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: The participate in discussions and voting on 19 charter? standard form leases. The board members who 20 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: The have present or prospective -- prospective charter, charter amendment. Water Service Agreements with the district may THE WITNESS: The charter not participate in discussions and voting on <sup>23</sup> amendment, yes. It doesn't affect directly. standard form water lease agreements." 24 24 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay. Q. And if you could read that next 25 BY MR. BRASHEAR: 25 sentence as well? Page 118 Page 119 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Just A. Yeah, I am a college grad. 2 <sup>2</sup> before you start, I believe one -- it wasn't HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. <sup>3</sup> verbatim because there was one you said And I wanted to say, too, you just read, "the <sup>4</sup> proposed leases, and it was prospective leases. public generally or a board segment." Broad <sup>5</sup> I don't know -segment? 6 THE WITNESS: A broad segment, THE WITNESS: Excuse me. 7 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- if ves. 8 that matters. But I just wanted to correct 8 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm sorry. I'm not -that so it's a verbatim reading what's in here. 10 10 THE WITNESS: Thank you. THE WITNESS: Wow. 11 11 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Sorry. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- trying 12 to embarrass anybody. It's easy to misread. <sup>12</sup> Please go on. <sup>13</sup> So I just wanted to point that out so we have a 13 BY MR. BRASHEAR: 14 verbatim reading in the record. Q. Would you please read the next 15 sentence as well? THE WITNESS: Thank you. A. "Actions and discussions by Central 16 BY MR. BRASHEAR: board members with respect to standard form 17 Q. And so it's that summary that you're 18 referring to when you say -- the positions in <sup>18</sup> leases and standard form Water Service 19 Agreements are distinguishable from the effects that summary are what you were referring to of such actions on public generally or board when you say irrigators -- water surface 21 segment in the public." irrigator customers of Central can -- on the 22 22 Q. And I'll preempt Mr. Texel and -- the board cannot vote on those matters? third word there, you said "discussions," I 23 A. That is exactly right. <sup>24</sup> believe. But you would agree it's "actions and 24 Q. Do you know how many water service <sup>25</sup> decisions" in that sentence you just read? <sup>25</sup> irrigation customers of Central are on the

Page 120 Page 121 board of directors today? that are owned by Central. There's approximately 850 cabins around the lake. A. Currently, I believe there are six. 3 They're just another segment of Central Q. And so on matters covered by the <sup>4</sup> scope of this opinion, those six do not vote on customers, direct customers that we are in those matters; is that your testimony? charge of. 6 Q. I believe -- thank you. A. That is correct. 7 I believe you indicated a moment ago that Q. I believe you indicated earlier you said there were matters you don't vote on. Is there are six surface water irrigation that because of this same opinion? customers serving on the Central board today? 10 10 A. I believe that is the right number, A. That is correct. 11 11 Q. Are you a water service customer of yes. 12 Central? 12 Q. And you are not one of those six; is 13 13 that correct? A. I am not. 14 14 Q. So are you covered by the lease A. I am not one of those six. 15 15 provision of this opinion? Q. How many members of the Central board 16 16 today are involved or are irrigators, whether A. That's where I fit in, yes. 17 surface water or groundwater? Q. And what lease does that refer to? 18 18 A. The Johnson Lake cabin lease. A. There are 10 out of the 12 are 19 19 Q. Okay. So you're -- you have a lease irrigators of some kind. 20 20 O. But -- but not all are Central with Central in that way? 21 21 customers? A. I do. 22 22 Q. Okay. Is -- what is -- when you A. No. Only those six are Central refer to Johnson Lake, can you -- just what is customers. 24 24 that? Q. Because they have surface water 25 contracts? 25 A. Johnson Lake is one of the reservoirs Page 122 Page 123 all -- all people that the district serves, not A. With Central, yes. 2 Q. Thank you. just the surface water irrigators, that -- the 3 Mr. Rowe, there's -- you talked earlier few that are objecting. 4 O. Mr. Rowe, I'd like to refer you to <sup>4</sup> about your engagement with constituents and <sup>5</sup> conversations with constituents. Are you Exhibit 44. <sup>6</sup> familiar with the objections or issues that the Mr. Rowe, what is Exhibit 44? What is it Protestants have raised regarding the merger? captioned as? A. Yes, I am. A. Plan of Consolidation, Schedule G. Q. And what would you view as the issues MS. KREIFELS: Might have marked 10 that they've raised, as you understand it? it backwards. 11 A. Control of water, representation. THE WITNESS: Reserve funds? 12 12 O. And is it a -- are those issues that MS. KREIFELS: Yes. 13 13 you had considered before they were raised by MR. BRASHEAR: Check the order. 14 the Protestants? MS. KREIFELS: I think the 15 15 A. Absolutely. sticker got put on the wrong page. 16 Q. And why would you have considered 16 THE WITNESS: This is a 17 17 those? different one. 18 18 A. Why? I think that they -- those MR. DEGAN: Counsel, Plan of 19 issues were just part of what we knew was Consolidation, is that --20 20 coming. MR. BRASHEAR: Yes. 21 21 Q. And who do you mean by we? MR. JARECKE: Yes. 22 22 A. The board. They -- there's some MR. BRASHEAR: The entire. 23 strong personalities that really were wanting MR. DEGAN: You only get three 24 it their way. And we knew that we'd have a pages. 25 battle on our hands and we needed to represent MS. KREIFELS: Hold on.

Page 124 Page 125 THE WITNESS: All right. That's what you were saying about the sticker? 2 MS. KREIFELS: Yeah, it just MS. KREIFELS: Yeah. 3 <sup>3</sup> got -- the sticker got put on the back instead HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm <sup>4</sup> of the front. 4 sorry. I just -- I wanted to clarify that so I 5 THE WITNESS: Okay. knew. 6 6 MS. KREIFELS: There you go. And is this -- if you know, maybe counsel A. Plan of Consolidation. knows, is this the same document that's BY MR. BRASHEAR: attached as one of the exhibits to the petition Q. Are you familiar with this document, that Central filed? <sup>10</sup> Mr. Rowe? 10 MR. BRASHEAR: Correct. 11 11 A. I am. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 12 Q. And is --And this one's in black and white. The one 13 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm attached to the petition is in color for --<sup>14</sup> going to interrupt for just a moment, only important to the maps --<sup>15</sup> Mr. Brashear. 15 MR. BRASHEAR: Correct. 16 16 You said Schedule G. Is Schedule G part HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- of of the Plan of Consolidation? the subdivisions. Maybe that doesn't matter 18 It sounded like you referred to the Plan today but -- all right. Just wanted to clarify 19 of Consolidation being Schedule G. If I read 19 that. Thank you. 20 it right, Schedule G is the last page of the 20 MR. BRASHEAR: Correct. <sup>21</sup> Plan of Consolidation? 21 BY MR. BRASHEAR: 22 22 THE WITNESS: That is correct. Q. Mr. Rowe, so you've seen this <sup>23</sup> I had it upside down. The sticker was on the document before? <sup>24</sup> wrong page. 24 A. That is correct. 25 25 Q. And what do you understand it to be? HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. Page 127 Page 126 <sup>1</sup> as well? A. This is the document that Dawson <sup>2</sup> is -- becomes -- Central acquires Dawson. 2 A. Absolutely. 3 Q. And would you understand this to set Q. Why would that be important to you? <sup>4</sup> forth terms that had to be negotiated for A. Because they were relinquishing <sup>5</sup> Central and Dawson to consider the merger? what -- they needed to understand where we A. We needed some guidelines. We needed were -- that we were all on the same page, <sup>7</sup> a -- some sort of chart to take us down the going the same direction when we agreed on the same outline of what we were to be. path that we were going to go down. We needed to have both Dawson and Central O. You were asked earlier about the <sup>10</sup> agree on a set of predesignated rules and how potential for conflict between demands for <sup>11</sup> this was going to be. delivery of irrigation water and power. Do you 12 12 Q. And would you have felt comfortable remember that question from the board members? 13 13 as a Central director voting on a potential merger if you hadn't had the Plan of 14 Q. Do you recall that question? 15 Consolidation? 15 A. Yes. 16 16 A. Wouldn't consider it. Q. After -- assuming for purposes of 17 17 Q. Why was this important to you in your this question that the board approves the 18 consideration? amendments and Platte River Public Power and 19 19 Irrigation District exists, do you -- do you A. Because we needed an outline, a <sup>20</sup> draft, a direction that we as the two boards expect there to be conflict between the <sup>21</sup> were going to go toward. We needed a set of delivery of surface irrigation water -- let me 22 ground rules that this is how it's going to back up one second. 23 23 happen. Will you be a director of Platte River 24 <sup>24</sup> Public Power and Irrigation District? Q. Was it important to you that the

<sup>25</sup> Dawson board approve this Plan of Consolidation

A. I will be a director.

Page 129

Page 128 Q. And would it be your opinion or do <sup>2</sup> vou expect there to be conflicts for Platte River as a presumed director between demands <sup>4</sup> for delivery of irrigation water and power generation? A. Absolutely not.

We went into the discussion that water 8 trumps power, so we're all on that page. We -like I said before, this is innate with us.

- Q. And when you say we in that sentence, who do you mean?
- A. I'm referring to our board. And so 13 as we have discussions and as we consolidate with Dawson, they are 100 percent on our page.
  - Q. So you believe Dawson share -- Dawson board members share that view as well?
  - A. Absolutely. That was -- that was the premise of everything that we have done.
- Q. Mr. Rowe, do you believe that this <sup>20</sup> transaction -- I'll refer to everything before us today that's led up to this, do you believe that this -- this consolidation transaction <sup>23</sup> between Central and Dawson has been studied <sup>24</sup> sufficiently?
  - A. Absolutely.

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Page 130 with the general manager, work with his staff; <sup>2</sup> develop agendas and try to give guidance.

Like I said earlier, as president, you 4 know, my board came to me and said, hey, we <sup>5</sup> have got to look to the future, we cannot be 6 stagnant, we have to move forward or who knows where this district might go or not be.

And so I believe this is in the best interest of the district and everyone within the district. And if I didn't believe that, I would not be sitting here today.

- Q. Mr. Rowe, at the conclusion of Phase 13 1, did you vote to move to Phase 2?
  - A. I did.
- Q. At the conclusion of Phase 2, did you vote to move to Phase 3?
  - A. I did.
- Q. At the conclusion of Phase 3, did you 19 vote to move to Phase 4?
  - A. I did.
- Q. At the meeting at the end of Phase 4 <sup>22</sup> to approve the Plan of Consolidation and the <sup>23</sup> filing of the petition, did you vote in favor of those resolutions?
  - A. I did.

Q. Why do you say that?

A. We've been doing this for 2-1/2

<sup>3</sup> vears. We've beat the dead cat.

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We have went through consultants. We've asked questions. We've had open houses. We've did everything in our powers to, you know, answer the questions, be transparent, set a path forward.

We believe that we have checked every box several times. And I'm very excited about it.

- O. Mr. Rowe, what would you -- as a director of Central, what do you view as your 13 duty?
- 14 A. My duty? To make sure we stick with 15 the mission statement. My duty is -- as a 16 director or as president?
  - O. As director.
- A. As a director, I have constituents, 19 and I need to answer to them, and I need to do what's best for the district in light of my constituents and the constituents of the area.
- 22 O. Would you view any additional duties that exist for you as president?
- A. Well, as president, I listen to everyone, including my board, our board; work

Page 131 Q. Mr. Rowe, do you believe that this merger is in the best interest of Central?

A. I do.

Q. And why do you say that, sir?

5 A. It's a path to the future. The world's changing. And we have to keep up with 7 it.

I do believe that if we're not moving forward, we're moving backwards.

This is excellent for the area. This is excellent for future economic development. This is excellent for relationships with other water entities so we can secure water deliveries in the future.

I believe that with this merger, we'll 16 have a bigger footprint -- same -- you know, within reason of the same size of footprint but a much heavier footprint and maybe have -continue to build relationships and store more water in McConaughy. So it helps all of Nebraska.

MR. BRASHEAR: I have no further questions.

24 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: All <sup>25</sup> right. Mr. Degan, cross?

Page 132 Page 133 MR. DEGAN: Yeah. Thank you. This is a guideline. This is something that -- these are the ground rules. **CROSS-EXAMINATION** 3 <sup>3</sup> BY MR. DEGAN: Q. Okay. But would you agree that if Q. Mr. Rowe, before we set aside the this consolidation is approved and the <sup>5</sup> consolidation plan, you testified that it was amendments to the charter are allowed to go 6 important for the current board to make sure forward, a new board will have to be <sup>7</sup> that Dawson was on the same page. Do you constituted: isn't that right? 8 8 recall that testimony? A. That is true. 9 A. Yes. Q. And they will have to implement their 10 10 own bylaws; correct? Q. Okay. Because you stated that your board's primary interests are the water users; 11 A. The new board will be all of the 12 right? board members from both boards, and so those 13 A. Sure. bylaws will be developed between the two 14 Q. Okay. So that was important to you; boards. 15 15 It will be a 23-member board, and 16 16 A. Absolutely. systematically over time as their terms run 17 out -- I believe alphabetically, the board will Q. All right. And you entered into this consolidation plan; is that right? get down to the size that we have talked about. 19 19 A. That is correct. Q. Okay. So those bylaws will be 20 20 created in the future; would you agree with Q. Do you have an understanding as to 21 whether that document in front of you will bind that? the future board, the consolidated entity? 22 A. Yes, yes. 23 23 A. The word bind I think is rather Q. Okay. And I take it, it is your intention and your opinion that the things that <sup>24</sup> restrictive. I think it's important for a <sup>25</sup> future board to develop themselves. are in the consolidation plan will be Page 134 Page 135 costs of maintaining the irrigation system? implemented in the future? A. Absolutely. A. Yes. 3 3 Q. And does this board hold any Q. That's your belief? 4 obligations to anybody other than persons who A. That's my belief, absolutely. Q. Okay. But as you pointed out, at use the water, whether it's for recreational 6 that time, now half the board will be former purposes, whether it's for surface water Central directors, and the other half of the irrigation, whether it's for groundwater irrigation, whether it's for environmental board will be former Dawson directors; correct? 9 purposes? A. Sure. 10 Q. And you're -- okay. So -- and I want A. All of those. <sup>11</sup> to clarify, there was a question from counsel 11 Q. It's all of those. But they're all as to what I stated in open. So -- so let me 12 related to water; right? 13 clarify by asking you this question, would you A. And we all drink water, yes. 14 <sup>14</sup> agree that currently Central's -- the entirety Q. Okay. But when the new board is of Central's board is chosen from persons who constituted, half the board is going to come 16 have an interest in the use of the water? <sup>16</sup> from a background of supporting water use, and 17 the other half will come from a background of A. Define the use of water. 18 Q. Use of water, the allocation and the delivering low-cost power to retail customers. management of the water in Central's irrigation Do you agree with that? 20 20 system. A. No. 21 21 O. You don't? A. Are they elected by the people who 22 A. No. I would -- I would agree that use water? I would say yes. 23 <sup>23</sup> that has been their -- the board they sit on. Q. Well, you agree with me that the

<sup>24</sup> hydro units were constructed in order to

<sup>25</sup> provide a revenue source to supplement the

<sup>24</sup> But many of those Dawson members are irrigators

25 themselves. They are farmers.

Page 136 Page 137 <sup>1</sup> isn't it? Q. Okay. Let's talk about that. 2 So you will agree with me that the vast A. I can't answer that. 3 <sup>3</sup> majority of Central's surface water irrigators Q. Okay. Well, there -- there are no <sup>4</sup> are in the Tri County area? Dawson customers in Kearney or Phelps, are A. The majority. I think there -- I there? 6 believe there's 5,000 acres that are in Dawson A. To my knowledge, in those counties, 7 and Lincoln County. no. 8 Q. Okay. But when -- just for I do believe that many people in those clarification for the board, when we talk about counties have contracts with Dawson. 10 Tri County, we're talking about Phelps, Gosper O. Well, but they're not electricity 11 and Kearney; correct? customers? 12 A. Those are charter counties. 12 A. Well, they would be electricity 13 13 customers. I mean, there's many people that O. Those are charter counties; correct? 14 A. Yes. have farm ground that Dawson supplies power to. 15 15 Q. Aren't those counties in Southern's Q. And that's where the majority of your 16 surface water irrigates -- irrigators reside? service territory? A. Majority of surface water irrigators, 17 A. The two counties you're referencing, 18 18 Central's, yes. yes. 19 Q. Okay. What percentage of the -- your But I'm saying that there are customers --<sup>20</sup> surface water irrigators in Gosper County 20 there are people who live in those counties who 21 21 receive their power from Dawson? have Dawson Power in other counties. 22 A. That's a lot. And I don't know how O. Okay. But you were talking about an many. I -- that would be probably a question additional ancillary benefit of this <sup>24</sup> for the Dawson side. consolidation would come from the fact that groundwater irrigators would benefit from lower Q. Okay. It's less than 50 percent, Page 138 Page 139 <sup>1</sup> cost electricity. Do you recall when you But is it your testimony that you don't <sup>2</sup> testified to that? owe a heightened duty to your ratepayers? 3 A. I'm not sure what you mean by a A. Yep. <sup>4</sup> heightened duty. Q. But would you agree with me that to <sup>5</sup> the extent that those surface water -- those I believe that we have them in absolute <sup>6</sup> front, forefront of our minds. I believe that groundwater irrigators live in counties that ratepayers are extremely important. aren't served by Dawson, there's no benefit? A. I don't agree with that at all. But I also would argue that the folks at 9 McConaughy are important. Fish and Wildlife is O. Well, how so? 10 important. The people who are benefiting from A. I believe that we will probably have the mound are important. a more stable water supply. 12 12 I believe that we won't have to worry And I would also say that the people on 13 the north side of the river are not evil about the income so that we can take care of the structures that are in all of the counties. people. We think just like the folks on the 15 15 south side of the river. We're all in this I also believe that this is -- this --16 this is everyone's water, not just the folks in 16 together. 17 17 those three counties. And, honestly, if we don't hold hands, 18 18 I think this is a public entity. I someone's going to take it away from all of us. believe that everyone should have a piece of And I believe that we need to be a stronger entity. We need to move forward. We need to it. I think everyone should have a voice. And <sup>21</sup> I don't believe that I agree with the premise work with each other. And this is -- this is a

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good thing.

Central?

<sup>25</sup> interested party in Central's water.

Q. Well, I understand the position that

the surface water irrigators are not the only

that you are making.

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Q. Who would take the water away from

A. I don't know. You tell me. I

Page 140 Page 141 <sup>1</sup> believe if we have local control, we have local Q. I don't believe Keith --<sup>2</sup> control. 2 A. Dawson is not chartered. 3 3 I mean, I can't say that -- Central's a Lincoln is not chartered. 4 <sup>4</sup> pretty small entity. And the State of Nebraska Keith is not chartered. 5 <sup>5</sup> wants to do it, maybe Columbus wants to do it, Only the three, Phelps, Gosper and Kearney 6 maybe federal government wants to do it. I County are chartered counties. <sup>7</sup> don't know. But I do think we need to hold 7 Q. But you have local control as you sit 8 hands. 8 here right now? 9 And this -- this merged entity will make A. We do. <sup>10</sup> the district a lot stronger district. 10 Q. Over the -- over the existing 11 Q. Okay. I just want to touch on a chartered territory that Central has; right? couple of the benefits that you testified to of A. I would agree with that. 13 the consolidation. One was local control? Q. Okay. The other benefit that you A. Yes. 14 cited is local ownership of generation? 15 15 Q. But you have that now, don't you? A. Yep. 16 16 A. Yeah, probably not equal local O. You have that now; right? <sup>17</sup> control. 17 A. Local control of generation, I would 18 18 As you said, the majority of the votes agree. <sup>19</sup> come from three counties. And this district 19 But we have no way to sell it or keep <sup>20</sup> stretches from Keith County, Dawson County, 20 it -- keep the monies within our area or our 21 Lincoln County and Phelps, Gosper and Kearney. region. 22 22 O. But there's nobody outside the So Central has to sell wholesale. Dawson chartered territory that has a seat on your buys retail and resells retail. And us as a <sup>24</sup> board other than Keith? 24 merged entity, we -- we are creating our own 25 power to sell. A. No. Page 142 Page 143 Q. But I'm confused by that answer board, all of that energy has always been sold <sup>2</sup> because a moment ago, you agreed with me that pursuant to a Power Purchase Agreement; <sup>3</sup> the hydro units were built to provide revenue correct? 4 <sup>4</sup> streams to offset the costs of operating the A. It has, you're right, yes. 5 <sup>5</sup> irrigation system; correct? Q. All right. And would you agree with me that under your Power Purchase Agreements, A. Absolutely. Q. So what difference does it make as to you're allowed to take care of your irrigation 8 whether you're going to sell -- where you sell service needs first before you provide 9 that power other than just maximizing the best hydropower requirements? 10 A. They go hand in hand. return you can get? 11 11 A. Well, that's probably exactly what Q. That's not my question. we're talking about here is maximizing the best 12 Would you agree with me that you're not obligated under your PPAs that you currently return we can get. And that would be <sup>14</sup> vertically integrated. 14 have to deliver power if your irrigation and 15 Q. But Central's never done that in the water surface -- water usage needs aren't first 16 80 years that it's been in existence; right? 16 met? 17 17 A. Would you please say that again? A. No. I don't think that's true. 18 18 Q. Are you familiar with the terms of Central had transmission lines to Omaha or <sup>19</sup> Beatrice. They were a part of another power 19 your PPAs? 20 20 plant. A. Sure. 21 21 I think the original Central was --Q. Okay. Is there not a provision in 22 they're -- they were involved in this way back 22 that PPA that says you're not obligated to 23 in the day.

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Q. As far as the three hydro units are

<sup>25</sup> concerned, certainly during your tenure on the

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deliver power if you need the water to serve

your irrigation purposes?

A. That is correct.

Page 147

Page 144 Q. Okay. And they're not always hand in <sup>2</sup> hand. Would you agree with that, hydropower <sup>3</sup> releases and agricultural releases? A. They're not always hand in hand? You <sup>5</sup> have Fish and Wildlife. And you have NPPD. <sup>6</sup> And you have the environmental flows. And they 7 all spin the wheel. And you don't irrigate in 8 those off-seasons, so I would agree with that. O. Okay. And that's where I was

<sup>10</sup> getting. So let me parse that out for the benefit of the board here because there's kind 12 of two issues.

13 One, there are other entities that have <sup>14</sup> rights to water that's stored in McConaughy; would you agree with that? 16

- A. That is correct.
- Q. There's NPPD has -- has an interest; 18 correct?
  - A. That is correct.

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- 20 O. Pursuant to your FERC license, <sup>21</sup> Central entered into an agreement to provide certain instream flow releases for the benefit 23
- 24 A. That is correct.

of wildlife?

Q. So there are already dibs taken on

Page 146 <sup>1</sup> allocated to 6.7 inches. So the board was very <sup>2</sup> due diligent on trying to stretch out the water <sup>3</sup> supply as long as they possibly can.

The staff was fantastic. They had <sup>5</sup> projections and said, hey, hey, hey. And, you 6 know, this is -- this is why we're talking <sup>7</sup> about this potential merger is we don't want to get in that situation again.

- Q. Well, but this merger won't help with dry periods. Dry periods are going to happen. 11 That's Mother Nature; right? 12
- A. It will. But I believe that we will 13 have the ability to make some agreements with <sup>14</sup> other entities that will help store water in <sup>15</sup> McConaughy.
- O. But for the last 80 years, Central has successfully managed its water resources during wet years, during dry years, and you've <sup>19</sup> always been able to deliver to the satisfaction of your users; would you agree?
- A. No, I would not agree with that. And, plus the world's changing.

That 6.7 was not fun for anyone. That's <sup>24</sup> inches delivered.

Q. But you can't deliver water you don't

Page 145 some of that water in McConaughy before you <sup>2</sup> even get to irrigators; would you agree with 3 that? 4

- A. I would agree with that.
- Q. Okay. And your Water Service 6 Agreements do not require Central to provide any quantity of water; would you agree with 8 that?
- 9 A. They not require us to deliver 10 irrigation water? I guess I would agree with 11 that.

That's -- but that's not the premise of 13 the whole district. But I suppose technically, 14 ves.

- 15 Q. Okay. And I want to be fair. 16 Certainly it is your goal and your purpose that you want to deliver water, and historically you have; correct?
  - A. We always have, absolutely.
- 20 Q. Okay. But I just want to clarify, 21 there's a clause in your Water Service Agreements that say if for whatever reason you don't deliver, tough luck to the irrigator?
- A. And I think I mentioned that earlier. <sup>25</sup> We -- when McConaughy was extremely low, we

have?

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A. That's true.

O. Okav.

4 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: If I can <sup>5</sup> interrupt, when you mentioned the 6.7, what exactly -- 6.7 inches in context does that mean?

THE WITNESS: Typically a crop requires 18 to 20 inches of water. And the deliveries that Central makes were based on an 18-inch allocation. And in future years -- or recent years, we've changed that to 13 inches <sup>13</sup> and knocked the price down so it would incentivize customers not to use all of 15 their water but to save some back in <sup>16</sup> McConaughy.

So in those real dry years, we voted to 18 lower the allocations to 6.7 inches. And, fortunately, Mother Nature was really good to us.

HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So the 6.7 is how much water you're -- 6.7 inches of water on the crops? THE WITNESS: That's exactly

<sup>25</sup> right.

Page 148 Page 149 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: As variability, is there not? 2 <sup>2</sup> opposed to rain? A. In season? Sure. 3 3 THE WITNESS: As opposed -- yes, Q. You could have a widespread storm event or an extended period of rain, for yes. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. I example? <sup>6</sup> just wanted to clarify that. A. Well, you could, other than it takes THE WITNESS: Yes. Sorry. Yes. 10, 12 days to get water from McConaughy to HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: No Phelps County. apology needed. I just wanted to make sure for Q. It's not instant, certainly? 10 the record it's clear what that meant. A. Correct. 11 11 Mr. Degan, sorry. Q. But certainly there could be a 12 MR. DEGAN: No. situation where there's an extremely wet June 13 BY MR. DEGAN: that may impact the need for irrigation water Q. Water management for Central entails from a surface water irrigator's perspective? <sup>15</sup> controlling whether you release water or 15 A. We'd all hope for that. 16 whether you store water: is that a fair Q. Right. That's a good problem to 17 have? statement? 18 18 A. Yes. A. That's right. 19 19 Q. And you have several reservoirs. Q. Okay. So there's -- there's 20 <sup>20</sup> It's not just McConaughy. It's Johnson. It's in-season variability. But there's also 21 seasonal -- seasonal variability that you Elwood. It's multiple facilities? 22 A. Sure. 22 touched on; agreed? 23 23 Q. Okay. And would you agree with me A. Okay. Yes. 24 <sup>24</sup> that strictly from an irrigator's perspective, Q. Okay. Surface water irrigators don't 25 there seasonable -- there's in-season 25 need water in the winter months; would you Page 151 Page 150 Q. Okay. But the problem comes in when agree? there's periods of scarcity and there's not A. Yes. Q. And generally that's a period where enough water to be able to satisfy the needs of your irrigators; correct? you store water in your reservoirs? A. Presumably, in the spring, yes. A. Sure. 6 Q. Okay. For purposes of generating O. And it happens, does it not? 7 <sup>7</sup> hydroelectricity, though, don't you want those A. It has happened. 8 hydros turning 12 months a year? Q. You call that allocating water; 9 right? A. If you could, absolutely. But that's 10 A. That's what we did, yes. not what we do. 11 Q. And I think what you're saying is Q. And I think there was a severe one in 12 that when there's enough water, there's no around 2006? 13 conflict. Can we agree on that? A. I would agree, yes. 14 14 A. I would agree on that. Q. And there was -- there was a drought 15 15 in -- just as recently as last year, was there But I also might state that there are winter releases that have to take place in the 16 not? 17 17 wintertime. So, you know, it's still spinning. A. It has been very dry. 18 18 So I don't want to put off the -- the Q. But you were able to get by without <sup>19</sup> having to allocate water; correct? pretense that the gates are shut and no water 20 A. That's right. We've learned a lot comes out, period, because there's always 21 from the 2000s on how to handle water and how something flowing. 22 22 O. You -- because you have obligations to manage water. 23 23 to other parties that we've talked about; Q. Okay. 24 correct? A. So the staff of management has done a <sup>25</sup> fantastic job. A. Plus the North Platte flows through.

Page 152 Page 153 <sup>1</sup> incomes and our expenses. Q. When the water's not there, the <sup>2</sup> hydros aren't going to turn and you're not Q. So you had a -- this report prepared going to generate the same amount of revenue; <sup>3</sup> by the PSE folks. And would you agree with me 4 correct? there's a lot of information in here about the <sup>5</sup> finances of the two respective districts? A. Could have, would have, should have. <sup>6</sup> I don't know. Yeah, I suppose. I mean, that's A. Yes, I would. 7 quite -- quite a grasp. But, yeah. Q. There's a lot in here about the Q. So that does create some variability administrative issues of tieing the two in predicting your revenues from year to year? districts together? A. Yes. A. I would agree with that. 11 11 Q. It's a function of two components? Q. We even get into a discussion in here 12 12 as to how you get the employee benefits and A. Yep. 13 employees consolidated? Q. The amount of water; correct? 14 14 A. Okay. A. Yep, yep. 15 15 Q. And the rate that you get for your Q. And then there's an awful lot of 16 <sup>16</sup> discussion in here about integrating Central's electricity; correct? <sup>17</sup> hydro assets and Dawson's retail utility A. That's right. 18 Q. Okay. But you've been able to manage system? 19 19 that pretty darn well for 80 years, have you A. Okay. 20 20 Q. Okay. But there's practically not? 21 21 A. We've been very fortunate. nothing in here about how you would manage this 22 Power contracts are less than what they've combined entity for purposes of keeping <sup>23</sup> been. You know, that's the -- the idea behind residential ratepayers' interests balanced <sup>24</sup> against the interests of water users? the merger is we get rid of those ebbs and <sup>25</sup> flows and we kind of level off our -- our A. I think that's part of this. We Page 155 Page 154 would have a -- another piece of the --MR. DEGAN: Well, he can testify HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: What's as to what he understands. <sup>3</sup> this? When you say part of this? HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Did THE WITNESS: I'm sorry, the legal counsel ever tell you the answer to that <sup>5</sup> consolidation -- Plan of Consolidation. question, whether you could put that into the charter or not? A. We would have another piece of the <sup>7</sup> pie. And that's where it would go. And then THE WITNESS: I think -- I don't we would allocate out. know if I can answer you that -- on that. 9 BY MR. DEGAN: HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. I Q. Okay. So that's something that think I'll sustain it. I think it calls for a <sup>11</sup> you'll do in the future? legal conclusion on that particular question, 12 12 if legal counsel didn't brief you on it and you A. Well, yeah. 13 13 said you don't know, anyway, so --O. Implement what's in the Plan of <sup>14</sup> Consolidation? <sup>14</sup>BY MR. DEGAN: 15 15 A. Yes, yes. Q. But you also testified that the Q. Okay. But those provisions are not <sup>16</sup> reason that Central didn't retain a water in the charter; would you agree with that, the consultant as part of this process was because <sup>18</sup> Central's got water experts? proposed charter -- or the amended charter? 19 Excuse me. 19 A. Yes. 20 20 Q. Okay. But would you agree with me A. I guess, yeah. 21 Q. Could have put them in the charter? <sup>21</sup> that Central has experts in the production of 22 22 hydropower? A. I think --23 23 MR. JARECKE: I'm going to A. Yes. <sup>24</sup> object to that question because it calls for 24 Q. And Dawson has experts in the <sup>25</sup> legal conclusion. <sup>25</sup> delivery of retail power; correct?

A. I would agree, yes.

Q. So I'm just having trouble <sup>3</sup> understanding why the two districts would feel <sup>4</sup> the need to get an expert to opine on the <sup>5</sup> consolidation of the electric assets despite <sup>6</sup> their respective expertises and, yet, wouldn't <sup>7</sup> turn around and do the same study and 8 information gathering on the water side?

A. Well, we needed an outside view. We 10 needed someone to say, hey, yeah, this will work, this looks great, this is a direction you <sup>12</sup> guys should be looking, continue with your <sup>13</sup> conversations.

In terms of irrigation, these guys are really something. They know irrigation. They're the -- they're the people that people go to when they want to know about irrigation.

Q. But they know power, too?

A. They know power. But that's much <sup>20</sup> more than just power. That is how do you handle the people, how do you -- how would the whole thing work together?

It's a bird's-eye view. It's a | 24 | 30,000-foot view of the -- the districts put 25 together.

You know, our staff and management, <sup>2</sup> they -- they're second to none. And they <sup>3</sup> handed them the information. And Dawson handed 4 the information. And this is what they came <sup>5</sup> out with.

And then we asked questions and tried to poke holes in it. And I believe we did what we

- Q. The respective boards met at least a couple of times in joint sessions; correct?
  - A. Okay. Yes.
  - Q. Do you recall that?

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- 14 Q. All right. And so to be clear, that was the entire board of Dawson and the entire 16 board of Central?
  - A. Okay.
  - Q. Did that happen?
  - A. Yes.
- Q. And this was prior to the vote to <sup>21</sup> approve the consolidation plan; is that right?
  - A. Yes.
- O. In fairness, I believe one of them <sup>24</sup> was the meeting at which the consolidation plan <sup>25</sup> was actually approved?

Page 157 Q. Were you -- did you have an <sup>2</sup> understanding that PSE is primarily an electric engineering firm?

A. Sure.

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Q. They don't have any hydrological or water use management experience whatsoever?

A. Okay.

Q. And were you aware that they had never been involved in a prior merger between an irrigation district and a retail utility?

A. We discussed what they had done. And 12 at the time, it seemed very legitimate. And I can't remember what -- what that all entailed.

Q. But didn't that cause you some concern that, gees, maybe there's something out -- despite all of your experience and dispute your team -- and I understand that you have faith in your team, but the fact that the consultant didn't -- did not have any background in this type of a merger, didn't that create for you a concern in the back of your mind that, hey, we might be missing something here that could really cause a problem down the road?

A. No, I can't say that I did.

Page 159

A. Yes. But -- not approved. Was distributed, was talked about.

Q. Okay. At one or both of those joint sessions, did the boards convene into closed session?

A. We convened into closed session at one, at the very last joint meeting in Kearney, which I don't know what the dates are.

- Q. Okay. Well, when I asked you about this in your deposition about whether the closed session was members of both boards, you were unsure?
  - A. I was unsure, yes.
- Q. Have you looked at something that has refreshed your recollection since then?

A. I believe you gave me a document that talked about the potential -- economic development potential. And we would have had to go into closed session to sign that agreement, the -- the NonDisclosure Agreement.

Q. And the NonDisclosure Agreement, this was an agreement that would bind the directors from not disclosing what transpired during that closed session?

A. That's what closed sessions are for,

Page 160 <sup>1</sup> yes.

Q. Have you ever had to sign a <sup>3</sup> NonDisclosure Agreement in connection with your <sup>4</sup> duties as a director of Central?

A. We've never had an economic 6 opportunity that was staring us in the face <sup>7</sup> before.

- Q. Are you aware that Central has <sup>9</sup> refused to disclose the details of the <sup>10</sup> responses that they have received for -- to the RFP for the PPAs?
- A. I'm not sure I understand what you're <sup>13</sup> asking.
- Q. All right. So I'll represent to you 15 we have sought to get the RFP responses, meaning the folks that are interested in potentially buying your power, and I will 18 represent to you that Central has declined to produce that information on the grounds that <sup>20</sup> it's confidential.

I guess just my threshold question was, were you aware of that?

A. Yes.

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Q. Okay. And was that a board decision 25 not to share that information?

Page 162 <sup>1</sup> its word for the representations that the pricing that they're -- that they're seeing in <sup>3</sup> response to their RFP is lower than what <sup>4</sup> they're currently receiving under their <sup>5</sup> existing PPAs? We have to take that on face 6 value, do we not?

- A. Sure. But that's our job. That's why we were elected.
- Q. Okay. But also the Power Review Board will have to take the -- that assertion based on face value from Central?
  - A. Okav.
- 13 Q. Because I will represent to you there's nothing that will come into evidence that indicates what that pricing information actually is. 17
  - A. I really don't know how it pertains. But, okay.
- 19 Q. Okay. Last issue, the -- was there a vacancy on Central's board at the time that this vote was taken? 22
  - A. There was.
  - Q. And which county was that representative -- or director from?
    - A. That was Phelps County.

Page 161 A. It's a business decision. And it's <sup>2</sup> contract negotiations. So, yes, it would be in the closed session. And that's when we discuss it. And so, therefore, we wouldn't disclose anything because it would be the internal workings of the negotiations. So, no.

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Q. Okay. But would you agree with me that because we don't have the benefit of that information, that the Protestants would have no way of being able to validate what's being represented as to the pricing information that Central has received in response to its RFP?

A. I might say this, you know, we were elected by our people to represent the board and to do what we felt was right with the board. And we can't be micromanaged.

There is no way that we can release that type of information to our competition, their competition. Those are interworkings. So we can't do that.

Q. I understand. And I'm not trying to argue with you over the decision. I just want to make the point do you at least understand that because we don't have the benefit of that information, that we have to take Central at

Page 163

Q. Okay. So one of the Tri County areas that are predominantly from surface water irrigators; correct?

- A. Yep, that's correct.
- Q. And normally they should have three directors from that county: correct?
  - A. That is correct.
- Q. All right. What happened to the prior director that opened that vacancy?
  - A. He passed away.
  - Q. Okay. When did he pass away?
- A. Oh, probably a year before the new vote for a six-year term was to come about.
- Q. Okay. So approximately one year before that seat would have been up for election?
  - A. That is correct.
- Q. Okay. Did -- why did the board not seat a new -- a new director?
- A. Because in the past, we had had a director that was unable to come to meetings. And we didn't reseat them.

This -- I felt that the public needed to elect their representative. And that was their <sup>25</sup> duty. That was not our duty.

Page 164 Page 165 to try to figure out what was going on and with Had this been a year into a six-year term, <sup>2</sup> that would have been a whole different the back history. So I don't agree with that. 3 conversation. Q. Do you have an understanding as to whether the Nebraska Statutes require the board I might add that that absent spot was an automatic no vote in terms of the merger. to fill that vacancy? Q. Okay. But you'll agree with me that A. It was my understanding that if that <sup>7</sup> it did deprive Gosper County of an additional was -- I'm president of the board. And that director who may have had a voice in the was my choice. And it was my understanding that that was -- could be protocol since we discussion? 10 were that close and it was a -- a general A. We would have seated that person. 11 And I -- just the -- for them to have got up to election was coming up. 12 speed on everything that the district is about Q. Okay. So it was your choice; is that would have been virtually impossible. That's 13 right? 14 why they're six-year terms. A. I'm the one who made the call, yes. 15 15 Q. In a year's time, they couldn't have Q. Okay. Did it go to a vote? I mean, 16 16 got up to speed? was there a vote put to the greater board as to 17 A. No way. whether or not to seat that vacant seat? 18 18 Q. Okay. But you do agree with me that A. There was discussion. And everyone 19 it did deprive Gosper County of one voice agreed. 20 during deliberations even if that was counted Q. But there was no vote? 21 21 A. There was no formal vote, no. as a no vote? 22 22 A. I don't know that I do agree with O. And there's nothing in the minutes. 23 23 and there's no resolution; right? you. 24 24 That person -- it wasn't fair for that A. There might be something in the 25 person, if we would have sat someone in there. minutes. But no resolution, no. Page 167 Page 166 MR. DEGAN: Okay. No further probably see more of those in the future. <sup>2</sup> questions. Thank you. But are there other examples of an <sup>3</sup> irrigation district merging with a public power 3 THE WITNESS: All right. Thank 4 you. or an electric utility district, either in 5 BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: I have <sup>5</sup> Nebraska or otherwise, that there would have 6 a question. been some experiential organization to do this 7 With respect to the PSE study that you study? 8 8 asked and made the -- Protestants asked about THE WITNESS: We brought in a <sup>9</sup> the lack of water knowledge, to your knowledge, director from a public power -- I'm sorry, a are there other examples of this type of general manager from a public power in the 11 merger? This seems like a fairly unique northern part of the state who had done one of 12 merger. 12 those mergers and spoke to us about it. 13 13 THE WITNESS: I think there are. BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: Okay. <sup>14</sup> I can't tell you off the top of my head. But I 14 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Was that 15 a merger between a public power irrigation believe they've happened in Nebraska. Staff would know. And -- who they were. 16 district and a public power or just two public 17 17 I believe they were in northeast Nebraska. power districts? 18 18 BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: Okay. THE WITNESS: I believe it was 19 19 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Is -- is an irrigation district and public power. It's 20 20 the board member talking about mergers of been a while back. 21 public power districts? BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: Okay. 22 22 BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: Yeah. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Do you <sup>23</sup> I'm not necessarily talking about the merger of 23 know that for sure? Or --24 two public power districts. I mean, there have 24 MR. JARECKE: We can clarify. been several of those. And I think we'll 25 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: You can

	Page 168		Page 169
1	clarify with another witness?	1	the production?
2	MR. JARECKE: Yeah.	2	THE WITNESS: That would be the
3	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I don't	3	same. So
4	want to I don't want to testify. But	4	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: You
5	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: I have a	5	you're going to have two general managers with
6	couple of questions.	6	equal authority?
7	Who are Devin Brundage and Gwen Kautz,	7	THE WITNESS: That's, I believe,
8	Kautz?	8	the way the boards have thought that they would
9	THE WITNESS: It's Gwen Kautz.	9	run forward. And as we phase things out and we
10	She's the general manager for Dawson Public	10	learn about each other's operations and then we
11	Power.	11	would go from there.
12	And Devin Brundage is the general manager	12	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: What would
13	for Central Public Power.	13	"go from there" mean?
14	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: And which	14	THE WITNESS: We would decide
15	of them is going to manage the district	15	which general manager we would have or, if we
16	services division?	16	wanted a new general manager, it would be a
17	THE WITNESS: It will be a	17	board decision at that point in time.
18	co-management and, at a later date, decide what	18	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So could
19	direction the board would like to go.	19	you have one of them on the distribution and
20	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: What about	20	one of them on the production?
21	the distribution?	21	THE WITNESS: I think they would
22	THE WITNESS: It will be under		have the knowledge from their arena to bring to
23	the same umbrella. So that will be a joint	23	the board the boards, and so we would learn
24	effort.	24	about each other through their experience.
25	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: What about	25	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: But would
1	one of them ultimately be responsible for	1	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay. My
2	distribution and the other one be responsible	2	other question is, I'm looking at your
3	for production?	3	consolidation. You had indicated that you
4	THE WITNESS: I can't answer	4	would not have gone forward unless you had this
5	that. I guess it would be a board decision at	5	document because it was your guiding principle?
6	that time.	6	THE WITNESS: Yes.
7	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Would you	7	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: My
8	view that as having quite a conflict of	8	understanding is recitals in a contract are not
9	interest between the two?		binding, they're just they're not part of
10	THE WITNESS: No, I wouldn't. I	10	the contract like all your whereases.
11	think that's the glorious part of this this	11	THE WITNESS: Okay.
12	potential merger is that there would be no	12	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So when I'm
13	conflict because it would all be in house. It	13	looking at the Consolidation Agreement, where
14	would be	14	exactly was the water set out that would make
15	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: I guess	15	you feel comfortable with and obviously the
16	what I was thinking of, when they come before	16	Protestants, where should they feel comfortable
17	the board and tell them about all the wonderful	17	in looking at this document?
18	things they've done in their division, that	18	THE WITNESS: Well, I don't know
19	potentially could there be a conflict between	19	that I can answer you without looking at the
20	the two divisions?	20	document and reading it again.
21	THE WITNESS: Well, I hope not.	21	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Do you have
22		l	it in front of you?
23	everybody would be rowing in the same	23	THE WITNESS: I do.
24	direction, and so they it would be for the	24	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Why don't
25	betterment of the company.	25	you read it? Because I'm I'm if I'm a

	Protestant, I'm concerned about water, where in	1	because I think that if you could point to
- 1	this document should I have find comfort?	2	where the water rights that are being
	THE WITNESS: Well	3	protected, that that would, you know, give
	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: If I	4	maybe some solace to those who are objecting.
	could interrupt, Chairman Reida, given the hour	5	So I agree with Tim, why don't you get a
	and you just asked him to read the document,	6	chance to read your document over the lunch
	which is I'm not sure how many pages	7	hour, and then you can respond.
	which is I'm not sure now many pages  would we want to give him a chance to read that	8	THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you.
	9 and come back after lunch and have him	9	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: You're
1		10	welcome.
1	because, otherwise, we're going to take a long	11	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: I have
1	pause for min to read through that document.	12	questions. We're obviously going to break.
1	DOTALD WILLINDLK KLIDTI. I assumed	13	And this witness is coming back. So I think
1		14	it's up to everybody whether we want to
1	THE WITHLESS. Well, I ve lead	15	continue with this witness after lunch, and I
1		16	have a series of questions.
	I don't I can't answer you. I just	17	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So,
1	1 don't I can't answer you. I just	18	Mr. Chair? Mr. Reida?
1		19	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Yes?
2	about Highlion and water. This as we go	20	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So as
2	_	21	chair, it's 12 just after 12:10. Do you
2		22	want to break at this point, Mr. Rowe can read
	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay.	23	through the Plan of Consolidation, we can come
	Maybe we should do what Tim suggested, over the	24	back to this witness?
	lunch hour, if you want to review that document	25	I know the other board members indicated
	Page 174		Page 175
- 1	they have some questions, too. Is this a good	1	(At 1:20 p.m., with parties present as
	time for a break for lunch?	2	before, the following proceedings were had:)
	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: I'd be okay		HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: We'll
	Dorne Member 1221 12 of only	3	
	with that. What does everybody else think?	4	reconvene this reconvene this hearing.
	with that. What does everybody else think? BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: That's	4 5	And I believe we were at the board members
	with that. What does everybody else think?  BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: That's fine.	4 5 6	And I believe we were at the board members having some questions for this witness.
	with that. What does everybody else think? BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: That's fine. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: That's	4 5 6 7	And I believe we were at the board members having some questions for this witness.  Were you going to say something?
	with that. What does everybody else think? BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: That's fine. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: That's fine.	4 5 6 7 8	And I believe we were at the board members having some questions for this witness.  Were you going to say something?  MR. BRASHEAR: No. I was and
	with that. What does everybody else think? BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: That's fine. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: That's fine. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So they	4 5 6 7 8 9	And I believe we were at the board members having some questions for this witness.  Were you going to say something?  MR. BRASHEAR: No. I was and I will have a couple followup questions as
1	with that. What does everybody else think? BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: That's fine. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: That's fine. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So they said it's fine.	4 5 6 7 8 9	And I believe we were at the board members having some questions for this witness.  Were you going to say something?  MR. BRASHEAR: No. I was and I will have a couple followup questions as well. But board first.
1 1	with that. What does everybody else think?  BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: That's fine.  BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: That's fine.  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So they said it's fine.  Ms. Peck, are you okay with that?	4 5 6 7 8 9 10	And I believe we were at the board members having some questions for this witness.  Were you going to say something?  MR. BRASHEAR: No. I was and I will have a couple followup questions as well. But board first.  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
1 1 1	with that. What does everybody else think? BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: That's fine. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: That's fine. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So they said it's fine. Ms. Peck, are you okay with that? She's nodding yes.	4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11	And I believe we were at the board members having some questions for this witness.  Were you going to say something?  MR. BRASHEAR: No. I was and I will have a couple followup questions as well. But board first.  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. Okay.
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Page 176 Page 177 <sup>1</sup>|consolidation agreement. regulations and policies on said subjects on <sup>2</sup>PRPPID." THE WITNESS: I would point you 3 <sup>3</sup> to No. 3, the purpose on page 2, and -- "The BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So there's <sup>4</sup> primary purpose of PRPPID shall be to at a not any superiority, just that you're merging <sup>5</sup> low -- at as low an overall cost as possible the two together? THE WITNESS: We're merging the <sup>6</sup> deliver -- deliver surface irrigation, 7 distribute electrical power and operate hydro two together. But I would note that on day <sup>8</sup> facilities to generate -- generate electrical one, there will be 12 Central directors, and <sup>9</sup> power for wholesale and retail distribution. there will be 11 Dawson directors. And on day <sup>10</sup> The secondary purpose of PRPPID shall be to one, their governing rules move forward. recharge groundwater, enhance the environment, 11 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So what if provide recreational opportunities and 12 there's a conflict between the two? 13 <sup>13</sup> facilitate economic development." THE WITNESS: Well, I guess I And then I would also point you to No. 6, would say, like any board meeting, you'd work governing documents, "On the consolidation 15 it out. date, the charter, as amended, concurrent here 16 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Yeah, I within -- with by -- and bylaws of Central 17 guess -- and that was what my question was when 18 shall be the charter and the bylaws of PRPPID you have two general managers who are on equal <sup>19</sup> and the rules, regulations and policies of ground, how do you know who's in charge? <sup>20</sup> Central with regard to the delivery of surface 20 THE WITNESS: Well, I would also <sup>21</sup> water irrigation, operations of hydropower 21 say we'll have to work that out. <sup>22</sup> facilities and distribution of wholesale 22 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So if there <sup>23</sup> electrical power and the rules, regulations and 23 was an issue, they would have to come to the policies of Dawson with regard to distribution 24 board for an operational -- daily operational of retail electrical power, be these rules, 25 Page 178 Page 179 THE WITNESS: Yeah, they consolidation, the charter and the bylaws move <sup>2</sup> definitely could. forward on day one from Central and from <sup>3</sup> Dawson. And then all 23 directors would be in BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Is that 4 <sup>4</sup> what you're expecting, that on a daily force. 5 <sup>5</sup> operational basis, they have to address the BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay. 6 board to make decisions? Thank you. 7 THE WITNESS: No, I don't expect THE WITNESS: Thank you. 8 8 that. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So in the opening comments of both counsels, I I would think that they are -- Dawson will noticed a difference kind of in how they run Dawson's stuff in regard to them and 11 <sup>11</sup> Central would run Central's stuff in regard to described this. 12 12 them until we figure out as a board and as the Central's opening said, you know, it --13 that the district was owned and accountable to governing body how we would run it in the <sup>14</sup> future. 14 the public. 15 15 But the bylaws would carry forward from Citizens mentioned that these are not -what is currently both entities' bylaws. They 16 these are citizens, not customers, and they're 17 17 also ratepayers. would move forward. 18 18 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: I guess So I think we're kind of getting some to 19 that's maybe where the Protestants would have 19 the fundamental about, like, what's the the issues, that there's no -- there's no difference here between, you know, kind of the <sup>21</sup> clearly defined operational guidelines. And difference of perspectives. you have two general managers where no one 22 And so I thought I'd ask a little bit really is in charge on a day-to-day operations. <sup>23</sup> about Central today. 24 24 Does -- so how many -- how do the THE WITNESS: I would direct you 25 to the governing documents, No. 6, the <sup>25</sup> elections work? So are the elections -- every

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	voter that sits within that county is able to	1	and where they are scattered across the
- 1	elect a director?	1	counties.
	THE WITNESS: That is correct.	3	So there's one in Keith County. There's
	They're six-year terms. My county, Dawson, for	4	one in Lincoln County. I'm in Dawson County.
	instance, everyone in Dawson County would vote	5	And then there are three in Gosper County,
	for whomever they chose at the time, whoever	6	three in Phelps County and three in Kearney
	was up for election, whoever had filed.	7	County.
	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So	8	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Are you
	these boards today as elected and governed in	9	talking about the blue dots?
1		10	THE WITNESS: Yes.
1		11	MS. KREIFELS: And he's
1		12	referring to Exhibit 43.
1	THE WITTLESS. That is confect.	13	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.
1	DOTALD MEMBER HETCHBOTT. 50	14	All right. Thank you.
1		15	So let's go back to the vote here on the
1		16	charter amendment. You were in attendance the
1		17	
1		18	day that this was approved by Central's board? THE WITNESS: Yes.
1	speaking, mose are the six countries, right.	19	
2	THE WITHESS. That is confect.	20	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And the
2	BOTHED WEIGHER TO TOTH SOIT. Can you	21	vote was nine to three with one board office
	ten me now many arcetors are mean one or	22	vacant, as was previously mentioned?
2	those countries. Of how does that election work	23	THE WITNESS: Yes.
2	today. What's the composition of the source.		BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And so
	THE WITHESS. So currently if		more are more excesses with the mercuaning
2	Journook at the orac, those are the affectors	23	the vacancy that are in those three counties
	the Tri County area?	1	vote?
	THE WITNESS: That is correct.	2	THE WITNESS: Two voted no. And
	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Do you	3	then there was a vacant position, which made
	recall the three board members that chose to	4	three total no's.
	vote against this? Were they all representing	5	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Oh,
	the Tri County area?	6	okay. Okay. Okay. All right. I got it.
	THE WITNESS: All three of them	7	So the majority of the directors elected
	would have been in Phelps County.	8	in those three counties voted in favor of
	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: All	9	this of amendment?
1	three were in Phelps County?	10	THE WITNESS: That is correct.
1	THE WITNESS: So I'll remind you	11	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Do you
1		12	believe that the irrigation water service, the
1	absent voter. There was no one in that seat.	13	users of irrigation water service are
1	So it was by default a no. But that was also	14	prejudiced by this amendment?
1		15	THE WITNESS: No, not at all.
1		16	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Have
1	each county get three has three directors?	17	you had discussions with people that do believe
1		18	that?
1	_	19	THE WITNESS: I've heard it and
2		20	read it in the newspaper. Heard it on the
2		21	radio.
2		22	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: But
1	-	23	based on your understanding of the district's
2			
2	And of that nine, three voted no, and one	24	processes and governance and your knowledge of

Page 184 Page 185 1 be provided, you don't believe they are A. NonDisclosure Agreement. 2 <sup>2</sup> prejudiced? Q. And there was reference to meetings THE WITNESS: I don't. where that may have been signed at. Do you BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okav. recall what joint board meeting that occurred <sup>5</sup> All right. 6 6 THE WITNESS: Not in my view. A. It was in Kearney at a joint board <sup>7</sup> meeting. And the NDA was to discuss a business BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: All right. Thank you. opportunity that would deal with carbon-free HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Any electricity that Central could provide and 10 other questions by board members? All right. Dawson could also be the distributor to. 11 11 Mr. Brashear, you said you had some. Q. Mr. Rowe, is it your testimony that 12 MR. BRASHEAR: Couple followup, 12 that NDA was not related to the merger of 13 just --13 Central and Dawson Public Power District? 14 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Redirect 14 A. It had nothing to do with that. It 15 15 was just a potential outside endeavor that questions. Okay. 16 16 could possibly happen if the -- if the stars MR. BRASHEAR: Redirect, yes, thank you. aligned with both districts. 18 18 REDIRECT EXAMINATION Q. It related to an economic development 19 BY MR. BRASHEAR: opportunity? 20 20 O. Mr. Rowe, earlier under A. Yes. 21 cross-examination from Mr. Degan, reference was HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Just to <sup>22</sup> clarify, when you say has nothing to do with 22 made to a NDA. What -- do you understand what 23 an NDA refers to? that? 24 24 A. Yes, I do. THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. 25 O. What does NDA stand for? 25 With --Page 186 Page 187 <sup>1</sup>BY MR. BRASHEAR: between the two districts as of July 1 if a Q. Does it have anything to do with the merger were to take place by July 1. 3 3 Q. And is it your understanding that merger? 4 this is a listing of the current directors of A. Had nothing to do with the merger. 5 Q. Okay. Thank you. Central and Dawson? HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Just A. This is a listing of the current wanted to be explicit in the record on that. directors, yes. 8 MR. BRASHEAR: Appreciate that. O. And are -- what color are the Central 9 directors in? BY MR. BRASHEAR: 10 Q. Mr. Rowe, would you view Central as A. They are blue. 11 <sup>11</sup> being an example of local control today? Q. And what color are the Dawson 12 <sup>12</sup> directors in? A. Yes, I would. 13 13 Q. If the Power Review Board approves A. They are red. 14 <sup>14</sup> this amendment and Platte River Public Power Q. And is it your -- what is your 15 and Irrigation District takes effect, would you understanding from the Plan of Consolidation <sup>16</sup> view Platte River Public Power and Irrigation with regard to how many directors Platte River 17 17 District as being a locally controlled entity Public Power and Irrigation District would have 18 18 as well? on the first day? 19 19 A. First day, there would be 23. A. Absolutely. 20 Q. I want to refer to -- Mr. Rowe, you Q. And how many of those directors would <sup>21</sup> to Exhibit 43, which is both on the easel and be current directors of Central? in -- before the board members. 22 A. There will be 12 current directors of 23 <sup>23</sup> Central. What is your understanding of what Exhibit <sup>24</sup> | 43 is? 24 Q. And how many of those directors would A. 43 is a map of the board membership be who are now current directors of Dawson?

Page 189 Page 188 A. There will be 11 current directors 6 that the rules, regulations and policies of <sup>2</sup> for Dawson. Central regarding the delivery of surface irrigation will be those of Platte River on day Q. So is it your testimony there will be <sup>4</sup> 23 directors at the beginning, 12 of whom will one? 5 <sup>5</sup> have been Central directors and 11 who will A. That is correct. 6 6 have been Dawson directors? MR. DEGAN: Objection. Form, A. That is my testimony, yes. foundation, to the extent it calls for a legal 8 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Each of conclusion. those are the full boards; right? There's 12 BY MR. BRASHEAR: 10 and 11 now on those respective boards; right? Q. Is it your belief --11 11 THE WITNESS: That is correct. MR. DEGAN: His understanding. 12 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. <sup>12</sup>BY MR. BRASHEAR: 13 13 BY MR. BRASHEAR: O. Is it your understanding --14 Q. Mr. Rowe, you referred in Exhibit 44, MR. BRASHEAR: Thank you, 15 the Plan of Consolidation, to Section 6? 15 Counsel. 16 16 A. Yes. BY MR. BRASHEAR: 17 Q. Is it your understanding that on the Q. Is it your understanding that the rules, regulations and policies of Central <sup>18</sup> first day of Platte River Public Power and <sup>19</sup> Irrigation District, the bylaws of Central will regarding delivery of surface irrigation will <sup>20</sup> be the bylaws of Platte River? be those of Platte River on day one? 21 21 A. That is correct. A. It is, yes. 22 22 O. Would you view the bylaws of Central Q. Do you believe that the rules, today as being favorable towards irrigators? regulations and policies of Central today are 24 A. I would say, yes. favorable towards surface water irrigators? 25 Q. Is it your understanding from Section A. I do believe that, ves. Page 190 Page 191 Q. To change the bylaws of Platte River, that a vote would be required by the Platte <sup>2</sup> what would be required as you read Section 6? River board to amend the bylaws? MR. DEGAN: Again, I'm going to A. Yes, it would be -- a vote would be 4 object to the extent it calls for a legal required to amend the bylaws. <sup>5</sup> conclusion. Q. And a majority of the Platte River 6 BY MR. BRASHEAR: board -- is it your understanding the majority Q. What is your understanding of what of the Platte River board would be former 8 the Platte River board would need to do to directors of Central when Platte River is change the bylaws? formed? 10 A. You would need a majority vote. And A. That is correct. 11 the majority would be sitting with Central. So 11 Q. Mr. Rowe, you testified earlier about 12 you'd have to have a dissension from a Central 12 a vacancy on the Central board of directors. board member to have any changes. 13 Has that vacancy been filled? 14 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Would --14 A. It has. 15 let me interrupt for a moment. 15 Q. Who filled that vacancy? Would that vote be of the members present 16 A. Brent Soneson. 17 17 to change that? Or will it be the members --Q. And when was that filled? 18 of all members of the Platte River District? 18 A. That was filled in the general <sup>19</sup> Do you know? 19 election. 20 20 THE WITNESS: I don't know. 21 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 21 A. Of the -- the general election of --22 22 BY MR. BRASHEAR: O. November 2022? 23 Q. And so I -- Mr. Rowe, I want to A. Yes, exactly. <sup>24</sup> clarify, without getting into what the vote 24 Q. And Mr. Soneson has been seated? 25 would be required, is it your understanding A. He has.

1	MR. BRASHEAR: I have no further	1	percent.
2	questions.	2	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.
3	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Recross?	3	So if we go to the if we go to the not
4	MR. DEGAN: Are we doing	4	the immediate, you know, combined merger board
5	recrosses?	5	but the long-term vision of the of the
6	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: We are.	6	board, describing the Plan of Consolidation,
7	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Well,	7	there would be seven subdistricts?
8	before you well, I have a couple other	8	THE WITNESS: Yes.
9	followup ones that I was going to ask. But do	9	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And
10	you want to do recross first? Or do you	10	each one of those subdistricts has two
11	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Why	11	directors?
12	don't you go ahead. I think he's looking at	12	THE WITNESS: That is correct.
13	his notes of what he might want to ask. Why	13	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So if I
14	don't we have the board members ask.	14	go to the map that we said was in I don't
15	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So you	15	remember.
16	mentioned that all of the voters elect these	16	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Exhibit
17	directors. How many do you have a rough	17	43.
18	idea of the percentage of voters that are	18	MR. BRASHEAR: 43.
19	irrigation users?	19	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: 43, we
20	THE WITNESS: I don't.	20	also have up here, that means there will be two
21	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Do you	21	people from Keith County?
22	think do you have an idea whether that's	22	THE WITNESS: That is correct.
23	more or less than 20 percent?	23	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Are
24	THE WITNESS: If I had to guess,	24	those people Keith County in the merged, the
25	I would say it would be way less than 20	25	new Platte River Public Power District, in your
1	irrigation and public power district, would	1	that are represented Keith, Lincoln, Dawson,
- 1	it does it provide retail customer electric	2	Gosper, Phelps and Kearney all but one
3	service in Keith County? Do you know? I mean,	3	county, essentially Buffalo County, is the only
4	if you don't know, that's okay.	4	county that has no current Central customers or
5	THE WITNESS: I don't know. I	5	voters?
6	should know. But I don't.	6	THE WITNESS: That is correct.
7	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.	7	And I'd like to back you up just a second.
8	And then there would be two people from	8	There is one Dawson director that is in
9	Lincoln. And if I'm understanding correctly,	9	Gosper County.
10	Lincoln County, it's one of the areas of the	10	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: There
11	merger that is where there are voters	11	is one Daw oh, I see. Yeah, Dawson County
12	currently from both the from both current	12	goes into Dawson the district of Dawson
13	districts, Dawson and Central?	13	goes into Gosper County?
14	THE WITNESS: That is correct.	14	THE WITNESS: Exactly, yes.
15	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Same	15	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.
16	thing for Dawson County?	16	All right. I see that. Okay. All right.
17	THE WITNESS: That is correct as	17	Thank you.
18	well.	18	THE WITNESS: Yes.
19	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And	19	MR. DEGAN: I did have a couple
20	then the Tri County areas are just members of	20	of followup points. But I think I can get
21	Central but not members of Dawson?	21	there with other witnesses.
22	THE WITNESS: That is correct.	22	And counsel passed me a note, and I think
23	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So you	23	by stipulation, the parties have agreed not to
24	would have of the voters that are going to	24	do recross, just in the interest of time.
1.0 E	be electing directors, the current counties	25	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.

	Page 196		Page 197
1	MR. DEGAN: Agreed?	1	some information on that.
2	MR. JARECKE: On all witnesses,	2	THE REPORTER: Would yo spell
3	correct.	3	your name for me, please?
4	MR. DEGAN: On all witnesses.	4	THE WITNESS: Scott Dicke,
5	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. I	5	S-C-O-T-T, D-I-C-K-E.
6	don't want to foreclose that on a party.	6	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:
7	MR. DEGAN: Okay.	7	D-I-C-K-E?
8	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: If you	8	THE WITNESS: Correct.
9	guys want to stipulate to that, I'm fine with	9	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: No Y?
10	that.	10	THE WITNESS: Correct.
11	MR. JARECKE: Thank you.	11	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
12	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: All	12	SCOTT DICKE,
13	right. So I believe that's all for Mr. Rowe.	13	Called as a witness on behalf of CNPPID, being
14	Thank you very much.	14	first duly sworn, was examined and testified as
15	THE WITNESS: Thank you.	15	follows:
16	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: You can	16	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
17	step down.	17	Please be seated.
18	THE WITNESS: Thank you for your	18	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
19	time.	19	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And I
20	MR. BRASHEAR: We will call	20	you stated your name. Could you state your
21	Scott Dicke as our next witness.	22	address?
23	And I would preface that in noting that	23	THE WITNESS: 504 Alma, Nebraska
24	Mr. Dicke will talk about some of the	24	68920.
25	irrigation issues that have been raised by the board and that we discussed earlier to give	25	/// ///
	Page 198	1	/// Page 199
1	DIRECT EXAMINATION	1	Q. Where did you work before Central?
2	BY MR. BRASHEAR:	2	A. I was the assistant manager for the
3	Q. Mr yeah. Mr. Dicke, what is your	1	Lower Republican Natural Resources District.
4	position with Central?	4	Q. And what were your duties there?
5	I I'm sorry, Mr. Dicke, let me ask, are	5	A. I everything administrative. We
6	you an employee of Central?	6	had approximately 300,000 acres of groundwater
7	A. Yes, I am.	7	irrigation that was allocated and metered. And
8	Q. What is your position with Central?	8	so making sure that water was used efficiently
-	A. I'm the irrigation and water services	9	within the rules and regulations.
10	manager.	10	Q. So at Lower Republican, you primarily
12	Q. And what do those duties entail?	11	worked with groundwater irrigation?
	A. It's making suite our customers get	13	A. Correct.
13	water, making sure there's adequate		Q. And at Central, you primarily work
14	initiastructure to make sure that they ie taken	14	with surface water irrigation?
15 16	care of and they can irrigate their crops and	16	A. That's correct.
17	taking care of quotes.	17	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: How long
18	Q. So you're responsible for frontline	18	did you work for the Lower was it Lower?  MR. BRASHEAR: Lower Republican.
19	relationship with irrigation service customers?	19	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Lower
20	A. Yes, that's correct.	20	Republican.
21	Q. How long have you been at Central?	21	THE WITNESS: I want to say
22	A. A little over a couple two years, a little over.	22	short of eight years. End of end of 2014 to
23	Q. Have you held other positions at	23	maybe the beginning of 2021.
24	Central or	24	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
25	A. Not at Central, no.		So approximately eight years?
	1. The at Central, III.	1	~ approximately eight jours.

Page 200 Page 201 surface water and the groundwater. THE WITNESS: Approximately. A <sup>2</sup> little short of that. 2 Q. And you heard Mr. Rowe's testimony on surface water. Would you agree with his HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Close <sup>4</sup> enough. Just wanted to get an idea. description of surface water irrigation? 5 <sup>5</sup> BY MR. BRASHEAR: A. Yeah. 6 O. So, Mr. Dicke, I think you heard O. Anything you would add to that? 7 <sup>7</sup> testimony or questions earlier today about A. You know, generally when you think of 8 issues related to water and irrigation. I'd groundwater, again, it is water that is being <sup>9</sup> like to explore those a little bit with you if extracted from a well. And surface water 10 I may -typically is thought of as being impounded 11 A. Yes. behind a dam or drawn from the river and then 12 applied directly to the field. Q. -- for the benefit of everyone here. 13 13 What is meant by irrigation? Q. Okay. What irrigation is Central 14 14 involved with or does it facilitate? What A. Sure. I get that question a lot. 15 types of irrigation does it facilitate? And so irrigation, the application of 16 water to assist crops from -- if you have A. Predominantly surface water precipitation and you don't have enough of it, <sup>17</sup> irrigation. 18 you apply water for irrigation to grow the There is indirect support of the water 19 19 crop. table, increasing the water table. That 20 reduces pumping costs for groundwater pumpers, Q. And are -- is there one method of 21 irrigation, or are there -- is there more than groundwater irrigators. one method of irrigation? 22 O. I think at this time, Mr. Dicke, just 23 A. In Nebraska, we predominantly think to help with this description, I'd like to of surface water irrigation and groundwater 24 point to --25 <sup>25</sup> irrigation. We talked a little bit about the MS. KREIFELS: 21. Page 202 Page 203 <sup>1</sup>BY MR. BRASHEAR: But describe where you're pointing on the map Q. -- Exhibit 21, if I may. And we'll because the record won't -- if you just point 3 and sav -put up a slide which is page 15 of Exhibit 21. 4 MS. KREIFELS: It's actually THE WITNESS: Sure. 5 going to be page 16 instead. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- here, MR. BRASHEAR: Page 16. Sorry. people reading it wouldn't know where it's at. BY MR. BRASHEAR: THE WITNESS: Okay. Q. Page 16 of Exhibit 21. 8 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So if 9 Mr. Dicke, do you have page 16 of Exhibit you could do that, but, yes, you can do that. 10 10 21 --THE WITNESS: Okay. Thank you. 11 11 A. To start, in this whole map, we're A. I do. 12 <sup>12</sup> looking at the Central Platte Basin. Okay. Q. -- available to you? 13 <sup>13</sup> Lake McConaughy being at the far left side of And is that what's represented on the <sup>14</sup> easel as well? the illustration here. 15 15 A. Yes, it is. Each one of these four emblems recognizes 16 Q. Can -- do you understand this <sup>16</sup> a power production facility, one of Central's 17 17 exhibit, what it's portraying? facilities operated as a power plant. 18 18 A. I do. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And 19 19 Q. Could you explain what you understand that's those kind of square --20 20 this exhibit to be portraying? THE WITNESS: Right. 21 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- with A. Certainly. 22 22 the appearance of water coming out of it is --THE WITNESS: With permission of 23 the board and executive director, could I stand is a --24 and point to a few things? THE WITNESS: Hydro --25 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Yes. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- hydro

1	dam?	1	goes through the next hydro generation of
2	THE WITNESS: Hydro generation.	2	Jeffrey.
3	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:	3	And it continues to Johnson Lake down
4	Generation. Okay.	4	here. And water continues through J-1, as it's
5	THE WITNESS: Uh-huh, yep.	5	referred to, Johnson 1 and Johnson 2. Then
6	MR. JARECKE: Speak up just a	6	goes through the Phelps Canal system.
7	little bit.	7	And this area, in the darker color where
8	THE WITNESS: You bet.	8	it says direct water irrigation, that's all
9	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: That	9	water that Central provides directly to its
10	I just note that microphone only handles this	10	customers with the Water Service Agreement.
11	room.	11	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: That's
12	The microphone on the corner of that	12	the tan, orangish-looking area?
13	witness stand is the one that actually picks up	13	THE WITNESS: That's correct.
14	for WebEx.	14	Okay.
15	MR. JARECKE: Okay.	15	A. And so that's the water for
16	A. And starting at Lake McConaughy,	16	Central.
17	where irrigation water is stored, it is	17	Other water that's released out of Lake
18	released. It runs through one of the hydro	18	McConaughy for surface water irrigation might
19	generations generator. It continues down the	19	not run through Central's hydros. It might
20	river.	20	come down to the river.
21	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Which	21	The furthest one for surface water
22	one is that one?	22	irrigation is in Buffalo County. So Buffalo
23	THE WITNESS: This is at	23	County has an irrigation surface water
24	Kingsley Dam. Okay. Thank you.	24	irrigation district.
25	A. And as it comes down, it ultimately	25	And then this other darker magenta color,
1	purple, is also surface water irrigation	1	THE WITNESS: Towards Kearney.
2	districts.	2	In addition to this other darker area, this is
3	So that is a big picture. And then	3	all surface water irrigation that comes out of
4	ultimately all of this area is also has	4	Lake McConaughy.
5	groundwater irrigation.	5	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
6	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:	6	Thank you.
7	Depending on the original exhibit, it's kind of	7	BY MR. BRASHEAR:
8	magenta or purple on the large demonstration	8	Q. Mr. Dicke, where would you say
9	exhibit.	9	approximately that larger surface water
10	On the one I have, it's kind of a darker	10	irrigation spot in the middle of that, what
11	blue. And there's light blue around the hydro	11	counties is that in?
12	generators and such.	12	A. I believe that would be in Dawson and
13	I just want to be clear so we have the	13	Lincoln County predominantly.
14	colors.	14	Q. And so are there canals there then?
15	But the and then you referred to that	15	That's how that surface water irrigation is
16	small darker area on the right around the east	16	being delivered?
17	as I forget what that was.	17	A. Yes, that is correct.
18	THE WITNESS: This is	18	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: What's the
19	actually, water that's released from Lake	19	difference between direct surface and indirect
20	McConaughy is providing surface water	20	surface? Are you getting
21	irrigation in the very darkest color.		THE WITNESS: In in on
23	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: It's on	22	this illustration that's surface water
24	the upper right section?	24	irrigation that derives from Lake McConaughy.
25	THE WITNESS: Yep. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.		Direct surface water irrigation is the area that has a contract with Central to
	I HEAKING OFFICER LEXEL! ()KAV	دعا	rarea mat has a contract with Central to

Page 209 Page 208 <sup>1</sup> deliver that. of Central a moment ago, surface water <sup>2</sup> irrigation customers; is that correct? Indirect surface water irrigation is water 3 <sup>3</sup> that other irrigation districts have and they A. Yes. 4 4 store it in Lake McConaughy. It's the Q. Is there a document of some kind or <sup>5</sup> importance of Lake McConaughy to surface water how is that arrangement between Central and 6 irrigation. those customers proven, established, created? BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So I'm A. Sure. We have a -- what's called a 8 not sure -- I'm not asking you to answer maybe Water Service Agreement. That is to deliver <sup>9</sup> specifically about Mr. Rowe, but he testified water to those customers where the water rights 10 that he was an irrigator but he was not a are attached to the land. 11 <sup>11</sup> customer of Central. Does that imply that Q. And do the water rights belong to the 12 those people that are either in that landowner? Do they belong to Central? Do --13 circumstance are customers of these other A. They belong to the landowner --14 districts? Q. -- what is the balance? 15 15 THE WITNESS: It could be. A. -- and carried in trust by Central. 16 16 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay. Q. And generally I assume there's 17 THE WITNESS: In Mr. Rowe's variations between Water Service Agreements? 18 18 case. I believe that is how --A. Generally there is some variation. 19 19 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So But that is through time and through the edits <sup>20</sup> indirectly, they are benefiting from Central's of many attorneys over time. 21 management of that dam, whether they're direct Some of them go back to 1950. And as they customers of Central or not? evolved, there's just some -- some slight 23 THE WITNESS: I would say so. modifications in there. So -- but generally <sup>24</sup> BY MR. BRASHEAR: they are consistent. Q. Mr. Dicke, you talked about customers Q. Do the Water Service Agreements Page 211 Page 210 <sup>1</sup> establish how much water a customer is entitled Q. Is there a recommendation from staff 2 to? to the board, or is that something the board 3 A. Yes, they do. initiates? 4 4 Q. Do they establish a maximum amount? A. If -- if the staff is asked by the A. Yes, they do. 1.5 acre-feet per board, you know, what their thoughts are, we 6 acre. provide it. Q. Do they establish a minimum amount? You know, if -- a lot of times there's a A. They don't establish that. But the lot of sand on the beach in McConaughy that, <sup>9</sup> board has, you know, the responsibility to you know, some people are looking at. But provide water to the best of its ability but is staff does say this is how much water's there <sup>11</sup> not held liable should drought or something and this is what we need to get to -- to 12 come along. 12 everyone. 13 13 Q. Testimony was given earlier related Q. Is allocation made on a districtwide 14 to the term allocation. Does that relate to basis? Is it made on a canal-system basis, or 15 this question? 15 is -- or is it on an individual-agreement 16 A. Yes, it does. 16 basis? 17 17 Q. What does allocation mean? A. From what I understand, the board's 18 18 A. It is if the board determines there always made it on a districtwide basis. 19 is a quantifiable amount but it's not able to 19 Q. So everybody in the district, all meet that 1.5 acre-feet per acre, they could surface water irrigation customers are treated <sup>21</sup> say, well, we're going to allocate one the same in an allocation? <sup>22</sup> acre-foot per acre for those customers to make 22 A. That's what I understand. 23 <sup>23</sup> sure everybody has some water. Q. That's your understanding? 24 24 Q. And the board makes that decision? A. Yep.

25

A. The board does make that decision.

HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm

Page 212 Page 213 1 it could be modified if the water isn't going to interrupt for a minute. <sup>2</sup> available in sufficient quantity; is that a You said the district has a responsibility <sup>3</sup> to provide water to the irrigators; is that 3 fair --4 4 right? THE WITNESS: That's fair. 5 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: --THE WITNESS: To -- yes. 6 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Is -description? 7 <sup>7</sup> and what creates that responsibility? I'm Okay. Mr. Brashear -- or board member has 8 getting at is that a legal responsibility by a question. 9 statute? Is that a contractual responsibility? BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: You 10 10 What creates that right? testified to the difference between, like, the THE WITNESS: The service and water -- the rights belong to the landowners 12 the delivery is through a contract, through a 12 but the district is basically serving as trustee of that resource. Can you explain a water services contract with the producer. 14 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: But <sup>14</sup> little bit more about what that means? Or 15 there's not a guarantee on a minimum amount maybe I didn't describe that correctly. Can 16 you clarify that? that has to be supplied? It's kind of a 17 THE WITNESS: I think you -- the pro rata amount to all irrigators? 18 18 water -- the water that is stored and diverted THE WITNESS: It is the -- the 19 has a destination. And it's to a tract of <sup>19</sup> contracts all stipulate 1.5 acre-feet per acre. <sup>20</sup> You know, but the board has the capability to <sup>20</sup> land. Okay. And getting that water and 21 21 adjust that. holding that appropriation is what Central 22 22 does. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okav. 23 So it's -- it sets a standard --23 And so if a -- so the water can't be moved 24 <sup>24</sup> without the consent of the landowner. The THE WITNESS: Baseline. 25 <sup>25</sup> water's attached to the land. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- but BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay. Page 215 of the river where these -- in this diagram <sup>2</sup> And can you -- you mentioned these other where the indirect water irrigation is, the <sup>3</sup> irrigation districts that are receiving their contract water, there's probably more surface <sup>4</sup> water from Lake McConaughy. You mentioned water irrigated acres on that north side than <sup>5</sup> something about, I think, so much of the water what Central has in -- overall. 6 that's stored at McConaughy is in trust to 6 I don't know if I got there or not so --7 <sup>7</sup> various districts; is that a way to think about BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: No. I 8 that? 8 think that's helpful. 9 Can you kind of explain the relationship What about -- so did I understand 10 between how Central -- Central manages the flow correctly that Central is the one managing that of this water, the impact that it has on these flow from the dam? They manage the dam, so 12 other irrigators? 12 then water come through the dam -- even 13 13 though --THE WITNESS: I'll do my best. 14 14 So there's multiple interests that hold THE WITNESS: Yeah. <sup>15</sup> water in Lake McConaughy. There is irrigation. 15 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: -- the 16 And the irrigation districts include Central. pie is going to be -- how much water flows 17 It includes irrigation districts like in this 17 through that dam will be a function of how 18 exhibit in the dark blue area. Okay? Central decides to manage the water levels 19 There's also requirements of water to behind the dam and the lake level -- the depth <sup>20</sup> meet, that was mentioned, the Federal Energy of lake, as it shrinks -- in the event that <sup>21</sup> Regulatory Commission. there -- you were in a drought condition, it 22 And so there's a pie, you know. There's has to allocate, Central is the entity that this much water. And so as the water gets <sup>23</sup> determines how much water is going to flow <sup>24</sup> less, the overall pie gets smaller. 24 through this dam. And so, you know, on the -- the north side And they have to meet requirements for

	Page 216		Page 217
1	FERC, wildlife requirements. They're going to	l	to be released.
2	meet requirements to make sure that they are	2	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: They're
3	intering these states assers, states in guaran	3	senior to Central?
4	districts that have that the going to	4	THE WITNESS: They are.
5	receive some of this water for their uses, and	5	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So can you
6	you're also then for the downstream	6	address the mechanics of how it's metered?
7	hydroelectric dams, as well as the Central	7	Does each user have a metering device as it
8	customers that are irrigation users?	8	pumps out of the canal? Or how do you know how
9	THE WITNESS: I would say	9	much water they've used?
10	ultimately the water's flowing out of Lake	10	THE WITNESS: The end user at
11	McConaughy. And if I could, I would	11	Central has a meter.
12	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Yes.	12	I can't speak for the other irrigation
13	THE WITNESS: point to one	13	districts as to whether or not they meter the
14	spot here.	14	water. But they have their water right. And
15	Down by Kearney, this is, I believe, the	15	they can flow for that amount.
16	oldest one of the oldest or the oldest water	16	And so it is tracked in a very large,
17	right. So if they call	17	complicated spreadsheet that is you know,
18	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: That's	18	the a lot of people are involved, the people
19	the dark blue area on the north	19	who have the water right in the State of
20	THE WITNESS: It is.	20	Nebraska, Department of Natural Resources.
21	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: east	21	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Off of that
22	part of that light blew area?	22	metered amount, they're then billed, and off of
23	THE WITNESS: I believe that's	23	that, you're making a 30 percent margin; is
24	the Kearney Canal. And if they call for their	24	that correct?
25	water, since they're senior right, it it has	25	THE WITNESS: I need to
1	repeat could I ask you to repeat that	1	irrigation district, too. Where are they at in
2	question for me, please?		this span of irrigation? Where do they get
3	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Well, you	3	their water?
4	have a metered amount. So after the meter is	4	THE WITNESS: I believe from
5	somehow read, they're then billed for the	5	Lake McConaughy.
6	water, and off of that bill, Central has a 30	6	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Same place.
7	percent profit margin; is that correct?	7	Okay.
8	THE WITNESS: I can speak to the	8	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: One
9	meter. The water that runs through the meter	9	more question.
10	is billed. We know that amount.	10	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: One more
11	I can't speak to the 30 percent profit	11	and Kingsley hydro, how many megawatts max is
12		12	that?
13	water that runs through the meters at Central	13	THE WITNESS: I'll defer that to
14	we bill for.	14	the next witness exactly.
15	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay. I	15	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay.
16		16	Thank you.
17	the lawyers had indicated there's \$100 million	17	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So the
18	_	18	map that we've been looking at includes, in
19	30 percent margin. So maybe that that's	19	addition to the grayed or the contoured
20	somebody else probably going to tell us that.	20	areas, there are some lines in blue and red and
21	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I	21	purple. I don't know if you described those.
22	think I think the next witness is expected	22	But I don't remember. Can you describe what
23	to deal with that, Mr. Chair.	23	are we looking at with the rest of this map
24	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Then the	24	that
25	other question, where does NPPD is an	25	THE WITNESS: Sure.

Page 221 Page 220 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: -sub transmissions? Or do you know? <sup>2</sup> behind the contoured areas? 2 THE WITNESS: I'll leave it to 3 THE WITNESS: Thank you. The someone else. I believe they are transmissions 4 red lines in here are, I believe, Dawson's 4 lines. 5 <sup>5</sup> distribution -- electrical distribution HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 6 6 system --THE WITNESS: But I'll let BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay. someone else clarify that. THE WITNESS: -- and how it HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: There 9 overlaps and marries up with Central's are some blue lines at the end of the red <sup>10</sup> irrigation. lines. So do we have another witness that can 11 And then the larger area right here, the clarify what each of those colors indicates? 12 largest area of light blue is what we refer to 12 MR. BRASHEAR: Yes. 13 13 as incidental recharge or water that helps keep **HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:** 14 the -- water that seeps into the ground and 14 Counsel's indicating yes for Central. So I'll 15 keeps the water table high that also benefits defer that question. But we might want to <sup>16</sup> and supports all of the groundwater irrigators. clarify what each of the colors means, if it's Now, Central doesn't get paid for that. significant. 18 But it is a benefit to the whole -- to the 18 BY MR. BRASHEAR: 19 <sup>19</sup> whole Central Platte valley, and particularly Q. Mr. Dicke, looking at the exhibit on 20 the area underlying Central's customers. 20 the easel, page 16 of, I think, Exhibit 21, 21 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I think underneath the orange area there to the right we have the answer but -- largely, but you said of that map, there are a number of lines. And the red lines on there were the Dawson's what does that represent? What do those 24 <sup>24</sup> distribution system. There's some that are markings --<sup>25</sup> purple. Are those transmission lines or larger 25 A. Are you referring to these right Page 222 Page 223 1 here? level under the ground, where it would be, you know, with and without Central's system. Q. Yes. The water that comes through Central's A. Those are the irrigated tracts of <sup>4</sup> land that Central has contracts with. system incidentally recharges into the ground. Q. And so the canals run through that And from that, there's a big block of water, 6 area? it's surface water, that has created a very large rise in the water table. And that's A. That's correct. Q. At least some of the canals run referred to as the mound. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Is through that area? 10 A. Yes. that -- where is that on this map? Page 16 of 11 Exhibit 21? Q. Is the orange -- earlier there was 12 testimony related to the mound or at least 12 THE WITNESS: I don't believe it 13 is in this exhibit. reference made to the mound. Could you -- do 14 you have an understanding what the mound is? HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 15 15 THE WITNESS: I would refer --16 16 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Well, is O. Could you explain what the mound is? 17 17 the physical location on that -- on that A. Yes. 18 18 O. And what it refers -- that term exhibit? 19 refers to? 19 THE WITNESS: Yes. 20 20 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: It's not A. The mound for a lot of people is when <sup>21</sup> they look at the University of Nebraska shown on there. I'm just wondering if -- where 22 22 in context it's at on this map, just -groundwater map, a big blue spot. 23 23 It is a very -- substantial rise in the THE WITNESS: You bet. And we 24 water table, as much as 80 feet. do have an exhibit that shows it somewhere. 25 So when you're looking at static water HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.

	-,		
1	THE WITNESS: It is 37?	1	representation of Central's canals, reservoirs
2		2	and the like?
3	going to come out later, if it's in another	3	A. Yes, it does.
4	exhibit, I guess it doesn't may not matter.	4	Q. So the what are the blue lines on
5	,	5	page 10 of Exhibit 21? What what are those?
6	-	6	A. The blue lines are the canal system.
7	Central	7	Q. And there's the term diversion, which
8		8	appears to be located near a pointer for
9	or orangish area	9	North Platte. What does diversion refer to?
10	THE WITNESS: The tan with all	10	A. The point at which water is taken out
11		11	of the river.
12		12	Q. And how is that done?
13		13	A. Through gates. There's a little
14	_	14	structure there I shouldn't say a little
15		15	structure. There's a structure that holds the
16		16	water. And then it's diverted into the into
17	12 0	17	the canal system.
18		18	Q. Into the canal. And then there's a
19	is?	19	reference slightly further east on the river
20		20	that says river return. What does that refer
21	Q. Could I have you turn, Mr. Dicke, to	21	to?
22	page 10 of Exhibit 21.	22	A. That's where water is put back in
23	11 0	23	•
24		24	pick that water up or if there's a substantial
25		25	rain. But it's an offshoot from the canal
	Page 226		Page 227
1	system back to the river.	1	system called the
2	Q. This does Eximent page 10 of	2	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: You mean
3	Zimiero Zi merence unas sirere ure necumity evis	3	page 10?
4	invertecting off of central's canal system, is	4	THE WITNESS: Page yeah,
5	that correct?	5	thank you. Page 10.
6	71. 105, it is. That's correct.	6	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I think
7	WIK. DRASTILAR. Thave no further	7	it's Exhibit
8	questions.	8	MR. JARECKE: 21.
9	TIES THE CONTROL TESTED. WIT.	9	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: 21.
10	Degair.	10	THE WITNESS: Oh, thank you.
11	MR. DEGAN: Thank you.	11	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I just
12	BOTHED MEMBER MOET. Cult I usk	12	wanted to clarify that. Is it all
13	one?	13	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: So you
14	With BESTAY. On, said.	14	manage that water flow as well or just
15	BOTHE MEMBER MOET. Tou	15	THE WITNESS: No, we do not
16	mentioned earner there is a paramet path that	16	manage the Kearney Canal.
17	goes down to Buffalo County, I think you said.	17	BOARD MEMBER M0EN: Okay.
18	is that sparaner to the fiver and the	18	THE WITNESS: It's served
19	canals that Central manages?	19	through Lake McConaughy. The water that
20	THE WITHERS. It I	20	eventually gets there is stored in Lake
21	wouldn't there's a water released from	21	McConaughy.
22	Zake Westings, goes anough what was shown on	22	And then when the Kearney Canal and the
23	Exhibit 10 and then eventually gets to the	23	they ask for their water, it's released
2.4	Lange and the state of the stat	24	1
24	north side of the river just to the west of Kearney. And that that that's the canal	24 25	according to their appropriation.  BOARD MEMBER MOEN: That's

	Page 228		Page 229
1	essentially a parallel path out of the lake?	ı	hydro plant?
2	THE WITNESS: To down the	2	THE WITNESS: Yes.
3	river and to that, yeah, I guess.	3	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Does it go
4	BOTHED MEMBER MOETY. Thysically	4	through all four?
5	separate?	5	THE WITNESS: It can, yeah.
6	THE WITNESS: Physically	6	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: So some
7	separate. Yeah, I'm stuck on parallel a little	7	does; some doesn't?
8	Oit.	8	THE WITNESS: Yes.
9	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Okay.	9	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Okay.
10	THE WITNESS: Everything's	10	THE WITNESS: We're getting
11	running to the east.	ı	into it gets a little complicated. And
12	BOTHED MEMBER MOET. But on page		to I mentioned the words cfs, and that's
13	16, the direct and maneet, you manage the	13	cubic feet per second.
14	now of an allose.	15	BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Okay. Thank
	THE WITHESS. We don't manage	16	you.
16  17	the flow. We manage Lake McConaughy. And the water is stored in Lake McConaughy for those	17	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Just a real quick clarification. You mentioned the
18	_ ·	l	little on the direct surface water
19	others. If you know, if they ask for 200 cfs, that's what's released. And we would		irrigation area of the Tri County area, there's
20			a bunch of little boxes. And you said that's
21	press are cuttorn	ı	irrigated land. I don't see anything similar
22	BOT IND MEMBER MOEIT. ORay.	22	along the rest of the direct surface water
23	if they ask for 500, we	23	irrigation yellowish area up upstream of the
24		24	canal system.
25		25	Is that but there are irrigated
	Page 230	_	Page 231
1	irrigation customers up along that canal there?	1	customers that have Water Service Agreements
2	THE WITHESS. That's confect.	2	A. Correct.
3	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.	3	Q agreed?
4	111E W111VESS. 7180dt 3,000 01	4	Okay. And those customers have water
5	them.	5	allocations on water that's contained up here
7	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.	6 7	in Ogallala?
8	So they're just not you can't see them. But	8	A. Correct.
9	they re there. There are customers up there.	9	Q. Okay. And when we were talking about
10	Okay.	10	this purple area, this indirect surface water
11	don't have	11	irrigation, these are other irrigation districts; right?
12		12	A. Correct.
13	BOTTED WILLIAMER THE TETRISOTY. SO	13	Q. So these customers don't have any
14	in Lincoln County or whatever Dawson County	14	direct agreement with Central?
15	or whatever that area represents there?	15	A. Not for not with a Water Service
16	THE WITNESS: That's correct.	16	Agreement to deliver irrigation water to that
17	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.	17	land.
18	MR. DEGAN: Okay. Thank you.	18	Q. Not the end use customer?
19	CROSS-EXAMINATION	19	A. Not the end use customer, no.
20	BY MR. DEGAN:	20	Q. Okay. So when we get back up here to
21	Q. I just want to follow up on that and	21	McConaughy, Central owns Kingsley. You have
22		22	control over the dam; correct?
23	apologize if it's maybe perhaps a tad bit	23	A. We own Kingsley.
24		24	Q. Okay. And you own the reservoir as
25	orangish color, down here, those are Central	25	well; right?

Page 232 Page 233 A. We own Kingsley and the reservoir. Q. Okay. So with respect to your <sup>2</sup> customers, though, you're holding those water Q. Okay. But you don't own all the <sup>3</sup> water that's in Kingsley; right? And allocations in trust for their benefit? <sup>4</sup> McConaughy; right? A. Yeah. 5 A. There's -- as I mentioned before, Q. So when you're deciding whether to <sup>6</sup> there's a pie chart. And there are other release or store water, you're doing it on behalf of your surface water irrigators; people that have appropriations in Lake McConaughy. correct? 9 Q. And that's kind of what we get to A. Yes. when we're talking about these other irrigation 10 Q. All right. But if you get a call <sup>11</sup> from an irrigation district in this -- in this districts and other canals because there are purple area that says we want X number of cubic other parties that also have rights in the <sup>13</sup> feet of water, you just have to release that water in McConaughy? 14 water if they've got the right to demand the A. Correct. 15 release of that water? Q. Okay. And those rights can consist 16 16 of use rights? A. Yes. 17 17 Q. Okay. You don't have any discretion A. Sure. 18 over whether that water flows or not; right? O. Release rights? Flow rights? 19 19 A. I'll -- I believe there's quite a A. If they have a senior priority right. 20 20 few. O. Okav. 21 21 A. Yeah. Q. Okay. 22 22 A. I -- there would be another, you Q. And, in fact, in the water rights in <sup>23</sup> know, person that could testify to all of what McConaughy, NPPD's got rights for a certain those are. But, yes, there is different uses quantity of that water, do they not? of Lake McConaughy. 25 A. I believe so. Page 234 Page 235 Q. Well, isn't there a water plan? water service rate? 2 A. Yes, I think so. A. Oh, no. The mound water certainly 3 3 O. So -creates a very large benefit to the groundwater A. I don't know exactly what that pumpers. They do not pay Central for that. <sup>5</sup> quantity is. You know, it could be, you know, even Q. Okay. Well, is there a water others that have an interest in this may only <sup>7</sup> management plan that Central has at various have a very small or minor water service times had with NPPD concerning the management contract with Central but own -- but are and release of that water? considerable groundwater irrigators. 10 A. I believe it goes back a long ways. And so if, you know, there's not that 11 11 Q. Okay. Do you have any responsibility surface water irrigation coming down, it 12 over that plan? 12 jeopardizes the mound, and the water could go 13 13 A. I do not. way down. It would cost them more money. So 14 Q. You do not. Okay. That's somebody they have a very strong interest in it making <sup>15</sup> else within Central? sure they don't lose their bottom dollar in pumping costs. A. That's correct. 17 17 Q. Okay. Okay. And to be clear, the So, yeah, there's a -- but, no, Central <sup>18</sup> Central water service customers, they're 18 doesn't get paid for that. ratepayers? They're paying for their water; 19 Q. So in purposes of keeping the lights 20 right? on, you get that from two revenue sources; 21 21 right? It's the -- the Water Service Agreement A. They are.

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Q. Okay. And these -- these groundwater <sup>23</sup> enhancement -- groundwater irrigators, they may

<sup>24</sup> benefit from Central's canals and system, but

25 they're not paying -- they're not paying a

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revenues is one source; correct?

Q. Okay. Another source is -- of the

25 two main sources, I should say, would be sale

A. That is a source.

Page 237

of energy from the hydro units?

- A. Those would be the -- two of the <sup>3</sup> larger sources, yes.
  - Q. Okay. And in fairness, Central has additional revenue sources?
    - A. Correct.
- Q. There's some other agreements and 8 projects that they have along the way. But 9 would you agree with me that those are the two <sup>10</sup> principal sources of revenue for Central?
- A. I would say that they are two very 12 important ones, the power and the irrigation. And then there's -- there's others.
- Q. Okay. What proportion of total 15 revenues would you say would fall into the 16 other category?
  - A. Proportion of those revenues? A substantial portion is from the power production.

And then there -- the next two would probably be irrigation and leased revenues.

Q. Okay. Do you have an understanding that the hydro units were built specifically for the purpose of providing revenues to support the irrigation system?

Page 238 1 you're ready, let me know if you recognize <sup>2</sup> Exhibit 34?

A. I do.

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- Q. Okay. Do you recognize this as a <sup>5</sup> standard form Water Service Agreement used by <sup>6</sup> Central, this?
  - A. Yes, I do.
  - Q. And this in particular is a Phelps Water Service Agreement?
    - A. Yes.
- 11 Q. Okay. How many different forms does <sup>12</sup> Central maintain and are those for different <sup>13</sup> divisions or different -- different canal 14 systems?
- A. There are -- there's one for the <sup>16</sup> Phelps Canal system, one for the E65 system, one for the E67 system, and one for the supply canal.
  - Q. Would you agree with me that the terms are generally consistent between those three agreements?
    - A. Between those four agreements?
- Q. Between those four agreements, at least in its -- the form?
  - A. I would say that.

Page 236 A. I have heard that.

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O. Okay.

- A. But I don't know that for a fact.
- Q. Have you ever looked at Central's history that they maintain and post on their website?
- A. Very recently I looked at a book, and it was kind of ironic about Phelps County farmers who came to the auditorium about 100 years ago and were in opposition of the Tri County project altogether and got into a -oh, they brought in 400 to 800 farmers to protest the construction of the project. And so they weren't necessarily thinking of the future where things could go.
- 16 Q. Okay. You gave some testimony about the Water Service Agreements. 18

MR. DEGAN: Counsel, could we put Exhibit -- let's see here, it's Exhibit 34 in front of the witness?

MS. KREIFELS: 34?

MR. DEGAN: Yes, please. Thank

23 you. 24

BY MR. DEGAN:

Q. Mr. Dicke, take a moment. And when

Page 239

Q. Okay. The first point, if I could turn your attention to would be Section 1(B) which governs delivery of water service. So we're in Section 1, which is the water service section.

And then if you go to subsection B, we're talking about the amount. It says that, "The district will deliver from water made available for use on said lands from appropriations granted the district by the State of Nebraska for the irrigation of each 40-acre tract during each irrigation season a total amount of water as nearly as practical that bears the same relation to all of the water that the district determines it has available for irrigation during each irrigation season," period.

See where that's indicated?

- A. Yeah, I do.
- Q. Okay. So the first step is the district makes a determination of how much water to make available for water -- surface water irrigators; would you agree?
  - A. Yeah.
  - Q. Okay.
  - A. Yeah.

Page 240 O. And this section continues on that <sup>2</sup> the district --A. I would correct that. O. Oh. A. I would say that the board ultimately

6 makes that decision.

Q. Okay. The district through its <sup>8</sup> board. Fair point.

And then the next paragraph, still in <sup>10</sup> Section 1(B) of Exhibit 34, states that, "The <sup>11</sup> district anticipates that during the irrigation 12 season, the amount of water it will deliver to 13 the owner under this agreement will be at the <sup>14</sup> rate of twenty-eight on-hundredths acre-foot, slash, irrigated acre, slash, 14-day period and agrees to make reasonable efforts to deliver this amount, comma, if so requested by the owner, comma, but shall incur no liability if 19 this delivery rate is not available, nor will <sup>20</sup> the owner be relieved from making the owner's annual payments as set forth in paragraph 2."

See where that's indicated?

A. Yeah, I do.

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Q. All right. Will you agree with me that what this provides is that in the event

Page 242 <sup>1</sup> times when water's not available, and if one of <sup>2</sup> those events occurs, Central's, one, not obligated to deliver any quantity of water, 4 would you agree?

A. If there are things, like, climatic <sup>6</sup> conditions that come up, like a drought, then 7 it -- you know, they -- they're not going to be held liable according to this agreement.

Q. They're not going to be held liable, and it also states that its obligation is to deliver the same relation to all of the water that the district determines it has available for irrigation during irrigation season.

So it's within the -- it's within the discretion of Central to determine what quantity of water it has available for irrigation; right?

A. Yes.

Q. Okay. And if it delivers nothing, <sup>20</sup> they're not liable; correct?

A. As the contract reads.

22 O. Okay. But the customer's still 23 obligated to pay, even if no water is delivered?

A. That's correct.

Page 241 that the district, for whatever reason, decides not to deliver water, it may -- it may do so?

A. It shall not incur. It's -- I believe it says it will make every reasonable effort.

O. It will make every reasonable effort. But we just touched on the provision above that says it's within the district's discretion to determine what releases will be made; correct?

A. If the board determines the -- you know, there's a drought condition and they would like to do that --

O. Okay.

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A. -- then the board is privy to do that.

16 Q. Certainly the purpose of Central is 17 to serve its water users, including the surface water irrigators; correct? 19

A. As testified --

O. Okav.

A. -- what all the purposes are.

O. And Central certainly always endeavors to make that water available?

A. Yes.

O. But there are events and there are

Page 243

Q. All right. If I could have you turn down to Section --3

A. And I might point out, I don't believe Central's ever not provided water.

Q. Okay. At least in your knowledge, in your period that you've been at Central?

A. That's correct.

Q. Okay. Have you been at Central during periods that they had to allocate water?

A. I have not.

Q. Okay. So you haven't been through a 12 period of scarcity?

A. Not at Central.

Q. Not at Central. But at your prior -when you were doing groundwater irrigation?

A. Oh, it was the heightened point of 17 what I worked on so --

O. I'm sorry?

A. Water supply, making sure that farmers have irrigation water. Usually I found that if you give farmers all the water they want whenever they want, they're usually pretty happy.

Q. Okay. Sounds like a pretty common 25 sense approach to --

Page 245

Page 244 A. It's just what I've found. I don't <sup>2</sup> know. 3

Q. I won't quibble with that. Okay. And in fairness, last year was a

dry year?

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A. Yes.

Q. But Central was able to manage its water resources and avoided having to allocate; correct?

A. Correct.

O. So Central was able to deliver all 12 the water that it had to deliver to NPPD; correct?

A. As far as I know.

O. In 2022?

A. Yeah.

17 Q. 2022. Are you also aware that <sup>18</sup> Central is obligated to release a certain amount of water each year to comply with its <sup>20</sup> FERC license?

A. I am.

O. And that's because of the <sup>23</sup> Environmental Protection Agency issue; is that <sup>24</sup> your understanding?

A. I understand it's a requirement for

Page 246 And so when they move into center pivot <sup>2</sup> systems -- which, you know, in this -- up and <sup>3</sup> down the valley, there's been a lot of pivots <sup>4</sup> put up in the last 20 -- 20 to 25 years.

And so, you know, that helps. And so 6 that's probably a -- you know, a -- you know, a <sup>7</sup> tremendous, you know, accolade to the producers 8 to watch how much water they're putting on and when they're putting on.

And it helps everyone. And it puts more <sup>11</sup> water -- it allows water to last a little 12 longer in Lake McConaughy --

O. Okav.

A. -- when those climatic conditions --

Q. And I may have you just perhaps <sup>16</sup> explain for the benefit of the board, when you're talking about pipes and gates, you're 18 talking about the more antiquated system of <sup>19</sup> gravity-fed piping that brought water to the -to the fields by virtue of gravity?

A. I am. Yeah. It -- where they lay <sup>22</sup> out the irrigation pipe and you slide it and it <sup>23</sup> runs down the rows versus now putting it through a pivot or a large sprinkler system, <sup>25</sup> for a lack of a bette<u>r explanation.</u>

the FERC license.

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Q. Okay. But, again, even though 2022 was a relatively dry year, you were able to meet your obligations under your FERC license?

A. That's -- yes.

And, you know, I might add, you know, the drought comes, and the one fortunate thing about our irrigation supply area is that a substantial portion or more of our customers are also -- have access to groundwater.

So there's some drought management in that. And so we live in a great area. We have a lot of water.

Q. And some of it is benefited by technology; would you agree?

A. Absolutely. The amount of water that was used by pivots in the year 2000 on Central's system only -- and that consists of approximately 108,000 acres -- I think there was about 175, 177 pivots. And now there's probably over 700 pivots. And that water savings is tremendous, you know.

If you're looking at sandy soils and folks are irrigating with a -- with gated pipe, that water just trickles down.

Page 247

Q. It allows farmers to put water directly where it's needed as opposed to just flowing it into a field?

A. It reduces the loss of the water.

Q. Okay.

A. It's just more efficient.

Q. Okay. I'm going to have you turn to Section 7 of the Water Service Agreement. We're on Exhibit 34.

Just want to touch on this. There's a discussion in here that states that, "The water user must use the water for irrigation purposes only."

And it further states, middle of Section 7, that, "The owner hereby consents to the transfer of all water appropriations attached to the above-described tract of land upon the expiration of the term of this agreement or prior to such expiration if said water appropriations are not beneficially used for the irrigation of crops as determined by the district."

Okay. So let's stop there.

So, first, Central, the -- a water user, 25 if -- if his Water Service Agreement is

<sup>1</sup> terminated, they surrender their water appropriations, do they not?

- A. There is a 10-year prior a notification. And in this agreement, they <sup>5</sup> consent, they voluntarily allow that water to <sup>6</sup> be transferred.
  - Q. Okay.

A. And so as I mentioned earlier, <sup>9</sup> there's over time different agreements. And so <sup>10</sup> this is the agreement that's used now.

But there are other agreements that don't have that clause. And if -- and so they can maintain and hold that water appropriation.

But as more attorneys probably looked over 15 it, they said, heck, you know, let's -- let's make this in here, that way if we have other <sup>17</sup> irrigators in the district that want to expand, 18 we don't lose that appropriation and we can go <sup>19</sup> ahead and transfer within the district to <sup>20</sup> irrigate those other lands. So it stays within the district.

- Q. Okay. But this is the current version that you use; correct?
  - A. That's correct.

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Q. Okay. And anybody that has signed

Page 250 <sup>1</sup> it's -- you know, there's conditions on that, <sup>2</sup> you know, like climatic conditions, then, you <sup>3</sup> know, that water -- you know, the state can <sup>4</sup> adjudicate anyone who doesn't use their water <sup>5</sup> beneficially. And so this comes out of that.

O. Yeah, but that's not what this says. 7 This doesn't say the state can take your water appropriation away. This says we can.

This is not saying that the Department of Natural Resources, if they make a determination that you're not using your water for beneficial purposes, the state can take away your <sup>13</sup> allocation. This says Central can take away <sup>14</sup> vour allocation.

- A. Yes.
- O. Right?
- A. This is exactly consistent with state  $_{18}|_{\text{law}}$ .
- Q. Okay. So Central holds for every one <sup>20</sup> of these agreements the power to take away <sup>21</sup> water right allocations. Would you agree that's what the document says?
- A. This agreement -- this agreement <sup>24</sup> allows them to consent for that water to be moved and if -- if that -- if this agreement is

this agreement has already consented away their appropriation right if they -- once the agreement is terminated; correct?

- A. In this -- in this agreement, they consent to allow us to move it.
- O. Okay. And Central can terminate these agreements either, one, by giving 10-year notice; is that right?
  - A. That's correct.

Page 248

- 10 Q. Okay. But the second part of that 11 clause that we just read says that the agreement can also be terminated if the district determines that they do not believe that the user is using the water for a beneficial purpose; isn't that what that 16 states?
  - A. What that states is verbatim.
  - O. Okay.

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A. Okay. And so where that is, is now <sup>20</sup> we're getting into Nebraska water law. And if, you know, the state says if you're not using vour water beneficially, they can adjudicate that.

We don't want all our district to lose 25 that. And so if they're not using it and

Page 251 terminated. And I have not known Central to terminate a Water Service Agreement.

- O. Okav. But I want to be clear because the farmers that have signed these agreements have already signed them. So they've already consented; agree?
  - A. Yes.
- 8 Q. Okay. So Central holds in its hands for anybody who signed this agreement the power 10 to terminate those allocated water rights; 11 true?
  - A. Under this agreement?
  - O. Uh-huh.
  - A. Yeah.
- Q. Then, again, you've said this is the <sup>16</sup> current standard water agreement that Central uses; right?
  - A. That's correct.
  - Q. Last point is, this last sentence on Section 7 says that, "The owner understands that by this consent, the district may transfer said water appropriations to other tracts of land as the district in its sole discretion deems fit."
    - See that?

Page 253 Page 252 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So if A. Yeah. <sup>2</sup> the customer was using the water beneficially, Q. Now, what's puzzling to me is that's <sup>3</sup> not limited in any way to the use of the water. 3 could the district end the contract and <sup>4</sup> It doesn't say to another allocated user. It reappropriate the water? 5 <sup>5</sup> doesn't say, you know, pursuant to approval of THE WITNESS: If Central were to give a 10-year prior notification that they <sup>6</sup> the Department of Natural Resources. were going to terminate it, that's when they It just says to any other tract of land 8 that the district may see fit. Isn't that what 8 could. 9 that says? HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Then 10 10 they could do what I just said? A. That's exactly what it says. 11 11 THE WITNESS: Yeah. And, you know, looking at how that is, you 12 know, there are sometimes people come in and 12 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Even 13 though the customer is using the water 13 they terminate their Water Service Agreement <sup>14</sup> after 10 years. And with that consent, you 14 beneficially? 15 know, that frees up that water -- that water to 15 THE WITNESS: It could. I've 16 never seen it. go to another tract of land. 17 17 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Sure. I believe we used this just recently for 18 the head of the comps to move water onto his 18 I'm talking about their authority, not 19 land just for that reason. practical use of it or whether they've 20 20 implemented it. Okay. Q. But to any tract of land that the 21 21 district sees fit? BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Well, I 22 22 just want to make sure I understand. A. It's what it says. 23 23 What's the basis of that -- of your O. Okay. 24 <sup>24</sup> perspective or opinion on that? Because I MR. DEGAN: Thank you. No <sup>25</sup> further questions. 25 mean, it appears as if the district has to be Page 254 Page 255 <sup>1</sup> able to make some determination that it's not not beneficial because it's not really getting <sup>2</sup> being beneficially used for irrigation of used for the purpose it was intended for. 3 3 crops. And so, yeah, that -- in that case. But 4 So it can't be for just any reason; right? we haven't seen that. <sup>5</sup> They have to make some type of determination And so if -- you know, it's getting put on 6 that it's not being used for irrigation the land for irrigation. It's beneficially purposes for crops? used according to the water right. THE WITNESS: Correct. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: But BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Right? that -- okay. So I want to clarify now because 10 So they can't just arbitrarily say, hey, I that seems like there's two different answers <sup>11</sup> don't think you're using this well in general; because the one I asked is, even though the 12 right? I mean, can -- I mean --<sup>12</sup> customer's using it beneficially, you indicated 13 13 to me with a 10-year notice that Central could THE WITNESS: Generally. I 14 mean, you're going to -- this gets into a lot 14 cancel. 15 of what-ifs. 15 And I think what you told the vice chair I mean, we're really dealing with water 16 just now is that if it's being beneficially 17 coming down -- coming down the canal, going to used, it couldn't. So I'm a little confused. 18 18 a farm field, to an ag field, to raise corn. THE WITNESS: There's two 19 19 options there. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Right. 20 20 THE WITNESS: And it -- you So let's, for example, say that we have a 21 know, if for whatever reason they, speaking customer who doesn't ever pay. Okay? And that very hypothetically, didn't put any of it out 22 would have nothing to do with the beneficial 23 23 there for five years and it just ran into the use. You know, if we're not paying and we're <sup>24</sup> ditch, you know, maybe -- maybe people would doing all kinds of service and we say, look, come to the board and go, hey, this is really 25 this is a customer -- and I don't know that

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1	Central's ever done this. I actually asked. I	1	that did you have a followup question?
2	don't think they have that they could	2	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: No. Go
3	terminate that, you know.	3	ahead.
4	And then the other one is what the	4	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: That
5	beneficial use question. So it could be one or	5	gives the 10-year notice provision. And what
6	the other.	6	I'm getting at and I think you answered,
7		7	though is the basis upon which the district
8	TILIMING OFFICER TEXELS. ORay.	8	can do it.
9	So if a if a customer who pays hasn't otherwise breached the contract and is	9	You're saying if they give the 10 years'
10		10	notice under No. 4, under No. 7, they can do it
11	beneficially using the water, would the	11	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
12	district have authority with 10 years' notice	12	even though the customer hasn't breached and
13	to the the contract for water use.	13	they're beneficially using the water,
	THE WITNESS: They could under	14	technically?
15	this contract. Under this one.		THE WITNESS: That's that's
	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	15	the way I read it.
16	Chay.	16	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
17	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: What	17	Okay. I just want to clarify that. Thank you.
18	provision would provide that, just authority to	18	MR. BRASHEAR: I just have one
19	do that? Are you looking at Section 4, the	19	redirect.
20	term?	20	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.
21	MR. DEGAN: Yes.	21	REDIRECT EXAMINATION
22	THE WITNESS: Yeah, I have to	22	BY MR. BRASHEAR:
23	take off my glasses to read this.	23	Q. I believe just one redirect.
24	Yes, under the term, item 4.	24	Mr. Dicke, is Exhibit 34 that we've
25	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Well, in		been you've been discussing with counsel and
1	the board, that's a current agreement of	1	Any further questions by the board or the chair
2	Central; is that correct?	2	or Ms. Peck?
3		3	Okay. They're indicating no on the WebEx.
4	agreement.	4	I don't see any from here. So I think that's
5	Q. But it's the agreement Central would	5	it for Mr. Dicke.
6	use with a new customer on the Phelps Canal	6	Thank you very much.
7	today?	7	THE WITNESS: Thank you.
8	A. Yes, that's correct.	8	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Who's
9		9	your next witness, Mr. Brashear?
10	will be the agreement if Platte River Public	10	MR. BRASHEAR: We will call
	Power and Irrigation District exists?	11	Devin Brundage.
12		12	Hearing Officer Mr. Texel, would it be
13	·	13	open to a break perhaps before we start
	would ultimately decide what agreement would be	1	1 -
14	would diffinately decide what agreement would be	14	HVIF. Brundage? That may be
14 15	brought in. But all these agreements are going	14 15	Mr. Brundage? That may be HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine
	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.		HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine
15	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.  Q. It's your but these are rights and	15	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine with that. Let's take a short break.
15 16	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.  Q. It's your but these are rights and obligations of Central today; is that correct?	15 16	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine with that. Let's take a short break.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten minutes?
15 16 17	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.  Q. It's your but these are rights and obligations of Central today; is that correct?  A. That's correct, yes.	15 16 17 18	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine with that. Let's take a short break.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten minutes?  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Five to
15 16 17 18 19	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.  Q. It's your but these are rights and obligations of Central today; is that correct?  A. That's correct, yes.  Q. And you don't do you have any	15 16 17 18 19	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine with that. Let's take a short break.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten minutes?  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Five to ten minutes.
15 16 17 18 19 20	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.  Q. It's your but these are rights and obligations of Central today; is that correct?  A. That's correct, yes.  Q. And you don't do you have any reason to believe those will be different with	15 16 17 18 19 20	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine with that. Let's take a short break.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten minutes?  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Five to ten minutes.  MR. DEGAN: Ten.
15 16 17 18 19 20 21	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.  Q. It's your but these are rights and obligations of Central today; is that correct?  A. That's correct, yes.  Q. And you don't do you have any reason to believe those will be different with Platte River Public Power?	15 16 17 18 19 20 21	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine with that. Let's take a short break.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten minutes?  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Five to ten minutes.  MR. DEGAN: Ten.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten.
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.  Q. It's your but these are rights and obligations of Central today; is that correct?  A. That's correct, yes.  Q. And you don't do you have any reason to believe those will be different with Platte River Public Power?  A. No.	15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine with that. Let's take a short break.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten minutes?  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Five to ten minutes.  MR. DEGAN: Ten.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten.  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: We'll do
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.  Q. It's your but these are rights and obligations of Central today; is that correct?  A. That's correct, yes.  Q. And you don't do you have any reason to believe those will be different with Platte River Public Power?  A. No.  MR. BRASHEAR: No further	15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine with that. Let's take a short break.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten minutes?  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Five to ten minutes.  MR. DEGAN: Ten.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten.  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: We'll do ten minutes. That sounds fine. We'll
15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	brought in. But all these agreements are going to carry on because the contracts were made.  Q. It's your but these are rights and obligations of Central today; is that correct?  A. That's correct, yes.  Q. And you don't do you have any reason to believe those will be different with Platte River Public Power?  A. No.	15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm fine with that. Let's take a short break.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten minutes?  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Five to ten minutes.  MR. DEGAN: Ten.  MR. BRASHEAR: Ten.  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: We'll do

Page 260 Page 261 (At 3:14 p.m., with parties present as DIRECT EXAMINATION before, the following proceedings were had:) BY MR. BRASHEAR: 3 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Let's go 3 Q. Mr. Brundage, good afternoon. 4 back on the record. A. Good afternoon. 5 And I think we had just --Q. Where did you grow up? 6 MR. BRASHEAR: We'll call A. I grew up small farm west of Cairo, 7 Nebraska. Mr. Brundage --8 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Mr. Q. Cairo? 9 A. Cairo, Cairo. Brundage. 10 10 MR. BRASHEAR: -- as the next O. Cairo. 11 11 witness. A. Your choice. 12 12 DEVIN BRUNDAGE, Q. I'll go with yours. 13 Called as a witness on behalf of CNPPID, being And where is that -- what county is that 14 first duly sworn, was examined and testified as located in? 15 15 follows: A. It's located in Hall County. I lived 16 16 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. on a small dryland farm in my youth. <sup>17</sup> Could you state your name, spell it and give Q. And you graduated from --18 your address. A. I graduated from Centura High School. 19 19 THE WITNESS: My name is Devin Q. And then after that, you matriculated Brundage, D-E-V-I-N, B-R-U-N-D-A-G-E, 1615 20 to where? 21 21 Avenue F, Gothenburg, Nebraska. A. From there went to Hastings College 22 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: All to study physics for a while and then the right. Mr. Brashear. University of Nebraska-Lincoln and received a 24 /// engineering -- electrical engineering degree. 25 Q. And do you have further degrees Page 262 Page 263 <sup>1</sup>|beyond your electrical engineering degree? superintendent, assistant division manager, A. No, I do not. division manager, and then a general manager. 3 Q. What division were you involved with Q. Do you have other training or <sup>4</sup> certification that you've done since graduating in the division manager position? with your electrical engineering degree? A. In the division manager position, it A. Industry trade-type stuff. But was a position that oversaw the infrastructure and production of hydro from Lake McConaughy nothing -- nothing relevant really. down to Lexington. Though, we, being a small Q. Okay. What is your relationship to 9 company, overlapped a lot. And we did work Central? 10 10 throughout the district for automation controls A. I am Central's general manager. 11 and engineering. Q. And so you're an employee of Central? 12 12 Q. So you worked with the hydro A. Yes, I am. 13 13 Q. How long have you been employed by generation -- power generation side? 14 the district? A. We worked throughout the district. 15 <sup>15</sup> But, yes, primarily in that arena. A. I've been employed with the district <sup>16</sup> for over 30 years. Q. Have you had duties -- before general 17 17 manager, have you had duties related to the Q. And you're general manager today? 18 18 A. Yes, I am. irrigation or irrigation delivery side -- side 19 19 of Central? Q. How long have you been general 20 20 A. With respect to some of the manager? automation, the algorithms, conservation A. I've been general manager for a 22 methods that we could develop to help us do a little over four years. 23 23 Q. And what positions did you hold with good job with our water resources to some 24 extent in that capacity, yes. the district before that? Q. What are your duties as general A. Was an engineer, a electrical

Page 267

<sup>1</sup> manager?

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A. As a general manager, I am here to <sup>3</sup> help our board execute the mission and vision <sup>4</sup> of our district and to really kind of work with <sup>5</sup> them to develop the strategies that will make <sup>6</sup> sure that we are fulfilling our obligation as a public power and irrigation district to -- to 8 our customers, to our constituents and to the public and to the State of Nebraska.

- Q. Do you report to the board directly?
- A. Yes, I do.

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Q. What is the mission of Central as you 13 understand it?

A. Our mission is that of a public power and irrigation district, to be all that we can be for the people that we serve, providing surface water irrigation, power generation, the recreational opportunities, enhancements to our <sup>19</sup> environment, economic development 20 opportunities.

It's a very multi-beneficial district. 22 And as you look back to our formation, I think there was a lot to be said for the vision that <sup>24</sup> George Norris and George Johnson had in <sup>25</sup> creating this district.

Page 266 Q. You made a mention a moment ago to <sup>2</sup> George Norris, U.S. Senator George Norris that most Nebraskans know. Is that who you're <sup>4</sup> referring to?

- A. That is correct. That is correct.
- O. You also made mention to George <sup>7</sup> Johnson. Who is George Johnson?
  - A. George Johnson was an engineer. Again, urban legend says he held multiple engineering degrees.

But I think he was Nebraska's state engineer for a number of years, assisted in the construction of the Capitol, a very smart <sup>14</sup> individual and was really the architect of our district.

16 When he worked with our founding board, McConaughy, Kingsley and those folks, he was the guy that said, hey, I understand your plight, come with me, I've got something for 20 you.

- Q. Are you -- you familiar with the <sup>22</sup> history of Central?
  - A. Yes, I am.
- 24 Q. How would you say the mission of <sup>25</sup> Central has remained the same and how has it

Page 265 It was all about making sure that these <sup>2</sup> resources could be maximized for the benefit of the people of central Nebraska.

And even then, I think the vision was even maybe more grandiose than we believe as we -- I think you heard testimony earlier, we provided transmission services. We were part of the transmission entity in the state.

We had a vested interest in a coal-fired plant in Bellevue, Nebraska, of all places.

As you read our original charter, our district was the product of these folks' vision that we could take these resources and build something for the people of this state that could go -- go on and provide opportunities for prosperity where some just saw a problem.

Some just saw a problem that there wasn't enough water on the ground. And that could have easily been solved with a diversion structure and diverting some water.

When you have vision, you say, no, I can go beyond that, we can set ourselves up for success and set our citizens up for success for the long term by -- by taking a little bit step back and a grander view of what we can be.

changed over its time?

A. Yeah, I think I just alluded to the fact that, you know, we existed as this entity that was part of the transmission system, generating energy with coal and hydro.

And over time, you have to make sure that you are providing the maximum value. And so, yeah, recreation was not a thing in 1940. I think it was probably safe to say that people were more concerned about eating and going to work and coming home and repeating. Recreation 12 became a thing.

In 1940, oddly enough, groundwater <sup>14</sup> irrigation was unknown. Surface water irrigation was the only way to provide water to crops. If -- if they had the technology in 1930, folks in south central Nebraska would have punched holes in the ground and began pumping water. They did not. Today we have that option.

So the mission of groundwater recharge really became evident as the district evolved and what was referred to as this nuisance drainage water that caused people issues with 25 their basements turned into a valuable

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Page 268 Page 269 <sup>1</sup> commodity that we could work with everybody territory in Adams, Phelps and Kearney <sup>2</sup> throughout the region on to provide Counties. 3 <sup>3</sup> opportunities for irrigation customers on every And today our charter contains Phelps, <sup>4</sup> part of the reach of the river from Lake Kearney and Gosper Counties as chartered <sup>5</sup> McConaughy to Minden. territories. O. You described a pretty broad mission O. And from the chartered territories. <sup>7</sup> as you talked about it now. Would you -- would we've heard testimony today regarding three <sup>8</sup> you say the board shares the understanding of directors being elected from each of the that mission generally? chartered territory counties? 10 10 A. Absolutely. I force our board chair A. That is correct. 11 11 to read it every -- every board meeting. O. Did -- how does Central -- let me ask Q. To -- what do you mean by "it"? the question, how does Central currently --13 A. Our mission statement. does Central subdivide its territory today? 14 14 Q. And those concepts are articulated in A. Are you speaking with respect to --15 15 Q. Does it elect directors at large, or the mission statement of Central? 16 16 A. Yes, they are. does it elect them by districts? 17 17 Q. With regard to the board, how is A. They are elected on a geographical Central governed today? 18 basis by county lines. 19 19 A. Today our board is governed by 12 Q. So each county is its own 20 20 board members elected from 6 counties. subdivision? 21 21 Q. Okay. And how many -- is there a A. That is correct. 22 22 chartered territory of Central? Q. So from Furnas -- or, I'm sorry, from 23 A. There is a current chartered Gosper, Phelps and Kearney County, there are <sup>24</sup> territory. That has changed over time. three directors elected from each? 25 The original charter was chartered A. From each, that is correct. Page 270 Page 271 1 O. And that area is sometimes referred A. That is correct. 2 <sup>2</sup> to as the Tri Basin counties? Q. Do you have any idea of how many 3 A. Tri -- it's colloquially called voters there are in Central today? Tri County. A. Actually, I think in doing some I'm not sure if Adams, Phelps and Kearney research, I think we're in that 85,000-person <sup>6</sup> weren't the original Tri County. But neither range perhaps. here nor there. Yeah, that it is the --Q. Do you have any idea of how many what's -- it's referred to by some. irrigation customers Central has today? Q. And so you said there's a 12-member A. Today Central has accounts for 1,100, board. There are nine coming from the three approximately 1,100 accounts. 11 chartered territory counties? O. Can individuals own more than one 12 12 A. That's correct. account? 13 13 Q. Where do the other three come from? A. They can. 14 14 A. From Lincoln, Dawson and Keith Q. Okay. 15 15 Counties. A. So it is likely less than 1,100 16 16 O. One from each? people. 17 17 A. One from each. Q. Okay. Mr. Brundage, I'd like you 18 Q. Are directors of Central popularly 18 to -- we'll give you Exhibit 36. 19 19 elected? Mr. Brundage, are you familiar with this 20 20 A. They are elected at the general exhibit?

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A. Yes, I am.

O. And is this exhibit captioned revenue

Q. And would you describe what -- what

sources and bears the Central logo?

A. Yes, it is. And, yes, it does.

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counties.

<sup>25</sup> director slot?

elections, correct, by all voters within those

county, that subdivision, can vote for that

Q. So any registered voter within that

lot of water today. And I know that. So I'll Page 272 <sup>1</sup> this exhibit -- your understanding of this <sup>2</sup> exhibit and what it's communicating? <sup>2</sup> do everything I can to help you talk about some A. This is a graph our finance officers more of these water pieces. They are --<sup>4</sup> put together that depicts the general revenue they're very intricate. And there's a lot of <sup>5</sup> sources from the district from the year 2000 to detail to it. So, by all means, any questions year 2022. that go along with that. 7 Q. And how many revenue sources are So intentional recharge agreements. So we depicted on this exhibit? talked about you put water on the ground. Some A. On this exhibit, there's four revenue of it seeps into the aquifer. And some of it 10 sources, hydro generation, irrigation seeps out of the canals. And it bolters the <sup>11</sup> deliveries. They call it lot fees. That is 11 aquifer, brings the aquifer up. 12 leasehold interests around our regulating 12 We can do that sometimes intentionally. <sup>13</sup> reservoirs for recreational interests. So they 13 Now, there's requirements in the river that say <sup>14</sup> pay a lease for those -- the ability to have a you must have this much in there. But <sup>15</sup> cabin right on the water's edge. sometimes there's more in the river -- you were 16 And then the final one is recharge or -all around in 2019 when the huge floods came. <sup>17</sup> they call it miscellaneous irrigation. Really, Gee, wouldn't it be good if we could take some 18 it is intentional, purposeful recharge of that extra water and beneficially put it in contracts, agreements. the ground ahead of time for future use. That 20 20 helps us long term manage the resources better. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: What --21 what does that mean, recharge agreements? So we've developed these over time. You THE WITNESS: Okay. can see that they really only started back in 23 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I'm not the mid 2000s. We continue to innovate and <sup>24</sup> sure what that entails. find ways to make our water supply more sustainable. Intentional recharge agreements THE WITNESS: You've gotten a Page 274 Page 275 1 are one of those tools. in the 1940s. And so the ability to come up with the Today we have the ability to step back and <sup>3</sup> ability to work with our partners up and down say, hey, we understand today how water works 4 the stream to put water back into the aquifer much better than we did before, let's -- let's <sup>5</sup> is good for everybody. And so we -- we entered capitalize on that and work together for the 6 into those agreements. benefit. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Who pays So the question who pays, so we have just signed, I think, was probably the largest you for the recharge agreement? THE WITNESS: So currently -recharge agreement and longest because we've and I'll just talk about right now because I proven this works with the State of Nebraska 11 think -and with the Platte River Recovery Program, the 12 12 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I may be same folks that ensure the habitat piece under 13 jumping ahead. But I want to follow this 13 our FERC license. So they are helping us put 14 stuff. 14 water back in the ground and to recharge that 15 BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: I have 15 aguifer. 16 16 the same question. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Is the 17 17 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. Platte River Recovery -- what was it? 18 18 THE WITNESS: So this is -- this THE WITNESS: Program. 19 kind of -- I'll call it, this 15-year period 19 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Program, 20 20 has really been, I think, us getting our feet is that part of state or run by the state? 21 on the ground, around -- our head around some 21 THE WITNESS: That is an 22 of these concepts. 22 organization that is sanctioned by Colorado, 23 23 Great aside that Mr. Brashear talked about Wyoming, the Bureau of Reclamation --24 has your mission changed over time, that wasn't 24 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 25 25 contemplated that you would do things like this THE WITNESS: -- Fish and

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Page 280 Page 281 If I am depleting my aquifer too much, I the Republican, which, again, flows back into <sup>2</sup> have to put restrictions and controls on my the Republican Compact. groundwater pumping. But I've -- I've digressed to some extent. <sup>4</sup> But I think it's important to note that when If I can come up with a method to make <sup>5</sup> vou think about those historic agreements with sure that I am keeping up my aquifer <sup>6</sup> the Platte program, you're saying to yourself, adequately, providing opportunities to put <sup>7</sup> well, they're -- they're paying some of your water back in the ground, I can continue to 8 costs to put water on the ground in your pump water from my groundwater irrigation 9 irrigation area in the off-season to what end? wells. 10 10 Well, the end and on this -- this chart, So does that just mean underneath my -- my 11 you can see that that big purply splotch -- and area where I'm putting water on the ground? 12 it's not even drawn big enough there, I'll tell No, it does not. It helps everybody. 13 you that. It extends further. Those impacts And so when you see the big purple of putting water in the ground result in return 14 splotch -- and this is -- this is coming 15 flows. 15 completely back around to the question of the 16 marriage of water and power and the beauty that And those return flows are water that flow <sup>17</sup> I think our forefathers saw. back into the river. And the Platte program 18 says that's a good thing. Base flows, water Central Platte NRD is one of the folks 19 that flows back into the river after being put that is continuing to help pay through the <sup>20</sup> in the ground, beneficial use for the habitat. 20 state for recharge. 21 21 The State of Nebraska, the NRDs, they are Where does Central Platte NRD operate? <sup>22</sup> interested in putting water in the ground to Well, they operate in Dawson and Buffalo 23 mitigate those depletions so that groundwater Counties and further east. 24 pumping -- and this is -- this is an important Why are those folks interested in putting <sup>25</sup> point -- groundwater pumping can go on. 25 water in a mound on the other side of the Page 283 Page 282 <sup>1</sup> river? It provides certainty that that MS. KREIFELS: Exhibit 36. 37. 2 <sup>2</sup> groundwater recharge affects the entire area MR. BRASHEAR: Yeah, 37. <sup>3</sup> and they can continue to pump water well into 3 BY MR. BRASHEAR: 4 the future. Q. We'll get that --5 Does that impact a Dawson customer that is A. I'll apologize. We're on 36. 6 pumping groundwater out of the ground? Do they 6 Q. We're going to come back to this. 7 7 have a vested interest in making sure that A. Okay. multitudes, quantities, sufficient quantities 8 Q. You were talking about --9 and as much water as you can gets applied to HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So are the mound? They absolutely do. 40 percent of 10 we switching to 37? their load is irrigation load. 11 MR. BRASHEAR: Yes. 12 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: When you 12 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Exhibit 13 13 37? talk about the --14 14 THE WITNESS: Sorry. MR. BRASHEAR: Yes. 15 15 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -- big HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. purply splotch, which exhibit is that? <sup>16</sup>BY MR. BRASHEAR: 17 17 MS. KREIFELS: 43 -- no. 21. Q. So Exhibit 37, Mr. Brundage, what's 18 18 that labeled? MR. BRASHEAR: Page --19 19 MS. KREIFELS: Page 16 of A. This is the groundwater-level change 20 map. And it's labeled predevelopment to the Exhibit 21. 21 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. spring of 2021. So --22 Q. Is this helpful to the discussion you MR. BRASHEAR: Actually, not to 23 <sup>23</sup> interrupt, but, Mr. Brundage, I'm wondering, were just having? <sup>24</sup> let's look at Exhibit 37 because I believe that 24 A. I think it can be. 25 is what you're kind of referring to. 25 If you -- you heard testimony earlier

Page 285 Page 284 <sup>1</sup> about the big blue spot on the university map. NPPD's system near Sutherland and <sup>2</sup> North Platte, Lake Maloney, those provide <sup>2</sup> If you look on the middle of the area down <sup>3</sup> there towards the bottom, you'll see the big that -- part of that green splotch. <sup>4</sup> blue splotch. That water from Lake McConaughy is <sup>5</sup> recharging that area from McConaughy to That is a change in groundwater elevation 6 from -- when they say predevelopment, what they <sup>6</sup> Lexington every day of the week. Every day <sup>7</sup> mean is before our districts, before there was that there's water in that system producing 8 development on the river until today, electricity -- and we run 365 days a year --<sup>9</sup> basically. it's providing that recharge benefit, even in 10 10 And you see, you know, 60-, 70-, 80-, in that area. 11 some places in Gosper County maybe as much as The fact that it is there and the fact <sup>12</sup> 100-foot rise in that groundwater elevation. 12 that it operates provides those benefits. 13 <sup>13</sup> That's a lot of water, my estimation's maybe as Hopefully that is helpful to understanding 14 14 much as 2 million acre-feet, the amount of the concept of that recharge in the groundwater water that's held in Lake McConaughy above 15 mound a little bit. 16 ground, but a huge benefit to providing, again, MR. BRASHEAR: If there are <sup>17</sup> these offsets for environmental flows, these 17 other questions, I don't -- just on this line, 18 offsets for groundwater pumpers. 18 but, otherwise --19 And it isn't just there. You look HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I don't <sup>20</sup> upstream a little bit, you see some nice dark 20 have any more. 21 green spots as well. Those are the areas where BOARD MEMBER MOEN: I just have that water is transmitted from Lake McConaughy <sup>22</sup> a question. Earlier we heard there's no money <sup>23</sup> through those canals, through those hydros. involved for recharge. But here we're <sup>24</sup> They leak out of the lakes just as well as they showing -- is that there was no contracts to leak out of the canals and the irrigated area. <sup>25</sup> farm end users surface water? Page 286 Page 287 THE WITNESS: I think maybe The Platte River Program is the umbrella <sup>2</sup> the -- maybe the -- just discernment is between that, under the guidance of all of those board <sup>3</sup> an individual groundwater pumper as opposed to members from throughout those organizations, 4 4 a state. make those decisions. 5 5 BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Okay. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So I think it's great that Central is able to do all THE WITNESS: Or something along those lines. those things today. BOARD MEMBER MOEN: Okay. 8 I guess the question that we have before 9 us is, does this merger allow you to do that MR. BRASHEAR: I'm sorry. 10 10 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So the better? <sup>11</sup> Platte River Recovery Program --11 THE WITNESS: I think it does. 12 12 THE WITNESS: Yes. BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: How so? 13 13 THE WITNESS: So within the --BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: -- is 14 so you just heard that question how does -- how 14 the entity -- or a main entity that's paying; 15 does these people that pump groundwater is that what I understood you to say? 16 benefit. THE WITNESS: So they are -- it <sup>17</sup> gets a little complicated. You have all of 17 You know, when those people are your 18 customers and the ability to help them help you 18 these Colorado and Wyoming and Nebraska <sup>19</sup> participating in this. And there's monies that 19 manage the water resource, it becomes a 20 flow from the federal government, from the 20 potent -- a potent thing that you can really 21 apply. 21 state governments into the organization to do things, like, habitat restoration but, also, to 22 You've heard -- probably heard about the <sup>23</sup> provide for some water. And so that -- that 23 South Platte Canal and Reservoir Project. <sup>24</sup> ability for them to help us recharge is part <sup>24</sup> Perkins -- sorry, I'll say it like you hear it <sup>25</sup> of -- part of that mission. <sup>25</sup> in the news, Perkins County Canal.

BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay. Page 289 THE WITNESS: -- you see -- you <sup>2</sup> Yes. <sup>2</sup> see not a lot of change, pretty flat and 3 THE WITNESS: Big project. Very 3 steady. 4 4 important to water. Central's been a But you -- on this map over here, you see <sup>5</sup> participant in the focus group for many years, irrigation going on. You see a lot of 6 trying to help push along this -- this -- this irrigation going on, more acres probably than <sup>7</sup> program, when you have your organization with Central serves with water out of Lake 8 your folks, your new customers that are part of 8 McConaughy. <sup>9</sup> that conversation saying, no, that is a good 9 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And this 10 thing, that is good for us, more water 10 map over here is page 16 of Exhibit 21? 11 sustainability is good for me as a groundwater 11 THE WITNESS: That's correct. 12 pumper and then you open up doors to say what 12 MR. BRASHEAR: Correct. 13 <sup>13</sup> else can I do for -- for water sustainability. THE WITNESS: That's correct. 14 What if I have a customer -- and let's So as we think about that, you're saying 15 look at your -- this will get into the weeds a 15 to yourself, well, why no big mound, why no big 16 blue splotch over there, they've been operating little bit. If you want me to stop, just say 17 so. <sup>17</sup> just as long, if not longer, than Central has 18 But as you look at this groundwater map, been, why is there no big groundwater rise over 19 you see up here above the Platte River -there. 20 20 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Exhibit Well, the fact of the matter is it's 21 21 37? geology. Central's system is built up clear on 22 THE WITNESS: I'm sorry, on this plateau another step above. 23 Exhibit 37. If you look at the area above the These other canals lie kind of in the 24 Platte River -valley, valley bed. And their geology below 25 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Yes. 25 them allows that water to hit the gravels and Page 290 Page 291 <sup>1</sup> sands and returned right back to the river. in those very driest of years be able to use <sup>2</sup> Can't build -- can't build a mountain out of that water, that would allow us to continue to <sup>3</sup> wet sand. It spreads out. It goes back to the <sup>3</sup> have enough water year after year after year to <sup>4</sup> river. provide that water down to south central So when I think about innovative ways that <sup>5</sup> Nebraska where it will continue to recharge the 6 our districts can work together, when it's -aguifer. <sup>7</sup> when there's times of drought -- and you've Is there a day when you have the 8 heard testimony today about times of drought thousand-year drought and you have to work with <sup>9</sup> and our customers allocating, being allocated, folks to make sure that there's adequate 10 not being able to receive an allotment of 10 irrigation for all? Sure. 11 <sup>11</sup> water, the -- let's step back for a second and But in the short term, I think you've 12 think about that. 12 improved your ability to manage the water 13 resource by incredible factors when you can get Did -- did any of the other canals receive <sup>14</sup> an allocation of water? The answer is no. producers to partner with you to make sure that 15 If you had it in your best interest to do there's adequate water supplies for years to 16 the very best job that you could with that come and make sure that you're bringing that water, you would work with producers to say 17 water through the most hydros that you can on 18 vou're in an area where you can't really affect 18 the way to put it in the very best place that 19 the mound, would you be willing to work with us 19 you can, south central Nebraska where you can 20 <sup>20</sup> if I come up with a conjunctive management -store it underground. 21 <sup>21</sup> and I'm going to use more words than you want BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So let 22 to use -- but a -- a program where you can be 22 me summarize really quickly what I heard you 23 <sup>23</sup> part of the solution to ensure that we have a say. I heard you say that there's <sup>24</sup> sustainable amount of water, if I were to let <sup>24</sup> opportunities to collaborate with the -- the vou tap into that aquifer that we maintain and <sup>25</sup> darker purple in the middle irrigation district

Page 292 <sup>1</sup> and those customers that are water customers; water when there's plenty. In 2019, let's get <sup>2</sup> right? <sup>2</sup> everybody and their brother putting water on 3 THE WITNESS: Correct. the ground because that's helpful to everyone. And when it's 2006 and there's not much, would BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: For <sup>5</sup> them to cooperate -- coordinate with the you be a partner with me and we'll switch you over to groundwater. Central water customers? 7 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: It THE WITNESS: Correct. 8 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: But appears to me as if you're making an argument <sup>9</sup> that's not what this merger is doing; right? that there's a benefit of irrigation districts <sup>10</sup> You're not merging with that irrigation cooperating together. 11 district. You're merging with the entity that I don't hear you making an argument for provides electricity to them. 12 how the electric service that's being provided 13 So explain that to me because that's what to those same -- if there's a benefit of 14 we're approving. combining that electric service with your water 15 15 THE WITNESS: Right. So I'm service. 16 16 merging with that company that provides THE WITNESS: So the benefit <sup>17</sup> electricity that will help pump water out of <sup>17</sup> from the financial side -- and that's what 18 the ground or pump water out of that canal. we'll get into next -- is using -- and we can Central is all about water and irrigation talk a lot about the ability to use the hydro <sup>20</sup> and water management. to shave peak on the customers, new 21 21 distribution customers. The ability to sit down with those <sup>22</sup> customers in a -- in a way to provide 22 And that's a financial advantage. That's <sup>23</sup> incentives for them to say, hey, yeah, that what the -- the study was -- was really focused <sup>24</sup> would be a -- that would be a great deal for me on making sure that we understood how those two 25 if you set me up with a way to use the surface would work together. Page 294 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Do you So the generation would go and replace --<sup>2</sup> I think you've heard other people talk about think that there's a benefit -- you -- you're <sup>3</sup> replacing those most expensive megawatts at the making an argument that the water cost is going to decrease. Do you think the water cost is <sup>4</sup> right time of the day, and that is a financial <sup>5</sup> advantage and savings. That reduces costs for going to decrease so there's a benefit to the <sup>6</sup> everybody. 6 electric customers, will that be seen in lower You've got four lines on the graph. If I electricity costs? Or for the water rates? 8 can improve any of them or create new ones --8 THE WITNESS: So as -- as 9 they've -- as the study would indicate, as you <sup>9</sup> the costs are fixed; right? McConaughy's a big thing. It's very expensive. That's the 10 look at it, using the generation -- that's a 11 resource that Central has today -- against the 11 largest -- at one time, it was the largest 12 hydraulic-filled dam in the world. They're not <sup>12</sup> energy load can be looked at as two parts. 13 13 cheap to maintain. So the first part is what didn't I get by 14 14 selling it; right? So I could sell it like And as we find customers, stakeholders, 15 you know, even now leaseholders, groundwater <sup>15</sup> PPA, like Central started doing in the '90s. rechargers, everybody that participates helps <sup>16</sup> Prior to that, you know, we -- those hydro lower the cost because we are public power and plants really were serving those customers; 18 irrigation, the lowest cost, making sure that 18 right? Because it was a different time, we're not doing any more than we have to to 19 different area -- era. We were -- we were part 20 <sup>20</sup> make sure that the rates are low. of the grid. We were serving that load. 21 Today it changed. What if I could use When I keep the rates low for the water, <sup>22</sup> customers want to keep using the water. As 22 that generation with those customers. If I use 23 it with those customers, there's a portion of 23 they keep using the water, you bring the water <sup>24</sup> into the neighborhood, you continue to 24 it that I didn't get to sell. recharge. It benefits everyone. 25 So that was, in the study, indicated as a

Page 296 Page 297 <sup>1</sup> chunk of money that you'd have to say this is delivery, lot fees, recharge, miscellaneous are <sup>2</sup> for hydro irrigation benefit. fairly steady or constant across as long as And then on top of that, there's the they're on that chart? <sup>4</sup> savings by chart -- carving off those very most 4 A. Irrigation and recreational fees for 5 <sup>5</sup> expensive megawatts and they said, well, here's sure. 6 6 an allocation method you could use to say some The recharge is really a function of these 7 of that money goes to saving energy payers' kind of target flows in the river, so somewhat money and saving water users' money. more variable and erratic. Hopefully able to HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: What continue to work on that. 10 10 study are you referring to? Q. What is the primary source of revenue 11 11 THE WITNESS: The PSE study. that this chart indicates for Central? 12 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: PSE 12 A. I'm sorry, sir? 13 study. O. No. For Central. 14 14 MR. BRASHEAR: Which we'll get A. Our primary revenue source is hydro 15 15 to in a minute. generation. 16 16 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I assume Q. And that's revenue derived from sale 17 that's what was meant. Okay. of power produced at the four hydro plants --18 18 MR. BRASHEAR: Okay. A. That's correct. 19 BY MR. BRASHEAR: O. -- for Central? 20 20 Q. So, Mr. Brundage, I'd like to return A. That is correct. 21 21 to Exhibit 36 --Q. Would you --22 22 A. Yes. A. I'll qualify that. There is a 23 23 O. -- as we talk about the revenue different contract for the Kingsley unit which <sup>24</sup> sources. And would you agree, sir, with my -really doesn't result in appreciable revenue. 25 at least characterization of irrigation O. I know there were questions about Page 299 Page 298 A. Jeffrey is a 20-megawatt unit, this earlier. So let's just briefly, so what 2 <sup>2</sup> is the capacity of the Kingsley unit? average -- approximately. 3 A. Approximately 50 megawatts. O. And is that contract -- is that power Q. And who is that power -- is that sold to someone? 5 <sup>5</sup> power sold to another entity? A. It's currently under contract with 6 Evergy. A. That power is under contract with the 7 Q. And Johnson 1, what's the capacity of Nebraska Public Power District for what is 8 termed in the contract the life of the plant. that plant? 9 O. And is there -- what revenue does A. Again, approximately 20. 10 Central receive off of that? O. And is that being sold to someone? 11 A. Also under contract to Evergy. A. There's a fraction that is part of 12 the revenue that is -- that there's two parts 12 Q. What about Johnson 2? 13 to that. It gets into a lot of accounting A. Johnson 2, I'm just going to make it 14 seem a little nicer, 20 -- about 21 megawatts, stuff that I'd have to qualify my FC0 to come 15 so -- and it's also under contract to Evergy. talk about. But in general it's a small piece. But the contract lays out that NPPD takes 16 Q. Are Jeffrey, Johnson 1 and Johnson 2 17 17 care of the O and M costs associated with the under the same contract? 18 18 facility. A. Yes, they are. 19 19 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I want Q. So is it characterized as a Cost of to clarify one thing. For Evergy, is that just Service Agreement? like energy with a V instead of an N? A. That basically is correct. 22 22 Q. So Kingsley power goes to NPPD? THE WITNESS: Yes. 23 23 A. Yes. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: For the 24 24 spelling. Q. For Jeffrey -- what's the capacity of 25 <sup>25</sup> Jeffrey? THE WITNESS: E-V --

Page 300 Page 301 <sup>1</sup> E-V-E-R-G-Y. A. No. It is a Power Purchase Agreement <sup>2</sup> with an investor-owned utility. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Yep, I'm <sup>3</sup> sorry, yeah, Evergy --Q. So as this chart depicts the revenue <sup>4</sup> from hydro generation over time, do you have an THE WITNESS: Yeah. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: -idea of how much of that hydro generation 6 instead of energy. Okay. revenue would be from Kingsley versus how much THE WITNESS: When the PPA was from the PPAs? 8 8 signed, it was actually with Kansas City Power A. It's safe to say that that blue line <sup>9</sup> and Light. And on Westar and KCP and L's is most all of the Jeffrey, Johnson and Johnson 10 <sup>10</sup> merger, it became Evergy. energy. 11 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Well, Q. Would it be a fair characterization <sup>12</sup> and all I'm getting at now is I want to get the 12 to say that the hydro generation line on this 13 <sup>13</sup> correct spelling for the company for the court chart is not consistent? 14 <sup>14</sup> reporter. Evergy. Okay. A. It appears not to be. 15 BY MR. BRASHEAR: 15 Q. Do you have a insight into the 16 16 variations in that line? Q. So, Mr. Brundage, my understanding <sup>17</sup> your testimony there's approximately 110 17 Let's focus just for purposes from 2008 to megawatts of hydropower generation for Central? 2022. Do you have an insight into the 19 A. Approximately. fluctuation or an understanding of why it is? 20 20 O. And Exhibit 36 reflects the revenue A. Yes. So the PPA is a mechanism by 21 21 from that generation? which we turn that energy into revenue. And A. That is correct. the amount of water you have creates the amount 23 Q. You indicated the NPPD agreement is of energy you produce. And that produces the 24 <sup>24</sup> for cost of service. The Evergy contract is revenue. 25 not, I'm assuming? 25 So in the 2000s timeframe, you see a large Page 303 Page 302 You have multiple entities flowing water <sup>1</sup> dip in the revenue, not a lot of water. I <sup>2</sup> out. We're trying to maximize the beneficial <sup>2</sup> think you've heard testimony to the allocation use of that water at every turn. of customers because there just wasn't much. 4 We have two engineers that schedule, you That was the same period of time when, you <sup>5</sup> know, generation of water and work with other <sup>5</sup> know, there just was not much. 6 entities to make sure that we know when the And so turbines don't turn and meters water is going where it's going because we can don't turn. 8 Q. The -- what explains the drop in 9 revenue from 2011 to 2013? I think there was a question maybe earlier about our ability to store that water and A. Again, another short little dry period from 20 -- in 2012 was another very dry release in the reservoirs along the supply 12 year, probably very similar to what we canal before it gets to the irrigated area. 13 <sup>13</sup> experienced this year in 2022. The dip looks But we -- we plan seasonally what we're 14 <sup>14</sup> nearly similar in some respects, 2022 and going to hopefully see for the next year. And 15 2020 -- 2012. so when 2012 rolled around, we said, well, 16 we're going to have to curtail wintertime O. So you stated, I think, just a moment 17 releases and make sure that we're storing. ago water drives the revenue or water drives 18 the turbines, I believe? We have targets that we're trying to hit 19 19 in Lake McConaughy and make sure we can ensure A. That's correct. a water supply every year. We're very Q. So Central made adjustments in 2011, <sup>21</sup> 2012, 2013 in terms of how much power it conservative, trying to make sure that we're 22 22 holding onto as much as we can because that's generated? 23 23 next year's supply. A. We reduced -- so we have -- again, 24 You don't get to make water. And the fuel you've gotten a good taste for how the water

works. It is a -- it is a dance.

25 is replenished by God and the mountains. And

Page 305 Page 304 1 so we have -- we have to plan. BY MR. BRASHEAR: 2 And so in 2012, we reduced our off-season Q. So, Mr. Brundage, when -- Exhibit 36 <sup>3</sup> flows to try to store and be ready for next would seem to demonstrate fairly clearly that 4 year's irrigation season. hydropower -- or hydro generation revenue is the primary revenue source for Central; would BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Can I ask a 6 question about your PPA? How does that work? you agree with that? 7 Is there a time of delivery component in the A. Yes, it is. 8 8 PPA? Q. So if hydro generation revenue is In other words, if you're delivering this such a significant source, why did Central cut 10 water and this generation at midnight, are you its revenue in 2012 -- why wouldn't it make getting a different price than if you deliver sure that it could generate hydropower at 12 it at two o'clock in the afternoon? maximum ability for maximum revenue? 13 13 THE WITNESS: I am trying not to A. It -- there is only so much water. 14 disclose any of the details of a PPA that we 14 And, again, we have to be prepared for the next 15 have an agreement with, with them. season. And so we manage the water supply. 16 16 I can tell you -- am I -- am I on solid We -- as we manage the water supply, that ground to answer that question, Counsel? <sup>17</sup> follows out that there will be only so much 18 MR. BRASHEAR: In a general 18 generation available. 19 sense, yes. Q. Do you -- what is the effect of 20 having -- would you view this revenue as being 20 THE WITNESS: In a general 21 sense, the current contract does not fluctuating then for Central? 22 differentiate. 22 A. Absolutely. 23 23 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Doesn't Q. And how does that affect the <sup>24</sup> management of the district? <sup>24</sup> differentiate on time of day? THE WITNESS: On time of day. A. It keeps us on our toes. It's a Page 306 Page 307 <sup>1</sup> challenge. And I think as you look at the extent. But saving the reserves during the wet <sup>2</sup> revenue sources chart there, I think it makes times turns into capital expenditures during the dry times because when the wet times are 3 it obvious that in times of not, you're <sup>4</sup> probably working on a deficit. So I better in here, you're spinning turbines and your lakes <sup>5</sup> times of plenty be putting -- putting some are full, you don't really have the ability to 6 money away. access facilities to do maintenance. You -you want to, again, capitalize on the water So we talk about the reserve funds. I think that was a topic. We have to put when it's there. something away in light of being ready for that So we will actually spend -- you would next thing. want to spend more in capital expenditures in 11 the dry times, which is counterintuitive. But I think there's two parts really to that. And that's being ready for times when there 12 it's part of the challenge that we face, 13 isn't adequate generation to cover revenue continuing to move forward and changing --<sup>14</sup>|shortfalls, and then, also, being prepared to 14 changing environment from an energy 15 take care of large capital expenditures on our perspective. 16 O. For those capital projects, Central system. 17 17 Q. How would you describe the general uses reserve funds --18 18 financial health of Central today? A. Yes. 19 19 A. We're in good shape. Q. -- to pay for those? 20 20 Q. And why do you say that? A. That's correct. 21 A. Again, we've had some very good water 21 Q. Does it do bonding of any kind? 22 years. You can see that on the revenue chart. A. No, we do not bond any more. Up through the '80s, as we had cost of service We've put some money away.

We're entering a dry time. And I think

that it's almost counterintuitive to some

24

contracts, long-term, historical-type

contracts, you know, we did that. We have not

Page 309 Page 308 1 done that since the '80s. a different focus on managing those generation We've changed course, and now we do resources? 3 <sup>3</sup> reserve funding as opposed to bond funding. THE WITNESS: It's a great HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Let me, 4 question. <sup>5</sup> before you leave that issue, what kinds of So it's changing; right? The landscape's 6 bonds were they in the '80s? changing. You heard me say that, you know, the THE WITNESS: I cannot help you. PPA was probably -- didn't differentiate a lot HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Were between time of day. That won't be the case in they revenue bonds or -the next contract. 10 THE WITNESS: I don't -- I So what does that look like? Well, that 11 assume that they would have been revenue bonds, might actually lift some of the lower times a 12 but --12 little bit. And -- but it might shave off the 13 13 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: They peaks. 14 were not general obligation bonds? Well, what if I can lower the bottom and THE WITNESS: No, no. We are 15 raise the top if I can leverage maybe some of 16 not a taxing authority. that resource to shaving, again, those most 17 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. expensive -- as we look -- as we look to the 18 Okay. Just wanted to clarify. Okay. future, markets, you know, we see it now; 19 BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: I have right? In the SPP market. You have negative 20 a question. <sup>20</sup> \$10 L and P prices, and you have \$100 L and P 21 21 You know, we're looking at the historical prices. 22 data here of, you know, how you've managed 22 It's put a lot of pressure on our G and 23 the -- the generation resource. You know, now Ts. NPPD has a huge challenge, you know, how <sup>24</sup> as you consolidate into two entities, do you do I -- how do I manage my resources to -- back 25 see that pattern continuing? Or would there be and forth with that. You see them moving those Page 310 Page 311 1 around. appropriate for those timeframes? Or --As a merged entity, you know, they have THE WITNESS: Yeah, the 3 3 created a contract that incentivizes shaving contracts end at the end of this year, of --4 off those top numbers. And, you know, that the Evergy contracts expire December of 2023. 5 seems to be the way of the future, the most And we have gone through the process of 6 expensive resources are the last ones issuing a new proposal to folks. And you're 7 dispatched. correct, that it won't be that type of contract And so if we can chop off those peaks, going forward. 9 that's the maximum revenue and probably going That makes sense. We continue to evolve. 10 to be able to get back on that. And things continue to change. 11 If it's not, well, I've got choices. I HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: You 12 can do other things, too. But it really does 12 mentioned SPP. Just for the record, that's 13 align our interests with the contractual things Southwest Power Pool? 14 that are in there, put in there on purpose to 14 THE WITNESS: I apologize. Yes. 15 minimize the cost to even NPPD. It's a 15 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I don't symbiotic relationship even between our think that's been mentioned in the record yet. 17 17 suppliers. So -- I have one question. So if -- let's 18 18 BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: Maybe say the board would approve the merger and the 19 just to follow up a little bit, you made the new board's constituted, if the new board put a 20 comment that your current contracts for the priority on generation and they wanted to shave <sup>21</sup> Jeffrey and the J-1, J-2, there's no off these parts where it dips down, like what 22 differentiation between time of use, which can happened between 2012 and 2013 and then 2022 <sup>23</sup> have a significant price differential. now, would the board at that point be able to 24 24 Are those long-term contracts coming to an prioritize hydro generation and say we want to end so that you can reflect what's maybe more <sup>25</sup> continue it at the top level, not let it drop?

Page 312 Page 313 1 Would they have the ability to do that? THE WITNESS: Not that I'm aware THE WITNESS: There is -- I  $_{2}|_{\text{of.}}$ 3 <sup>3</sup> think maybe the question is incentive. There's HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okav. 4 4 only so much water and --BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So I HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Well, want to ask, similar along those lines, make 6 not just the incentive. But would they have sure I understand the flow of things. 7 7 the ability to do that? So -- and the management, if I understood You said there's only so much water. correctly, you're managing Kingsley and the 9 Could they deplete the water more and say we're amount of flow that's coming out of McConaughy going to prioritize generation as opposed to but that most of the revenue that's being 11 generated there -- you're -- it's a cost of irrigation, other water uses to keep it higher 12 and not let it dip so low? 12 service kind of contract. So NPPD is really 13 13 THE WITNESS: Yeah, if -- you benefiting the most from that. 14 <sup>14</sup> know, we can't hamstring the board. If they So the thing that probably benefits, you <sup>15</sup> want to make wrong decisions, they're able to 15 know, where this balance of interest or equity 16 16 is just really how much is being generated from do that. 17 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Is there the other three dams? 18 <sup>18</sup> any legal impediment to them doing it? Or THE WITNESS: Yes. 19 would the Fish and Wildlife or some entity be BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: That's 20 able to tell them they can't do that? 20 what's driving your economic potential 21 21 THE WITNESS: I would -- I incentives; right? It's those three <sup>22</sup> assume the state would be very displeased. <sup>22</sup> downstream. 23 23 And all -- those three downstream are HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Well, <sup>24</sup> really being -- it's only coming from <sup>24</sup> but I'm getting more at the -- if there's any <sup>25</sup> whatever's coming from McConaughy, though; <sup>25</sup> legal impediment for the board to do that? Page 315 Page 314 1 right? the river for nearly three months, so pushing So are there -- how -- I mean, McConaughy up through December, September, October, 3 is a lot bigger, has a lot more to storage; November, almost into December. And almost is <sup>4</sup> right? So can you talk a little bit about the still occurring today. <sup>5</sup> storage? How much flexibility is there to --So you'd say to yourself, well, then, gee, 6 to manipulate, if you were to -- not you've had zero generation in the last three 7 manipulate, to manage the economic incentives months. 8 here that we're talking about with just those 8 Well, our diversion at North Platte has 9 three dams? been somewhere between a quarter and a third 10 THE WITNESS: Thank you. Thank full the entire time. We've generated every <sup>11</sup> you, Mr. Hutchison. That is the question, day that we wanted to for those entire three 12 12 flexibility. You've hit it. months. 13 So what can I do and is -- let's start Where is that water coming from? Well, with the first question, is McConaughy the the South Platte bypasses the -- the McConaughy 15 source? No, not exactly. coming from Colorado. And we know what that And I'll use this year, as a matter of 16 looks like. It's feast or famine. <sup>17</sup> fact, for an example. 2022, dry year, entered 17 But there's also return flows. So here we 18 conservation mode, back in the last half of 18 go back to this intertwined connected system. <sup>19</sup> 2020, really trying to hold onto the water, 19 Remember that big green splotch on your make sure we got adequate revenues for next Exhibit 37, that is the system of canals from  $_{21}|_{\text{vear.}}$ McConaughy to North Platte that puts water in 22 from Sutherland Lake and Lake Maloney. That And so I'll get into just a little bit of 23 operations. Starting in September, outages water seeps back into the river and shows back occurred for maintenance. Not a drop of water 24 up at our diversion dam at North Platte. was released from Lake McConaughy that touched Water from the Sandhills and the recharge

Page 316 Page 317 1 that occurs up in that -- and there hasn't been A. Yes. 2 <sup>2</sup> a lot of talk in that upper purple splotch, the Q. -- that's being discussed. 3 <sup>3</sup> Glendo Canals, a whole other set of canals that So how did that conversation start? 4 4 operate some on Wyoming water and some on A. So, again, our PPA -- our Purchase <sup>5</sup> supplemental McConaughy water. That irrigation Agreement is set to expire. It's time to go 6 turns into return flows that show up at out and find out what we're going to do next. 7 7 North Platte. And so RFPs are issued. We talk to our 8 So that water together has been a supply neighbors and begin to discuss what <sup>9</sup> for our hydros for the last three, four months opportunities are there. That's my job, go out with nearly -- first off, no, and then nearly there and find out how we can make sure that 11 no water touching the river from Lake 11 we're doing the very best job for our district 12 McConaughy. 12 and our customers. 13 13 It's a -- it's a very interesting and And so that led to a discussion with Gwen <sup>14</sup> Kautz with Dawson, talking about, you know, <sup>14</sup> intricate and incredible system. I will give, and that's why I started out with the Georges. what her ability to take power is, not <sup>16</sup> They had a vision. They had a great idea. And 16 understanding, you know, their contractual 17 I think we can -- I think we can take it arrangements, discussing that a little bit. 18 forward. 18 And I would say that led into, gee, we're 19 19 in the same neighborhood, we have communication Does that answer the question? 20 BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Yes. systems, are there shared interests that we <sup>21</sup> Thank you. 21 have in being able to help each other out from 22 BY MR. BRASHEAR: 22 time to time, could that be advantageous. 23 23 Q. So I think, Mr. Brundage, going out And that snowballed. That snowballed <sup>24</sup> into, hey, what does this look like. And so of that, let's talk about this conversation with Dawson and the merger -that was the genesis. Page 318 Page 319 Q. Okay. I want to call your attention water supply, our ability to manage it, if this <sup>2</sup> to Exhibit 44, the Plan of Consolidation, which does not help us, we're not doing it. And it 3 we'll get you a copy of. doesn't just help us, it has to help all of us. 4 And specifically I want -- I would direct And so that led to talking with our <sup>5</sup> your attention, Mr. Brundage, to Schedule A. boards. And we had this opportunity to ask our A. Yes, sir. boards if they were interested in pursuing this Q. Are you familiar with this Plan of concept. And they were. Consolidation document? 8 And so this November 5th announcement was, A. Yes, I am. hey, the boards are interested in talking about 10 10 O. And the Schedule A? this idea. 11 11 A. Yes. Q. So -- but it -- not just talking to 12 12 Q. So at No. 1, it talks about a public the boards, apparently there was a decision made to let the public know or at least <sup>13</sup> announcement by districts of the initial <sup>14</sup> conversations, November 5th, 2020. What 14 publicly make folks aware of that? 15 precipitated that announcement? A. That's correct. 16 A. So, again, this kind of genesis Q. What precipitated that decision? 17 17 occurred. And that turned into some internal Because you could have talked to the boards, I 18 conversations with our staff. assume, in closed session or something as well? 19 19 We knew that as we talked about more A. Yeah, again, this -- if we're going <sup>20</sup> significant things like this, like a -- an to do this, this is going to be a fully public <sup>21</sup> actual merger, consolidation, that we had to and transparent process from the get-go, this make sure that we knew where we were and that's 22 is going to be discussed and -- and vetted and 23 the -- no one gets hurt. 23 talked about. 24 24 And I think our initial conversation was Q. And then moving down to, I guess it

<sup>25</sup> if this doesn't benefit our irrigators, our

would be entry three there, there was a press

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Page 320 release from Central, it appears, of approval of a joint study on December 7th? A. Yes. 4

- Q. Is that your reading of that?
- A. Yes.

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- O. What was that announcing?
- A. That was announcing, I think, the 8 board's approval to put together a joint study 9 to -- to look at these things that we -- we did <sup>10</sup> independently have the ability to really get our heads wrapped around.

We wanted a third-party, independent consultant to say tell us how the components of this merger would work with respect to how the generation and the -- and the distribution/ delivery of that could -- could and would work together with our two districts.

- Q. So does study there refer to hiring 19 PSE?
  - A. Yes, it does.
- Q. And was there a vote taken to approve 22 that study?
- 23 A. Yes, there was a vote taken to enter <sup>24</sup> into an agreement with PSE, correct.
  - Q. Do you happen to recall the vote,

Page 322 1 testimony before related to a phases process in <sup>2</sup> this. What -- can you explain what that phase approach was and when was that decided to use?

A. So, yeah, our consultant proposed <sup>5</sup> kind of a -- worked with staff to develop a <sup>6</sup> four -- kind of four phases that would allow the study process. And kind of developed it for the entire process, which went even beyond probably the -- some of the scope of the study itself.

But allowed for decision gates, check-ins 12 at various points within the process to make sure that if -- if there was a point at which 14 it made no sense to move on with the discussion, we could -- we could stop the process at that point.

And, of course, that was -- would be financially prudent to do.

- 19 Q. And those would be board votes or board decisions?
  - A. That's correct.
  - Q. Moving forward or stopping?
  - A. Between the -- between those phases to move ahead or not.
    - O. When these conversations with

what the outcome of that vote was?

- A. That was a -- I believe every board member voted in favor of that.
  - Q. Unanimous vote in favor?
  - A. That's correct, yes.

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HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Which exhibit are we on?

MR. BRASHEAR: This is Exhibit 44. We're on Schedule A.

HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Oh, Schedule A. Okay.

MR. BRASHEAR: I don't know that we'll spend a lot more time on Schedule A at 14 the moment but just to clarify. 15

BY MR. BRASHEAR:

- O. Why did -- so Dawson and Central <sup>17</sup> retained PSE together?
  - A. Yeah, I guess that's correct.
  - Q. Why did Central decide to do a joint study with Dawson versus one on its own?
  - A. We're consolidating. It was -- made sense that both parties would pay for half of the study to make sure that everyone was being represented in that.
    - Q. And was there -- there's been

Page 323 Central's -- or, I'm sorry, with Dawson started and you retained PSA -- PSE with Dawson, what due diligence did Central have in mind related to this study and conversation? What were the <sup>5</sup> issues that Central wanted to make sure it looked at?

A. We had to understand, again, some of the things that we don't understand ourselves, the distribution side, you know, how would that resource be able to be leveraged, what are the impacts to the ability to serve that, what are the contracts like, help us understand what 13 that benefit could look like.

Beyond that, you know, we had many conversations. Our water folks are in constant communications with our state regulators, DNR. and those folks. We have a lot of expertise in that area.

We engaged various legal firms as to, you know, what are the legal requirements to do some of these things, what are the -- some of the financial pieces. Our CFO, you know, engaged auditors, our auditor to ask questions and understand some of the impacts.

So PSE was the major player in

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Page 324 <sup>1</sup> understanding the parts that we needed to <sup>2</sup> figure out how they work together and then <sup>3</sup> other regulators and professionals in the <sup>4</sup> field.

Q. As general manager at the time, 6 what -- what was perhaps the issues that you <sup>7</sup> were most uncertain about or, you know, in this 8 conversation with Dawson?

A. Yeah, we -- we don't have a <sup>10</sup> distribution arm anymore. And so, you know, making sure that we understood that interaction 12 that -- the expertise, understanding -- and <sup>13</sup> understanding the facilities that would be --14 these \$200 million worth of assets that would 15 be coming -- coming into our umbrella, you 16 know, understanding the condition of those. I think that was one of the pieces that they studied.

And then also, you know, their background <sup>20</sup> in governance questions, their background and ability to say here's how -- some of the things vou need to think about that are really outside <sup>23</sup> our scope but you need to think about long term <sup>24</sup> in negotiating what might be a merger between 25 vour two boards.

have to assume that we will deliver water like <sup>2</sup> we do for our customers in this -- in this setting because that's a nonnegotiable.

Q. Was that position communicated to <sup>5</sup> Dawson representatives at this time, too?

A. Oh, yeah. They understand what we do, yeah, uh-huh. And we said that we will deliver water. That's what we do.

Q. Was PSE engaged to make a recommendation on whether or not to merge, or was -- what was the scope of its engagement?

A. No. They're a third-party, independent consultant to provide us assistance in understanding the major opportunities and challenges.

O. Phase 1, what did that phase consist of?

18 A. Phase 1 was really this high-level <sup>19</sup> look. Again, it didn't make a lot of sense to <sup>20</sup> jump into a very detailed analysis of many of <sup>21</sup> the contractual things and all of that -- all that minutia if, from the outset, it wasn't going to have any traction so let's do a high-level, 30,000-foot look, get some -- some <sup>25</sup> back-of-the-napkin guesses and if that looked

Page 325 Q. Did you as general manager believe <sup>2</sup> vou needed a consultant to advise Central on hydropower generation issues?

A. Not how to do it but how to integrate it into -- how it could be used, integrate into a distribution setting.

Q. Why did you not think you needed a consultant on that issue?

A. On --

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10 Q. Why did you not need a consultant on 11 that issue?

A. On hydropower generation?

Q. Hydropower generation.

A. We do that. We --

Q. You know what you're doing?

A. We understand hydro generation.

17 O. Does Central believe it needed a 18 consultant to advise it on water and irrigation 19 issues?

A. What -- we understand irrigation. And, again, the consolidation was predicated on nothing changes, we will do what we do with water.

And those were the parameters we really set forth to PSE is, you know, assume -- you

Page 327 like it had some value and the board was interested in doing so, move to the next phase and dig in.

Q. Did the districts conduct Phase 1 by themselves, or did PSE assist with that?

A. PSE completed the Phase 1 review.

Q. I would refer you back to schedule -or Exhibit 44, Schedule A.

Item 17 on that list says, "Phase 1 study -- press release, Phase 1 study results, vote to move to Phase 2."

Do you see that item? Item 17?

A. Which, sir?

O. Item 17.

A. 17. Got it.

O. Do you see that one?

A. Yes, sir.

18 Q. So was there a vote taken sometime before April 9th to move to phase -- to approve 20 Phase 1?

21 A. Yeah, there was a vote to move to <sup>22</sup> Phase -- to Phase 2. 23

Q. Do you recall the outcome of that 24 vote?

A. I believe there was maybe one -- one

Page 328 Page 329 no, to the best of my recollection. What outreach was done by Central to the <sup>2</sup> public during Phase 1, what engagement with the Q. But yes from --3 A. Yeah. public? 4 4 O. -- other directors? A. Schedule A kind of shows some of it. 5 5 A. Yes, that's correct. That is not a comprehensive list. 6 6 O. What outreach was done --We -- once again, we tried to get the word 7 out as best we could. We met with our water HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Wait. 8 THE WITNESS: Okay. users group, had many -- many -- and some 9 **HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Clarify** one-on-one meetings, had interested parties that wanted to learn more. that. I'm not sure. There was a one no vote, 11 11 and the others were all yes votes? Our door was always open. If there was 12 THE WITNESS: That's to the best 12 somebody that was -- would listen to us for an 13 of my recollection, yes. 13 hour and a half -- because it is -- you know, 14 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. today you've heard a lot about the intricacies 15 So I couldn't hear that. So -of the water and the power that the Georges had 16 understood. It takes a while. And so we had a MR. BRASHEAR: Sorry. 17 THE WITNESS: We can get you the number of group meetings that helped people 18 minutes if you'd like to see the actual -work through those. 19 19 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I don't Q. So in April of 2021, the board voted 20 20 to move to Phase 2. need them. I just wanted that in the record 21 21 What happened during Phase 2? What did clearly because you kind of talked over each 22 22 that consist of? other. 23 23 THE WITNESS: I apologize. A. Phase 2 was this deep dive. So it <sup>24</sup>BY MR. BRASHEAR: was digging into all of the details, digging out the G and T contract that Dawson has for Q. My apologies. Page 331 Page 330 <sup>1</sup> its -- all requirements. It's required to Q. Is that the meeting referred to at <sup>2</sup> purchase its power through that contract with item 31 on Schedule A? <sup>3</sup> this exception. 3 A. Yes. I believe so. 4 And so understanding this exception for 10 Q. And that was held in Kearney? <sup>5</sup> percent that could be generated with internal 5 A. That was. <sup>6</sup> resources, digging into the details of that, 6 Q. And who -- you said there were a <sup>7</sup> meeting with the contract holders so we knew number of attendees. Were there state 8 what that meant, there wasn't any surprises at representatives there? <sup>9</sup> the end of that trail, digging into what the A. Yeah, we had Lieutenant Governor 10 combined staff could look like or, you know, Foley come to visit with us. It was good. 11 they're identifying where those savings were 11 Q. Were there representatives of NRDs, with -- with respect to the labor pool. 12 Natural Resource Districts there? 13 13 They really dug into as many details as --A. Yeah, we had Natural Resource 14 as PSE was qualified to provide us. 14 District directors. We had water users. We 15 Q. What engagement was done during Phase had neighboring utilities. We had ag <sup>16</sup> 2 with the public or outreach with the public? industries. Yeah, a lot of folks came to 17 17 A. So, yeah, Phase 2, throughout all of witness it. 18 these phases, again, we were visiting Rotaries 18 Q. Was the media there as well? and talking to folks and letting them know. 19 A. Yes, they were. 20 But then at the conclusion of Phase 2, Q. That was a public meeting? <sup>21</sup> there was a -- we tried to really invite as 21 A. Yes, it was. many folks as we could to come and hear the 22 Q. And was there a presentation at that results of Phase 2 at a joint board meeting 23 meeting? over in Kearney and presented the results of 24 A. Yes, there was.

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<sup>25</sup> Phase 2.

O. I would refer you, Mr. Brundage, to

Page 333 Page 332 Exhibit 21. A. This is kind of the summary of PSE's <sup>2</sup> assessment of the -- here's some of the Mr. Brundage, do you recognize Exhibit 21? 3 A. Yes. financial benefits, some of the opportunities 4 Q. What is that, sir? that come from this merger. 5 A. This is the presentation, I believe, And then on the other side where you're 6 from the Phase 2 results that was presented at going to have some issues if you're going to 7 that joint meeting. make this happen or where the challenges lie. 8 Q. In Kearney during the public session? And so the financial savings and that -- I 9 A. Yes. think there was an understanding there was 10 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: By whom? probably going to be a financial savings. But, 11 THE WITNESS: The presentation again, that wasn't going to be enough -was done -- on the cover page you see the name 12 financial savings alone is -- is not enough to <sup>13</sup> Erik Sonju, who's the president of PSE. And he make this happen. Again, prefaced under one did the presentation to the group. plus one is greater than two. 15 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 15 So the power savings, the power supply. <sup>16</sup> Again, this improvement in workforce. Not only <sup>16</sup>BY MR. BRASHEAR: Q. Mr. Brundage, I'd have you turn to do you get financial savings in the workforce what's marked the number 3, I think it would be but I think you get a level of efficiency and slide 3 in that presentation. folks that become better at their job because 20 20 A. Yes. they have more to do in their area to become 21 21 Q. All right. That lists a category of the masters of some more so. 22 opportunities and challenges? 22 Coordination of the water and energy 23 23 A. Yes. management. And then this flexibility piece 24 Q. What is this -- to the best of your that we began to talk about more. <sup>25</sup> recollection, what does this slide reflect? 25 But they recognized that it wasn't all Page 335 Page 334 <sup>1</sup> unicorns and lollipops, there would be board flexibility for what? What does that mean? <sup>2</sup> composition and representation would be THE WITNESS: Yeah, so it's kind 3 <sup>3</sup> something you would have to address. of a placeholder for a whole lot of things. You know, what -- so you have this hydro and I Union/nonunion workforce, it was a <sup>5</sup> difference in our two organizations from that can use it to shave peak, what if some days 6 perspective. those electrons for some reason are worth more There was this dichotomy in the financial than they are to use -- and I can buy cheaper methods. Dawson is traditional REA, you bond 8 ones. 9 to build a powerline. Central had to migrate Well, flexibility. I have the option to 10 from that to a reserve-base policy, how are you every so often decide what the best use of my going to work that together. Tried to help generation mix is. 12 identify those challenges that would be part of 12 Flexibility in our two businesses, this  $_{13}|_{\text{this}}$ . 13 vertically integrated utility, thinking about 14 the future of sustainable agriculture is now Q. Mr. Brundage, did you -- do you generally agree with the opportunities and all about carbon. You know, is there an <sup>16</sup> challenges that were put forth on this slide? ability to leverage that resource to help 17 17 A. I think PSE did a good job. businesses in the footprint that helps 18 18 Q. Was there anything at that time or ultimately ag. even now that you would say was omitted from 19 I'll -- I'll launch on it now. KAAPA this or that you would have included? Ethanol, interestingly enough, is one of A. I think they did a good job of Dawson's largest loads, 7 percent of their 22 summarizing where your challenges would be. load. And KAAPA Ethanol creates ethanol from 23 23 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Before corn, corn that's fed by water that is supplied <sup>24</sup> we lose -- leave page 3 or slide 3, when it <sup>24</sup> in large part from Central and/or the ability

25 says greater flexibility in the future,

25 to have irrigation that's predicated in our

Page 336 Page 337 <sup>1</sup> ability to irrigate from recharge. use 10 percent of your peak load for internal 2 use. That ability to help that partner with a 3 <sup>3</sup> resource that comes back to help everybody in And so 10 percent of Dawson's peak load is 4 the valley, that's the kind of flexibility that in that -- and just using round numbers, 20 <sup>5</sup> you have -- you have choices. I have tools in megawatts. 6 my toolbox. So our one facility at Jeffrey is about 20 7 megawatts. And since it is dispatchable, yes, HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. THE WITNESS: What can I do with I can use it on a daily basis to help modify this, what else can I do with this. the most expensive megawatts that come through. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: That And that was what PSE used as their vehicle to 11 gives me some examples. I just wanted to flush try to evaluate the financial advantage to 12 it out. 12 that. 13 13 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Lalso have BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay. So <sup>14</sup> a question on that slide. And this may be my 14 my note for that is correct. <sup>15</sup> fault. I may have made bad notes. But I 15 The other thing I have on that is that the <sup>16</sup> advantage is going to be \$10 million. I thought at the beginning -- and it could have been the opening -- I have here that you could thought that was on a per-year basis. But this 18 cook 20 megawatts off the peak. Is that number is showing what? 11 million over 7 years. Was correct? I incorrect with that? Or is that -- was the 20 20 savings going to be 10 million per year? THE WITNESS: So the --21 21 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: As far as THE WITNESS: No, it is not 10 <sup>22</sup> cooking the demand charges, that you can cook 22 million per year. 23 20 megawatts off? Is that right or wrong? And there are some caveats in that number. 24 <sup>24</sup> It's actually -- and as -- again, this has been THE WITNESS: Right. The QLG <sup>25</sup> a long process. This was created at a point in <sup>25</sup> requirement in Dawson's contract says you can Page 338 Page 339 which year one was thought to be 2023 and there engineers, you know, we do better than that <sup>2</sup> would be no savings from the merger because we today and can easily do that tomorrow. <sup>3</sup> wouldn't have our contract expired yet. And so And, once again, back to that peak shave <sup>4</sup> it should be closer to six years. Neither here piece. I'll just kind of reiterate, you know. <sup>5</sup> nor there. this is on a daily cycle basis. And I think there was testimony earlier talking about how The 11 million that was part of the <sup>7</sup> presentation was over that six or seven years, that impacts deliveries. however you look at it. One has to remember these hydros are on -the supply canal system would have regulating But it's also a number based on our reservoirs in front of them. We already cycle ability to match peaks 50 percent of the time. And, again, throughout this entire process those units in a 24-hour period routinely. we've been -- we work to be as conservative as 12 This is just really modifying that -- that 13 possible. 13 profile to meet the day's needs. 14 14 Back to flexibility, I'll hit it from a As PSE worked through that, they had 15 numbers that said, well, you can shave the peak 15 different angle, if -- if I have a peak at <sup>16</sup> all the time. And we said, well, maybe it three o'clock on July 17th of 2027, I either makes sense to assume that sometime your 17 have to know that contractually now or I can 18 generator's going to be down or something make that decision the day before it happens 19 happens that I can't hit peak or you have a because I have that facility, that generation <sup>20</sup> regulatory restriction, please give us some resource ready to match that load a daily <sup>21</sup> sensitivity to this. 21 basis. 22 22 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So the 10 And so that number really reflects that I only am able to match peak 50 percent of the 23 million per year; is that correct? That you time. And so it's very conservative. estimate 10 million per year if you could match <sup>25</sup> exactly? Is that where that came from? No doubt as you talk to our hydraulic

Page 340 Page 341 THE WITNESS: I think from a THE WITNESS: Great question, power perspective, it's more like 1.5 million, 2 Chairman Reida. 3 <sup>3</sup> ballpark, per year. The reserves -- and Central has a reserve BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So it's fund policy now. Somewhere in that \$90 million <sup>5</sup> only a million a year? range maybe. THE WITNESS: Million and a Some of those are dedicated reserves, <sup>7</sup> half. Let's use round numbers. can't be moved. Some are flexible. But, yeah, BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay. I you're right in that ballpark. guess my second question on this same slide, I'm not sure where the 30 percent margin 10 you said that the distribution system for came from, to be honest with you. 11 Dawson is what? About \$200 million of assets If you look back at revenue chart 36, I 12 coming in? <sup>12</sup> can tell you in 2004, there wasn't much margin 13 THE WITNESS: I believe their on that generation that we were -- we were <sup>14</sup> deficit in those years. <sup>14</sup> book value is in that 240, \$250 million range. 15 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So if I was I guess if you take an average, you can <sup>16</sup> a water user and I've been, you know, with 16 try to come up with a number. But in general, <sup>17</sup> Central for a long period of time and I have -remember that you're saving money to either 18 is it correct you've got 100 million of -- in 18 expend on expenses or to get through times of 19 19 the bank, so to speak, and are you making 30 drought. <sup>20</sup> percent margin? Did I write that down 20 I think -- I think even today's a great 21 21 incorrectly? example. We have a new siphon project going 22 THE WITNESS: So, yeah, let's go from Johnson Lake to Elwood, water conduit. 23 back to that. The old one is 80 years old. That's old for 24 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Are you steel; right? The guess at the cost to replace <sup>25</sup> making 30 percent margin? that's about 20 million. That's a big chunk. Page 342 Page 343 they're a -- they've got a significant amount Has to be done to continue to manage the <sup>2</sup> water resources. We're trying to get some of debt and you're flush with cash, that <sup>3</sup> grants to help out with it. But it is -- to potentially some of that cash might be voted to <sup>4</sup> maintain and operate these resources, we have go into something where you've got debt, in <sup>5</sup> to have the ability to have the revenue streams other words, going from your cash position in 6 to take care of those -- those things. water to going -- going into the electrical BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So the -- I side. 8 guess my concern or maybe the concern of a How do you view that if that is -- have --9 water user is the difference in your financing has anyone objected to that or have that philosophy, which would be the middle something that potentially could be a real <sup>11</sup> challenge. I remember looking at the -- your 11 hindrance? 12 <sup>12</sup> Plan of Consolidation. You had, I believe, THE WITNESS: That's a great 13 13 five different pots that are each going to be auestion. 14 14 independently managed, you're going to have --And, yeah, that was -- that was discussed as far as accounting and -- and accounts. at length. That's -- I think it's why it <sup>16</sup> But -- but I think it also says -- and that showed up in No. 2 or 3 on the challenges list. <sup>17</sup> they're going to be kept separately and 17 how to understand that. 18 independently unless you have a board vote of, 18 And, yeah, so I think -- and I'm going to 19 I think, three-fifths. Then you can start 19 point to -- back to Exhibit 44, the Plan of 20 <sup>20</sup> mixing and matching and so -- as far as what Consolidation. 21 money goes into what pot. We talk about these financial units. It's 22 And so if I'm a water user, I guess one of not unique to Central. Central has had my concerns would be that if all of a sudden on 23 financial units a lot of its life. 24 this distribution system -- because my When we had a steam division -- we had a 25 100-megawatt, a natural gas-fired plant near <sup>25</sup> understanding is that Dawson uses bonds, so

Lexington, Nebraska, up through the mid 90s. Page 345 The water -- the water ebbs and flows won't --<sup>2</sup> We had a steam division. won't stop. 3 We have a Kingsley division. You've heard I think we can improve the revenue stream <sup>4</sup> about the cost of service contract with the <sup>4</sup> from it, through the consolidation. But we <sup>5</sup> Kingsley division. We -- it's an accounting still need to plan for those things. 6 mechanism. You keep those -- those funds and Energy distribution statute says thou <sup>7</sup> shalt pay for your stuff. And so, you know, <sup>7</sup> that contract for that purpose with NPPD. 8 We -- we operate that way. 8 having that financial unit makes a lot of We have a Glendo division. That's why you 10 see those -- those in there. 10 Have those bonds that are there. And you 11 Now, what the Plan of Consolidation also should bond in the future. Makes a lot of 12 says is that the plan calls for us to be able sense in a lot of ways under the right 13 13 to, with a three-fifths vote of the board, conditions to have the folks that are enjoying pledge some of that as long as it's returned on the powerlines and transmission lines and 15 the terms, with interest. transformers to pay for them as they go along. <sup>16</sup> It's the reason they operate that way. 16 So I think that is what the intent was if 17 <sup>17</sup> vou can, once again, leverage to your BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So when you <sup>18</sup> advantage. But you have to make sure you have 18 have something where -- I mean, if you have a 19 reserves in place to be able to take care of <sup>19</sup> debtor and creditor that are two different 20 the -- our other obligations, our 20 entities, it's pretty easy to figure out if <sup>21</sup> infrastructure. And so that option is there. 21 they don't pay, that you foreclose on them or 22 whatever. But I think, by and large, those reserve <sup>23</sup> fund policies are there to say, hey, we have 23 In this particular case, because your large expenditures that we have to plan for, we <sup>24</sup> debtors and creditors potentially could all be <sup>25</sup> have ebbs and flows. And those won't stop. within the one entity, what would you -- if --Page 346 Page 347 <sup>1</sup> if -- let's say on the electric side, you just divisions whole, right. That's correct. <sup>2</sup> raise the electric rates? Is that the idea, to BOARD MEMBER REIDA: And in the <sup>3</sup> pay it off? event you did have a transfer, then there would be some mechanism that would be in place to pay THE WITNESS: If you have an <sup>5</sup> obligation for the electric side, yeah, you it back --6 would raise rates to pay those bonds. Or, you 6 THE WITNESS: That's correct. 7 <sup>7</sup> know, it would be the board making a decision BOARD MEMBER REIDA: -- with 8 on how to pay for those improvements. interest? 9 BOARD MEMBER REIDA: But it THE WITNESS: I'm sorry? 10 would be the electric customers that would pay BOARD MEMBER REIDA: With for that? You wouldn't mix and match into the interest, there would be what the prevailing 12 water? 12 interest rate, the prime? Or what would --13 13 THE WITNESS: Again, the THE WITNESS: That's correct. 14 <sup>14</sup> board -- you know, as we move forward, the BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Or would 15 you? board will decide what terms that would be, 16 THE WITNESS: That's correct. would be fair to everyone. 17 electric customers pay for electric BOARD MEMBER REIDA: All right. 18 Have you had any -- I notice one of the other infrastructure. 19 challenges you have -- I don't know which is BOARD MEMBER REIDA: So other 20 than -- other than this three-fifths vote, your which, but one of you has union labor and one <sup>21</sup> intent is to keep these entities separate with is nonunion. 22 22 respect to their obligations and their cash? Has the -- has the union objected? Or how 23 23 is that going to work? What's going to be the THE WITNESS: There would be an <sup>24</sup> accounting method just like we used with our end result? You going to have the union or 25 nonunion? other divisions to -- to keep those accounting

	- 240		- 040
1	THE WITNESS: Great question.	1	North Platte Canals.
2	Yeah, so it has been like I said, this has	2	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.
3	been a two-year process. And I'll report to	3	THE WITNESS: And so we work
4	you that Central was the entity that had the	4	with them. Water is held and released from the
5	union. And late last year, our union	5	Glendo Reservoir out of McConaughy. And we
6	decertified.	6	have contracts with those Glendo Canal
7	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Oh, so you	7	participants.
8	have no unions?	8	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.
9	THE WITNESS: That's correct.	9	THE WITNESS: So that's a
10	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: Okay.	10	separate once again, another separate
11	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So I	11	financial unit.
12	want to kind of follow Frank, are you	12	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: I've
13	finished with your line of questions?	13	got it.
14	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: I am.	14	So if I'm understand correctly, in order
15	Thank you.		to well, let's go to the first one. Is
16	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: All	16	what does it take so this Plan of
17	right.	17	Consolidation, I think we've already discussed,
18	-		is going to be, at least initially, binding on
19	What was Glendo again? I'm still on these five financial units.		the combined board, but the board would
20	Tre Imanetal antis.	20	· ·
21	THE WITNESS: Yeah, I get it.		ultimately have the authority to make changes
	So we lost that slide. Glendo are the	22	to this. Do you know, is that a simple
22	canals. Maybe you remember the dark purple	23	majority? Do you know whether or not what
	splotch way up by Kingsley?		it would what would it take to modify this
24	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.	24 25	plan and to change these rules?
25	THE WITNESS: Those are the	∠5	THE WITNESS: So you'll have the
1	23-member board that sits down and creates	1	THE WITNESS: That's correct.
2	the the foundational pieces, the policy.	2	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So the
3	That that should be in your board's purview	3	Tri County area will have six directors?
4	to build their policies, their bylaws. I	4	THE WITNESS: The traditional
5	believe the stipulations to change bylaws are	5	Tri County area, yeah, that's correct, six.
6	three-fifths majority.	6	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So, I
7	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.	7	mean, because each of those three counties will
8	THE WITNESS: So you will you	8	each have two?
9	will have that in place. Simple majority is to	9	THE WITNESS: That's correct.
10		10	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So
11	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.	11	you'd have to have at least one director from
12	_	12	those Tri County area to agree to a change to
13	for the combined board of 23 is going to base	13	the bylaws in the future?
14	their new bylaws on this Plan of Consolidation?	14	THE WITNESS: Yeah, I believe
15	THE WITNESS: That's correct.	15	you're correct.
16	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And	16	I guess if you're looking at it from a
17	then if in the future there would need to be	17	director with surface water irrigation
18	change, it would take a three-fifths majority	18	customers within their district, you know, you
19	to change?	19	actually have increased that to 5 subdivisions
20	THE WITNESS: That's correct.	20	or 10 directors of Lincoln County and Dawson
21	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: You're	21	County also have surface water, direct surface
22	going to have a board of 14?	22	water irrigators as well.
23	THE WITNESS: That's correct.	23	_
24	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And I	24	But, yeah, your math is correct.
		25	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.
L <sup>2</sup> 5	think, if I did my math right, that means nine?	45	THE WITNESS: I think.

BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay. Page 353 of this will have to be implemented by the <sup>2</sup> All right. Thank you. <sup>2</sup> Platte River Public Power Irrigation District <sup>3</sup> BY MR. BRASHEAR: board of directors and management of Platte Q. Mr. Brundage, there have been some River at the time? <sup>5</sup> questions about Plan of Consolidation. So I'm A. Absolutely. going to skip ahead to that, and then we'll 6 Q. Let me ask you, Section 1 talks about come back the PSE report. a consolidation date at least in here of July So if you'd look at Exhibit 44, please. 1st, 2023. But the Plan of Consolidation, when 9 A. Yes. sir. was that approved? 10 10 O. And you're aware of the Plan of A. Plan of Consolidation was approved as <sup>11</sup> Consolidation, I think you indicated? 11 part of the amendment -- charter amendment and 12 A. Yes. charter dissolution resolutions October 24. 13 13 Q. I guess that's true. You had it in Q. So why the proposal of a delayed 14 front of you, didn't you? 14 consolidation date? 15 15 A. Yes. A. Yeah, it turns out it takes a lot of 16 16 O. What is your understanding of what time to effect a merger. There's a lot of work <sup>17</sup> the Plan of Consolidation is meant to do? Why to be done in the background, contracts, 18 is there a Plan of Consolidation? getting accounting done, bond work. 19 A. It really is this intent. You have You know, this -- we understand that this 20 the two boards that came together and said as 20 is not a snap-your-fingers-and-everything's-<sup>21</sup> we -- as we walk through this, let's have a done process. It takes time. And so we <sup>22</sup> document that kind of says here's our intention allowed for what we hoped to be at least six 23 as we sit down and as a new board of 23, this months to get our feet on the ground and ready <sup>24</sup> is -- this is a guiding document for us. to change over. Q. And you understand that the -- some 25 Q. So was the Plan of Consolidation Page 355 designed to or intended to address every issue? we do. We are a public power and irrigation district. We store and deliver surface water. A. No. 3 O. What issues was it intended to We generate hydroelectric energy and hope to <sup>4</sup> address? distribute it to people right there in our A. I think it -- again, it was this service territory. 6 guiding -- guiding document said this is our Q. What is your -- what is your intent, this is how we'll look at the reserve understanding of "at as low an overall cost as funds, for instance. That was one of them that possible"? What is that referring to here? was addressed in there. Facilities. A. That is the public power motto, It was kind of the initial conditions. affordable, reliable. We want to make sure this is what we agree to sit down and do as we there's sustainable supplies of water at the 12 convene our new -- our new board. 12 lowest possible cost. 13 13 O. Section 3 that discusses purposes, We want to make sure that there's 14 The primary purposes of PRPPID shall be to, at 14 sustainable amounts of power at the lowest as low an overall cost as possible, deliver possible cost for our ratepayers. <sup>16</sup> surface irrigation, distribute electrical power O. So it's your understanding that 17 and operate hydropower facilities to generate refers to both surface water irrigation and 18 electrical power for wholesale and retail electric distribution? 19 19 distribution." A. Absolutely. 20 Q. Then it states, "The secondary What does it mean -- what is your <sup>21</sup> understanding of why those are called the purposes of PRPPID shall be to recharge 22 primary purposes? What does that denote? groundwater, enhance the environment, provide

23

24

A. Those are what Chapter 70 entities

are chartered to do. I'm sorry, yeah, Chapter

<sup>25</sup> 70 entities are chartered to do. That's what

23

recreational opportunities and facilitate

I think this refers to a little bit what

economic development."

Page 356 Page 357 <sup>1</sup> you talked about in mission earlier. But so this electrical distribution to our entity. <sup>2</sup> And -- is that where -- is that what your <sup>2</sup> calling these secondary, does that mean they're <sup>3</sup> less important or they're subservient to the question was, sir? 4 <sup>4</sup> primary? Or what is that supposed to denote? Q. Yeah. So this is not a new district 5 A. They are all important. We are a being formed? 6 public power and irrigation district, and our A. No. It's -- Central -- Central's mission is to do those things. charter is being amended to absorb the assets, Central's is that exact grouping, minus revenue streams and the liabilities and distribution -- distribute electrical power. customers of Dawson. 10 O. Was a new district being formed And I don't know what comes next. Maybe 11 11 there's a next some day. We'll be prepared for considered? 12 12 A. No. The -- it -- technically this that. 13 13 was really the only way this had any -- any Q. In section -- I'll skip ahead one section, Section 5 of the agreement states that 14 option. 15 Dawson shall cease to exist as a separate Central holds a FERC license. It's a 16 40-year FERC license. Made no sense to try to entity and invest in PRPPID. 17 reopen a federal license for hydropower. This Section 2 talks about Central shall be 18 renamed. was the only way this could work really. 19 19 What is your understanding of the actual HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Let me 20 20 transaction that's contemplated here? interrupt for just a moment. 21 21 A. Yeah, so, as the board is well aware, MR. BRASHEAR: I'm sorry. 22 this is a dissolution of Dawson. So its 22 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I think we're going to need to take a five-minute assets, its revenue stream, its customers and <sup>24</sup> its liabilities will come into Central. <sup>24</sup> break. I need to call security because we're 25 going be here after 5, possibly a few minutes Central has a charter amendment to add 358 Page 359 <sup>1</sup> after 5:30. So I think I need to make a quick Let's take a five-minute break. I'll be <sup>2</sup> call to Capitol Security, let them know we have right back. I'm going to make a quick call, <sup>3</sup> 40 or 50 people that should be in here. And make sure security knows, and we'll go forward 4 <sup>4</sup> they have asked me to do that before. from there. 5 So I think let's take a five-minute break. (5:00 p.m. - Recess taken.) <sup>6</sup> I'll take care of that. 6 7 How much -- we have to finish up this. 8 How much longer do you think we need to be? 8 9 And then we have cross yet. So do you have 10 very much longer? 11 11 MR. BRASHEAR: A not 12 12 insignificant amount, yes. 13 13 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. 14 14 All right. 15 15 MR. DEGAN: I'm assuming we're 16 not going to get to cross? 17 17 MR. BRASHEAR: I don't believe 18 we will get to cross today. But I don't -- I 19 mean, I'm also cognizant of board members and 20 you having questions so I --21 21 MR. DEGAN: Yeah. 22 22 MR. BRASHEAR: I guess we'll go 23 23 as long as you'll allow us to go. 24 24 HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I just 25 want to get a handle on things.

1	(At 5:14 p.m., with parties present as before,	1	MR. DEGAN: Counsel, just so I
2	the following proceedings were had:)	2	can be on the same page, what are we supposed
3	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:	3	to be looking at?
4	Mr. Brashear, you may continue, please.	4	MR. BRASHEAR: So this would be
5	BY MR. BRASHEAR:	5	the slide labeled consolidation assessment,
6	Q. Mr. Brundage, we're back on the	6	financial model results.
7	record.	7	MR. DEGAN: Okay. So it's page
8	I apologize, I'm going to jump around.	8	52 on my copy, too.
9	I'll say that to the counsel and the board as	9	MR. BRASHEAR: That's what I
10	well. In the interest of time, let's go to	10	have.
11	Exhibit 21 again, please, page 52.	11	MR. DEGAN: Okay.
12	Is it marked page 52 on Exhibit 21?	12	MR. BRASHEAR: But apparently it
13	A. Supply power supply and power	13	might be page 54 on
14	sales benefits?	14	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I have
15	Q. No, it should be consolidation	15	page 54 also.
16	assessment, intanetal model results.	16	MR. DEGAN: Well, that's my
17	MR. JARECKE: Probably that one.	17	concern, we may have more than one model here.
18	THE WITNESS: Okay.	18	MR. JARECKE: I think it's
19	BY MR. BRASHEAR:	19	because of the cover page.
20	Q. You have that, page 52 in front of	20	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:
21	you or slide 52 in front of you?	21	Combined combined versus consolidated net
22	A. It says page 54. I will	22	income impact areas, is that what it says?
23	Q. I'm sorry. Well, I okay. We'll	23	MR. BRASHEAR: Correct.
24 25	go with that, yes.	25	MS. KREIFELS: Which exhibit do
23	A. Okay.	23	you have?
1	BOARD MEMBER REIDA: 52.	1	MS. KREIFELS: That's correct.
2	MR. DEGAN: Yeah, that looks	2	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: That's
3	like it looks like the same, yeah, looking	3	right.
4	at the numbers.	4	Okay. So I just want to use the reference
5	MS. KREIFELS: What number?	5	that's in the exhibit that's in the record.
6	MR. JARECKE: Well, you have	6	And then we can figure out the rest later.
7	this is Exhibit 21.	7	MS. KREIFELS: Okay.
8	MR. BRASHEAR: Exhibit 21.	8	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: So
1 2	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Let's go		BY MR. BRASHEAR:
	off the record and figure out what exhibit	10	Q. And i will note, Mr. Brundage, does
11	we're on.	11	the page you're looking at say consolidation
12	(An off-the-record discussion was held.)	12	assessment, financial model results at the top?
13	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: All	13	A. Yes, it does.
14 15	inghe. So do you know, on the original extract	15	Q. Combined versus consolidated net
16	that you gave the court reporter, is it is	16	income impact areas?
17	this marked as 54 or 52? MS. KREIFELS: 54.	17	A. Yes, it does.
18	MS. KREIFELS: 54. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Page 54.	18	Q. And it shows 2023 through 2030
19		19	figures for those years?  A. That's correct.
20	hearing officer? Because mine's 54 for what	20	Q. Okay. I'd like to call your
21	we're talking about.	21	attention to the blue box or outlined blue
22	MS. KREIFELS: Yes.	22	box that is underneath the label, allocation of
23	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	23	savings. Do you see that?
24	in the state of th		100.11150. 20 Jou dec Hitt.
44	MR. DEGAN: Again, just to be	24	A. Correct.

Page 365 Page 364 1 to make sure and -- Hearing Officer, internally; is that correct? 2 <sup>2</sup> everybody's --A. That's correct. 3 3 MR. DEGAN: Yep. Q. Do you -- is this a final allocation MR. BRASHEAR: Yep. Okay. or a binding allocation on Central, Dawson or <sup>5</sup> BY MR. BRASHEAR: Platte River Public Power and Irrigation O. What is this allocation of savings to District? 7 refer to in your understanding? A. No. Once against, this was PSE's A. So this is PSE's work in identifying here's an idea for you, it's a good idea, and the -- in the red box above, it says total could be one that the boards -- boards would 10 10 savings. adopt. 11 11 And I guess just to -- as an aside, to Q. Did you understand the methodology <sup>12</sup> Chairman Reida's question, you can kind of see 12 used by PSE to develop this? 13 those annual savings numbers there. 13 A. Yes. We talked about it. It is --14 it is deep. But, yeah, I understand the ratios This blue box is what PSE did in <sup>15</sup> developing an -- one idea for an allocation 15 of savings. 16 model to say there are savings, a value that Q. But the allocation of savings, if the <sup>17</sup> has come to that hydro asset that -- above and 17 merger moves forward and the Jeffrey hydro is 18 beyond what you would have gotten for the PPA used internally, that allocation has not been <sup>19</sup> and there's value to the retail energy finally determined yet; is that correct? <sup>20</sup> division. And this was the allocation method 20 A. No. it has not. 21 <sup>21</sup> he developed and showed how those savings could Q. Thank you. be split between water savings, hydro 22 Mr. Brundage, I'd like to focus your -irrigation and energy distribution savings. direct your attention to Exhibit 1, the 24 Q. Because this would reflect the Petition to Amend. <sup>25</sup> Jeffrey hydro 20 megawatts being used 25 MS. KREIFELS: I'm going to hand Page 367 Page 366 1 you a copy. A. Yes. 2 Did the board members have copies of O. Or Platte River Public Power and 3 what's already in the record? **Irrigation District?** 4 MS. BIRKETT: Well, they have a A. Yes. 5 copy of that. Q. Can the charter be changed by a MS. KREIFELS: Okay. district on its own? BY MR. BRASHEAR: MR. DEGAN: Objection. Form, Q. Mr. Brundage, are you familiar with foundation, calls for a legal conclusion. this document? BY MR. BRASHEAR: 10 10 A. Yes, I am. Q. Do you have an understanding if the 11 11 Q. You've seen it before? district can change the Petition to Amend? 12 12 A. Yes. A. I'm not a lawyer, sir. But in my 13 13 Q. I'd like to direct your attention opinion, the charter would require a <sup>14</sup> to -- for -- what is your understanding of the three-fifths majority of the board to modify. <sup>15</sup> Petition to Amend? What is its purpose? 15 Q. Does it require approval from anyone A. This is the document that Power 16 else to amend a charter? 17 Review Board requires and is defined in statute MR. DEGAN: Again, same 18 as the document to amend your charter as a objection, form, foundation and --19 public power or public power and irrigation BY MR. BRASHEAR: 20 20 district. Q. What is your understanding of what's 21 Q. And do you understand the charter to required to amend a charter? 22 be the document issued by Power Review that MR. DEGAN: I'm just objecting 23 governs districts? to form and foundation. 24 24 A. Yes. BY MR. BRASHEAR: O. Like Central? O. What is your understanding of what's

,	Page 368	1	Page 369
	required to amend a charter?	2	will consist of 23 board members effective on
	A. I understand it takes a three-fifths		July 1, 2023.
3	majority and that is an that is required to		Q. And what is the final number of
4	come before the Power Review Board. Is that an	4	directors that you understand the amended
5	answer to your question, sir?	5	charter would provide for?
6	Q. So yes.	6	A. The final board membership will
7	So you understand that it has to also come	7	consist of 14 board members.
8	-	8	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: That's
9		9	after attrition?
10		10	THE WITNESS: After attrition
11		11	over the course of three election cycles.
12		12	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Over
13	Q. With regard this is the retition	13	different cycles. Yes. Okay.
14		14	BY MR. BRASHEAR:
15		15	
	Q. While regard to beetion 10 of the		Q. Are the subdivisions of the charter
16	petition.	16	as amended to be based on geography or
17	71. 103.	17	population?
18	Q. That discusses the number of	18	A. The subdivision
19	directors of proposed for Central as	19	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I think
20	amended; is that correct?	20	we've already stipulated to that, haven't we?
21	A. That is correct.	21	MR. BRASHEAR: I suppose we
22	Q. What is your understanding of the	22	have. Okay.
23	number of directors that the amended charter	23	A. Subdivisions will be based on
24		24	geography, along county lines and precinct
25		25	lines.
	Page 370		Page 371
1	BT WIK. BIG ISTILL IK.	1	representation. And that is highlighted in the
2	Q. I'd like to call your attention, sir,	2	orangish color.
3	to Exhibit 43, which I will represent is up on	3	So it looks just like we had discussed,
4	the easel. And we'll get you one to look at as	4	the six whole counties, Keith, Lincoln, Dawson,
5	well.	5	Gosper, Phelps and Kearney.
6	MR. JARECKE: Exhibit number?	6	And then overlaid on top of that is an
7	MR. BRASHEAR: Exhibit 43.	7	outline in bright red of what the regions would
8	MS. KREIFELS: Yeah.	8	be under the Platte River Public Power and
9		9	Irrigation District, noting, I think you can
10		10	see, really, the changes are removing, in large
11		11	part, a lower piece of Lincoln County and
12			this really, this one new representation
13	MIS. KKEITELS. 43. That one:	13	area I think was noted earlier by a board
14	MIK. DIAMSTILAK. 108.	14	member at Buffalo subdivision.
15	MIS. KKLII LLS. NO. 105 71.	15	
16	WIN. DIAMILAN. BUILY, Exhibit	16	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: When you
	Tr. Wry apologics.		say when you say that areas or regions, are
17	wis. KKEITEEs. This is a copy.	17	you talking about the voting subdivisions of
18	MIK. JAKECKE. Teall.	18	the district?
19	BT WIK. BIG ISTILLIK.	19	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry?
20	Q. Mi. Diulidage, are you faililliai with	20	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: You said
21	Exmort 41:	21	that the red outlined the red outlines in
22	A. Yes. I have seen that.	22	here are around the regions. Is that the
23	Q. What is that depicting?	23	voting subdivisions of the charter territory?
24		24	THE WITNESS: That's correct.
25	First, the current Central area of	25	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.

2/1			
1	Page 372 THE WITNESS: That's correct.	1	page 373 approximately 85,000 folks/voters that vote in
2		2	Central's board selection.
3	subdivisions under the model for Platte River	3	And the new model for the Platte River
4	Public Power and Irrigation District.	4	Public Power and Irrigation District shows a
5	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And the	5	total voter population of about 30,000 less,
6		6	about 56,000 votes.
7	tan or THE WITNESS: Tan is the	7	Q. And what is your understanding of
8		8	what accounts for that reduction in voters?
9	existing HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: is	9	A. This is a much more rural-focused
10			model. The cutouts, as you can see, this
11	the chartered territory as existing of Central?  THE WITNESS: Of Central, that's	11	the consolidation the consolidation
12		12	represented territories really is a very nice
13	correct, sir.	13	
14	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay. I	14	conglomeration of Central's and Dawson's
15	just wanted to make sure we had the right	15	current represented territories.
16	nomenclature down.	16	So you see North Platte, the City of
17	BY MR. BRASHEAR:		North Platte's carved out. The other
	Q. Mr. Brundage, this legend includes	17	municipalities in Dawson's traditional charter
18	population figures; is that correct?	1	territory are carved out. And so you lose a
20	A. Yes, it does.	19	lot of those especially North Platte, that's
	Q. What did what does the legend tell	20	probably 20, 25,000 people, 20,000 people right
21	you or how do you interpret that?	21	there perhaps. So all the municipal population
22	A. So, again, Central's current	22	is removed from those those regions.
23	representations are whose counties, metading	23	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: You said
	anything within the county, and so that shows	1	it's rule oriented. What do you mean by that?
25	that in those six counties, you have	25	The new or the newly constituted Platte
1	River PPNID said it's rule	1	County. So currently in Central, you have a Page 375
2	THE WITNESS: Basically you	2	single director from Lincoln County?
3	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:	3	THE WITNESS: That's correct.
4	oriented.	4	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: You're
5	THE WITNESS: you've added	5	going to now have two?
6	this Buffalo subdivision, but, yet, your	6	THE WITNESS: That's correct.
7	population is 30,000 less.	7	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And
8	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: What do	8	currently that one person who is elected
9	you mean by rule?	9	from Lincoln County, the voters include the
10	MR. JARECKE: Rural.	10	City of North Platte?
11	THE WITNESS: Rural.	11	THE WITNESS: That is correct.
12	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Rural?	12	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So
1		1	
	I misunderstood you.	13	there are irrigators in Lincoln County?
	I misunderstood you. THE WITNESS: I'm sorry.	13	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators
13	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I		
13 14	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry.	14	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators
13 14 15	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I	14 15	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators in Lincoln County, that's correct.
13 14 15 16	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I thought you said rule. Rural oriented. Okay.	14 15 16	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators in Lincoln County, that's correct.  BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And
13 14 15 16 17	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry.  HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I thought you said rule. Rural oriented. Okay. I apologize.	14 15 16 17	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators in Lincoln County, that's correct.  BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And those irrigators, it would seem to me then, if
13 14 15 16 17 18	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I thought you said rule. Rural oriented. Okay. I apologize. BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: So my	14 15 16 17 18	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators in Lincoln County, that's correct.  BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And those irrigators, it would seem to me then, if I'm understanding what you're doing just
13 14 15 16 17 18	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I thought you said rule. Rural oriented. Okay. I apologize. BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: So my question is this, is the intent then that now	14 15 16 17 18 19	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators in Lincoln County, that's correct.  BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And those irrigators, it would seem to me then, if I'm understanding what you're doing just taking Lincoln County as an example the
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I thought you said rule. Rural oriented. Okay. I apologize. BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: So my question is this, is the intent then that now you've narrowed the voting population down to	14 15 16 17 18 19 20	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators in Lincoln County, that's correct.  BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And those irrigators, it would seem to me then, if I'm understanding what you're doing just taking Lincoln County as an example the irrigators will have better representation in
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I thought you said rule. Rural oriented. Okay. I apologize. BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: So my question is this, is the intent then that now you've narrowed the voting population down to those directly impacted by the activities of	14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators in Lincoln County, that's correct.  BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And those irrigators, it would seem to me then, if I'm understanding what you're doing just taking Lincoln County as an example the irrigators will have better representation in the merged district than they currently do
13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	THE WITNESS: I'm sorry. HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: I thought you said rule. Rural oriented. Okay. I apologize. BOARD MEMBER GOTTSCHALK: So my question is this, is the intent then that now you've narrowed the voting population down to those directly impacted by the activities of both districts?	14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22	THE WITNESS: We have irrigators in Lincoln County, that's correct.  BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: And those irrigators, it would seem to me then, if I'm understanding what you're doing just taking Lincoln County as an example the irrigators will have better representation in the merged district than they currently do under the current Central District?

1	Page 376 you.	1	talked about Lincoln County. Is the same sort
2	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And when	2	of true in Dawson County? I see three
3	you say better, you mean less diluted?	3	carve-outs in Dawson County. What are those
4	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Yes.	4	carve-outs?
5	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Would	5	THE WITNESS: Those carve-outs
6	that be accurate	6	are for Lexington, Cozad and Gothenburg.
7	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: That's	7	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So the
8	probably a more accurate question, yes.	8	same principle would apply, just not as big of
9	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:	9	a city as North Platte?
10	characterization?	10	THE WITNESS: That's correct.
11	THE WITNESS: It will be a very	11	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Thank
12	rural-focused electorate.	12	you.
13	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: And	13	THE WITNESS: And I'll point out
14	following up t, Vice Chair Hutchison's	14	-
15	question, would it be less dilution of the vote	15	carve-outs still exist. Kearney is not part of
16	with the smaller population?	16	that. They're not served.
17	THE WITNESS: You will you	17	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: But
18	·	18	that's not currently part of Central?
19	board that are, you know, rural residents of	19	THE WITNESS: No, no. That's
20	that subdivision, Lincoln County, not municipal	20	correct.
21	or urban urban folks. Urban folks won't be	21	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So if
22	selecting the member of the board.	22	it you're looking at Central
23	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Okay.	23	THE WITNESS: That's correct.
24	Thank you.	24	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: Okay.
25	BOARD MEMBER HUTCHISON: So we	25	HEARING OFFICER TEXEL: Mr.

```
1
    Brashear, so we've got about three minutes left
2
    today because I want to stop at 5:35.
                                             Is --
 3
    are you at the end of a line of questioning?
4
    Or, I quess, is this a good place in a few
5
    minutes?
6
                    MR. BRASHEAR:
                                    This is as good a
7
    place to break as any.
8
                     HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:
9
    If you're going to start a new line, I didn't
10
    want you to do that and then stop in the
11
    middle.
12
                     MR. BRASHEAR: No.
                                         This is a
13
    good place to break.
14
                    HEARING OFFICER TEXEL:
                                             Okay.
15
    So I think we're going to stop here today then.
16
    We will reconvene tomorrow at 8:30.
17
          The doors to the building will open at
18
    eight for the public. So you can come in at
19
    that time.
20
          I'm going to leave my things here.
21
    will be locked. I'll lock the door after we
22
    leave. You can leave the exhibits up.
23
          So with that, we will recess now. And we
24
    will reconvene at 8:30 tomorrow morning.
25
          (Recessed at 5:32 p.m.)
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WORD INDEX	110:21 111:16	<b>12/27/22</b> 6:9	<b>1950</b> 209:21
	128:14 237:9	<b>12/29/21</b> 5:20	<b>197</b> 3:10
<\$>	340:18	<b>12:10</b> 173:2 <i>1</i>	<b>1st</b> 1:13 6:22
<b>\$10</b> 74:14 309:20	<b>1006</b> 3:17	<b>12:12</b> 174:22	20:15 61:1 353:8
337:16	<b>100-foot</b> 284: <i>12</i>	<b>12:15</b> 174: <i>14</i>	1-TESTIMONY
<b>\$100</b> 61:23 71:8	100-megawatt	<b>120</b> 80:15	1:7
72:12 218:17	343:25	<b>12-member</b> 270:9	
309:20	<b>1023</b> 2:4	<b>12th</b> 25:15	<2>
<b>\$11</b> 73: <i>14</i>	<b>1050</b> 3: <i>17</i>	<b>13</b> 147: <i>12</i>	<b>2</b> 4:6 39:18, 22
<b>\$200</b> 324:14	<b>1054</b> 3:18	<b>132</b> 3:9	40:12 58:8, 10
340:11	<b>1069</b> 3:18	<b>14</b> 350:22 369:7	73:12 77:2 112:5
<b>\$250</b> 340: <i>14</i>	<b>1073</b> 3:18	<b>14-day</b> 240: <i>15</i>	130:13, 15 176:3
<b>\$90</b> 51:9 341: <i>4</i>	<b>108,000</b> 245:19	<b>14-member</b> 58:7	205:5 240:21
	<b>1090</b> 3:18	68:15, 16	284:14 299:12, 13,
<1>	<b>1097</b> 5:17	<b>15</b> 1:15 45:25	16 327:11, 22
<b>1</b> 112:5 130: <i>13</i>	<b>1098</b> 5:17	202:3	329:20, 21, 23
187:1, 2 205:5	<b>10-minute</b> 109:2	<b>15th</b> 8:7	330:16, 17, 20, 23,
239:4 299:7, 16	<b>10s</b> 71:4	<b>15-year</b> 274:19	25 332:6 343:16
318:12 326:16, 18	<b>10-year</b> 73:22	<b>16</b> 79:23 202:5, 6,	356:17
327:4, 6, 9, 10, 20	248:3 249:7	8, 9 221:20	<b>2/16/22</b> 5:20
329:2 353:6	253:6 255:13	223:10 224:16	<b>2/3/22</b> 4:5
365:23 369:2	257:5	228:13 282:19	<b>2/8/23</b> 6:11
<b>1(B</b> 239:2 240:10	<b>11</b> 98: <i>10</i> 177:9	289:10	<b>2/9/23</b> 6:12
1)(b 28:4	188:1, 5, 10	<b>1615</b> 260:20	<b>2:40</b> 259:25
<b>1,100</b> 271:9, 10, 15	337:18 338:6	<b>1650</b> 2:16	<b>20</b> 4:3 22:13, 16,
<b>1.5</b> 210:5, 20	<b>11/3/11</b> 6:5	<b>17</b> 327:9, 12, 14,	<i>17</i> 39: <i>3</i> 147:9
212:19 340:2	<b>11:09</b> 110: <i>1</i>	15	192:23, 25 224:16
<b>1/2</b> 98: <i>10</i>	<b>110</b> 300: <i>17</i>	<b>175</b> 245:20	246:4 299:9, 14
1/4/23 4:17	<b>1111</b> 3:18	<b>177</b> 245:20	302:11 336:18, 23
1/9/23 4:18	<b>1122</b> 7:2, 5	<b>17th</b> 339:16	337:4, 6 341:25
<b>1:15</b> 174:15, 17	<b>1123</b> 3:20	<b>18</b> 81: <i>3</i> 147:9	364:25 373:20
<b>1:20</b> 175: <i>1</i>	<b>1128</b> 2:11	<b>184</b> 3:9	<b>20,000</b> 373:20
<b>10</b> 74:8 108: <i>1</i>	<b>1139</b> 3:20	<b>18-inch</b> 147: <i>11</i>	<b>200</b> 83:9 228:18
121:18 149:7	<b>1142</b> 3:4, 5	<b>19</b> 4:2 8:3 26:18,	<b>2000</b> 245:17
224:22 225:5	<b>1143</b> 7:2, 5	24 27:1	272:5
226:2, 23 227:3, 5	1144 7:6	<b>1920s</b> 54:19	<b>2000s</b> 56:1
252:14 256:11	1145 7:6	<b>1930</b> 267:17	151:21 273:23
257:9 330:4	1153 7:6	<b>1930s</b> 48:19 55:9,	277:1 301:25
337:1, 3, 20, 21	<b>12</b> 5:2 7:2 68:7 99:22 108: <i>I</i>	21 56:7	<b>2004</b> 341: <i>12</i>
339:22, 24 351:20	99:22 108:1 121:18 149:7	<b>1933</b> 26:3, 6 47:20	<b>2006</b> 151: <i>12</i> 293: <i>4</i>
368:15, 25 <b>10/24/22</b> 4:14, 15	150:8 173:21	<b>1937</b> 26:11	<b>293</b> :4 <b>2007</b> 5:17
<b>10:24</b> /22 4:14, 13 <b>10:34</b> 92:5	177:8 187:22	<b>193</b> 7 26.11 <b>1940</b> 267:8, 13	<b>2007</b> 3:17 <b>2008</b> 301:17
<b>10:54</b> 92:5 <b>10:51</b> 109:5		1940 267:8, 13 1940s 275:1	<b>2008</b> 301:17 <b>201</b> 2:5
<b>10:51</b> 109:3 <b>100</b> 66:3, 16	188:4, 9 268:19 12/13/22 5:8	1940s 275:1 1941 60:2	<b>201</b> 2:3 <b>2011</b> 302:9, 20
91:20 93:13	1413144 3.0	1771 00.2	<b>2011</b> 302.3, 20
71.20 73.13	I 	1	1

2012 302:11, 15, 21 304:2				
305:10 311:22   102:6   23 4:6 41:17,25   32 4:21   34:18 331:2   417 4:6   42 3:3 5:12   311:22   57:12 179:3   33 4:21   34 4:24 237:19,   10:12 115:6,17   2019 273:16   360:13 352:23   247:9 257:24   43 3:4 5:13 98:1,   6,7,10 181:12   2019-E65 4:18   230 3:10   35 5:2   247:9 257:24   6,7,10 181:12   186:21,24,25   2019-Phelps 4:24   23-member   271:18 283:1,5   282:17 370:3,7,   119:12 2020 50:8 302:15   350:1   305:1   305:2 341:11   45:13 123:5,6   181:19 318:14   24 4:6 353:12   2621 199:23   247 106:3   37 5:3 224:1   321:9 327:8   322:1 2021 199:23   247 106:3   37 5:3 224:1   321:9 327:8   339:4   41:18 42:1   42:1   331:2 314:17   26 4:2,12   25,000 373:20   38 3:3 5:6 41:17   450 51:7   450 3:10   311:22 314:17   26 4:2,12   27 4:12   21 3:35:8   28 4:15   338:17 369:2   29 4:15   27 4:12   21 3:29:10   305:18 303:17 369:2   29 4:15   303:18 303:4   333:4 333:4   335:8   363:17 369:2   29 4:15   200-megawatt   334:24 343:16   335:28   241:18 42:1   339:4   41:17,25 42:2   201:25 202:2,3,8,   10 221:20 223:11   224:14 260:1   334:24 343:16   335:28   241:18 42:1   226:19 39:4   41:18 42:1   226:19 39:4   41:18 42:1   226:19 30:19   356:14 357:12   300:19 30:19   356:14 357:12   300:19 30:19   356:14 357:12   300:19 30:19   300:19 30	<b>2012</b> 302:11, 15,	<b>22</b> 4:3, 6 39:24	<b>300,000</b> 199:6	370:14, 16, 21
2013   302:9, 21   23   4:6   41:17, 25   57:12   179:3   33   4:21   94:23   98:2, 7	21 303:15 304:2	40:9 41:21 81:5	<b>301</b> 1: <i>13</i> 8: <i>9</i>	<b>416</b> 4:6
311:22	305:10 311:22	102:6	<b>31</b> 4:18 331:2	<b>417</b> 4:6
2014   199:22   187:19   188:4   34   4:24   237:19   43   3:4   5:13   98:1,   2019:E65   4:18   230   3:10   35   5:2   2019:Phelps   4:24   23-member   271:18   283:1,   2019:Supply   4:21   133:15   172:21   296:21   300:20   314:19   318:14   24   4:6   353:12   247   106:3   2021   199:23   247   106:3   37   5:3   224:1   2022   5:9   53:7   24-hour   339:11   24.15   23   315:20   201:18   302:13, 14   311:22   272:6   301:18   302:13, 14   311:22   314:17   264:2, 12   27   4:12   21, 23, 24   5:2, 3, 5,   363:17   369:2   29   4:15   2027   339:16   2027   339:16   2030   363:17   2033   363:17   205   21   332:18, 19   334:24   343:16   335:24   339:4   41:17, 25   4:2   201:25   502:2, 3, 8,   301:125   304:18   60:1   21:25   20:25   304:18   60:1   21:25   20:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:25   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:24:18   32:24   33:21   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:24:18   32:25   22:25   304:18   60:1   22:24:18   32:25   22:25   304:18   60:1   32:25   33:27	<b>2013</b> 302:9, 21	<b>23</b> 4:6 41:17, 25	<b>32</b> 4:21	<b>42</b> 3:3 5:12
2019 273:16   350:13 352:23   369:1   247:9 257:24   6,7.10 181:12   2019-E65 4:18   230 3:10   35 5:2   186:21, 24, 25   2019-E67 4:21   23-38 42:2   36 3:2 5:3   193:17, 18, 19   2019-Supply 4:21   133:15 172:21   296:21 300:20   11, 12   2020 50:8 302:15   350:1   305:2 341:11   44 5:13 123:5, 6   314:19 318:14   24 4:6 353:12   365 285:8   188:14 318:2   2021 199:23   247 106:3   37 5:3 224:1   321:9 327:8   2022 5:9 53:7   24-hour 339:11   10, 13, 17 288:21, 2   2023 1:15 8:7   25 4:10 246:4   23 315:20   41:18 42:1   2023 1:15 8:7   260 3:10   14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 2   2027 339:16   29 4:15   29 4:15   39.45, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14 6 3:7 5:17   2025 303:17   299:1   334:24 343:16   375:10   39:19   2026 339:4   34:17   25 4:2   29:15   332:18, 19   32:10 130:16, 18   176:3 332:18, 19   32:20   32:20   33:20   33:20   33:20   33:30:20	311:22	57:12 179:3	<b>33</b> 4:21	94:23 98:2, 7
293:1	<b>2014</b> 199:22	187: <i>19</i> 188: <i>4</i>	<b>34</b> 4:24 237:19,	110:12 115:6, 17
2019-E65 4:18   230 3:10   35 5:2   186:21, 24, 25   2019-Phelps 4:24   23-member   23-member   271:18 283:1, 5   282:17 370:3, 7, 2019-Supply 4:21   133:15 172:21   305:2 341:11   45:13 123:5, 6   314:19 318:14   24 4:6 353:12   365 285:8   188:14 318:2   2021 199:23   247 106:3   37 5:3 224:1   321:9 327:8   283:21 329:19   240 340:14   282:24 283:1, 2, 343:19 352:8   245:2 272:6   300:20   311:22 244:15, 17   25 4:10 246:4   23 315:20   41:18 42:1   450 51:7   301:18 302:13, 14   257 3:10   42:1   450 51:7   456 3:10   311:22 314:17   26 4:2, 12   39 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 450 51:7   456 3:10   311:22 314:17   26 4:2, 12   39 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 46 3:7 5:17   455 338:1 335:8   28 4:15   6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16   3363:17 369:2   29 4:15   39:7, 11 40:20   41:21 102:6   452 2027 339:16   2027 339:16   204 6:23 20:15   41:21 102:6   452 2027 339:16   204 6:23 20:15   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2027 339:16   204 6:23 20:15   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2027 339:16   204 6:23 20:15   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2027 339:16   204 6:23 20:15   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2027 339:16   204 6:23 20:15   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2027 339:16   205 5:12 6:15   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2027 339:16   205 5:12 6:15   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2027 339:16   205 5:12 6:15   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2020 330:13   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2020 330:13   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2020 330:13   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2020 330:13   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2020 330:13   41:21 102:6   452 2020 2020 330:13   41:18 330:19   336:14 357:25   500 359:5   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23   500 228:23	<b>2019</b> 273:16	350:13 352:23	21 238:2 240:10	<b>43</b> 3:4 5:13 98:1,
2019-Refp 4:21   23-38 42:2   23-member   271:1/8 283:1, 5   282:1/7 370:3, 7,   2019-Supply 4:21   133:15 172:21   305:2 341:11   44 5:1/3 123:5, 6   314:1/9 318:1/4   24 4:6 353:1/2   365 285:8   188:1/4 318:2   2021 199:23   24/7 106:3   37 5:3 224:1   321:9 327:8   283:21 329:1/9   240 340:1/4   25 4:10 246:4   23 315:20   41:1/8 42:1   245:2 272:6   25,000 373:20   38 3:3 5:6 41:1/7   245:2 272:6   25,000 373:20   38 3:3 5:6 41:1/7   245:2 272:6   25,000 373:20   38 3:3 5:6 41:1/7   25 4:1/2 203 1:1/5 8:7   260 3:1/0   14, 15, 17, 18, 20,   46 3:7 5:1/7   2023 1:1/5 8:7   260 3:1/0   14, 15, 17, 18, 20,   47 5:1/7   25:1/5 61:2 311:4   27 4:1/2   21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5,   36:1/7 369:2   29 4:1/5   39:7, 1/4 00:20   2027 339:1/6   204 6:23 20:1/5   41:2/1 102:6   45:2/0   334:2/4 343:1/6   257:1/0   334:2/4 343:1/6   257:1/0   334:2/4 343:1/6   257:1/0   334:2/4 343:1/6   257:1/0   334:2/4 343:1/6   257:1/0   356:1/4 357:25   301:2/2 202:2, 3, 8,   3/11/22 6:5   3/31/21 5:1/6   358:3   3/31/21 5:1/6   358:3   3/31/22 6:2   400 237:1/2   5:30 44:2/5 45:4, 47.1/7, 25 42:2   3/31/22 6:2   400 237:1/2   5:30 38:3/6 230:4/5   30:1/1 224:1/6 22 225:5   30 4:1/8 62:1   201:25 202:2, 3, 8,   3/31/22 6:2   400 237:1/2   5:32 378:25   226:3 227:8, 9 :1/0   221:1/2 321:1/6 321:1/6   358:3   33:1/0, 23 33:1	293:1	369: <i>1</i>	247:9 257:24	6, 7, 10 181:12
2019-Phelps 4:24   23-member   133:15 172:21   296:21 300:20   11, 12   2020 50:8 302:15   350:1   305:2 341:11   44 5:13 123:5, 6	<b>2019-E65</b> 4:18	<b>230</b> 3:10	<b>35</b> 5:2	186:21, 24, 25
2019-Supply 4:21   133:15 172:21   296:21 300:20   11, 12   2020 50:8 302:15   350:1   305:2 341:11   44 5:13 123:5, 6	<b>2019-E67</b> 4:21	<b>23-38</b> 42:2	<b>36</b> 3:2 5:3	193:17, 18, 19
2020   50:8   302:15   350:1   305:2   341:11   365   288:14   318:14   24   4:6   353:12   365   288:8   321:9   327:8   328:21   329:19   240   340:14   282:24   283:1, 2, 282:24   283:1, 2, 282:24   283:1, 2, 283:21   329:19   24-hour   339:11   10, 13, 17   288:21, 285:2   272:6   25,000   373:20   38   33:5:6   41:17   450   51:7   450   311:22   314:17   26   4:2, 12   27   4:12   21, 23, 24   5:2, 3, 5, 38:10   38:1   353:8   28   4:15   203   363:17   369:2   29   4:15   203   363:17   203   363:17   203   363:17   203   363:17   203   363:17   205   5:12   6:15   94:21   95:5   97:12, 13   176:3   332:18, 19   21   256:19, 24   257:10   257:	<b>2019-Phelps</b> 4:24	23-member	271:18 283:1,5	282:17 370:3, 7,
314:19   318:14   24   4:6   353:12   365   285:8   321:9   327:8   328:21   329:19   240   340:14   282:24   283:1, 2   343:19   352:8   245:2   272:6   25,000   373:20   38   3:3   5:6   41:17   25:19   25:31:4   26   42:12   21:23   24:1   456   3:10   24:18   338:1   338:1   353:8   26   4:15   29   4:15   29   4:15   29   4:15   29   4:15   29   4:15   203   363:17   203   363:17   203   363:17   203   363:17   205   5:12   6:15   94:21   95:5   97:12, 13   176:3   332:18; 19   21   25:10   23:11   24:12   299:1   334:24   343:16   334:24   343:16   334:24   343:16   334:24   343:16   334:24   343:16   358:3   358:3   36:14   357:25   30:125   202:2, 3, 8, 10   221:20   223:11   224:16, 22   225:5   30   4:18   62:1   224:16, 22   225:5   30   4:18   62:1   224:16, 22   225:5   30:418   62:1   224:16, 22   225:5   30:418   62:1   224:16, 22   225:5   30:418   62:1   229:17   20:20   23:17   30:000-foot   14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 23:18; 33:19   22-1/2   85:5, 17   30:000-foot   14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 24   50:00   228:23   358:3   358:3   358:3   356:14   357:25   356:14   357:25   356:14   357:25   356:14   357:25   356:14   357:25   358:3	<b>2019-Supply</b> 4:21	133:15 172:21	296:21 300:20	
2021         199:23         24/7         106:3         37         5:3         224:1         321:9         327:8           2022         5:9         53:7         24-hour         339:11         10, 13, 17         288:21, 2         45         5:13         8:3         39:4           191:22         244:15, 17         25         4:10         246:4         23         315:20         41:18         42:1         45         5:13         8:3         39:4           245:2         272:6         25,000         373:20         38         3:3         5:6         41:17         456         3:10           311:22         314:17         26         4:2         39         4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 4         46         3:7         5:17           2023         1:15         8:7         260         3:10         14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 4         47         5:17           2338:1         353:8         28         4:15         39:7, 11         40:20         47         5:17           202         2030         363:17         20         24         33:210         130:16, 18         458:10         130:19, 35:19         35:14         36:14         357:25           20-megawatt         334:24	<b>2020</b> 50:8 302:15	350:1	305:2 341:11	<b>44</b> 5: <i>13</i> 123: <i>5</i> , <i>6</i>
283:21 329:19 2022 5:9 53:7 191:22 244:15,17 245:2 272:6 301:18 302:13,14 211:22 314:17 2023 1:15 8:7 25 4:10 246:4 27 4:12 283:15:20 38 3:3 5:6 41:17 450 51:7 456 3:10 42:1 47 5:17 456 3:10 47 5:17 25:15 61:2 311:4 27 4:12 29 4:15 203 363:17 205 5:12 6:15 2030 363:17 205 5:12 6:15 207 329:16 207 339:16 208 4:21 208 4:21 209 4:21 209 4:21 209 4:21 209 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2009 4:21 2019 5:20 2027 339:16 2019 6:23 20:15 2019 6:23 20:15 2019 6:23 20:25 2010 130:16,18 2019 135:29 2019 137 130:16 2019 1	314:19 318:14	<b>24</b> 4:6 353:12	<b>365</b> 285:8	188: <i>14</i> 318:2
2022         5:9         53:7         24-hour         339:11         10, 13, 17         288:21, 23         45         5:13         8:3         39:4           191:22         244:15, 17         25         4:10         246:4         23         315:20         41:18         42:1         450         51:7	<b>2021</b> 199:23	<b>24/7</b> 106: <i>3</i>	<b>37</b> 5:3 224:1	321:9 327:8
191:22 244:15, 17   25,000 373:20   38 3:3 5:6 41:17   450 51:7   450 51:7   450 31:18 302:13, 14   257 3:10   42:1   456 3:10   475 1:7   456 3:10   475 1:7   456 3:10   456 3:10   475 1:7   475 1:7   475	283:21 329:19	<b>240</b> 340: <i>14</i>	282:24 283:1, 2,	343:19 352:8
245:2 272:6       301:18 302:13, 14       25,000 373:20       38 3:3 5:6 41:17       450 51:7         301:18 302:13, 14       26 4:2, 12       39 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 46 3:7 5:17         2023 1:15 8:7       260 3:10       14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 48 5:20       47 5:17         25:15 61:2 311:4       27 4:12       21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 69, 11, 12, 13, 16 36:17 369:2       48 5:20         338:1 353:8       363:17 369:2       29 4:15       39.7, 11 40:20         2027 339:16       2nd 6:23 20:15       41:21 102:6       <5 >         2030 363:17       3 2:10 130:16, 18 176:3 332:18, 19 21 256:19, 24       109:1 351:19 356:14 357:25       356:14 357:25         13       176:3 332:18, 19 21 256:19, 24       257:10 5:00 359:5       5:00 359:5         20-megawatt 74:12 299:1       354:13 354:13 40 5:9 41:18 358:3       40 5:9 41:18 5:16 5:00 359:5       5:14 360:1 5:00 359:5         21 4:3 39:4 41:77, 25 42:2 3/31/21 5:16 358:3       3/31/22 6:2 400 237:12 5:30 44:25 45:4, 7, 11, 13 358:1       5:30 44:25 45:4, 7, 11, 13 358:1         201:25 202:2, 3, 8, 10 221:20 223:11 224:16, 22 225:5 226:3 227:8, 9       217:23 218:6, 11, 402.475.5100 2:13 402.475.5100 2:13 402.475.7080 2:7       28:4 136:25 298:3 338:10, 23 358:3 40.24 40-45 42:2 298:3 338:10, 23 358:3 40.24 40-45 42:2 298:3 338:10, 23 358:3 40.24 40-45 42:2 298:3 338:10, 23 358:3 40.24 40-45 42:2 298:3 338:10, 23 358:3 40.24 40-45 42:2 298:3 338:10, 23 358:3 40.24 40-45 42:2 298:3 338:10, 23 3	<b>2022</b> 5:9 53:7	<b>24-hour</b> 339: <i>11</i>	10, 13, 17 288:21,	<b>45</b> 5:13 8:3 39:4
301:18 302:13, 14 31:22 314:17 26 4:2, 12 39 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 46 3:7 5:17 2023 1:15 8:7 260 3:10 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 38:1 353:8 28 4:15 39:7, 11 40:20 2027 339:16 2027 339:16 2030 363:17 205 5:12 6:15 94:21 95:5 97:12, 176:3 332:18, 19 21 256:19, 24 20-megawatt 334:24 343:16 257:10 40:29:1 354:13 171:2 299:1 354:13 40:29:1 354:13 40:29:2 201:25 202:2, 3, 8, 31/22 6:5 42:1 282:10 5:30 44:25 45:4, 41:17, 25 42:2 3/31/21 5:16 358:3 20:15 40:237:12 5:32 378:25 20:25:5 20:23.11 224:16, 22 225:5 30 4:18 62:1 224:16, 22 225:5 30, 41:8 62:1 226:17, 20 289:10 19 262:16 340:19, 299:14 332:1, 2 25 341:9 40-year 357:16 500 228:23 374:7 40-year 357:16 500 228:23 26:24 21:28:5, 17 20:22 374:7 30,000-foot 129:2 156:24 326:24 21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 46 3:10 46 3:7 5:17 46 3:7 5:17 47.12, 42:10 40.2346.6000 2:18 5:20 42.12 282:10 5.30 44:25 45:4, 40.2346.6000 2:18 50.23 24:8 299:14 332:1, 2 25 341:9 40-year 357:16 500 228:23 360:11, 12 362:7, 30,000-foot 129:2 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 51 5:24 51.12, 12, 20.22:2 374:7 20.22:2 374:7 30,000-foot 129:2 156:24 326:24 21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 51 52.4 52.6 36:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 51 5:24 52.9 30:11, 12, 23.26:2 40.234.5 52.3, 5, 50.228:23 30.000-foot 129:2 20.228:23 50:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23.24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 24:10 260 2.11 25.12 25.24 25.2	191:22 244:15, 17	<b>25</b> 4:10 246:4	23 315:20	41:18 42:1
311:22 314:17 2023 1:15 8:7 25:15 61:2 311:4 338:1 353:8 363:17 369:2 2027 339:16 2030 363:17 205 5:12 6:15 94:21 95:5 97:12, 176:3 332:18, 19 20-megawatt 334:24 343:16 21 4:3 39:4 41:17, 25 42:2 201:25 202:2, 3, 8, 10 221:20 223:11 224:16, 22 225:5 210 230 373:1 224:16, 22 225:5 226:3 227:8, 9 228 4:15 229 4:15 229 4:15 229 4:15 229 4:15 220:16 220:	245:2 272:6	<b>25,000</b> 373:20	<b>38</b> 3:3 5:6 41:17	<b>450</b> 51:7
2023       1:15       8:7       260       3:10       14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24       47       5:17         25:15       61:2       311:4       27       4:12       21, 23, 24       5:2, 3, 5, 48       5:20         338:1       353:8       28       4:15       39:7, 11       40:20       49       5:20         2027       339:16       2nd       6:23       20:15       41:21       102:6       <5 >         2030       363:17       32       2nd       6:23       20:15       41:21       102:6       <5 >         204:21       95:5       97:12, 94:21       32:10       130:16, 18       45:10       130:19, 35:119       35:119	301:18 302:13, 14	<b>257</b> 3:10	42:1	<b>456</b> 3:10
25:15 61:2 311:4 28 4:15 28 4:15 6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16 49 5:20 2027 339:16 2nd 6:23 20:15 41:21 102:6 5.12 6:15 42:1 95:5 97:12, 13 16:3 332:18, 19 21 256:19, 24 200 136:6 230:4 257:10 250:20:20:20:20:20:20:20:20:20:20:20:20:20	311:22 314:17	<b>26</b> 4:2, 12	<b>39</b> 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12,	<b>46</b> 3:7 5:17
338:1       353:8       28       4:15       6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16       49       5:20         2027       339:16       2nd       6:23       20:15       41:21       102:6       <5 >         2030       363:17       363:17       363:17       363:17       363:18	<b>2023</b> 1:15 8:7	<b>260</b> 3:10	14, 15, 17, 18, 20,	<b>47</b> 5:17
363:17 369:2       29 4:15       39:7, 11 40:20       41:21 102:6       <5>         2030 363:17       205 5:12 6:15       <3>       <4>       109:1 351:19         94:21 95:5 97:12, 13       3 2:10 130:16, 18 176:3 332:18, 19       21 256:19, 24 256:19, 24 257:10       356:14 357:25 250:24         20-megawatt 74:12 299:1       354:13 354:13 40 5:9 41:18 257:10 25:00 359:5       40 5:9 41:18 5:14 360:1 25:14 360:1       5:00 359:5 25:14 36:1         21 4:3 39:4 41:17, 25 42:2 201:25 202:2, 3, 8, 10 221:20 223:11 224:16, 22 225:5 226:3 227:8, 9 217:23 218:6, 11, 224:16, 22 225:5 225:17, 20 289:10 299:14 332:1, 2 25 341:9 259:14 332:1, 2 25 341:9 259:14 332:1, 2 25 341:9 360:11, 12 362:7, 374:7 30,000-foot 129:2       40-45 42:2 298:3 338:10, 23 28:23 27:26 298:3 374:7 30,000-foot 129:2       40-45 42:2 298:3 50 228:23 25:24 20.22       500 228:23 25:24 20.22         2-1/2 85:5, 17 129:2       156:24 326:24 21.23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 12, 12, 12.2	25:15 61:2 311:4	<b>27</b> 4:12	21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5,	<b>48</b> 5:20
2027       339:16       2nd       6:23       20:15       41:21       102:6       <5 >         2030       363:17       36:12       6:15       <3 >       544:17       57:11         205       5:12       6:15       <3 >       4 >       109:1       351:19         94:21       95:5       97:12,       32:10       130:16, 18       4 58:10       130:19,       356:14       357:25         13       176:3       332:18, 19       21       256:19, 24       5,000       136:6       230:4         20-megawatt       334:24       343:16       257:10       5:00       359:5         74:12       299:1       354:13       40       5:9       41:18       5:14       360:1         201:25       202:2, 3, 8,       3/31/21       5:16       358:3       7, 11, 13       358:1         201:25       202:2, 3, 8,       3/31/22       6:2       400       237:12       5:32       378:25         201:25       202:2, 3, 8,       3/31/22       6:2       402.346.6000       2:18       5:35       378:2         226:3       227:8, 9       217:23       218:6, 11,       402.475.7080       2:7       28:4       136:25 <tr< td=""><td>338:1 353:8</td><td><b>28</b> 4:15</td><td>6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16</td><td><b>49</b> 5:20</td></tr<>	338:1 353:8	<b>28</b> 4:15	6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16	<b>49</b> 5:20
2030       363:17       363:17       363:17       363:17       363:17       363:17       363:17       363:17       363:17       363:18, 19       363:19       363:19       363:19       363:19       363:19       363:19       363:19       363:19       363:19       363:19       363:19       356:14       357:25       356:14       357:25       356:14       357:25       5,000       136:6       230:4       230:4       257:10       5:00       359:5       5:00       359:5       5:00       359:5       5:14       360:1       360:1       360:1       358:3       7,11,13       358:1       358:1       7,11,13       358:1       358:1       7,11,13       358:1       358:1       7,11,13       358:1       358:1       360:1       358:3       7,11,13       358:1       358:1       360:	363:17 369:2	<b>29</b> 4:15	39:7, 11 40:20	
205       5:12       6:15       4       3       2:10       130:16, 18       4       58:10       130:19, 356:14       357:25       356:14       357:25       5,000       136:6       230:4         20-megawatt       334:24       343:16       257:10       5,000       136:6       230:4         74:12       299:1       354:13       40       5:9       41:18       5:14       360:1         21       4:3       39:4       3/11/22       6:5       42:1       282:10       5:30       44:25       45:4,         41:17, 25       42:2       3/31/21       5:16       358:3       7, 11, 13       358:1         201:25       202:2, 3, 8,       3/31/22       6:2       400       237:12       5:32       378:25         10       221:20       223:11       3:14       260:1       402.346.6000       2:18       5:35       378:2         226:3       227:8, 9       217:23       218:6, 11,       402.475.7080       2:7       28:4       136:25         282:17, 20       289:10       19       262:16       340:19,       40-45       42:2       298:3       338:10, 23         360:11, 12       362:7,       374:7       40-acre	<b>2027</b> 339:16	<b>2nd</b> 6:23 20:15	41:21 102:6	< 5 >
94:21       95:5       97:12,       3       2:10       130:16, 18       4       58:10       130:19,       356:14       357:25         20-megawatt       334:24       343:16       257:10       5:00       359:5         74:12       299:1       354:13       40       5:9       41:18       5:14       360:1         21       4:3       39:4       3/11/22       6:5       42:1       282:10       5:30       44:25       45:4,         41:17, 25       42:2       3/31/21       5:16       358:3       7, 11, 13       358:1         201:25       202:2, 3, 8,       3/31/22       6:2       400       237:12       5:32       378:25         10       221:20       223:11       3:14       260:1       402.346.6000       2:18       5:35       378:2         24:16, 22       225:5       30       4:18       62:1       402.475.5100       2:13       50       5:23       24:8         226:3       227:8, 9       217:23       218:6, 11,       40-45       42:2       298:3       338:10, 23         299:14       332:1, 2       25       341:9       40-acre       239:11       500       228:23         8, 25	<b>2030</b> 363:17			<b>5</b> 44:17 57:11
13       176:3       332:18, 19       21       256:19, 24       5,000       136:6       230:4         20-megawatt       334:24       343:16       257:10       5:00       359:5         74:12       299:1       354:13       40       5:9       41:18       5:14       360:1         21       4:3       39:4       3/11/22       6:5       42:1       282:10       5:30       44:25       45:4,         41:17, 25       42:2       3/31/21       5:16       358:3       7, 11, 13       358:1         201:25       202:2, 3, 8,       3/31/22       6:2       400       237:12       5:32       378:25         10       221:20       223:11       3:14       260:1       402.346.6000       2:18       5:35       378:2         226:3       227:8, 9       217:23       218:6, 11,       402.475.7080       2:7       28:4       136:25         282:17, 20       289:10       19       262:16       340:19,       40-45       42:2       298:3       338:10, 23         299:14       332:1, 2       30,000       373:5       40-year       357:16       500       228:23         8, 25       374:7       41       4:5, 6, 9, 11,		< 3 >	<4>	109:1 351:19
20-megawatt         334:24 343:16         257:10         5:00 359:5           74:12 299:1         354:13         40 5:9 41:18         5:14 360:1           21 4:3 39:4         3/11/22 6:5         42:1 282:10         5:30 44:25 45:4,           41:17, 25 42:2         3/31/21 5:16         358:3         7, 11, 13 358:1           201:25 202:2, 3, 8, 10 221:20 223:11         3:14 260:1         402.346.6000 2:18         5:32 378:25           10 221:20 223:11         3:14 260:1         402.475.5100 2:13         50 5:23 24:8           224:16, 22 225:5         30 4:18 62:1         402.475.7080 2:7         28:4 136:25           282:17, 20 289:10         19 262:16 340:19, 25 341:9         40-45 42:2         298:3 338:10, 23           299:14 332:1, 2         25 341:9         40-acre 239:11         358:3           360:11, 12 362:7, 8, 25         374:7         40-acre 239:11         500 228:23           8, 25         374:7         41 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 504 197:22         504 197:22           2-1/2 85:5, 17         30,000-foot 156:24 326:24         21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 52	94:21 95:5 97:12,	,	<b>4</b> 58:10 130:19,	356:14 357:25
74:12 299:1       354:13       40 5:9 41:18       5:14 360:1         21 4:3 39:4       3/11/22 6:5       42:1 282:10       5:30 44:25 45:4,         41:17, 25 42:2       3/31/21 5:16       358:3       7, 11, 13 358:1         201:25 202:2, 3, 8,       3/31/22 6:2       400 237:12       5:32 378:25         10 221:20 223:11       3:14 260:1       402.346.6000 2:18       5:35 378:2         224:16, 22 225:5       30 4:18 62:1       402.475.5100 2:13       50 5:23 24:8         226:3 227:8, 9       217:23 218:6, 11,       402.475.7080 2:7       28:4 136:25         282:17, 20 289:10       19 262:16 340:19,       40-45 42:2       298:3 338:10, 23         299:14 332:1, 2       25 341:9       40-acre 239:11       358:3         360:11, 12 362:7,       30,000 373:5       40-year 357:16       500 228:23         8, 25       374:7       41 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12,       504 197:22         2-1/2 85:5, 17       30,000-foot       14, 15, 17, 18, 20,       51 5:24         129:2       156:24 326:24       21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5,       52 6:2 360:11, 12,		,		
21 4:3 39:4       3/11/22 6:5       42:1 282:10       5:30 44:25 45:4,         41:17, 25 42:2       3/31/21 5:16       358:3       7, 11, 13 358:1         201:25 202:2, 3, 8, 10 221:20 223:11       3:14 260:1       400 237:12       5:32 378:25         224:16, 22 225:5       30 4:18 62:1       402.346.6000 2:18       5:35 378:2         226:3 227:8, 9       217:23 218:6, 11, 217:23 218:6, 11, 2299:14 332:1, 2       40-45 42:2       298:3 338:10, 23         289:14 332:1, 2       25 341:9       40-acre 239:11       358:3         360:11, 12 362:7, 8, 25       374:7       40-acre 239:11       358:3         40-acre 239:11       500 228:23         41 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 504 197:22       504 197:22         2-1/2 85:5, 17       30,000-foot 156:24 326:24       14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 23	_			
41:17, 25 42:2       3/31/21 5:16       358:3       7, 11, 13 358:1         201:25 202:2, 3, 8, 10 221:20 223:11       3:14 260:1       400 237:12       5:32 378:25         224:16, 22 225:5       30 4:18 62:1       402.475.5100 2:18       5:35 378:2         226:3 227:8, 9       217:23 218:6, 11, 23 218:6, 11, 19 262:16 340:19, 299:14 332:1, 2       40-45 42:2       298:3 338:10, 23         360:11, 12 362:7, 8, 25       374:7       40-acre 239:11 358:3       358:3         40-acre 239:11       358:3       50 5:23 24:8         40-45 42:2       298:3 338:10, 23         40-acre 239:11       358:3         40-acre 239:11       358:3         500 228:23         41 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 504       504 197:22         2-1/2 85:5, 17       30,000-foot 156:24 326:24       14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21       51 5:24         129:2       156:24 326:24       21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12,				
201:25 202:2, 3, 8,       3/31/22 6:2       400 237:12       5:32 378:25         10 221:20 223:11       3:14 260:1       402.346.6000 2:18       5:35 378:2         224:16, 22 225:5       30 4:18 62:1       402.475.5100 2:13       50 5:23 24:8         226:3 227:8, 9       217:23 218:6, 11,       402.475.7080 2:7       28:4 136:25         282:17, 20 289:10       19 262:16 340:19,       40-45 42:2       298:3 338:10, 23         299:14 332:1, 2       25 341:9       40-acre 239:11       358:3         360:11, 12 362:7,       30,000 373:5       40-year 357:16       500 228:23         41 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12,       504 197:22         2-1/2 85:5, 17       30,000-foot       14, 15, 17, 18, 20,       51 5:24         129:2       156:24 326:24       21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5,       52 6:2 360:11, 12,				· ·
10       221:20       223:11       3:14       260:1       402.346.6000       2:18       5:35       378:2         224:16, 22       225:5       30       4:18       62:1       402.475.5100       2:13       50       5:23       24:8         226:3       227:8, 9       217:23       218:6, 11,       402.475.7080       2:7       28:4       136:25         282:17, 20       289:10       19       262:16       340:19,       40-45       42:2       298:3       338:10, 23         299:14       332:1, 2       25       341:9       40-acre       239:11       358:3         360:11, 12       362:7,       30,000       373:5       40-year       357:16       500       228:23         41       4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12,       504       197:22       14, 15, 17, 18, 20,       51       5:24         2-1/2       85:5, 17       156:24       326:24       21, 23, 24       5:2, 3, 5,       52       6:2       360:11, 12,	,			
224:16, 22 225:5       30 4:18 62:1       402.475.5100 2:13       50 5:23 24:8         226:3 227:8, 9       217:23 218:6, 11,       402.475.7080 2:7       28:4 136:25         282:17, 20 289:10       19 262:16 340:19,       40-45 42:2       298:3 338:10, 23         299:14 332:1, 2       25 341:9       40-acre 239:11       358:3         360:11, 12 362:7,       30,000 373:5       40-year 357:16       500 228:23         8, 25       374:7       41 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12,       504 197:22         2-1/2 85:5, 17       30,000-foot       14, 15, 17, 18, 20,       51 5:24         129:2       156:24 326:24       21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5,       52 6:2 360:11, 12,				
226:3       227:8, 9       217:23       218:6, 11, 19       402.475.7080       2:7       28:4       136:25         282:17, 20       289:10       19       262:16       340:19, 23       298:3       338:10, 23         299:14       332:1, 2       25       341:9       40-acre       239:11       358:3         360:11, 12       362:7, 8, 25       374:7       41       4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 41.7       504       197:22         2-1/2       85:5, 17       30,000-foot       14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 41.7       51       5:24         129:2       156:24       326:24       21, 23, 24       5:2, 3, 5, 52       6:2       360:11, 12, 3				
282:17, 20 289:10       19 262:16 340:19,       40-45 42:2       298:3 338:10, 23         299:14 332:1, 2       25 341:9       40-acre 239:11       358:3         360:11, 12 362:7,       30,000 373:5       40-year 357:16       500 228:23         8, 25       374:7       41 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12,       504 197:22         2-1/2 85:5, 17       30,000-foot       14, 15, 17, 18, 20,       51 5:24         129:2       156:24 326:24       21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5,       52 6:2 360:11, 12,				
299:14 332:1, 2       25 341:9       40-acre 239:11       358:3         360:11, 12 362:7, 8, 25       374:7       40-year 357:16       500 228:23         41 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 129:2       51 5:24         129:2       156:24 326:24       21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12,	1			
360:11, 12 362:7, 8, 25       30,000 373:5       40-year 357:16       500 228:23         2-1/2 85:5, 17       30,000-foot 156:24 326:24       14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12,	1			
8, 25       374:7       41 4:5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 12, 1504 197:22         2-1/2 85:5, 17       30,000-foot 156:24 326:24       14, 15, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 52 6:2 360:11, 12, 21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5, 24	1			
2-1/2       85:5, 17       30,000-foot       14, 15, 17, 18, 20,       51       5:24         129:2       156:24       326:24       21, 23, 24       5:2, 3, 5,       52       6:2       360:11, 12,		'	1	
129:2   156:24 326:24   21, 23, 24 5:2, 3, 5,   <b>52</b> 6:2 360:11, 12,				
		/		
<b>300</b> 2:11	129:2			
		300 2:11	6, 9, 11, 12, 13, 16	20, 21 361:8
		<u> </u>		<u> </u>

262.1 16	(0500 0.5 10	00 54.16 61.12	323:11 324:21
362:1, 16 <b>528</b> 5:19	<b>68508</b> 2:5, <i>12</i> <b>68920</b> 197:23	<b>80</b> 54:16 61:13 72:8 75:3 142:16	
<b>526</b> 5.19 <b>53</b> 6:2	<b>69</b> 6:23		335:16, 24 336:1,
	09 0.23	146:16 152:19	2 338:10 342:5
<b>533</b> 5:19	47.	222:24 284:10	able 22:7 78:22
<b>54</b> 6:5 360:22	<7>	341:23	100:22 111:7
361:13, 15 362:16,	<b>7</b> 5:9 117:2, 3	80,000 49:7	146:19 151:3, 18
17, 18, 20, 25	247:8, 15 251:20	800 237:12	152:18 161:10
<b>55</b> 6:5	257:10 335:21	<b>80s</b> 307:23 308:1,	180:1 210:19
<b>554</b> 3:10	337:18	6	244:7, 11 245:3
<b>559</b> 3:13	<b>7/1/23</b> 5:11, 13	<b>85,000</b> 373:1	254:1 287:6
<b>56</b> 6:5	<b>70</b> 7:2 28:8	85,000-person	290:10 291:1
<b>56,000</b> 373:6	284:10 354:23, 25	271:5	297:8 310:10
<b>57</b> 6:9	<b>700</b> 245:21	<b>850</b> 121:2	311:23 312:15, 20
<b>58</b> 6:9	<b>70-604</b> ( <b>5</b> 25:21	<b>857</b> 3:16	317:21 323:10
<b>59</b> 6: <i>12</i>	<b>70-604</b> (6 27:16		338:23 344:12, 19
<b>5th</b> 318: <i>14</i> 319:8	<b>70-605</b> (5 24:24	<9>	<b>about</b> 20:14, 19
	<b>70-612</b> 28: <i>3</i>	<b>9</b> 68:7 99:22	50:10 52:23, 24
<6>	<b>70-612(1)(a</b> 27:16	<b>9/6/22</b> 4:12	55:2 61:15 62:1
<b>6</b> 1:4 8:14 10:8,	<b>70-612(1)(b</b> 24: <i>13</i>	<b>9:07</b> 8:1, 7	63:18, 19 64:17
18 23:24 24:3	27:19, 22 28:9	<b>9:30</b> 44: <i>17</i>	68:23 69:3, 18
27:10, 14 28:15	<b>70-662</b> 28: <i>19</i>	<b>9:45</b> 46:18	70:11 72:18 73:4
47:10 58:10	<b>70-664</b> 24:1, 6	<b>906</b> 3:16	74:25 82:19 85:2,
68: <i>16</i> 176: <i>14</i>	<b>707</b> 3:13	<b>90s</b> 277:1 295:15	9, 18 86:2 87:2,
178:25 188:15	<b>71</b> 7:2	344:1	13 88:17 92:16
189: <i>1</i> 190:2	<b>714</b> 3: <i>14</i>	<b>919</b> 6:15	97:4 103:24, 25
268:20	<b>72</b> 7:2	<b>920</b> 6:15	113:2 <i>1</i> 122:4
<b>6.7</b> 105:7 146: <i>1</i> ,	<b>73</b> 7:6	<b>921</b> 3:16	125:1 127:9
23 147:5, 6, 18, 22	<b>75</b> 57:13	<b>957</b> 3:16	129:10 133:18
<b>60</b> 6:13 284:10	<b>756</b> 3:14	<b>977</b> 3:16	136:1, 9, 10
<b>61</b> 3:7 6:13	<b>762</b> 3:14	<b>988</b> 3:17	137:22 138: <i>13</i>
<b>610</b> 3:13 5:20, 22,	<b>764</b> 5:8	<b>9th</b> 327:19	142:12 146:7
23, 24 6:2, 4, 5, 8,	<b>765</b> 5:8		150:23 153:4, 7,
9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 22,	<b>770</b> 3:16	< A >	16, 21 156:17
23, 25 7:2	<b>79</b> 3:9	<b>a.m</b> 8:1, 7 109:5	159:2, 9, 10, 17
<b>62</b> 6:15	<b>7th</b> 320:2	110: <i>1</i>	163: <i>13</i> 164: <i>12</i>
<b>63</b> 6:15		<b>ability</b> 15:14	166:8, 20, 23
<b>64</b> 6: <i>15</i>	<8>	94:3 108:15	167:12 168:20, 25
<b>65</b> 6:15	<b>8</b> 4:2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 11,	116: <i>4</i> 146: <i>13</i>	169: <i>10</i> , <i>24</i> 170: <i>17</i>
<b>653</b> 3:13	12, 14, 15, 17, 18,	210:10 272:14	172: <i>1</i> , <i>1</i> 9 174: <i>17</i>
<b>66</b> 6:15	20, 21, 23, 24 5:2,	274:2, 3 275:2	179:19, 23 181:9
<b>663</b> 3:13	3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12,	286:24 287:18	191: <i>11</i> 196:23
<b>67</b> 6:15	13, 16 98:10	291:12 292:21	200:7, 25 208:9,
<b>677</b> 3:13	108: <i>1</i>	293:19 303:10	25 213: <i>14</i> 214: <i>5</i> ,
<b>68</b> 6:23	<b>8/31/22</b> 4:11	305:12 307:5	7 215:9 230:4
<b>68102</b> 2: <i>17</i>	<b>8:30</b> 378:16, 24	312:1, 7 317:15	231:8 232:10
		319:1 320:10	237:8, 9, 16 239:7

245:8, 20 246:17,
18 253:18 265:1
267:10 268:7
273:2, 8 274:10,
23 279:20 280:5
282:13 283:8
284:1 287:22
289: <i>14</i> 290: <i>5</i> , <i>8</i> ,
12 292:19 293:19
294:2 296:23
297:25 298:15
299:12, 14 303:10
304:6 306:7
314:4, 8 316:24
317:14 318:12, 19
319:9, 23 324:7,
22, 23 329:14
333:24 335:13, 15
337:6 339:6
340:11 341:25
343:2 <i>1</i> 344: <i>4</i>
352:5 353:6
356:1, 17 362:21
365:13 371:17
373:5, 6 377:1
378:1
above 241:7
284:15 288:19, 23
289:22 364:9, 17
above-described
247: <i>17</i>
<b>absent</b> 29:24
164: <i>4</i> 182: <i>13</i>
absolute 87:17
139:5
<b>Absolutely</b> 44:8
83:18 85:1 88:3
89:25 122: <i>15</i>
127:2 128:6, 17,
25 132:16 134:2,
4 142:6 145:19
150:9 186: <i>19</i>
245:16 268:10
282:10 305:22
353:5 355:19
absorb 357:7
i e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e

accept 22:16 26:24 41:17, 25 accepting 58:12 access 245:10 307:6 accident 38:10 accolade 246:7 accomplished 61:16, 17 according 227:24 242:8 255:7 **account** 59:15 271:12 Accountability 6:13 59:2 94:16 115:15 accountable 52:3 53:20 56:23 57:2 82:23 179:13 accounting 298:13 342:15 344:5 346:24, 25 353:18 accounts 271:9, 10 342:15 373:8 accumulated 61:22 accurate 37:14 224:25 376:6, 8 accurately 60:20 **achieve** 59:14 276:2 achieved 47:21 achieving 48:11 acknowledged 56:3 acquires 126:2 acquisition 84:20 acre 210:6, 20, 22 212:19 240:15 acre-feet 210:5, 20 212:19 284:14 **acre-foot** 210:22 240:14

acres 136:6 199:6 215:4 245:19 289:6 **acronyms** 76:24 77:24 across-the-board 91:6 Act 28:13, 23, 25 276:4 **action** 36:8 **actions** 58:22 118:16, 20, 24 activities 374:21 acts 20:20 actual 318:21 328:18 356:19 **Adams** 269:1 270:5 **add** 16:1 39:19 88:7 164:4 201:6 245:6 356:25 **added** 26:10 374:5 **addition** 49:21 67:23 69:19 75:25 207:2 219:19 additional 11:3 25:12 32:21, 25 36:8 51:8 55:19 63:6 70:22 129:22 137:23 164:7 236:5 address 8:11 19:21 21:21 33:18 38:1 47:5 53:2 57:21 79:20, 23 80:12 114:4 178:5 197:21 217:6 260:18 334:3 354:1, 4 addressed 25:16 26:7 28:25 175:25 354:9

addresses 39:16

**adequate** 198:*13* 277:4 291:9, 15 306:13 314:20 adequately 70:8 281:6 adjacent 75:22 adjourn 44:2 adjudicate 249:22 250:4 **adjust** 212:21 adjustments 302:20 administration 73:2 administrative 35:5 153:8 199:5 admissibility 25:14 26:21 31:9 **adopt** 350:10 365:10 advantage 293:22 294:5 337:11, 16 344:18 advantageous 317:22 advise 325:2, 18 Advisory 5:12 6:15 98:5 116:13 advocacy 12:7 advocated 15:11 **affect** 94:8 99:16 116:23 290:18 305:23 affected 276:3 **affects** 82:19 114:12 282:2 affiliation 12:5 affirmative 28:16 affordable 60:11 355:10 after 20:9, 17, 20, *21* 21:*15*, *23* 23:*6* 43:14.17 44:25 45:10, 13 46:3 60:15 66:10, 18 68:11, 12 127:16

172:9 173:15, 21	142:2 209:1	252:13 258:1, 4, 5,	allocated 105:7
218:4 252:14	237:10 266:1	10, 13 274:8	146: <i>1</i> 199: <i>7</i>
261:19 280:19	302:17	275:9 276:6, 10	251:10 252:4
291:3 357:25	<b>agree</b> 61:9 79:3	277:14 278:12, 13	290:9
358:1 369:9, 10	93:17 118:24	279:2, 3 298:20	allocating 151:8
378:21	126:10 133:3, 20	300:23 301:1	290:9
afternoon 261:3,	134:14, 23 135:19,		allocation 134:18
4 304:12	22 136:2 138:4, 8,	320:24 356:14	147:11 210:14, 17
<b>ag</b> 49:8 80:9	21 141:12, 18	agreements 59:7	211:13, 21 250:13,
254:18 331:15	143:5, 12 144:2, 8,	117:13, 16, 21, 23	14 290:14 296:6
335:18	15 145:2, 4, 7, 10	118:19 143:6	302:2 363:22
again 8:8 28:3	146:20, 21 148:23	145:6, 22 146:13	364:6, 15, 20
33:11 34:22	150:1, 13, 14	209:17, 25 231:1	365:3, 4, 16, 18
35:25 37:2 54:23	151:13 152:10	236:7 237:17	<b>allocations</b> 147:18
92:6 115:24	153:3 154:17	238:21, 22, 23	231:5 233:3
143:17 146:8	155:20 156:1	248:9, 11 249:7	250:21 279:23
171:20 190:3	161:7 164:6, 18,	250:20 251:4	allotment 290:10
201:8 245:2	22 165:2 173:5	258:14 272:19, 21	allow 19:24
251:15 266:9	201:3 236:9	273:7, 25 274:6	70:15 248:5
276:22 277:8	238:19 239:22	280:5	249:5 287:9
280:1 284:16	240:24 242:4	agrees 240:16	291:2 322:6
299:9 302:10, 23	245:15 250:21	agricultural 144:3	358:23
305:14 306:21	251:6 296:24	agriculture 48:2	<b>allowed</b> 13:10
307:7 309:16	305:6 334:15	60:11 63:1	72:12 97:9
317:4 318:16	351:12 354:11	335:14	104:17 133:5
319:19 323:7	agreed 25:8 31:3	ahead 83:23	143:7 322:11
325:21 326:19	36:1 38:19 43:5	89:12 192:12	353:22
329:6 330:18	45:19, 25 127:7	248:19 257:3	allows 246:11
333:11, 13, 16	142:2 149:22	273:19 274:13	247:1 250:24
337:24 338:11	165:19 195:23	322:24 352:6	289:25
339:3 344:17	196:1 231:3	356:13	allude 69:22
347:13 348:18	Agreement 4:20,	air-conditioner	<b>alluded</b> 61:15
349:10 354:5	21, 23, 24 37:6	105:23	72:17 267:2
360:11 362:24	38:15 42:22 43:2,	air-conditioning	alluding 96:20
367:17 372:22	3 53:13 143:2	106:24	Alma 197:22
<b>Against</b> 61:7	144:21 159:20, 21,	<b>alfalfa</b> 80:10	almost 95:15
75:23 83:20, 21	22 160:3 171:13	algorithms 263:21	306:25 315:3
153:24 182:5	175:22 176:1	align 67:5 69:2	alone 333:12
295:11 365:7	185:1 205:10	310:13	along 103:7
<b>Agency</b> 244:23	209:8 231:14, 16	<b>aligned</b> 185:17	210:12 229:22
agenda 20:9, 18	235:21 238:5, 9	alignment 69:5	230:1 236:8
88:17	240:13 242:8	allocate 105:4	273:6 286:6
agendas 130:2	247:8, 18, 25	151:19 154:8	288:6 303:11
ago 54:16 85:5,	248:4, 10 249:1, 3,	210:21 215:22	313:5 345:15
17 90:12 94:6	4, 12 250:23, 25	243:9 244:8	369:24
115:20 121:7	251:2, 9, 12, 16		
			•

alphabatically	220.7 12 240.12	Angreena 6:15 22	161:5 186:2
alphabetically 133:17	239:7, <i>12</i> 240: <i>12</i> , <i>17</i> 244: <i>19</i> 245: <i>16</i>	<b>Answers</b> 6:15, 23 255:10	201:6 229:21
already 21:25	284:14 290:24	anticipates 240:11	334:18 372:24
22:4 25:8 26:19	301:22 313:9	anticipates 240.11 anticipation 15:1	anyway 13:19
40:16 108:5	343:1 358:12	antiquated 246:18	155:13
144:25 249:1	amounts 355:14	any 13:22 14:3,	apologies 328:25
251:5 339:10	analysis 18:10	18 16:8 20:4	370:16
349:17 366:3	71:23 326:20	21:8 22:14, 15	apologize 33:6
369:20	analyze 14:21	24:19 28:20 30:7	101:22 110:16
Alternatives 4:9	15:15	31:21 35:17	180:16 230:23
although 10:15	ancillary 137:23	38:15, 17 40:4	283:5 311:14
62:21	and/or 27:11	43:7 55:9 58:19,	328:23 360:8
altogether 237:11	335:24	23 59:3 64:19, 22	374:17
always 67:4	angle 339:15	65:24 67:9 71:24	apology 148:9
69:16 73:19	animals 114:12	75:9, 10, 12, 17	apparently
91:18, 21 113:5	announce 29:21	78:11, 12 81:16	319:12 361:12
143:1 144:1, 4	34:19 46:19 92:4	84:17 86:1, 19	appeal 22:6
145:19 146:19	announcement	87:14, 15, 18	appearance
150:20 211:18	318: <i>13</i> , <i>15</i> 319:8	92:16 97:9 116:5	203:22
241:22 329:11	announcing 320:6,	129:22 135:3	<b>APPEARING</b> 2:1,
<b>AMEND</b> 1:6	7	145:7 157:5, 19	8, 14
191:2, 4 365:24	annual 51:8	177:4, 14 184:9	appears 71:23
366:15, 18 367:11,	240:21 364:13	190:13 231:13	225:8 253:25
16, 21 368:1, 13	annually 55:15	233:17 234:11	293:8 301:14
amended 59:10	another 13:16	242:3 252:3, 7, 20	320:1
154:18 176:16	18:1 22:24 37:24	254:4, 22 258:19	appellate 76:23
357:7 368:20, 23	50:6 114:1, 3, 18	259:1, 4 270:23	application 16:10
369:4, 16	121:3 142:19	271:2, 7 273:5	70:20 76:12
AMENDMENT	154:1, 6 168:1	285:20 290:13	200:15
1:4 8:14 10:8, 18	221:10 224:3	294:8, 19 304:14	<b>applied</b> 201:12
23:24 24:3 27:10,	232:22 235:24	307:21, 22 312:18,	282:9
14 28:15 47:10	252:4, 16 289:22	24 326:23 330:8	apply 27:17
116:11, 21, 23	298:5 302:10, 11	347:18 357:13	200:18 276:24
181:16 183:9, 14	349:10	378:7	287:21 377:8
186:14 353:11	answer 31:14	anybody 119:12	appointed 12:21
356:25	37:20 129:7, 19	135:4 248:25	13:16
amendments	137:2 142:1	251:9	appointment
49:16, 18 50:3	155:4, 8 170:4	anymore 100:4	19:25
54:24 57:16	171:19 172:17	324:10	appreciable
59:25 127:18	208:8 220:22	<b>anyone</b> 86:17	297:24
133:5	290:14 304:17	146:23 250:4	Appreciate 186:8
amongst 50:11	316:19 368:5	343:9 367:15	approach 243:25
amount 152:3, 13	answerable 65:17	anything 20:5	322:3
210:4, 7, 19	answered 37:17	30:3 32:15 35:1	approaching 51:9
212:15, 17 217:15,	108:20 257:6	78:1 94:7, 12	61:23
22 218:4, 10		99:15 116:5	

appropriate 311:1 appropriated 64:2
appropriation
89:8 213:2 <i>1</i>
227:24 248:13, 18
249:2 250:8
appropriations
232:7 239:9
247:16, 20 248:2
251:22
approval 8:20
10:7 23:23 24:2,
<i>17</i> 36:6, 25 47: <i>13</i>
49:18 54:8 57:15
252:5 320:1, 8
367:15
approve 8:12
24:7 47:9 58: <i>14</i>
59:22 60:24
70:19 126:25
130:22 158:2 <i>1</i>
311:18 320:21
327:19
approved 12:24
62: <i>15</i> 133: <i>4</i>
158:25 159: <i>1</i>
181: <i>17</i> 353:9, <i>10</i>
368:10
<b>approves</b> 127: <i>17</i>
186: <i>13</i>
approving 24:23
292: <i>14</i>
approximately
44: <i>15</i> 121:2
163: <i>14</i> 174: <i>13</i>
199:6, 25 200: <i>1</i>
207:9 245:19
271:10 298:3
299:2, 9 300:17,
19 373:1
<b>April</b> 327:19
329:19
<b>aquifer</b> 89:18
273:9, 11 274:4
275:15 279:23
213.13 219.23

```
281:1, 5 290:25
291:6
arbitrarily 254:10
architect 266:14
are 8:8 9:4
10:24 11:22
14:16 15:14
21:17 22:23 23:9
24:9 25:1, 4, 9
27:5, 19 28:5
29:2, 4, 8, 11
34:23 36:4, 20, 22
40:8, 24 41:9
42:3 43:11, 12
45:6 47:3 48:5
49:3, 8 50:22
51:6, 15, 17, 21
52:1 55:4 56:12,
24 57:8 59:22, 25
60:5, 9 61:18
62:8, 17, 18, 23, 24
63:8, 10, 11, 15
64:24 65:6, 9
66:4, 6, 10, 13, 24
68:2, 13 69:2, 8,
18 70:3, 4 73:15,
21 74:13, 15
75:13, 15 77:17
78:2, 8 80:11, 12,
23 82:22 83:6, 12,
25 86:25 88:6
89:11 91:3 92:1
93:7, 25 95:17
96:5, 7, 18 97:5, 7
99:22 100:10, 13,
15 101:1, 2 102:2,
3, 10 104:4, 6, 12,
17 105:14 106:11,
12 109:3 110:19,
25 111:2, 7
112:13 115:11, 19
116:3 117:3
118:19 119:19, 25
120:2, 11, 14
121:1, 4, 8, 12, 16,
18, 20, 22 122:5,
```

*12* 123:*3* 124:*9* 128:14 132:11 133:2, 5, 25 134:21 135:24, 25 136:4, 6, 12, 13 137:3, 4, 19, 20 138:14, 22, 24 139:7, 9, 10, 11, 13 141:6, 24 142:24 143:18 144:13, 25 146:10 150:15, 19 152:22 154:16 156:14 159:8, 25 160:8, 16 161:19 163:2 166:10, 13 167:2 168:7 171:8 172:18 173:2, 4 174:11 175:23, 24 177:*1*8 178:9 179:15, 16, 25 180:10, 18, 21, 25 181:1, 5, 8, 24, 25 183:*13* 184:*1* 187:8, 10, 11, 13, 25 188:9 189:23 192:4, 6, 18 193:23 194:11, 20, *24* 195:*1* 198:*5* 200:20, 21 207:14, 20 208:12, 13, 20 209:10, 24 211:5, 9, 20 214:3 216:2, 4, 8 217:4, 18 219:1, 20, 23 220:4, 24, 25 221:3, 9, 22, 25 222:3 225:4, 5, 6 226:3 229:25 230:8, 13, 25 231:10 232:6, 11, 24 234:21 235:8 236:9, 11 238:12, *15. 20* 241:21, 25 242:5 244:17 245:10, 24 247:20 248:11 252:12

256:19 258:14, 16 263:25 264:6 266:21 267:7 268:14, 16 269:14, 17, 23 270:10, 18, 20 271:3, 19 272:7 273:3 274:1 275:13 276:3, 22 278:17, 25 279:6, 17, 25 280:16, 21 281:24 283:9 284:21 285:16 286:16 287:17 288:8 292:1 294:9, 17, 20 296:10 297:1 299:16, 18 304:10 307:3, 5 308:15 310:6, 14, 24 313:23 314:2 317:7, 9, 20 318:7 319:9 321:7 323:10, 11, 15, 20, 21 324:22 334:10 335:6, 7 337:23 339:8 340:19, 24 341:6, 7 342:13 344:23 345:10, 13, 19 348:12, 21, 25 350:5 354:21, 23, 24, 25 355:1 356:5 361:2 364:16 366:8 369:15 370:20 371:10, 16, 22 372:2, 23 373:18 375:13 376:19 377:3, 6 378:3 **area** 49:2 68:2, 7, 17 80:17 83:2 90:14 91:1 129:21 131:10 136:4 141:20 180:14 182:1, 6 205:7, 12 206:4, 16 207:2, 25

214.19 216.10 22	osido 70.12	Aggramation 5.6	305:18
214:18 216:19, 22	aside 72:12	Assumption 5:6	
220:11, 12, 20	132:4 274:23	56:15, 16	Avenue 260:21
221:21 222:6, 9	364:11	assumptions 13:22	average 299:2
224:6, 9 229:19,	asked 20:12	attach 104:12	341:15
23 230:13, 15	59:22 127:9	attached 89:9	avoid 35:17
231:9 233:12	129:5 158:6	125:8, 13 209:10	avoided 244:8
245:8, 12 270:1	159:9 166:8	213:25 247:16	avoiding 38:11
280:9 281:11	172:6 211:4	attend 14:25	aware 21:18 51:1
282:2 284:2, 25	255:11 256:1	29:20	84:22 101:20
285:5, 10 288:23	358:4	attendance 181:16	157:8 160:8, 22
290:18 295:19	<b>asking</b> 47:13	attendees 331:7	244:17 313:1
303:12 323:18	98:19 134:13	attention 239:2	319:14 352:10
333:20 351:3, 5,	160:13 208:8	318:1, 5 363:21	356:21
12 370:25 371:13	asks 47:8	365:23 366:13	<b>awful</b> 153:15
<b>areas</b> 163: <i>1</i>	assert 57:23	370:2	
194:10, 20 219:20	assertion 162:10	attorney 35:7	< B >
220:2 284:21	assessment 71:21	61:6	<b>back</b> 13:12 32:11
361:22 363:15	333:2 360:16	attorneys 9:9	45:11, 12 46:15,
371:16	361:5 363:12	33:20 209:20	19 65:13 70:21
<b>arena</b> 169:22	<b>asset</b> 74:4 364:17	248:14	80:15 84:21 92:4,
263:15	assets 51:8 72:2,	<b>attrition</b> 369:9, 10	5 95:14 99:19
aren't 25:1 67:4	6 153:17 156:5	audience 34:2	100:16 105:5
69:9 137:15	324:14 340:11	Audio 7:6	109:3 110:4, 10
138:7 143:15	356:23 357:7	<b>auditor</b> 323:23	113:6 124:3
152:2 278:7	assist 200:16	auditorium 237:9	127:22 142:22
Arguably 40:8	327:5	auditors 323:23	147:15 157:21
<b>argue</b> 27:5 31:7	assistance 326:13	authority 37:5	165:2 167:20
67:6 86:24 139:8	assistant 199:2	57:8, 10 169:6	172:9 173:13, 24
161:22	263:1	253:18 256:11, 18	174: <i>17</i> 181: <i>15</i>
argument 18:7,	assisted 266:12	308:16 349:20	195:7 209:2 <i>1</i>
15 78:9 293:8, 11	<b>associate</b> 16: <i>13</i> ,	authorize 57:14	225:22 226:1
295:3	17, 23, 25	authorized 28:16	231:20 234:10
arguments 11:19	associated 298:17	78:12, 15	260:4 264:22
13:2 31:13, 23	Association 12:6	automatic 164:5	265:25 273:22
32:1, 2 97:19	15: <i>13</i> 16:8 76:2 <i>1</i>	automatically	274:4 275:2, 14
<b>arm</b> 276:8 324:10	<b>assume</b> 9:11	106:9	276:25 280:1, 17,
arrangement	209:16 296:16	automation	19 281:7, 15
209:5	308:11 312:22	263:10, 21	283:6 290:1, 3, 11
arrangements	319:18 325:25	availability 51:20	309:24 310:10
317:17	326:1 338:17	104:22	314:18 315:18, 23
<b>arrive</b> 18: <i>14</i>	350:10	available 108:7	327:7 336:3
<b>Article</b> 4:12, 17,	<b>assumed</b> 172:12	202:12 213:2	339:3, 14 340:23
18	assuming 28:13	239:8, 15, 21	341:11 343:19
articulated 268:14	36:25 127:16	240:19 241:23	347:5 352:7
	300:25 358:15	242:1, 12, 16	359:2 360:6
L			

background	271:23	216:15, 23 219:4	benefiting 60:21
25:20 31:11	<b>beat</b> 129:3	220:4 221:3	139:10 208:20
135:16, 17 157:20	<b>Beatrice</b> 142: <i>19</i>	223:12 232:19	313: <i>13</i>
324:19, 20 353:17	beauty 281:16	233:25 234:10	<b>benefits</b> 49:2, 3
back-of-the-	<b>bed</b> 289:24	241:4 243:4	52:25 60:19 72:3,
napkin 326:25	began 53:8	249:13 252:17	5, 15 73:1 140:12
backwards 84:2	267:18 333:24	257:23 258:20	153:12 220:15
123:10 131:9	beginning 51:11	265:5 282:24	285:12 294:25
<b>bad</b> 336:15	55:10 87:7, 20	302:18 321:2	313:14 333:3
<b>balance</b> 209:14	105:22 188:4	325:1, 17 327:25	360:14
313:15	199:23 336:16	331:3 332:5	best 23:24 53:18
<b>balanced</b> 153:23	368:24	340:13 342:12	57:6, 9 60:1
ballpark 340:3	<b>behalf</b> 11: <i>11</i>	350:5 351:14	64:12 65:3 70:24
341:8	12:7 15:11 34:15,	358:17 375:23	76:7, 8, 9 129:20
<b>bank</b> 340:19	17 39:9 47:5	<b>Bellevue</b> 265:10	130:8 131:2
<b>bankers</b> 49:11	78:13 79:3, 16	<b>belong</b> 64:1	142:9, 12 210:10
bartenders 49:12	101:23 197:13	209:11, 12, 13	214:13 290:15, 16
<b>Base</b> 280:18	233:7 260:13	213:11	291:18 317:11
350:13	<b>belief</b> 18:9 134:3,	beneficial 107:8	328:1, 12 329:7
<b>based</b> 11:14	4 189:10	249:15 250:11	332:24 335:10
31:13 32:2 40:4	<b>believe</b> 10:3 13:3	255:1, 22 256:5	<b>bet</b> 204:8 223:23
89:19, 20 97:19	14:7 26:6 29:19	280:20 303:2	<b>better</b> 52:16
112:22 147:10	36:19 38:6 39:4	beneficially	246:25 273:20
162:11 175:19	40:18, 21 44:11	247:20 249:22	275:4 287:10
183:23 338:9	45:1 56:14 65:1,	250:5 253:2, 14	306:4 333:19
369:16, 23	10 67:3 70:7, 24	254:2 255:6, 12,	339:1 375:20
Baseline 212:24	77:15, 16 78:17	16 256:10 257:12	376:3
basements 267:25	86:3 88:4 91:23	273:18	betterment 170:25
basically 99:3	93:11 97:6	benefit 34:2	<b>beyond</b> 54:11
213:12 284:9	110: <i>11</i> 114: <i>5</i>	44:10 48:1 49:14,	92:21 262:1
298:21 374:2	115:16 118:2, 24	23 50:14 56:6	265:22 322:8
<b>Basin</b> 49:5	120:2, 7 121:6, 7,	60:6, 12 62:4	323:14 364:18
203:12 270:2	10 128:15, 19, 21	67:10, 11 69:7	<b>bias</b> 12:4 14:18
279:6	129:9 130:8, 10	74:16, 23, 24	<b>biased</b> 14:16
<b>basis</b> 178:5	131:1, 8, 15	88:10 137:23, 25	<b>big</b> 206:3 222:22
211:14, 16, 18	133:17 136:6	138:7 141: <i>13</i>	223:5 280:11, 12
253:23 257:7	137:8 138:10, 12,	144:11, 22 161:8,	281:13 282:15
269:18 337:8, 17	15, 19, 21 139:5, 6,	24 200:12 220:18	284:1, 3 288:3
339:5, 21	<i>19</i> 140: <i>1</i> 141: <i>1</i>	233:3 234:24	289:15, 18 294:9
<b>Bass</b> 79:23	146:12 158:7, 23	235:3 246:16	315:19 341:25
<b>Batie</b> 3:20	159: <i>16</i> 166: <i>15</i> , <i>17</i>	265:2 275:6	377:8
<b>battle</b> 122:25	167:18 169:7	284:16 285:9	<b>bigger</b> 131:16
<b>Bay</b> 79:23	170:22 175:5, 18	287:16 293:9, 13,	314:3
<b>beach</b> 211:8	183: <i>12</i> , <i>17</i> 184: <i>1</i>	16 295:2, 5 296:2	<b>bill</b> 218:6, 14
bears 239:13	189:22, 25 196: <i>13</i>	318:25 323:13	<b>billed</b> 217:22
	207:12 208:18	benefited 245:14	

218:5, 10
<b>billions</b> 71:5
bills 106:17
bind 132:21, 23
159:22
<b>binding</b> 70:5
171:9 349: <i>18</i>
365:4
bird's-eye 156:23
Birkett 4:2 25:15
30:13, 19, 22
34:20 366:4
<b>bit</b> 10:19 54:14
105:19 179:22
200:9, 25 204:7
213:14 228:8
230:23 265:24
284:20 285:15
288: <i>16</i> 309: <i>12</i> 310: <i>19</i> 314: <i>4</i> , 22
317:17 355:25
black 125:12
blank 258:3
BLANKENAU
2:4 34:5
blessed 84:4
blew 216:22
block 223:5
<b>blue</b> 180:25
181:9 187:10
206:11 214:18
216:19 219:20
220:12 221:9
222:22 225:4, 6
284:1, 4 289:16
301:8 363:21
364: <i>14</i>
<b>BOARD</b> 1:2, 17
3:2 5:20, 22 6:9
8:12, 21 9:11, 12
10:10, 12 11:16
12:15, 16, 19, 20
13:4, 10, 23, 24
14:2, 9, 14, 23
15.21 16.15 17.7
15:2 <i>1</i> 16: <i>15</i> 17: <i>7</i> , <i>13</i> , <i>16</i> 18:2, <i>9</i> , <i>16</i>

```
19:7, 11, 17 21:21
22:20, 22 23:2, 10,
12, 14, 15, 18 24:8
25:3, 6 28:1, 16
29:3, 6, 10, 11, 17
30:5, 14, 25 31:15
32:4 33:7, 9, 16,
21 34:20 35:3, 7
36:5, 8, 21, 22
37:1, 9 44:16, 21,
24 45:22 46:3, 13,
17, 21, 23 47:14
52:14 53:16 58:7,
24 59:1 62:16
63:23 64:10, 21
65:17 66:3, 11, 12,
16 67:7, 16 68:8,
10, 15, 16 70:14
75:19, 20 78:14,
23 79:1 80:22
81:3, 8, 11, 13, 17
83:6, 10, 11, 15, 16,
23 84:7 85:20, 22
86:4, 20 87:6, 24
88:14 90:15
91:12, 19 92:4
93:12, 19 95:16,
17, 20 96:4, 14, 16,
18 97:21, 23 98:7,
21, 24 99:4, 7, 18
100:1, 4, 11, 13, 14,
24 101:5, 7, 10, 14,
18 102:9 103:17,
19 104:2, 19
105:3, 9, 17, 25
106:19 107:11, 17
108:4, 18, 23
110:13, 17, 25
111:14 112:11, 12,
18, 19 114:17, 24
116:1, 8, 15, 20, 24
117:11, 16, 19
118:17, 20 119:4,
22 120:1 121:9,
15 122:22 126:25
127:12, 17 128:12,
```

*16* 129:25 130:4 132:6, 22, 25 133:6, 11, 12, 15, 17 134:6, 8, 15 135:3, 14, 15, 23 136:9 140:24 143:1 144:11 146:1 158:15, 16 160:24 161:14, 16 162:10, 20 163:18 165:4, 7, 16 166:5, 18, 20, 22 167:13, 21 168:5, 14, 19, 20, 25 169:4, 12, 17, 18, 23, 25 170:5, 7, 15, 17 171:1, 7, 12, 21, 24 172:12, 21, 23 173:9, 11, 19, 25 174:3, 5, 7 175:5, 10, 15, 21 177:3, 11, 14, 16, 22, 24 178:3, 6, 12, 18 179:5, *8* 180:8, *13*, 20, 23 181:13, 17, 19, 20, 23 182:3, 4, 9, 16, 22 183:5, 11, *16*, *22* 184:*4*, *7*, *10* 185:4, *6* 186:*13*, *22, 25* 190:8, *13* 191:2, 6, 7, 12 192:7, 14, 15, 21 193:2, 4, 6, 9, 13, *19*, *23* 194:7, *15*, *19*, *23* 195:*10*, *15* 196:25 202:23 207:18 208:7, 16, *19* 210:9, *18*, *24*, 25 211:2, 5 212:20 213:7, 9 214:1 215:7, 15 216:12 217:5, 21 218:3, 15, 24 219:6, 8, 10, 15, 17 220:1, 7 226:12, 15 227:13, 17, 25

228:4, 9, 12, 21, 24 229:3, 6, 9, 14, 16 230:3, 6, 12, 17 240:5, 8 241:10, 14 246:16 253:21 254:9, 19, 25 256:17 257:2 258:1, 12 259:1 264:3, 10 266:16 268:8, 10, 11, 17, 19, 20 270:10 274:15 278:22 285:21 286:5, 8, 10, 13 287:2, 5, 12 288:1, 25 291:21 292:4, 8 293:7 295:1 304:5, 23 308:19 310:18 311:18, 19, 23 312:14, 25 313:4, 19 316:20 321:2 322:19, 20 327:1 329:19 330:23 334:1 336:13, 21 337:13 339:22 340:4, 8, 15, 24 342:7, 18 344:13 345:17 346:7, 9, 14, 19 347:2, 7, 10, 14, 15, 17 348:7, 10, 11, 14, 16, 24 349:2, 8, 12, 19 350:1, 7, 11, 13, 16, 21, 22, 24 351:2, 6, 10, 24 352:1, 23 353:3 354:12 356:21 358:19 360:9 362:1 366:2, 17 367:14 368:4, 8 369:1, 6, 7 371:13 373:2 374:18, 24 375:4, 7, 12, 16, 25 376:4, 7, 18, 19, 22, 25 377:7, 11, 17, 21,

24	22,
boardroom 86:18	79
boards 36:3, 20	90
51:21 52:13	95
59:12 66:10	18,
126:20 133:12, 14	11
158:9 159:4, 11	2, 4
169:8, 23 180:9	11
188:9, 10 319:5, 6,	12
9, 12, 17 324:25	12
352:20 365:9	15,
<b>board's</b> 23:13	17
24:22 25:16, 18	12,
28:24 36:6 70:19	9
77:16 85:23	12,
132:11 211:17	22
311:19 320:8	19
350: <i>3</i>	19
<b>body</b> 178:13	20
<b>bold</b> 50:3 54:15	20
<b>bolters</b> 273:10	22
<b>bond</b> 307:22	22
308:3 334:8	25
345:11 353:18	17,
<b>bonding</b> 307:21	23
bonds 24:22 26:1,	28
5, 10, 15 31:2	3,
308:6, 9, 11, 14	28
342:25 345:10	28
346:6	19
<b>book</b> 51:8 237:7	30
340: <i>14</i>	32
bookends 92:6	32
<b>bottom</b> 94:9	35
182:19 235:15	35
284:3 309:14	36
<b>Bound</b> 3:2 36:4,	9,
5, 12, 13, 14, 22, 24	36
boundaries 27:11	36
<b>bow</b> 19:5	24
<b>box</b> 129:9 363:21,	37
22 364:9, 14	19
<b>boxes</b> 229:20	6, .
<b>Brashear</b> 2:8 3:7	bre
34:11, 19 38:22	25
41:3 43:9 46:8,	

. 25 77:6 78:3 9:11, 14 80:4 ):4 92:9 94:22 5:2, 15 98:2, 4, 8, , 22 101:16 0:6, 7, 15 115:1, 4 116:25 8:13 119:16 23:13, 20, 22 24:8, 15 125:10, , 20, 21 131:22 75:8, *13* 184:*11*, , 16, 19 186:1, 8, 188:*13* 189:9, , 14, 16 190:6, 192:1 193:18 96:20 198:2 99:18 200:5 02:1, 6, 7 207:7 08:24 213:7 21:12, 18 224:17 26:7 257:18, 22 58:23 259:9, 10, , 21 260:6, 10, 261:2 274:23 32:18, 22 283:2, 11, 14, 16 35:16 286:9 89:12 296:14, 18, 300:15 304:18 05:1 316:22 21:8, 12, 15 28:16, 24 332:16 52:3 357:21 58:11, 17, 22 50:4, 5, 19 361:4, *12, 23* 362:8 53:9, 25 364:4, 5 66:7 367:9, 19, 369:14, 21 0:1, 7, 11, 13, 15, 372:16 378:1, 12 **eached** 256:9 57:11

**break** 33:15 43:14 44:18 108:24, 25 109:2 110:8 115:7, 10 173:12, 22 174:2 259:13, 16 357:24 358:5 359:1 378:7, *13* **breathe** 82:*14* breathing 83:18 **Brent** 191:*16* **Bridget** 1:21 29:11 **Brief** 6:23 155:12 **briefly** 298:1 **bright** 371:7 **bring** 8:19 60:3 84:21 91:4 111:21 169:22 294:23 **bringing** 291:*16* **brings** 273:11 **Broad** 119:4, 6 268:6 **broader** 37:19 brother 293:2 brought 25:2 82:16 167:8 237:12 246:19 258:14 Brundage 3:10 4:12 84:13, 14 168:7, 12 259:11, 14 260:7, 9, 12, 20 261:3 271:17, 19 282:23 283:17 296:20 300:16 305:2 316:23 318:5 331:25 332:2, 17 334:14 352:4 360:6 363:10 365:22 366:8 370:20 372:17 **B-R-U-N-D-A-G-E** 

260:20

**Buffalo** 195:3 205:22 226:17 281:22 371:14 374:6 377:14 **build** 69:22 131:19 265:13 290:2 334:9 350:4 Building 2:16 8:9 45:3, 12 378:17 **building's** 45:1, 7 **built** 54:6 62:24 72:8 142:3 236:23 276:25 289:21 **bunch** 87:11 229:20 Bureau 6:2 275:23 business 24:11 28:10 49:11 161:*1* 185:7 businesses 106:13 335:12, 17 **button** 228:20 **buv** 106:8 335:7 **buying** 74:13 160:17 **buvs** 67:22 141:23 **bylaws** 37:10 133:10, 13, 19 176:*17*, *18* 178:*15*, *16* 179:*1* 188:*19*, 20, 22 190:1, 9 191:2, 4 350:4, 5, *14* 351:*13* **bypasses** 315:14 by-product 112:25 113:19 < C > **cabin** 88:9 120:18 272:15

<b>cabins</b> 48:23	155:1, 8 161:17	22 229:24 230:1	271:22
121:2	167:24, 25 171:19	238:13, 16, 18	car 38:9
<b>Cairo</b> 261:6, 8, 9,	173:7, 22, 23	254:17 258:6	<b>carbon</b> 335:15
10	174:18 175:15	287:23, 25 292:18	carbon-free 185:8
California 106:23	180:20 195:20	303:12 339:9	care 81:23, 25
<b>call</b> 14:3 31:17	196: <i>16</i> 198: <i>15</i>	349:6	138:13 143:7
32:1 38:7 78:3	202:16 203:9	canals 65:9 71:7	198:15, 16 298:17
79:11 89:11	213:13, 15 214:2,	207:14 222:5, 8	306:15 342:6
151:8 165: <i>14</i>	9 217:5, 15 218:8	225:1, 23 226:19	344:19 358:6
196:20 216:17, 24	219:22 221:10	232:11 234:24	carried 82:7
233:10 259:10	225:23 226:12	273:10 284:23, 25	209:15
260:6 272:11, 17	229:5 232:15	289:23 290:13	carry 14:17
274:19 278:17	248:12, 18 249:6,	315:20 316:3	178:15 258:15
318:1 357:24	12, 22 250:3, 7, 8,	348:22 349:1	cart 64:16
358:2 359:2	12, 13 254:12	canal-system	carved 373:16, 18
363:20 370:2	257:8, 10 264:15	211:14	<b>carveout</b> 74:9, 10
<b>called</b> 39:8 77:21	265:21, 22, 25	cancel 255:14	carve-outs 377:3,
79:16 106:5	270:24 271:11, 13	<b>cannot</b> 35:1	4, 5, 15
197:13 209:7	273:2, 12, 22	115:12 119:22	carving 296:4
227:1 260:13	278:8, 9, 22 279:9,	130:5 308:7	case 89:10
270:3 277:2	16 280:11, 25	can't 9:1 35:6,	104:14, 23 208:18
354:21	281:4, 7 282:3, 9	10, 14 45:2, 11	255:3 309:8
Calling 3:3	283:24 287:20	84:3 91:23 94:6	345:23
31:21 77:17	288:13 290:6, 22	103:7 114:20	cash 218:18
356:2	291:13, 17, 19	137:2 140:3	343:2, 3, 5 346:22
<b>calls</b> 90:13	293:18 294:8	146:25 157:13, 25	cat 129:3
154:24 155:10	295:12 303:7, 19,	161: <i>16</i> , 20 166: <i>14</i>	<b>category</b> 236:16
189:7 190: <i>4</i>	22 304:5, 16	170:4 172:17	332:21
344:12 367:8	306:22 309:14, 15	213:23 217:12	caught 30:2
can 9:5 12:15	310:8, 12, 22, 25	218:11 230:7	cause 157:14, 23
15:16 16:1 22:22,	314:4, 13 316:17	254:4, 10 290:2,	<b>caused</b> 267:24
24 23:15 30:7, 10,	317:10 322:2	<i>18</i> 312: <i>14</i> , 20	<b>caveats</b> 337:23
13, 14 31:2, 4, 6,	328:17 335:5, 7	338:19 341:7	cease 356:15
17, 22 36:18	336:8, 9, 22, 25	capability 212:20	Centennial 1:14
41:17 44:23 45:4,	337:8 338:15	capacities 79:8	8:10
8 46:15 58:16	339:2, 17 341:12,	capacity 25:17	center 48:16
73:20 74:4 88:23	15 342:19 344:17	78:23, 25 263:24	246:1
96:15, 19 97:19,	345:3 361:2	298:2, 24 299:7	CENTRAL 1:4
21 106:8 107:24,	363:6 364:12	<b>capital</b> 306:15	2:1, 8 5:17 6:9
25 108: <i>10</i> 110: <i>13</i>	367:5, 11 371:9	307:2, 10, 16	8:13 9:13, 15
112:9 113:22	373:10 378:18, 22	capitalize 275:5	10:5 15:10 16:6,
114:4, 10 115:23	<b>Canal</b> 4:21	307:7	11, 12 24:10 28:9
119:21 120:23	108:11 205:6	<b>Capitol</b> 266:13	34:7, 12 36:21
131:13 138:13	216:24 217:8	358:2	39:3, 9 40:14
142:10, 13 146:3	225:6, 17, 18, 25	captioned 123:7	41:3, 6, 7 46:6
147:4 150:13	226:4, 25 227:16,		47:2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 18,

20 40 4 6 11 12
20 48:4, 6, 11, 13,
<i>17</i> , <i>18</i> , <i>22</i> 49: <i>6</i> , <i>13</i> ,
17, 10, 22, 47.0, 13,
20 24 50 6 51 14
20, 24 50:6 51:14
,
52.7 9 53.9 54.3
52:7, 9 53:9 54:3, 16, 18 56:4, 6, 18,
16 10 56.4 6 10
10. 18 30:4. 0. 18.
22, 23 57:1, 4, 9
22,23 31.1,7,7
50.1 2 5 17 60.1
59:1, 3, 5, 17 60:1,
9, 13, 16, 22, 23
9, 13, 10, 22, 23
(1 11 16 (0 0 10
61:11, 16 62:2, 10,
<i>23</i> 63: <i>12</i> 64: <i>1</i> , <i>4</i> ,
25 05.12 04.1, 7,
12 (5 1 5 (6 1
<i>13</i> 65:4, 5 66:4,
12 67:20, 21, 25
12 07.20, 21, 23
(0.0.20 (0.24
68:8, <i>20</i> 69: <i>24</i>
70:24 71:1, 3, 14,
10.27 11.1, 3, 17,
24 72.0 12 16
24 72:9, 12, 16
73:7, 17 74:18, 24
75:2, 3, 11 76:1, 5,
/5:2,5,11 $/6:1,5,$
7 78:2 80:20, 22,
7 70.2 00.20, 22,
22 25 01.2 02.4
<i>23</i> , <i>25</i> 81:2 82: <i>4</i> ,
7, 9, 10, 11, 19, 20,
23 83:2, 24 85:15
25 85:2, 24 85:15
86:24 87:2, 18
00.27 07.2, 10
99.0 10 11 00.7
88: <i>9</i> , <i>10</i> , <i>11</i> 90: <i>7</i>
00 11 05 10 06 5
92:11 95:18 96:7
72.11 75.10 70.7
97:1, 8 99:2
91.1,0 99.2
101: <i>4</i> , <i>11</i> 104: <i>13</i>
105: <i>12</i> 107: <i>23</i>
103.12 107.23
110 0 / 115 11
110:24 115: <i>11</i>
116: <i>4</i> , <i>10</i> 117: <i>12</i>
110.4, 10 117.12
110 16 110 01 05
118: <i>16</i> 119:2 <i>1</i> , 2 <i>5</i>
, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
120:12, 20 121:1,
120.12, 20 121.1,
2 0 15 20 22
3, 9, 15, 20, 22
3, 9, 15, 20, 22
3, 9, 13, 20, 22 122·1 125·9
122:1 125:9
122:1 125:9
122:1 125:9
122: <i>1</i> 125:9 126:2, <i>5</i> , <i>9</i> , <i>13</i>
122: <i>1</i> 125:9 126:2, <i>5</i> , <i>9</i> , <i>13</i>
122: <i>1</i> 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, <i>13</i> 128:23 129: <i>12</i>
122: <i>1</i> 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, <i>13</i> 128:23 129: <i>12</i>
122: <i>1</i> 125:9 126:2, <i>5</i> , <i>9</i> , <i>13</i>
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18 161:12, 25 162:11
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18 161:12, 25 162:11
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18 161:12, 25 162:11 168:13 172:18, 21
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18 161:12, 25 162:11 168:13 172:18, 21
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18 161:12, 25 162:11 168:13 172:18, 21 176:17, 20 177:8
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18 161:12, 25 162:11 168:13 172:18, 21 176:17, 20 177:8
122:1 125:9 126:2, 5, 9, 13 128:23 129:12 131:2 134:7 139:24 141:11, 22 142:18, 21 144:21 145:6 146:16 147:10 148:14 155:16, 21 158:16 160:4, 8, 18 161:12, 25 162:11 168:13 172:18, 21

185:9. *13* 186:*10* 187:5, 8, 21, 23 188:5, 19, 22 189:2, 18, 23 190:11, 12 191:8, 12 194:13, 21 195:4 198:4, 6, 8, 20, 24, 25 199:1, *13* 201:*13* 203:*12* 205:9, 16 207:25 208:11, 22 209:1, 5, 12, 15 213:21 214:10, 16 215:5, 10, 18, 22 216:7 217:3, 11 218:6, 12, 13 220:17, 19 221:14 222:4 224:7 226:19 230:25 231:14, 21 234:7, 15, 18 235:4, 8, 17 236:4, 10 238:6, 12 241:16, 22 242:15 243:6, 8, 13, 14 244:7, 11, 18 247:24 249:6 250:13, 19 251:1, 8, 16 253:5 255:13 258:2, 5, 17 262:9, 11 263:19 264:12 265:3 266:22, 25 267:17 268:15, 18, 22 269:11, 12, 13 270:18 271:3, 8, 9, 23 276:20 278:20 281:18, 21 287:6 289:7, 17 291:4, 19 292:6, 19 295:11, 15 297:11, 13, 19 298:10 300:18 302:20 305:5, 9, 21 306:18 307:16 320:1 321:16, 19 323:3, 5 325:2, 17

329:1 334:9 335:24 340:17 341:3 343:22 348:4 356:17, 24, *25* 357:6, *15* 365:4 366:25 368:13, 19 370:25 372:10, 11 375:1, 22 377:18, 22 **Central's** 6:15, 23 10:3, 8, 13, 18 23:23 24:2, 9 27:9, 23 28:4 40:24 50:21 55:7, 14, 18 56:24 57:13 58:14 60:3 63:17 64:14, 19 68:4 71:18 75:17, 18 76:8 79:10 81:20, 21 83:6, 16 93:12, 19 110:20 116:*1* 117:*11*, *14* 134:14, 15, 19 136:3, 18 138:25 140:3 142:15 153:16 155:18 162:20 178:11 179:*12* 181:*17* 203:16 205:19 208:20 220:9, 20 223:2, 3 225:1 226:4 234:24 237:4 242:2 243:4 245:18 256:1 262:10 279:12, 15 288:4 289:21 323:1 356:8 357:6 372:22 373:2, 13 **Centre** 2:10 **Centura** 261:18 **century** 47:17 **certain** 63:*13* 69:23, 25 115:12 144:22 233:23

244:18

certainly 16:5 31:22 32:2 50:16 51:5 69:5 70:9 77:18 142:25 145:*16* 149:*9*, *11* 202:21 235:2 241:16, 22 certainty 282:1 certification 262:4 certified 22:10 **CFO** 323:22 cfs 228:19 229:12 Chair 1:18, 19 21:2 29:7 173:18, 21 175:18 218:23 255:15 259:1 268:10 376:14 **Chairman** 13:23 29:10 31:14 33:19 46:22 110:18 172:5 341:2 364:12 challenge 306:1 307:12 309:23 342:11 challenges 53:2 326:15 332:22 333:7 334:12, 16, 22 343:16 347:19 chance 30:7 70:14 172:8 173:6 175:20 **change** 66:2 91:2 190:*1*, *9*, *17* 283:19 284:5 289:2 311:10 349:24 350:5, 18, 19 351:12 353:24 367:11 **changed** 147:*12* 267:1 268:24 274:24 295:21 308:2 367:5 Changes 5:5 58:*16*, *18* 190:*13* 

325:22 349:20	chartered 62:10	<b>clarify</b> 16:21	CNPPID/DAWSO
371:10	64:24 100:18	34:22 36:18 37:8,	N 3:12, 18
changing 58:23	140:23 141:2, 3, 4,	18 38:2 42:21	<b>coal</b> 267:5
131:6 146:22	6, 11 268:22, 23,	77:24 95:13 96:5,	coal-fired 265:9
307:13, 14 309:5,	25 269:4, 6, 9	<i>15</i> 112:9 125:4,	<b>Code</b> 106:5, 10
6	270:11 354:24, 25	18 134:11, 13	cognitive 105:19
<b>chapter</b> 53:21	372:10	145:20 148:6	cognizant 59:13
60:24 354:23, 24	<b>charters</b> 26:13	167:24 168:1	358:19
characterization	chat 30:17 35:1	185:22 190:24	coincidence
296:25 301:11	cheap 60:7, 21	213:16 221:7, 11,	107:19
376:10	106:8 294: <i>13</i>	16 227:12 230:22	coincident 107:6
characterized	cheaper 106:7	255:9 257:17	coincides 106:24
298:19	335:7	299:20 308:18	collaborate 291:24
characterizing	Check 123:13	321:14 328:9	collection 101:25
62:7	checked 129:9	clause 145:21	
			collective 15:11
charge 104:16	check-in 52:12	248:12 249:11	39:5
121:5 177:19	check-ins 322:11	clean 48:18	collectively 9:20
178:23	<b>choice</b> 165:8, 12	clear 21:5 56:20	41:2
<b>charged</b> 106:14	261:11	148:10 158:14	<b>college</b> 119: <i>1</i>
charges 336:22	choices 310:11	206:13 230:24	261:21
<b>Chart</b> 5:3 126:7	336:5	234:17 251:3	colloquially 270:3
232:6 280:10	<b>choose</b> 106:11	289:21 362:25	<b>color</b> 12:9 87:10
296:4 297:3, 11	<b>chop</b> 310:8	clear-eyed 51:24	125:13 187:8, 11
301:3, 13 306:2,	<b>chose</b> 180:6 182:4	<b>clearly</b> 19: <i>12</i>	205:7, 25 206:21
22 341:11	<b>chosen</b> 134:15	69:15 178:21	230:25 371:2
<b>CHARTER</b> 1:4, 6	<b>Chuck</b> 1:19	305:3 328:21	Colorado 275:22
8:14 10:8, 18	<b>chunk</b> 296:1	<b>clients</b> 62:2, 7	286:18 315:15
23:23 24:3 25:25	341:25	64:1, 7 66:15	<b>colors</b> 206:14
27:9, 14, 23 28:15	circumstance	70:14, 18 75:13,	221:11, 16 224:25
31:24 47:9 49:16	208:13	14	Columbus 140:5
50:3, 20 54:24	citation 24:18	climatic 242:5	co-management
58:14, 15 59:11	cite 22:7	246:14 250:2	168:18
70:9, 10 97:6	<b>cited</b> 141:14	Clipper 4:15	combination
116:19, 21, 22	Citizens 8:22	close 45:5 50:22	60:25 85:3
133:5 136:12, 13	9:18, 20, 22, 24	93:11, 16 94:7	Combined 3:2
154:17, 18, 21	38:13 41:13 42:6	165:10 200:3	5:9 36:5 51:9
155:6 176:16, 18	61:7 62:8 179:15,	<b>closed</b> 159:4, 6, 11,	53:19 58:5 60:18
179:1 181:16	16 265:23	19, 24, 25 161:3	64:15, 17 66:14
265:11 268:25	City 300:8	319:18	68:13 70:1 83:9
269:3 353:11, 12	373:15 375:10	closer 338:4	153:22 193:4
356:25 357:7	377:9	closing 46:2	330:10 349:19
366:18, 21 367:5,	claim 17:25	174: <i>14</i>	350:13 361:21
13, 16, 21 368:1,	57:18, 22	<b>CNPPID</b> 3:7	363:14
23 369:5, 15	clarification 40:2	6:23 79:16	combining 293:14
371:23 373:17	78:7 136:9	197:13 260:13	come 13:18 21:1
311.23 313.17	229:17	171.13 200.13	40:12 53:9 68:16
	1 221.11	I	TU.12 33.9 UO.1U

07.1.4.01.14	l a	1	1 2 2 2
87:1, 2 94:12	Comments 5:20,	compliance 276:8,	367:8
109:3 111:15, 24	22, 23 16:2, 5	10 278:13	concurrent 176:16
135:15, 17 137:24	54:1 99:22 179:9	complicated	condition 19:25
140:19 162:14	Commission 6:15	217:17 229:11	20:5 215:21
163: <i>13</i> , <i>21</i> 170: <i>16</i>	12:17 59:3 76:18	286:17	241:11 324:16
172:9 173:23	115:16 214:21	<b>comply</b> 63:13	conditioned 10:7
177:23 205:20	Commissioner	244:19 278:12	conditions 20:4
210:12 215:12	11:12 12:4, 12, 16	component 304:7	99:4 242:6
224:3 242:6	Commission's	components	246:14 250:1, 2
252:12 254:25	94:16	152:11 320:13	345:13 354:10
266:19 270:13	commitment 51:22	composition	<b>conduct</b> 10:10
274:2 281:4	committed 83:17	180:23 334:2	327:4
283:6 290:20	committee 18:25	comprehensive	conducted 54:2
291:16 298:14	20:8, 14, 15, 20, 21	49:19, 25 329:5	conduit 341:22
330:22 331:10	21:3 86:4 91:12	comprehensively	Conference 4:3
333:4 337:9	278:16, 18, 21	50: <i>13</i>	21:15, 24 22:3, 11
341:16 352:7	I control of the cont		25:11 30:20 33:3
356:24 364:17	commodity 268:1	compromise 59:14	25:11
		comps 252:18	
368:4, 7 378:18	51:14 58:3	<b>computer</b> 30:11	160:20
comes 46:19	243:24	concede 11:22	confidentiality
68:22 89:14, 20	commonalities	79:4	43:3
110:21 111:10, 17,	52:6	concedes 28:20	configure 27:10
22 113:7 150:20	communicated	conceived 47:23	confirmation 19:2
151: <i>1</i> 204:25	326:4	concept 48:19	confirmed 12:22
207:3 223:3	communicating	51:5 55:24 85:3	19:15
245:7 250:5	272:2	285:14 319:7	conflict 67:1
336:3 356:10	communication	<b>concepts</b> 268: <i>14</i>	73:10 111:3, 5
<b>comfort</b> 172:2	317:19	274:22	112:15, 17 127:10,
comfortable	communications	concern 11:24	20 150:13 170:8,
15:17 126:12	323:16	55:4 157:15, 21	13, 19 177:12
171:15, 16	communities 48:4	342:8 361:17	conflicted 67:8
<b>coming</b> 11:24	49:2	concerned 69:18	<b>conflicts</b> 68:22, 23
73:21 74:17	compact 276:6	75:14 142:25	69:17, 19 72:22
111:18 122:20	279:20 280:2	172:1 267:10	128:2
165:11 173:13	company 77:12	concerning 25:20	confused 35:13
203:22 235:11	84:20 170:25	234:8	142:1 255:17
254:17 267:11	263:9 292:16	concerns 12:3	confusion 35:17
270:10 281:14	300:13	55:3 56:11 75:24	conglomeration
310:24 313:9, 24,	competition	92:1, 16, 19	373: <i>13</i>
25 315:13, 15	161: <i>18</i> , <i>19</i>	342:23	conjunctive
324:15 340:12	complementary	conclusion 67:6	290:20
comma 240:17, 18	69:9, 16	97:12, 17 130:12,	connected 315:18
commencing 61:1	complete 19:24	15, 18 154:25	connection 55:23
comment 16:1	completed 327:6	155:11 189:8	160:3
93:10 107:22	completely 281:15	190:5 330:20	consent 213:24
310:20			248:5 249:5

250:24 251:2 <i>1</i>	64:12 65:11 66:1,	86:15 129:4	310:3 311:7
252:14	10, 19, 23 68:11	consulting 77:9	313:12 329:25
consented 249:1	69:14 70:4, 17	consumption	330:2, 7 336:25
251:6	73:24 74:16	85:13 92:23, 24	338:3 344:4, 7
<b>consents</b> 247:15	123:8, 19 124:7,	<b>contain</b> 26:14	contracts 73:20,
Consequently	17, 19, 21 126:15,	contained 70:3	22, 25 85:6 92:22
58:21	25 128:22 130:22	231:5	104:4, 7, 14 111:9
conservation	132:5, 18 133:4,	contains 27:14	117:12 121:25
263:21 314:18	25 137:24 140:13	269:3	137:9 152:22
conservative	154:5, <i>14</i> 156:5	contemplated	212:19 222:4
303:21 338:12, 24	158:2 <i>1</i> , 2 <i>4</i> 171: <i>3</i> ,	56:7 274:25	258:15 272:19
consider 93:19	<i>13</i> 173:23 175:22	356:20	285:24 307:24, 25
126:5, 16	176: <i>1</i> , <i>15</i> 179: <i>1</i>	contention 65:14	310:20, 24 311:3,
considerable	187:15 188:15	contents 25:14	4 323:12 349:6
235:9	193:6 318:2, <i>8</i> , 21	26:21 31:10	353:17
consideration	325:21 342:12	contested 45:23	contractual 212:9
56:12 65:24	343:20 344:11	context 147:6	310:13 317:16
72:20, 21 99:5	345: <i>4</i> 349: <i>17</i>	223:22	326:21
126:18	350:14 352:5, 11,	continually 276:23	contractually
considered 4:9	17, 18 353:7, 8, 10,	continue 36:24	339:17
55:21 122:13, 16	<i>14</i> , <i>25</i> 360: <i>15</i>	44:3 51:10 52:15	contrary 23:24
357:11	361:5 363:11	60:16 75:6 90:18	contributing 71:3,
considers 116:1	373:11	110:5 131:19	6, 7, 10, 12 72:2
<b>consist</b> 232:15	consortium 277:9	156:12 173:15	control 55:5
326:16 329:22	constant 297:2	273:23 281:7	56:18 57:19, 21
369:1, 7	323:15	282:3 291:2, 5	59:1 64:7, 8
consistent 209:24	constituents 53:1,	294:24 297:9	65:15 68:20
238:20 250:17	24 90:6, 7 91:8	311:9, 10, 25	85:12 90:25
301:13	122:4, 5 129:18,	342:1 360:4	122:11 140:1, 2,
consistently 47:25	21 264:8	continues 56:5	13, 17 141:7, 17
61:12	constituted 37:9	204:19 205:3, 4	186:11 231:22
consisting 66:3	133:7 135:15	240:1	controlled 66:17
consists 61:7	311:19 373:25	continuing 281:19	93:13, 20, 21
245:18	constitution 56:20	307:13 308:25	186:17
consolidate	constructed 62:24	contoured 219:19	controlling 27:19
128:13 308:24	63:2 134:24	220:2	148:15
consolidated	construction	contract 104:20	controls 64:9
10:12 37:2 49:23	237:13 266:13	105:10 161:2	263:10 281:2
73:11 132:22	consultant 40:13	171:8, 10 207:25	<b>convene</b> 159: <i>4</i>
153:13 361:21	86:10, 11, 21	212:12, 13 215:3	354:12
363:14	155:17 157:19	235:8 242:21	convened 8:17
consolidating	320:13 322:4	253:3 256:9, 12,	159:6
321:21	325:2, 8, 10, 18	14 297:23 298:6,	convenience 102:3
Consolidation	326:13	8, 16 299:3, 5, 11,	conversation 86:2
5:13 36:10, 15, 23	consultants 52:21	15, 17 300:24	164:3 288:9
37:19 62:15		304:21 309:9	316:24 317:3

210.24.222.4	105 10 15 50 51	1 20 22 251 5 5 2	1 202 0 200 37
318:24 323:4	125:10, 15, 20, 24	20, 23 351:1, 5, 9,	203:9 208:15
324:8	132:15, 19 133:10	<i>15</i> , <i>23</i> 361:23	210:20 213:1
conversations	134:8 136:11, 13	363:1, 19, 24	216:11 218:1
50:10 53:13 54:1	142:5 143:3, 25	365:1, 2, 19	222:13, 16 224:21
86:1, 8 88:21	144:16, 18, 19, 24	368:20, 21 371:24	232:23 235:5, 12
91:10, 11 122:5	145:18 149:10	372:1, 12, 18	237:15, 18 239:1
156: <i>13</i> 318: <i>14</i> , <i>18</i>	150:24 151:4, 19	374:23 375:3, 6,	243:1 253:3, 8, 10,
322:25 323:15	152:4, 13, 16	11, 15 377:10, 20,	15 255:13 256:2,
<b>convince</b> 70:14	155:25 158:10	23	5, 13 260:17
cook 107:8	163:3, 4, 6, 7, 17	correctly 16:16	263:22 265:2, 13,
336:18, 22	180:3, 12, 19	43:20 100:12	15, 18 268:1
<b>cooking</b> 336:22	182:2 183:10	194:9 213:15	273:17 290:16
cooperate 292:5	188:11, 21 189:5	215:10 313:8	295:14, 21 296:6
cooperating	191:10 193:12, 22	349:14	305:11 312:9
293:10	194:14, 17, 22	correlate 107:2	317:22 319:17
coordinate 292:5	195:6 196:3	correlation 106:21	320:16 322:15
Coordination	197:8, 10 198:19	cost 48:7 63:4	323:13 325:5
333:22	199:12, 15 205:13	74:13 138:1	329:7 330:5, 10,
<b>copies</b> 366:2	207:17 209:2	176:5 235:13	22 336:16, 17
<b>copy</b> 22:10 30:8	217:24 218:7	294:17, 18 295:3,	339:24 343:10
94:25 258:3	222:7 224:14, 20	4 298:19 300:24	345:24 357:18
318:3 361:8	226:5, 6 230:2, 16	307:23 310:15	364:21 365:9
366:1, 5 370:17	231:2, 7, 12, 22	313:11 341:24	<b>couldn't</b> 13:10
core 21:20 22:12	232:14 233:8	344:4 354:15	164:15 255:17
23:8, 22 24:25	234:16 235:22	355:7, 12, 15	328:15
25:9 68:1 97:5	236:6 240:3	costs 73:2 74:20	Counsel 4:10
116: <i>16</i>	241:9, 18 242:20,	135:1 142:4	25:18 32:20 33:9
corn 49:10 80:10	25 243:7 244:9,	201:20 235:16	36:1 38:4 42:19
254:18 335:23	10, 13 248:23, 24	280:8 294:5, 9	46:23 61:10, 14
corner 204:12	249:3, 9 251:18	295:7 298:17	62:6, 19 64:6
<b>Corp</b> 114:6	254:8 258:2, 8, 17,	<b>could</b> 17:25 18:4,	69:21 72:16 78:8
corporation 9:23	18 266:5 269:10,	14 19:8, 25 20:6,	93:10 102:19, 21
<b>Corps</b> 113:20	21, 25 270:12, 21	11, 22 32:1 38:1	123:18 125:6
<b>correct</b> 13:3, 5	271:1 276:11, 18	41:1 50:12 51:10,	
17:3 18:22 19:13	277:15 278:2	12 53:9, 18 70:9	189:15 195:22
30:20 31:5, 19	289:11, 12, 13	78:6 79:20 88:25	237:18 257:25
41:11, 15, 22	292:3, 7 297:18,	89:2, 7 117:8, 9,	304:17 360:9
43:10 77:13 81:6	20 298:21 300:13,	24 149:3, 6, 11	361:1 363:25
85:18 89:15, 21	22 302:19 307:20	150:9 152:5	370:9
98:8 99:25 100:5,	311:7 319:15	154:21 155:5	counsels 44:24
7 101:3 102:7	320:24 321:5, 18	157:23 158:8	46:3 179:9
105:16 108:10	322:21 328:5	165:9 169:18	counsel's 98:25
113:1, 4 114:14	336:19 337:14	170:19 172:5	99:21 221:14
115:8, 9, 13, 14	339:23 340:18	173:1 178:2	<b>counted</b> 164:20
118:8 120:6, 10	346:13, 16 347:1,	185:9, 10, 16	counterintuitive
121:13 124:22	6 348:9 350:15,	197:20 202:19, 23	306:25 307:11

counties 27:25
49:8 50:19 54:21
58:11, 21 62:9
68:2 96:22 97:5,
6 99:23 100:18
101: <i>1</i> 136: <i>12</i> , <i>13</i>
137:6, 9, 15, 17, 20,
<i>21</i> 138:6, <i>14</i> , <i>17</i>
140:19 141:6
180:11, 18, 22
181:2, 25 182:20
183:8 194:25
207:11 268:20
269:2, 4, 9 270:2,
11, 15, 22 281:23
351:7 371:4
372:23, 25
<b>country</b> 87: <i>1</i>
<b>county</b> 27:11
29:1 58:1 68:2, 7,
17 83:3, 4 90:9
94:2 96:23, 24
136:4, 7, 10, 20
140:20, 21 141:6
149:8 162:23, 25
163: <i>1</i> , <i>6</i> 164: <i>7</i> , <i>19</i>
180:1, 4, 5, 14, 15,
16, 17 181:3, 4, 5,
6, 7 182:1, 6, 8, 10,
15, 17, 19 193:21,
<i>24</i> 194: <i>3</i> , <i>10</i> , <i>16</i> ,
20 195:3, 4, 9, 11,
<i>13</i> 205:22, 23
207:13 226:17
229:19 230:13, 14
237:8, 11 261:13,
<i>15</i> 269: <i>18</i> , <i>19</i> , <i>23</i>
270:4, 6, 24
284:11 287:25
351:3, 5, 12, 20, 21
369:24 371:11
372:24 375:1, 2, 9,
<i>13</i> , <i>15</i> , <i>19</i> 376:20
377:1, 2, 3
<b>couple</b> 33:13
61:9 76:14
01.7 /0.17

```
140:12 158:10
168:6 175:9
184:12 192:8
195:19 198:21
course 16:10
50:4 308:2
322:17 369:11
court 9:1 14:14
17:22 18:4, 10, 14
29:2, 3 35:1, 5, 6
44:24 300:13
362:15
courtroom 35:14
cover 14:25
306:13 332:12
361:19
covered 14:24
120:3. 14
Cozad 377:6
create 47:11 74:4
152:8 157:21
294:8
created 48:17
55:19 88:11
133:20 209:6
223:6 310:3
337:25
creates 212:7, 10
235:3 301:22
335:22 350:1
creating 141:24
264:25
creation 56:9
creditor 345:19
creditors 24:4
345:24
critical 53:11
crop 147:8
200:19
crops 89:12
147:23 198:15
200:16 247:21
254:3, 7 267:16
Cross 3:9 131:25
358:9, 16, 18
```

CROSS-
<b>EXAMINATION</b>
132:2 184:2 <i>1</i>
230:19
<b>cubic</b> 229:13
233:12
curious 90:10
<b>current</b> 59:9
65:16 68:8 80:21
81:7, 8, 10 132:6
187:4, 6, 21, 22, 25
188: <i>1</i> 194: <i>12</i> , <i>25</i>
195:4 248:22
251:16 258:1, 3
268:23 304:21
310:20 370:25
372:22 373:14
375:22
currently 26:14
27:23 28:5, 9
61:16 62:9, 23
63:12 65:22 68:7,
03.12 03.22 06.7,
9 74:7 80:8 104:25 120:2
104:25 120:2
134:14 143:13
162: <i>4</i> 178: <i>16</i>
180:24 183:25
194:12 269:12
274:9 276:22
299:5 375:1, 8, 21
377:18
<b>curtail</b> 303:16
customer 59:4
65:25 67:12 97:1
104:11 116:3
120:11 194:2
208:11 210:1
231:18, 19 253:2,
13 255:21, 25
256:8 257:11
258:6 282:5
288: <i>14</i>
customers 24:9
28:5, 6 48:8
50:15, 18 51:18
53:1 55:17 56:24

62:7 63:18, 21 65:23 66:25 67:20 74:24 97:8 101:4, 6, 11 105:14 111:17 116:*10* 119:*21*, *25* 121:4, 9, 21, 23 135:18 137:4, 11, 13, 19 147:14 179:16 195:4 198:12, 18 205:10 208:13, 22, 25 209:2, 6, 9 210:22 211:20 216:8 220:20 230:1, 8 231:1, 4, 13 233:2 234:18 245:9 264:8 268:3 271:8 287:18 288:8 290:9 292:1, 6, 22 293:20, 21 294:14, 22 295:6, 17, 22, *23* 302:*3* 317:*12* 326:2 346:10, 17 351:18 356:23 357:9 customer's 242:22 255:12 **cut** 305:9 **cutouts** 373:10 **CV** 4:6 cycle 339:5, 10 cycles 369:11, 13 <D> Dahlgren 5:20 7:5 **daily** 49:6 51:15 177:24 178:4 337:8 339:5, 20 **Daley** 94:19 **Dam** 62:22 81:25 111:23 201:11 204:1, 24 208:21 215:11, 12, 17, 19,

24 231:22 294: <i>1</i> 2
315:24
dams 216:7
313: <i>17</i> 314:9
<b>dance</b> 302:25
dark 214: <i>18</i>
216:19 284:20
348:22
darker 205:7, 25
206:10, 16 207:2
291:25
darkest 206:21 darn 152:19
Darr 80:15
data 15:15
308:22
date 168:18
176:16 353:7, 14
dated 25:14
dates 159:8
<b>Dave</b> 34:3 47:2
79:12, 13
dave@nebenergyla
w.com 2:6
<b>David</b> 2:3 79:15,
22
<b>Daw</b> 195:11
DAWSON 1:7
2:1 5:9 9:16, 17
10:4, 6, 15 12:8
15:10 34:8 36:21
40:13 41:4, 8
47:4, 8, 10 49:17
50:18 51:14 52:9 54:3 57:16, 25
59:20 60:9, 23
66:13 67:19, 21
71:10, 13, 15 74:7,
23 76:4 83:3, 4
84:24 88:4, 12
90:9 96:24
104:13 126:1, 2, 5,
9, 25 128:14, 15,
23 132:7 134:8
135:2 <i>4</i> 136: <i>6</i> , 2 <i>1</i> ,
24 137:4, 9, 14, 21

138:7 140:20
130.7 140.20 141.2 22 155.24
141:2, 22 155:24 158:3, 15 168:10
176:24 177:9
178:9 179: <i>3</i>
180:4, 5, 17 181:4
185: <i>10</i> , <i>13</i> 187: <i>5</i> ,
11, 25 188:2, 6
194: <i>13</i> , <i>16</i> , <i>21</i>
195:1, 8, 11, 12
207:12 230:14
270:14 281:22
282:5 316:25
317:14 321:16, 20
323:1, 2 324:8
326:5 329:25
334:8 340:11
342:25 351:20
356: <i>15</i> , 22 357:9
365:4 371:4
377:2, 3
<b>Dawson's</b> 5:6
50:20 71:10, 12
74:3, 23 75:20
153:17 178:10
220:4, 23 335:21
336:25 337:3
373:13, 17
<b>DAY</b> 1:7 11:20
44:14 66:18, 22
67:8 76:3 91:20
106:1 142:23
177.7 9 179.2
181: <i>17</i> 187: <i>18</i> , <i>19</i> 188: <i>18</i> 189: <i>3</i> , <i>20</i>
188:18 189:3.20
285:6 291:7
294:4 304:24, 25
309:8 315:11
339:18 356:11
days 64:14 65:2
67:4 149:7 285:8
335:5
day's 339:13
day-to-day 178:23
dead 129:3
127.3

<b>declined</b> 160:18
<b>decrease</b> 295:4, 5
dedicated 341:6
deems 251:24
<b>deep</b> 51:22 279:8
329:23 365:14
default 113:4
182:14
defaulted 38:17
<b>defer</b> 219: <i>13</i>
221: <i>15</i>
<b>deficiency</b> 104:21
<b>deficit</b> 306:4
341: <i>14</i> <b>define</b> 89:2 90:2
134: <i>17</i>
<b>defined</b> 178:21
366: <i>17</i>
definitely 178:2
<b>Degan</b> 2:15 3:7
11:5, 9 15:18
17:12 26:22
32:20, 25 34:15
36: <i>18</i> 37: <i>7</i> 38: <i>3</i> ,
20 39:9, 12, 17
40:1 41:14, 19, 23
42:7, 24 43:23
44:5, 8 61:4, 5
76:16 77:1, 5, 8,
13, 15, 22 78:16,
24 79:6 96:3
97:11 103:4
123:18, 23 131:25
132:1, 3 148:11,
12, 13 154:9
155: <i>1</i> , <i>14</i> 166: <i>1</i>
184:21 189:6, 11
190:3 192:4
195:19 196:1, 4, 7
195: <i>19</i> 196: <i>1</i> , <i>4</i> , <i>7</i> 226: <i>10</i> , <i>11</i> , <i>14</i>
230:18, 20 237:18,
22, 24 252:24
256:21 259:20
358: <i>15</i> , <i>21</i> 361: <i>1</i> ,
7, 11, 16 362:2, 24

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364:3 367:7, 17,	<b>demands</b> 127:10	designed 54:5	<b>Devin's</b> 91:19, 22
22 370:9	128:3	354:1	<b>diagram</b> 215: <i>1</i>
<b>degree</b> 261:24	demonstrate 305:3	desire 52:6	<b>dibs</b> 144:25
262:1, 5	demonstrated	<b>desired</b> 47:17	dichotomy 334:7
degrees 261:25	51:21	despite 156:5	<b>Dicke</b> 3:10
266:10	demonstration	157:16	196:2 <i>1</i> , 2 <i>3</i> 197:4,
<b>delayed</b> 353:13	57:20 206:8	destination 213:19	<i>12</i> 198:3, 5 200:6
delegate 16:19	<b>denote</b> 354:22	<b>detail</b> 273:5	201:22 202:9
deliberating 12:1	356:4	detailed 25:19	207:8 208:25
deliberations	deny 70:20 76:12	326:20	221:19 224:21
17:19 164:20	<b>denying</b> 24:23	details 160:9	237:25 257:24
deliver 54:8	Department	304:14 329:24	259:5
60:18 99:10	217:20 250:9	330:6, 13	<b>D-I-C-K-E</b> 197:5,
111:6 143:14, 23	252:6	determination	7
145:9, 17, 23	depending 13:20	239:20 250:10	<b>did</b> 11:18 12:7,
146:19, 25 176:6	18:15 19:3, 9	254:1, 5	25 13:8 14:25
208:1 209:8	44:15, 21, 23	determine 52:15	15:7, 9, 10 24:18
231:16 239:8	114:12 206:7	57:5 64:21 241:9	26:4, 7 29:14
240:12, 16 241:2	depicted 272:8	242:15	48:16 77:4 85:2
242:3, 11 244:11,	depicting 370:23,	determined 53:3	86:20 88:21 90:5,
12 304:11 326:1,	24	247:21 365:19	9, 21, 23, 25 91:7,
8 354:15 355:2	depicts 272:4	determines	9 99:20 103:2
delivered 47:25	301:3	210:18 215:23	116:10 129:6
61:12 75:4	deplete 312:9	239:15 241:10	130:13, 14, 15, 17,
101:24 102:21	depleting 279:25	242:12 249:13	18, 20, 23, 25
105:8 146:24	281:1	determining 8:18	151:10 155:3
207:16 242:24	depletions 279:6	develop 130:2	157:1, 19, 25
deliveries 131:14	280:23	132:25 263:22	158:7, 18 159:4
147:10 272:11	deposition 159:10	264:5 322:5	163:11, 18 164:7,
339:7	<b>deprive</b> 164:7, 19	365:12	19 165:15 195:19
delivering 61:18	Dep-Robert 7:2	developed 133:13	199: <i>1</i> , <i>17</i> 215:9
63:4 135:18	Dep-Roger 7:2	273:21 277:2, 22	257:1 261:5
304:9	<b>depth</b> 215:19	322:7 364:21	262:23 263:9
<b>delivers</b> 105:12,	derived 48:9	developing 364:15	267:19 269:11
13 242:19	73:15 297:16	development	275:4 290:13
delivery 55:11	<b>derives</b> 207:23	54:13 82:3	305:9 307:25
87:22 105:2	describe 203:1	131:11 159:18	317:3 320:9
127:11, 21 128:4	213:15 219:22	176:13 185:18	321:16, 19 323:3
155:25 176:20	271:25 306:17	264:19 279:15	325:1, 7, 10
189:2, 19 212:12	described 60:20	284:8 355:24	326:16 327:4, 5
239:3 240:19	179:11 219:21	<b>device</b> 217:7	329:21 332:14
263:18 297:1	268:6	<b>Devin</b> 84:7, 12	334:14, 17, 21
304:7 320:16	describing 193:6	86:3 168:7, 12	340:20 347:3
<b>demand</b> 107:9, 14,	description 201:4,	259:11 260:12, 19	350:25 364:14
20 233:14 336:22	23 213:6	<b>D-E-V-I-N</b> 260:20	365:11 366:2
			372:20
	•	•	

didn't 12:19 83:1	228:13 229:18, 22	191:8, 12 192:17	<b>dispute</b> 65:16
130:10 155:12, 16	231:14 261:1	193:11 194:25	157:17
157:14, 19, 20	318:4 351:21	269:8, 15, 24	dissension 190:12
163:22 213:15	365:23 366:13	270:18 328:4	dissenting 75:18,
254:22 295:13, 24	directed 66:17	331:14 351:3, 20	20
309:7 326:19	93:13	353:3 368:19, 23	dissidence 105:19
352:14 378:9	direction 126:20	369:4	DISSOLUTION
difference 49:10	127:7 156:11	<b>disagree</b> 62:6, 19	1:9 10:7, 9, 11
96:6, 15 142:7	168:19 170:24	discernment 286:2	353:12 356:22
179:10, 20, 21	directly 57:22	disclose 160:9	dissolve 34:10
207:19 213:10	90:7 116:23	161:4 304:14	distinct 11:22
334:5 342:9	201:12 205:9	disclosed 43:2	distinction 35:12
different 67:18	247:2 264:10	disclosing 159:23	101:13
70:2 91:17	279:4 374:21	Disclosure 6:15	distinguishable
123:17 164:2	Director 5:13	59:3 94:16	118:19
232:24 238:11, 12,	15:9 16:1 19:24	115:16	distribute 52:23
13 248:9 255:10	25:18 26:12	discretion 57:8,	54:9 176:7
258:20 279:3, 21	58:17 59:4 80:23,	10 233:17 241:8	354:16 355:4
295:18, 19 297:23	24 81:2 82:6	242:15 251:23	356:9
304:11 309:1	83:4 96:24	discuss 53:8 94:4	distributed 159:2
339:15 342:13	101:24 112:8	161:3 185:7	distribution 49:22
345:19 369:13	126:13 127:23, 25	317:8	52:20 71:12
differential 310:23	128:3 129:12, 16,	discussed 53:18	168:21 169:19
differentiate	17, 18 160:4	115:6 157:11	170:2 176:9, 22,
304:22, 24 309:7	162:24 163:9, 19,	196:25 317:2	24 220:5, 24
differentiation	21 164:8 167:9	319:22 343:14	293:21 320:15
310:22	180:2 195:8	349:17 371:3	323:9 324:10
difficult 67:15	202:23 270:25	discusses 354:13	325:6 340:10
difficulties 72:23	351:11, 17 375:2	368:18	342:24 345:6
difficulty 75:16	directors 28:18	discussing 257:25	354:19 355:18
dig 327:3	36:4 44:11 51:3	317:17	356:9 357:1
<b>digging</b> 329:24	57:4, 7, 13 58:7, 8,	discussion 32:9	364:23
330:6, 9	24 62:13 66:3, 14,	57:14 59:13 73:3	distributor 185:10
digressed 280:3	20 68:13 81:17	88:17 97:9 128:7	<b>DISTRICT</b> 2:1, 2,
diligence 323:3	82:22 83:8 86:23	153:11, 16 164:9	8 9:14, 16 10:5,
diligent 146:2	88:5, 12 94:2	165:18 247:11	11 23:25 24:5, 20
<b>diluted</b> 376:3	96:23 99:13	283:22 317:13	27:12 28:18 29:1
<b>dilution</b> 376:15	100:2, 25 115:11	322:15 362:12	34:8, 9, 13 36:7
<b>dip</b> 302:1, 13	120:1 134:7, 8	discussions 52:16	37:3, 4 47:7, 8, 12
312:12	159:22 163:6	117:13, 18, 22	49:21, 23 52:22
dips 311:21	177:8, 9 179:3	118:16, 23 128:13	53:14, 15, 16, 17,
<b>Direct</b> 3:9 62:14	180:21, 25 181:24	183:17	19 54:5, 7, 14
80:3, 24 101:6	182:17, 20 183:7	dispatchable	55:12 57:6 58:6
121:4 178:24	187:4, 7, 9, 12, 16,	337:7	59:12, 18, 21
198: <i>1</i> 205:8	20, 21, 22, 24, 25	dispatched 310:7	60:18 61:1, 22
207:19, 24 208:21	188:1, 4, 5, 6	displeased 312:22	62:12 70:1 72:24

81:24 82:16	59:24 97:3 153:5,	48:12 51:12 55:1	234:11, 13, 14
86:14, 25 92:18	9 156:3, 24	56:6, 19 57:9, 24	235:4 236:22
96:18 97:5 99:3	166:21, 24 167:17	58:2 60:14 61:9	238:3, 4, 7 239:18
103:24 104:3	185:17 187:1	70:7, 17, 23 83:2,	240:23 241:2, 12,
116:17 117:21	194:13 206:2	19, 22, 24 86:7	14 248:2 249:13
123:1 127:19, 24	208:3, 14 214:3, 7,	88:2, 4, 8, 11	253:10 255:22
129:20 130:7, 9,	16, 17 216:4	92:13, 16 93:24	256:19 257:8, 10
10 140:10, 19	217:13 231:11	94:6, 7, 25 95:1	258:19 259:22
145:13 157:10	232:11 269:16	98:9 99:4, 11, 13	261:25 262:2, 3
164:12 167:3, 4,	284:7 290:6	102:12 103:4, 15	263:22 264:10, 11
16, 19 168:15	293:9 318:13	104:2, 5, 7, 19	268:12 270:13
179:13 185:13	320:17 327:4	105:19 106:1	271:2, 7 273:2, 12
186:15, 17 187:17	331:12 366:23	110:19, 20 114:6	274:25 278:9, 11
188:19 190:18	374:22	116:4 117:5	282:6, 10 286:21
193:25 194: <i>1</i>	DISTRICT'S 1:5,	119:24 120:4, 21	287:6, 9 288:13
195: <i>12</i> 199: <i>3</i>	8 8:14 50:9	122:21 125:25	290:15 295:1, 4
205:24 211:19	52:14 183:23	127:11, 14, 19	301:4, 15, 18
212:2 213:12	241:8	128:1, 11, 19, 21	305:19 306:20
219:1 233:11	districtwide	129:1, 12, 19	307:6, 21, 22
239:8, 10, 14, 20	211:13, 18	131:1, 3, 4, 8	308:2, 24 309:24
240:2, 7, 11 241:1	ditch 254:24	132:7, 20 135:19	310:12 312:1, 7,
242:12 247:22	dive 329:23	137:8 138:1	16, 20, 25 314:13
248:17, 19, 21	<b>diversion</b> 225:7, 9	140:5, 6, 7 141:9	317:6 319:20
249:13, 24 251:21,	265:19 315:8, 24	145:6 150:10	320:25 321:19
23 252:8, 21	diverted 213:18	154:11 156:7, 20,	322:18 323:20
253:3, 25 256:11	225:16	21 158:8, 12	325:4, 14, 22
257:7 258:11	diverting 265:20	161:15, 20, 23	326:2, 7, 8, 23
262:14, 15, 24	dividing 57:25	162:6 164:18, 22	327:12, 16, 23
263:10, 14 264:4,	<b>division</b> 168:16	165:3 167:6, 22	332:2 333:17, 20
7, 15, 21, 25	170:18 263:1, 2, 3,	171:21, 23 172:24	334:14 336:8, 9
265:12 266:15	4, 5 343:24 344:2,	173:21 177:19	339:1, 2 343:8
267:22 272:5	3, 5, 9 364:20	179:24 182:3	349:21, 22 352:17
291:25 292:11	divisions 170:20	183:11, 17 184:22,	354:11, 24, 25
298:7 305:24	238:13 346:25	24 185:3, 14, 22	355:1 356:7
317:11 331:14	347:1	186:2, 4 189:22,	358:4, 8, 9 361:24
351:18 353:2	<b>DNR</b> 278:16	25 190:8, 19	362:14 363:23
355:2 356:6	323:16	192:9, 10, 17, 21,	365:3 366:21
357:4, 10 365:6	<b>do</b> 11:3, 8 13:15	22 194:3 195:24	367:10 372:21
366:20 367:3, 6,	15:16 16:25	198:11 202:9, 11,	373:24 374:8
<i>11</i> 368:25 371:9,	17:22 19:10 20:6	16, 18 203:9	375:21 378:10
18 372:4 373:4	22:9, 24 25:25	209:11, 12, 25	document 39:16
375:21, 22	26:14, 20 27:16	210:3, 4, 5, 7	43:4 116:16
<b>districts</b> 25:23, 24	30:13, 15, 17	214:13 217:8	124:9 125:7, 23
26:13 43:4 50:12,	32:21 33:10, 19	219:2 221:1, 10,	126: <i>1</i> 132:2 <i>1</i>
17, 22 51:4, 7, 25	42:19, 20 43:6	23 222:13 223:24	159: <i>16</i> 171: <i>5</i> , <i>17</i> ,
52:1, 20 53:3, 23	44:11, 18 45:8	227:15 233:24	20 172:2, 6, 11, 13,
L			

<i>15, 25</i> 173:6	doesn't 75:2 76:4	103:6 108:15	down 9:1 20:2
174:19 175:19, 22	112:13 113:20	114:2, 3, 5 118:5	24:18 30:12
209:4 250:22	116:23 125:17	120:8 135:21	105:7 124:23
318:8 352:22, 24	220:17 224:4	136:22 138:8, 21	126:7, 8 133:18
354:6 366:9, <i>16</i> ,	229:7 235:18	139:1, 17, 25	147:13 157:24
18, 22	250:4, 7 252:4, 5	140:7, 15 141:1	196:17 204:19, 25
documents 11:4	255:21 278:5	142:17 144:7	205:3, 20 216:15
176: <i>15</i> 178:25	297:24 304:23	145:23 146:7, 25	226:17 228:2
does 18:20 20:21	318:25 319:3	149:24 150:7, 18	230:25 235:11, 13
24: <i>19</i> 31: <i>14</i>	doing 52:5 53:5	152:6 155:7, 13	243:2 245:25
40:12 45:22	61:18 75:6 83:12	157:5 159:8	246:3, 23 254:17
64:18 71:25 72:1	129:2 192:4	161:8, 24 162:17	263:8 274:3
91:23 96:11 99:2	233:6 243:15	164:22 165:2	284:2 291:4
104:3, 10, 22	255:24 271:4	168:3, 4 170:22	292:21 311:21
110:24 111:14, 15	292:9 294:19	171:18, 24 172:17	319:24 338:18
113:11 120:17	295:15 312:18	173:5 178:7	340:20 350:10
135:3 142:7	317:11 319:2	184:1, 3 190:20	352:23 354:11
147:6 151:6	325:15 327:2	192:12, 14, 20	372:15 374:20
152:8 172:18	375:18	193:14 194:4, 5, 6	downstream
174: <i>4</i> 179:2 <i>4</i>	dollar 235:15	196:6 200:17	110:21, 22 111:16,
180:22 182:16	dollars 71:5	210:8 215:6	17 216:6 278:21
184:25 186:2	<b>Don</b> 42:18	219:21, 22 223:12	313:22, 23
194:2 201: <i>14</i> , <i>15</i>	done 21:23 30:22	228:15 229:21	draft 126:20
208:11 210:14, 16,	48:7 53:23 61:13	230:11 231:13	drainage 267:24
17, 25 211:10	71:22, 24 72:17	232:2 233:17	draw 35:12 97:19
213:22 217:7	82:9, 12 85:25	234:4 235:15	drawn 201:11
218:25 221:23	90:11 115:1	237:3 243:3	280:12
224:24, 25 225:3,	128:18 142:15	244:1 248:11, 18	draws 106:17
9, 20 226:2 229:3,	151:24 157:11	249:24 254:11	<b>driest</b> 291:1
7 238:11 269:11,	167:11 170:18	255:25 256:2	drill 279:10
12, 13, 15, 16	172:16 225:12	258:19 259:4	<b>drink</b> 135:13
271:24 272:21	256:1 262:4	285:17, 19 293:11	<b>Drive</b> 79:23
281:10, 12, 21	278:6 279:12	302:6, 7 303:24	<b>Drive-2/8/23</b> 7:6
282:5 287:9, 11,	308:1 328:6	307:5 308:10	drives 302:17
14, 15 298:9	329:1 330:15	311:15 321:12	<b>driving</b> 313:20
304:6, 21 305:23	332:12 342:1	323:8 324:9	<b>drop</b> 302:8
307:21 309:10	353:17, 18, 21	328:19 345:21	311:25 314:24
310:12 316:19	don't 16:24 17:5	347:19 356:10	drought 105:6
317:24 319:2	18:12 19:19 20:3,	358:17, 18	151: <i>14</i> 210: <i>11</i>
320:18, 20 325:17	10 21:7 22:1	<b>door</b> 91:18, 21	215:21 241:11
332:25 335:1	31:21 32:7 44:7	329:11 378:21	242:6 245:7, 11
349:16 354:20, 22	45:13 49:9 58:25	doors 84:8, 15, 16	290:7, 8 291:8
356:2 363:10, 13,	59:8 65:23 70:16	288:12 378:17	341:19
16 367:15 368:10	76:16 77:20 78:1,	<b>dots</b> 181:9	<b>dry</b> 146:10, 18
372:19, 20	16 84:11 95:13	<b>doubt</b> 338:25	147:17 151:17
	98:19, 22 100:3		244:5 245:3
	•		

302:10, 11 306:24	easel 98:5 186:21	208:12 249:7	295:7
307:3, 11 314:17	202:14 221:20	339:16 341:17	Electronic 102:23
<b>dryland</b> 261:16	370:4	elect 62:13	Electronically
due 10:14 57:19	easily 103:8	163:24 180:2	102:24
73:21 146:2	265:19 339:2	192:16 269:15, 16	electrons 335:6
323:3	east 206:16	elected 47:14	elects 57:3, 4
dues-paying 17:1	216:21 225:19	58:8 81:4, 14	elements 37:11
dug 330:13	228:11 281:23	82:25 134:21	50:16
duly 79:17	easy 52:5 119:12	161:14 162:8	elevation 284:5, 12
197:14 260:14	345:20	180:9 183:7	eligible 100:10
duplicative 38:12	eating 267:10	268:20 269:8, 17,	Ellen 2:3 34:4
during 15:3 16:8	ebbs 152:24	24 270:19, 20	47:2
30:3 60:13 69:10	344:25 345:1	375:8	
81:17 82:6 88:14	economic 49:2	electing 57:7	ellen@nebenergyla w.com 2:6
90:7 106:9	51:16 54:13 82:3	194:25	Elwood 4:15
142:25 146:18	131:11 159:17	election 163:16	148:21 341:22
159:23 164:20	160:5 176:13	165:11 180:7, 22	
		1	Email 6:4, 5 30:9
239:11, 16 240:11	185:18 264:19	191:19, 21 369:11	embarrass 119: <i>12</i>
242:13 243:9	313:20 314:7	elections 179:25	embedded 59:10
307:1, 2 329:2, 21	355:24	270:21	emblems 203:15
330:15 332:8	edge 272:15	electorate 376:12	<b>employed</b> 262:13,
duties 14:17	edification 77:16	Electric 12:6	15
129:22 160:4	edits 209:19	15:13 16:7 24:10	<b>employee</b> 73:1
198:11 199:4	educate 103:21	65:22 66:24	153:12 198:6
263:16, 17, 25	effect 24:19 36:9	67:11, 20 73:3	262:11
<b>duty</b> 104:3, 20	186:15 279:11	156:5 157:2	<b>employees</b> 153: <i>13</i>
129:13, 14, 15	305:19 353:16	167:4 194:2	employer 29:19
139:2, 4 163:25	effective 369:1	293:12, 14 295:6	103:22
	effectively 39:2	346:1, 2, 5, 10, 17	enable 49:22
< E >	58:22 61:19 75:3	355:18	enact 37:10
<b>E65</b> 238:16	effects 55:2	electrical 54:9	enacted 26:3
<b>E67</b> 238:17	118:19	103:23 107:6, 19	endangered
<b>earlier</b> 11: <i>16</i>	efficiency 333:18	108:17 176:7, 8,	114:10 276:4
61:5 120:7 122:3	efficient 247:6	23, 25 220:5	<b>endeavor</b> 185: <i>15</i>
127:9 130:3	efficiently 199:8	261:24 262:1, 5,	endeavors 83:13
145:24 184:20	<b>effort</b> 168:24	25 343:6 354:16,	241:23
191: <i>11</i> 196:25	241:5, 6	18 356:9 357:1	<b>ended</b> 53:13
200:7 210:13	efforts 15:9	electricity 24:16	energy 66:6
222:11 226:16	240:16	60:8, 12, 21 65:25	74:11 76:17
248:8 265:6	<b>eight</b> 199:22, 25	67:21, 22 93:3	106:17 143:1
279:2 283:25	378:18	103:24 106:6, 7, 8	214:20 236:1
285:22 298:1	<b>either</b> 13:11 19:8	107:1 108:6	267:5 295:12
303:9 339:6	20:2 24:8 29:23	137:10, 12 138:1	296:7 299:21
356: <i>1</i> 371: <i>13</i>	65:7 67:9 73:9	152:16 185:9	300:6 301:10, 21,
early 56:1 277:1	90:6 167:4	285:8 292:12, 17	23 307:14 333:22
J = 1.1.1			

	1		
345:6 355:3	315:10, 11 322:8	<b>error</b> 17:20 18:5,	everybody 9:2
364:19, 23	338:11	13	10:3 170:23
engage 90:5	entirely 67:18	especially 373:19	173: <i>14</i> 174: <i>4</i>
engaged 52:20	entirety 43:5	essentially 11:25	210:23 211:19
53:23 80:8	49:24 96:4	40:22 50:20	268:1 274:5
323:19, 23 326:9	134:14	180: <i>10</i> 195: <i>3</i>	281:12 293:2
engagement 91:7	<b>entities</b> 47:14	228:1	294:6, 16 336:3
122:4 326:11	52:3 76:23 104:5	establish 65:2	everybody's 364:2
329:2 330:15	131:13 144:13	210:1, 4, 7, 8	everyone 9:9
engages 24:10	146:14 178:16	established 48:12	82:18 91:21
48:22	303:1, 6 308:24	52:11 209:6	129:25 130:9
engineer 262:25	345:20 346:21	establishment	138:19, 20 165:18
266:8, 12	354:23, 25	47:22	180:5 200:12
Engineering	entitled 117:5	estimate 339:24	211:12 246:10
40:13 77:7, 9	210:1	estimation 67:14	293:3 294:25
157:3 261:24	<b>Entity</b> 5:9 48:6	estimation's	321:23 347:16
262:1, 5 263:11	64:15, 18 66:14	284:13	everyone's 138:16
266:10	73:11 114:9	<b>Ethanol</b> 335:20,	everything 9:6
engineers 86:22,	132:22 138:18	22	47:21 93:8
23 113:20 303:4	139:20 140:4, 9	<b>E-V</b> 299:25	128:18, 20 129:6
339:1	141:24 153:22	evaluate 52:21	164:12 199:5
enhance 50:15	186:17 215:22	337:11	273:2 279:20
54:11 176:11	265:8 267:3	event 18:17	Everything's
355:22	286:14 292:11	149:4 215:20	228:10
enhancement	298:5 310:2	240:25 347:3	everywhere 91:23
234:23	312:19 345:25	events 241:25	evidence 13:1
enhancements	348:4 356:16	242:2	18:12 23:6, 16
264:18	357:1	eventually 68:12,	26:18 31:4 46:4
<b>enjoying</b> 345: <i>13</i>	entry 319:25	14 226:23 227:20	65:1 67:3, 7
ensure 27:12	environment	ever 73:8 155:4	162:14
56:5 275:12	54:12 176:11	160:2 237:4	evident 267:22
290:23 303:19	264:19 307:14	243:4 255:21	evidentiary 34:25
ensures 49:3	355:22	256:1	35:11
ensuring 52:13	environmental	Evergy 299:6, 11,	evil 139: <i>13</i>
entail 198:11	49:3 56:11 63:10	15, 20 300:3, 10,	evolve 311:9
<b>entailed</b> 157:13	82:2 135:8 144:6	14, 24 311:4	evolved 209:22
entails 148: <i>14</i>	244:23 284:17	E-V-E-R-G-Y	267:22
272:24	envisioned 54:14	300:1	<b>Ex</b> 6:5
enter 320:23	equal 27:15	every 49:1 54:14	exact 14:16 22:8
<b>entered</b> 132:17	140:16 169:6	88:16, 19 91:12	356:8
144:21 274:5	177:18	129:9 179:25	exactly 17:22
314:17	equity 313:15	241:4, 6 250:19	57:20 96:5 104:5,
entering 306:24	era 295:19	268:3, 11 285:6	9, 10 119:23
entire 85:22	Erik 332:13	303:3, 20 315:10	142:11 147:6, 24
123:22 158:15	erratic 297:8	321:2 335:10	171:14 191:23
278:19 282:2		354:1	195:14 219:14

234:4 250:17	17, 19 123:5, 6	127:19 258:11	ovnlenation
252:10 314:15	181:12 186:21, 23	expand 248:17	explanation 246:25
339:25	188: <i>14</i> 193: <i>16</i>	expand 248.17 expect 127:20	explicit 186:7
<b>EXAMINATION</b>		128:2 178:7	explore 53:8
80:3 184:18	202:2, 3, 8, 9, 17,	<b>Expected</b> 3:4, 5	84:8 200:9
	20 206:7, 9	48:6 218:22	
198:1 257:21	214:18 221:19, 20		<b>explored</b> 52:10 85:24
261:1	223:11, 13, 18, 24	expecting 178:4	
examined 79:17	224:4, 13, 16, 22	expediency 38:5	exploring 50:12
197:14 260:14	225:5 226:2, 3, 23	<b>expend</b> 341:18	extended 149:4
<b>example</b> 69:10	227:7 237:19	expenditures	extends 280:13
149:5 186:11	238:2 240:10	306:15 307:2, 10	<b>extent</b> 43:1 97:16
255:20 314:17	247:9 257:24	344:24	138:5 189:7
341:21 374:25	271:18, 20, 22	expense 74:17	190:4 263:24
375:19	272:1, 2, 8, 9	expenses 153:1	280:3 307:1
examples 166:10	282:16, 20, 24	341:18	extra 273:18
167:2 336:11	283:1, 12, 17	<b>expensive</b> 93:2, 3	extracted 201:9
excellent 131:10,	288:20, 23 289:10	106:6 294:3, 10	extraordinarily
11, 12	296:21 300:20	296:5 309:17	67:15
<b>exception</b> 39:5, 6	305:2 315:20	310:6 337:9	extremely 139:7
42:17 330:3, 4	318:2 321:7, 8	experience 51:24	145:25 149:12
Excerpt 3:4	327:8 332:1, 2	52:18 66:21	eyes 84:22
excited 82:11	343:19 352:8	83:10 157:6, 16	
85:11 129:10	360:11, 12 361:24	169:24	<f></f>
exciting 54:5	362:7, 8, 10, 14, 25	experienced	<b>face</b> 160:6 162:5,
85:15	363:5 365:23	302:13	11 307:12
exclusion 24:20	370:3, 6, 7, 15, 21	experiential 167:6	facilitate 54:13
<b>excuse</b> 39: <i>3</i>	<b>Exhibits</b> 3:3 4:1	<b>expert</b> 39:8, 14	176:13 201:14, 15
41:24 118:6	5:1 6:1 7:1 8:3	40:4, 7 42:17	355:23
154:19	10:22 32:18, 24	156:4	facilitated 54:1
execute 264:3	35:20 39:1, 3	expertise 52:19	facilitates 48:25
executive 20:21	40:3, 24 41:17, 25	73:7 323:17	facilities 50:22
25:18 26:12	42:2, 6, 8, 10, 13,	324:12	52:24 72:10
202:23	17 101:19, 25	expertises 156:6	108:25 148:21
<b>exempt</b> 41:21	102:2 125:8	<b>experts</b> 155:18, 21,	176:8, 22 203:17
exhaustive 25:2	378:22	24	307:6 324:13
<b>Exhibit</b> 4:2, 3, 6,	exist 48:17 58:19	expiration 247:18,	354:9, 17
10, 12, 15, 18, 21,	129:23 356:15	19	<b>facility</b> 203:16
24 5:2, 3, 6, 9, 12,	377:15	<b>expire</b> 311:4	298:18 337:6
13, 17, 20, 23, 24	existed 267:3	317:5	339:19
6:2, 5, 9, 12, 13, 15,	279:16	<b>expired</b> 338: <i>3</i>	<b>fact</b> 36:25 40:17
23 7:2, 6 22:13,	existence 142:16	<b>explain</b> 202:19	54:20 56:2 61:12,
16, 17 26:18, 24	<b>existing</b> 66:11, 12	213:13 214:9	21 63:12 67:6
27:1 39:7, 11, 22	141:10 162:5	222:16 246:16	68:6 69:22 73:6
40:9, 20 42:13, 14	372:8, 10	292:13 322:2	75:23 76:10
94:23 97:24 98:2,	exists 31:3, 17	explains 26:2	105:10 106:16
5 110:12 115:5,		302:8	137:24 157:18

233:22 237:3	<b>favor</b> 58:18	372:18	<b>Firm</b> 34:6, 12
267:3 285:11	75:19 130:23	<b>file</b> 28:14 102:22	47:1 157:3
289:20 314:17	183:8 321:3, 4	<b>filed</b> 10:6 29:1	<b>firms</b> 323:19
factor 18:8	favorable 74:1	125:9 180:7	<b>first</b> 8:8 11:14
factors 13:25	188:23 189:24	<b>filing</b> 130:23	17:17 23:22
21:1 99:6 291:13	Fax 5:17	<b>fill</b> 165:5	25:13 47:22
facts 25:20 27:7	FC0 298:14	<b>filled</b> 191:13, 15,	57:23 60:4 65:13
31:11, 13	fear 55:4	17, 18	67:25 78:3 79:10,
factually 79:1	<b>feast</b> 315:16	<b>final</b> 13:19	17 85:2, 9, 17
fair 38:20, 22	February 1:15	272:16 365:3	110:11 111:12, 23
43:8, 9 67:16	8:7	369:3, 6	117:8, 9 143:8, 15
112:23 145:15	<b>fed</b> 335:23	<b>finally</b> 365:19	175:10, 16 187:18,
148:16 164:24	<b>Federal</b> 76:17	<b>finance</b> 272:3	19 188:18 192:10
213:3, 4 240:8	114:9 140:6	finances 52:24	197: <i>14</i> 228: <i>25</i>
301:11 347:16	214:20 286:20	153:5	239:1, 19 247:24
<b>fairly</b> 14: <i>17</i>	357:17	financial 53:16	260:14 295:13
166:11 297:2	feedback 53:25	61:19 72:25	314:14 316:10
305:3	<b>feedlot</b> 49:11	74:16 75:10	349:15 370:25
fairness 71:21	<b>feel</b> 15:17 84:1, 3	99:16 293:17, 22	<b>Fish</b> 114:7, 9
158:23 236:4	156: <i>3</i> 171: <i>15</i> , <i>16</i>	294:4 306:18	139:9 144:5
244:4	fees 272:11 297:1,	323:22 333:3, 8,	275:25 312:19
<b>faith</b> 157:18	4	10, 12, 17 334:7	<b>fit</b> 120:16 251:24
<b>fall</b> 87:5 236:15	<b>feet</b> 222:24	337:11 343:21, 23	252:8, 21
<b>familiar</b> 115: <i>19</i>	229:13 233:13	345:8 348:19	fitting 51:6
122:6 124:9	274:20 353:23	349:11 360:16	<b>five</b> 21:20 22:23
143: <i>18</i> 172: <i>13</i>	<b>felt</b> 37:6 126:12	361:6 363:12	23:8 44:18, 19, 23
266:2 <i>1</i> 271: <i>19</i>	161: <i>15</i> 163:23	financially 52:1	57:17 97:7
318:7 366:8	277:3	55:11 322:18	100:19, 20 254:23
370:20	<b>FERC</b> 63:14	financials 75:10	259:18 342:13
<b>families</b> 48: <i>3</i> 49: <i>8</i>	72:14 76:16	financing 342:9	348:19
<b>famine</b> 315: <i>16</i>	144:20 216: <i>1</i>	<b>find</b> 18:4 24:8	five-minute
<b>fantastic</b> 82:9, 13	244:20 245:1, 4	25:4, 6 76:6 84:8	357:23 358:5
146:4 151:25	275:13 357:15, 16	172:2 175:23, 25	359:1
<b>far</b> 31:10 108:6	<b>fertile</b> 47: <i>17</i>	273:24 294:14	<b>fixed</b> 58:13, 15
142:24 203:13	<b>field</b> 49:10	317:6, 10	294:9
244: <i>14</i> 279:9	201:12 247:3	<b>finding</b> 27:25	Flash 7:6
336:21 342:15, 20	254:18 324:4	<b>findings</b> 21:2 <i>1</i>	<b>flat</b> 289:2
<b>Farm</b> 6:2 80:15	<b>fields</b> 246:20	22:12 23:22	flexibility 314:5,
137:14 254:18	<b>Fifth</b> 28:7	24:25 25:1, 4, 19	12 333:23 334:25
261:6, 16 285:25	<b>figure</b> 91:25	<b>fine</b> 33:22 46:12	335:1, 9, 12 336:4
<b>farmers</b> 135:25	105: <i>4</i> 165: <i>1</i>	90:19 114:1, 2	339:14
237:9, 12 243:20,	178:12 324:2	174:6, 8, 10 196:9	flexible 341:7
21 247:1 251:4	345:20 362:10	259:15, 23	flipped 60:2
<b>Farnam</b> 2:16	363:6	<b>finish</b> 358:7	<b>floods</b> 273:16
<b>fault</b> 336:15	<b>figures</b> 363:18	<b>finished</b> 348: <i>13</i>	<b>Floor</b> 1:13 8:8
L			

	a w		
flow 144:22	<b>follow</b> 36:13	<b>fortunate</b> 152:21	<b>front</b> 56:12
214:10 215:11, 23		245:7	110:12 115:7
217:15 227:14	103:7 230:21	fortunately 147:19	124:4 132:21
228:14, 16 232:18	274:13 310:19	forward 15:2	139:6 171:22
280:16 286:20	348:12	36:24 68:12, 21	237:20 339:10
313:6, 9	following 8:1	69:14 70:15	352:14 360:20, 21
<b>flowing</b> 106:18	27:11 110:2	72:14 83:14 84:2,	<b>frontline</b> 198: <i>17</i>
150:21 216:10	175:2 260:2	10 86:19 87:12	<b>fuel</b> 303:24
247:3 303:1	360:2 376:14	88:18, 20 129:8	<b>fulfill</b> 60:10
flows 63:11, 13	<b>follows</b> 79:18	130:6 131:9	fulfilling 264:6
111:24 144:6	197:15 260:15	133:6 139:20	<b>full</b> 19: <i>1</i> 20: <i>17</i> ,
150:25 152:25	305:17	169:9 171: <i>4</i>	24 79:20 188:9
215:16 233:18	<b>followup</b> 110: <i>18</i>	172:20 177:10	307:5 315:10
277:2, 23, 25	116:9 175:9	178:15, 17 179:2	<b>fully</b> 50:4, 15
279:25 280:1, 15,	184:12 192:9	307:13 311:8	58:6 59:18
16, 18, 19 284:17	195:20 257: <i>1</i>	316:18 322:22	319:20
297:7 304:3	374:25	347:14 359:3	<b>fun</b> 146:23
315:17 316:6	<b>footprint</b> 131: <i>16</i> ,	365:17	<b>function</b> 152:11
344:25 345:1	17, 18 335:17	<b>found</b> 8:21 22:18	215:17 297:6
fluctuating 305:21	<b>force</b> 179:4	27:2 42:4 243:20	<b>fund</b> 69:24 71:8
fluctuation 301:19	268:10	244:1	341:4 344:23
flush 336:11	foreclose 196:6	foundation 27:7	fundamental
343:2	345:21	52:8 54:6 189:7	179:19
focus 51:25	forefathers 281:17	367:8, 18, 23	<b>funding</b> 308:3
55:18 288:5	forefront 139:6	foundational 54:4	<b>funds</b> 123:11
301:17 309:1	forever 91:2	350:2	306:7 307:17
365:22	<b>forget</b> 206:17	<b>founding</b> 266:16	344:6 354:8
<b>focused</b> 51:17	Form 5:9 62:9	<b>four</b> 19:7 24:15	Furnas 269:22
72:25 73:1 87:6	117:15, 19, 23	71:6 81:13	furnishing 24:10
293:23	118:17, 18 189:6	100:20 203:15	<b>further</b> 59:23
focusing 64:13	238:5, 24 367:7,	229:4 238:22, 23	62:19 78:1, 6
<b>Foley</b> 331:10	18, 23	262:22 272:9	131:22 166: <i>1</i>
<b>folks</b> 90:9, 16	<b>formal</b> 34:24	294:7 297:17	192:1 225:19
138:16 139:8, 14	35:11 165:21	316:9 322:6	226:7 247:14
153:3 160:16	formation 54:15	four-phased 52:12	252:25 258:23
245:23 265:12	264:22	fourth 28:2	259:1 261:25
266:17 267:17	<b>formed</b> 68:1	<b>four-tier</b> 108:13	280:13 281:23
275:12 278:19	191:9 357:5, 10	<b>fraction</b> 298:11	<b>furthest</b> 205:21
281:18, 24 288:8	former 103:22	Frank 1:18	future 50:14
291:9 311:6	134:6, 8 191:7	17:14 30:6 94:18	59:9 60:18 72:14
319:14 323:15, 17	forms 238:11	103:20 348:12	75:7 82:3, 11
330:19, 22 331:16	forth 95:14	frankly 70:4	85: <i>14</i> 130: <i>5</i>
333:19 345:13	126:4 240:21	free 27:5	131:5, 11, 14
376:18, 21	309:25 325:25	frees 252:15	132:22, 25 133:20
folks/voters 373:1	334:16	Friday 8:7 44:3,	134:1 147:11
	337.10	16, 18, 20	154:11 167:1
	I	10, 10, 20	137.11 10/.1

178:14 237:15	generated 113:8	<b>getting</b> 10:19	143:10 154:7	
273:19 282:4	302:22 313:11, 16	72:3 107:1	156:17 159:19	
309:18 310:5	315:10 330:5	113:15, 23 144:10	165:15 168:19	
334:25 335:14	generates 48:18	179:18 190:24	169:11, 13 172:19	
345:11 350:17	71:13, 15	207:20 212:8	181:15 192:12	
351: <i>13</i>	generating 150:6	213:20 229:10	193: <i>3</i> , <i>14</i> 209:2 <i>1</i>	
	267:5	249:20 255:1, 5	229:3 235:12	
<g></g>	generation 48:10	257:6 274:20	237:15 239:6	
<b>gained</b> 51:24	52:19 55:12, 14	279:8 300:12	248:18 252:16	
gas-fired 343:25	76:20 85:12	304:11 312:24	254:25 257:2	
gated 245:24	92:11, 17 128:5	353:18	260:3 261:12	
gates 150:19	141:14, 17 204:2,	give 90:23 95:2	265:15, 22 273:6	
225:13 246:17	4 205:1 263:13	115:22 130:2	279:9 280:25	
322:11	264:17 272:10	172:8 173:3	294:1 315:18	
gathering 156:8	294:1 295:10, 22	174:17 196:25	317:5, 9 340:22	
Gee 273:17	297:15 300:18, 21	224:25 243:21	343:4 345:15	
315:5 317:18	301:4, 5, 12 303:5	253:6 257:9	349:15 358:22, 23	
gees 157:15	304:10 305:4, 8,	260:17 271:18	359:3 360:10, 24	
general 24:21	18 306:13 308:23	316:14 338:20	362:9	
25:18 26:1, 4, 10,	309:1 311:20, 24	given 46:9 57:10	<b>goal</b> 145:16	
15 39:13 47:15	312:10 315:6	80:12 172:5	<b>goals</b> 276:2	
130:1 165:10	320:15 325:3, 12,	210:13	<b>God</b> 303:25	
167:10 168:10, 12	13, 16 335:11	gives 257:5	goes 18:18 20:19	
169:5, 15, 16	339:19 341:13	336:11	68:11 69:14	
177:18 178:22	generations 60:19	giving 57:8 249:7	87:2 <i>4</i> 111: <i>11</i>	
191:18, 21 254:11	204:19	glasses 256:23	113:14 195:12, 13	
262:10, 17, 19, 21	Generator 112:4,	<b>Glendo</b> 316:3	205:1, 6 226:17,	
263:2, 16, 25	5 204:19	344:9 348:18, 21	22 234:10 279:4,	
264:2 270:20	generators 111:25	349:5, 6	21 290:3 296:7	
272:4 298:15	206:12	<b>glorious</b> 170:11	298:22 342:21	
304:18, 20 306:17	generator's 338:18	<b>GMs</b> 4:10, 15	<b>going</b> 9:7 15:2	
308:14 324:5	<b>genesis</b> 317:25	<b>go</b> 9:7 13:12	17:8 21:13 23:1,	
325:1 341:16	318:16	20:23 21:13 23:1,	7, 17 30:17 32:18,	
generally 118:20	geographic 58:13	7 29:5 30:11	24 33:5 42:9	
119:4 150:3	geographical	31:2 32:7, 10, 14,	43:12 45:6 60:5	
180:17 201:7	269:17	16 33:25 44:23	63:22 64:10, 13	
209:16, 18, 23	geography 369:16,	46:14 66:15	66:10, 13 67:5, 7,	
224:18, 20 238:20	24	68:19 70:15, 21	9, 14 69:12, 22	
254:13 268:9	<b>geology</b> 289:21, 24	80:15 84:8 87:12	70:1, 17 74:10, 11,	
334:15	George 60:2	88:18 89:12	14, 21, 22 87:8, 9,	
generate 52:22	264:24 266:2, 6, 7,	95:14 96:19	12 91:20 97:11	
54:10 66:8 74:14	8	99:19 105:5	100:11 103:21	
111:2, 7 112: <i>14</i>	<b>Georges</b> 316:15	106:4 108:3	107:8, 19 108:24	
114:21 152:3	329:15	110:4 118:12	109:1 110:4	
176:8 305:11	<b>get-go</b> 319:21	124:6 126:8, 2 <i>1</i>	111:1, 2 112:13	
354:17 355:3		130:7 133:5	124:14 126:8, 11,	

21, 22 127:7
135: <i>15</i> 139: <i>18</i> 142:8 146: <i>10</i>
152:2, 3 154:23
165:1 168:15
169:5 172: <i>10</i>
173: <i>12</i> 175: <i>7</i> 190: <i>3</i> 192: <i>9</i>
190:3 192:9
194:24 202:5 210:21 212:1
215:16, 23 216:1,
4 218:20 224:3
228:25 242:7, 9
247:7 253:7
254:14, 17 258:14
267: <i>10</i> 283: <i>6</i> 289: <i>5</i> , <i>6</i> 290: <i>21</i>
295:3, 5 299:13
303:7, 14, 16
310:9 311:8
312:10 316:23
317:6 319:19, 20,
22 326:23 333:6, 10, 11 334:11
337:16, 20 338:18
341:21 342:13, 14,
<i>17</i> 343:5, <i>6</i> , <i>18</i>
347:23, 24 349:18
350:13, 22 352:6
357:23, 25 358:16
359:2 360:8 365:25 375:5
378:9, 15, 20
<b>good</b> 11:7 33:25
46:24 61:4 80:5,
6 91:2 139:22
147:19 149:16
174: <i>1</i> 261: <i>3</i> , <i>4</i> 263:2 <i>3</i> 273: <i>17</i>
274:5 278:23
280:18 288:9, 10,
11 302:24 306:19,
21 331:10 334:17,
21 365:8 378:4, 6, 13
13

Gosper 6:2 50:18 68:3 94:1 96:22 99:23 136:*10*, *20* 140:*21* 141:5 164:7, 19 181:5 182:19 195:2, 9, 13 269:4, 23 284:11 371:5 Gothenburg 112:1 260:21 377:6 **gotten** 272:25 302:24 364:18 Gottschalk 1:22 11:12 12:12, 17 13:4 14:7, 9, 21, 23 15:21 16:15 17:7 29:8 166:5. 18, 22 167:13, 21 174:5 274:15 308:19 310:18 374:18 Gottschalk's 12:5 16:*1*, 9 governance 52:23 53:14 59:15 87:5 91:5 183:24 278:18, 20 324:20 governed 58:7 180:9 268:18, 19 **governing** 116:*16* 176:15 177:10 178:13, 25 government 15:8 140:6 286:20 governments 286:21 **governor** 12:21 13:17 331:9 **governs** 116:*1* 239:3 366:23 **grad** 119:*1* **grade** 113:24 graduated 80:14 261:17, 18

graduating 262:4 **grander** 265:25 grandiose 265:5 grandkids 85:14 **granted** 239:10 **grants** 342:3 **graph** 272:3 294:7 **grasp** 152:7 **gravels** 289:25 **gravity** 246:20 gravity-fed 246:19 graved 219:19 **great** 61:14 73:2 107:15, 21, 22 156:11 245:12 274:23 287:6 292:24 309:3 316:16 341:1, 20 343:12 348:1 greater 165:16 333:14 334:25 green 284:21 285:3 315:19 Greg 1:20 9:18 grew 80:15, 18 261:6 grid 295:20 gross 71:16 **ground** 89:6, 9 104:13 126:22 133:2 137:*14* 177:19 220:14 223:1, 4 265:18 267:18 273:8, 19 274:21 275:14 279:13 280:8, 14, 20, 22 281:7, 11 282:6 284:16 292:18 293:3 304:17 353:23 **grounds** 160:19 Groundwater 5:3 54:11 55:22, 24 56:*4* 58:*1* 81:*23* 

82:17 96:9

108:16 121:17 135:7 137:25 138:6 176:11 199:6, 11 200:24 201:1, 8, 20, 21 206:5 220:16 222:22 234:22, 23 235:3, 9 243:15 245:10 267:13, 21 279:10, 14, 16, 24 280:23, 25 281:3, 8 282:2, 6 284:5, 12, 18 285:14 286:3 287:15 288:11, 18 289:18 293:6 294:15 355:22 groundwater-level 283:19 **Group** 5:24 6:13 8:22 9:24 15:11 39:5 72:18 75:25 77:10 277:14 278:19 288:5 329:8, 17 332:14 grouping 356:8 grow 200:18 261:5 **guarantee** 212:*15* guess 14:6, 24 17:5 22:1 80:16 106:20 145:10 154:20 160:2*1* 170:5, 15 177:13, 17 178:18 192:24 224:4 228:3 287:8 319:24 321:18 340:9 341:15, 24 342:8, *22* 351:*16* 352:*13* 358:22 364:11 378:4 **guesses** 326:25 guessing 17:24 guidance 130:2

287:2	342:12 343:22, 24	75:3, 4, 23, 25	16 14: <i>14</i> 17: <i>16</i>
guideline 133:1	344:2 347:18	82:7, 9, 16, 18	18:7, 19 19:12, 20
guidelines 126:6	348:4 352:13	88:11 89:8 91:22	20:16 21:8, 25
178:2 <i>1</i>	357:13 360:2	92:7 93:14 94:2,	22:3, 10 24:22
<b>guiding</b> 171:5	371:3 372:14	7 99:3 100:18	25:3, 25 26:7
352:24 354:6	<b>hadn't</b> 12:21	102:6 113:2 <i>1</i>	30:11, 15 31:4
<b>guy</b> 266:18	126:14	114:6 128:23	32:21 35:16
<b>guys</b> 90:11	<b>half</b> 134:6, 7	135:23 140:23	36:23 37:4, 5, 9,
156: <i>12</i> , <i>14</i> 196:9	135:15, 17 314:18	141:11, 22 143:1,	10, 20 38:6, 12, 16
<b>Gwen</b> 103:15	321:22 329:13	<i>4</i> 144: <i>17</i> 146: <i>17</i>	40:2, 17 42:6, 8,
168:7, 9 317: <i>13</i>	340:7	151:7, 17, 24	12, 13, 19, 25
	<b>Hall</b> 261:15	155:2 <i>1</i> , 2 <i>4</i> 159: <i>14</i>	44:13, 18, 19, 20
<h></h>	<b>Hammel</b> 4:12	160:8, 18 161:12	45:11, 19, 20, 25
habitat 275:12	hamstring 312:14	182:17 185:22	46:6, 14 48:9, 16,
276:3 280:20	<b>hand</b> 35:15	191:13, 14, 24, 25	23 50:17 51:11,
286:22	143:10 144:1, 2, 4	193:10 195:4	14 53:13 55:19
<b>had</b> 1:12 8:2, 18,	365:25	205:23 206:4	56:2, 25 58:2, 22
22 11:6 12:20	<b>handed</b> 158:3	207:25 210:9, 23	59:1 61:25 62:11,
19:15 52:12	<b>handle</b> 151:21	212:2, 16, 20	14 63:6, 7, 10, 15
78:19 87:11, 16	156:21 358:25	213:7, 19 214:11	64:7, 11, 18 65:14,
88:16 91:11, 14,	handles 204:10	215:5, 22 216:25	22, 23 66:19, 21
<i>15</i> 93:6 96: <i>3</i>	hands 122:25	217:11 218:6	67:2, 17 68:9
108:23 110:2, 9	139:17 140:8	222:4 223:6	69:21 70:9, 12, 18,
122:13 124:23	251:8	234:7 236:4	22 72:7, 10, 16
126:4, 14 129:5	<b>happen</b> 92:25	239:15 242:12, 16	74:8 75:5, 15, 24
142:18 146:4	126:23 146:10	248:25 249:1	76:23, 25 77:24
153:2 157:8, 11	158:18 185:16	253:25 266:25	78: <i>1</i> 80:9 81: <i>1</i> ,
159:18 160:2, 5	320:25 333:7, 13	268:24 271:8, 9	11, 16 82:16 83:9
163:20 164:1, 8	happened 151:7	274:20, 24 278:6	84:7, 10 85:12, 13
167: <i>11</i> 171: <i>3</i> , <i>4</i>	163:8 166: <i>15</i>	279:11 289:17	86:5, 14, 22 87:8,
175:2, 18, 19	311:22 329:21	295:11 309:23	10, 17 88:9, 21
180:7 183:17	happens 9:3	314:3 315:8	89:10 90:18, 19
184: <i>11</i> 185: <i>14</i>	13:20 37:12	316:8 319:3	91:4, 9 92:6, 16
186:4 192:24	151:6 338:19	329:25 337:24	94:3, 25 96:23
199:6 218:17	339:18	339:8 341:3	97:2, 9 98:10, 16,
234:8 243:9	<b>happy</b> 243:23	342:1 343:9, 22	23 99:6, 12 100:2,
244:12 260:2, 5	<b>hard</b> 44:18, 20	347:20, 22 348:2	3, 9, 14 101:18, 22,
263:16, 17 264:24	harmless 18:5	356:25 364:17	23 102:12, 14, 16
265:9 267:16	<b>has</b> 9:5 14:14	365:18, 20 368:7	103:7, 12, 14, 21
290:15 306:21	16:25 22:8 23:14	hasn't 14:7	104:3, 24 105:3,
307:23 315:6	25:6 26:17 28:1	256:8 257:11	11, 18, 23, 24
316:16 318:21	36:8 47:21, 25	316: <i>1</i>	106:2 <i>3</i> 107: <i>14</i>
319:5 323:7, 14	48:7 55:15 59:17,	<b>Hastings</b> 261:21	108:15 110:11, 25
327:1 329:8, 9, 15,	20 60:15 61:11,	have 8:23, 25	111:3, 8 112:13,
16 331:9, 13, 14,	16 67:19, 20 68:7	11:2, 3, 19, 24	19, 24 113:5, 20
<i>15</i> 334:9 338: <i>14</i>	69:24 71:8, 11	12:3 13:10, 12, 15,	114:11, 20 115:7

116:4, 8 117:1, 17, 20 119:13 120:19 121:24 122:7, 16, 24 123:9 126:9, 12 128:13, 18 129:4, 9, 18 130:5, 6 131:6, 16, 18, 22 132:20 133:6, 9, 18 134:16 137:9, *14*, *21* 138:*10*, *12*, 19, 20 139:5 140:1, 15 141:7, 16, 19 143:14 144:5, 6, 13 145:18, 19 146:13 147:1 148:19 149:3, 17 150:16, 22 152:5, 19 154:*1*, *6*, *21* 157:*1*, 5, 18, 19 159:14, *18* 160:2, *10*, *15* 161:8, 9, 24, 25 162:5, 10 163:5, *15* 164:2, 8, *10*, *11*, *13*, *15*, *25* 165:*3* 166:5, 24 167:5 168:5 169:5, 8, 15, *19*, *22* 171:*4*, *21* 172:2, 9, 21 173:*11*, *16* 174:*1* 175:9, 16 177:18, 21, 23 178:5, 19, 22 182:8, 20 183:16 185:3 186:2 187:17 188:5, 6 190:12, *13* 192:1, 8, 14, 17, 22 193:20 194:24 195:*19*, *23* 196:*24* 198:20, 23 200:16, *17* 202:9 206:*10*, *13* 208:*3* 209:*7* 215:25 216:4 217:7, 14, 19 218:4 220:22 221:10 222:14

223:24 224:21 226:7 230:11 231:1, 4, 13, 21 232:7, 12 233:13, 17, 19 234:11 235:6, 7, 14 236:8, 22 237:1, 4 243:1, 8, 10, 20 245:10, *12* 246:*15* 247:*7* 248:12, 16 251:1, *4*, *5* 254:5 255:20, 22 256:2, 11, 22 257:1, 18 258:19 261:25 262:3, 13. 19 263:16, 17 265:19, 21 267:6, 18, 19 271:2, 7 272:14 273:14 274:15 275:2, 7 276:17 278:8, 12, 14, 21 279:17, 19, 21, 22 281:2 282:7 285:20, 21 286:17 287:8 288:7, 14 290:23 291:3, 7, 8 294:19 296:1 298:14 301:4, 15, 18, 22 302:23 303:1, 4, *16*, *18* 304:*1*, *15* 305:14 306:8 307:5, 25 308:11, 19 309:19, 20 310:2, 23 311:5, *17* 312:*1*, *6* 317:19, 21 319:17 320:10 323:3, 17 324:9 326:*1*, 23 332:17 333:6, 20 334:3, 20 335:4, 9, 25 336:5, 13, 15, 16, 17 337:15 338:3, 19 339:9, 15, 17, 19 340:17 341:21 342:4, 5,

14, 18 343:8, 9

344:3, 9, 18, 23, 24, *25* 345:*10*, *13*, *18* 346:4 347:3, 18, 19, 24 348:8 349:6, 20, 25 350:9, 22 351:3, 8, 11, 19, 21 352:4, 19, 21 353:1 358:2, 4, 7, 9 360:20 361:10, 14, 17, 25 362:6, 19 364:18 366:2, 4 367:10 368:10 369:22 370:22 372:25 375:1, 5, 14, 20 376:18 haven't 90:11 243:11 255:4 369:20 **he** 19:5, 8, 10 60:4 91:23 97:16 155:*1*, 2 163:*10*, *11* 172:*13* 191:*25* 192:13 208:9, 10 266:9, 11, 16, 17 332:13 364:21 **head** 33:24 166:14 252:18 274:21 heads 320:11 **health** 306:18 **hear** 11:19 12:25 15:4 23:15 50:8 52:11 53:11 58:5, 25 59:25 60:14 65:1 67:23 68:24 69:3 72:18 73:6 75:8, 21 287:24 293:11 328:15 330:22 heard 20:4 69:21 85:17 89:1 183:19, 20 200:6 201:2 237:1 265:6 269:7

279:19 283:25

285:22 287:14, 22 290:8 291:22, 23 294:2 302:2 309:6 329:14 344:*3* HEARING 1:6, 13 8:5, 6, 8, 11, 16, 17 9:10 10:23 11:17, 21, 24 12:14, 18 13:6, 11 14:11 15:1, 19, 23 16:3, 12, 20 17:4, 10, 15, 21 18:23 19:14, 19 20:1, 22 21:7, 11, 16, 19 22:21, 25 23:4, 11, 20 26:23 27:4 29:9, 18 30:10, 16, 21, 23 31:6, 20 32:6, 10 33:4, 11, 15, 23 34:18, 25 35:7, 10, 11, 23 36:2, 11 37:15, 23 38:23 39:21, 25 40:6, 10, 15, 23 41:5, 9, 12, 16, 20, 24 42:5 43:11, 16, 21, 25 44:6, 12, 13 45:18 46:11, 16 53:6 60:13 76:14 77:3, 11, 14, 23 79:5, 9, 13, 19, 25 88:22, 25 89:13, 17, 23 90:1 92:2 94:14, 20 95:4, 7, 12, 21 96:1, 10 97:15 98:9, 13 101:17 102:5, 8, *12, 18* 103:2, *6, 10* 108:22 110:3 112:2, 7, 22 113:9, *13*, *18*, *25* 114:8, 15, 25 116:13, 18 118:1, 7, 11 119:2, 8, 11 124:13, 25 125:3, 11, 16

131:2 <i>4</i> 147: <i>4</i> , 2 <i>1</i>
140.1.5.0.154.2
148:1, 5, 8 154:2
155: <i>3</i> , 9 166: <i>1</i> 9
· ·
167: <i>14</i> , 22, 25
169.2 170.4
168:3 172:4
173:17, 20 174:9
175:3, 4, 11, 14, 17
181:8 184:9, <i>14</i>
185:2 <i>1</i> 186:6
188:8, <i>12</i> 190: <i>14</i> ,
21 192:3, 6, 11
193:16 195:25
196:5, 8, 12, 16
197:6, 9, 11, 16, 19
199: <i>16</i> , <i>19</i> , <i>24</i>
200:3 202:25
203:5, 8, 18, 21, 25
204:3, 9, 21
205:11 206:6, 22,
25 207:5 211:25
212:6, 14, 22, 25
213:5 216: <i>18</i> , 2 <i>1</i>
217:2 218:2 <i>1</i>
220:21 221:5, 8,
13 223:9, 14, 16,
20, 25 224:2, 8, 12,
15 226:9 227:2, 6,
9, 11 253:1, 9, 12,
17 255:8 256:7,
15, 25 257:4, 16,
20 258:25 259:8,
12, 15, 18, 22
260:3, 8, 16, 22
272:20, 23 274:7,
12, 17 275:16, 19,
24 276:5, 9, 12, 15,
19 277:6, 10, 13,
16, 19, 24 278:3,
11 282:12, 15, 21
283:9, 12, 15
285:19 288:20
289:9 296:9, 12,
16 299:19, 23
· ·
300:2, 5, 11 308:4,
<i>8</i> , <i>13</i> , <i>17</i> 311: <i>11</i> ,
<i>15</i> 312:5, <i>17</i> , <i>23</i>
1

273:20 281:12
294:16 335:17
her 11:17 12:9
14:21 18:9 25:19
29:19, 20 33:24
317:15
<b>Herald</b> 4:17
herself 11: <i>13</i>
12: <i>13</i> 17: <i>18</i>
He's 18:24
175: <i>19</i> 181: <i>11</i> 192: <i>12</i>
hey 71:25 86:6
90:11 130:4
146:5 156:10
157:22 254:10, 25
157:22 254:10, 25 266:18 275:3
292:23 317:24
319:9 344:23
Hieden 3:4
<b>high</b> 51:19 80:14
106:17 220:15
261:18
<b>higher</b> 106: <i>14</i> 312: <i>11</i>
high-level 326:18,
24
highlighted 371:1
highlights 73:13
<b>highlights</b> 73: <i>13</i> <b>him</b> 18: <i>24</i> 19: <i>5</i>
172:6, 8, 9, 11
hindrance 343:11
hire 86:10
hired 77:10 86:11
hiring 320:18
<b>his</b> 39: <i>15</i> 40:22 61: <i>15</i> 78:8, 9
103:1 130:1
189·11 192·13
189: <i>11</i> 192: <i>13</i> 201: <i>3</i> 247:25
252:18
historic 280:5
historical 308:21
377:14
historically 99:6

145:17

historical-type 307:24 **History** 6:25 51:2 60:24 83:10 86:12 165:2 237:5 266:22 hit 289:25 303:18 314:12 338:19 339:14 Hold 103:9, 12 104:14 108:1 123:25 135:3 139:17 140:7 214:14 248:13 262:23 314:19 holders 330:7 **holding** 21:*15* 103:15 213:21 233:2 303:22 **holds** 225:15 250:19 251:8 357:15 holes 158:7 267:18 home 267:11 homes 48:23 honest 341:10 **honestly** 139:*17* hope 108:20 149:15 170:21 355:*3* **hoped** 12:23 47:24 353:22 **Hopefully** 285:*13* 297:8 303:14 horse 64:16 **hot** 106:25 hour 29:19 172:5, 25 173:7 174:14 329:13 hours 108:1 **house** 70:2 170:13 houses 54:2 91:14 129:5 **Hub** 4:18

huge 75:15	hydraulic-filled	idea 20:16 50:4	171:25 172:4, 25
273:16 284:16	294:12	85: <i>10</i> 152: <i>23</i>	173: <i>1</i> 177: <i>11</i> , 22
309:23	<b>Hydro</b> 6:5 42:22	192: <i>18</i> , <i>22</i> 200: <i>4</i>	180:24 185: <i>16</i>
hundreds 48:22	60:3 63:2 65:21	271:2, 7 301:5	186: <i>13</i> 187: <i>1</i>
<b>hurt</b> 318:23	71:6 73:15	316: <i>16</i> 319: <i>10</i>	192:2 <i>4</i> 193: <i>3</i> , <i>13</i>
Hutchison 1:19	110:22 111:18, 19	346:2 364: <i>15</i>	194: <i>4</i> , <i>9</i> 196:8
22:20, 22 23:2, 10,	112:5 134:24	365:8	200:9, 16 202:2
18 29:7 96:14	142:3, 24 153:17	identification 8:4	203:2, 8 210:18
97:21 98:18, 21,	176:7 203:24, 25	identified 21:20	211:4, 7 213:1, 23
	204:2, 18 205:1	23:8 42:14	215:6 216:11, 17,
	206:11 219:11	identify 52:25	24 219:21 221:16
	229:1 236:1, 23	334:12	223:21 224:2, 3
	263:7, 12 267:5	identifying 53:2	225:24 228:18, 23
	272:10 293:19	73:9, 10 330:11	230:23 233:10, 14,
	295:16 296:2	364:8	19 235:10 238:1
	297:14, 17 301:4,	<b>if</b> 9:2, 4 13:12	239:1, 6 240:17,
	5, 12 305:4, 8	15:25 16:22	<i>18</i> 241: <i>10</i> 242: <i>1</i> ,
	311:24 325:16	17: <i>17</i> , <i>18</i> 18: <i>3</i>	5, 19, 23 243:1, 21
	335:4 364:17, 22,	19:5, 14 20:11, 20	245:23 247:19, 25
	25 365:17	21:14 22:6 23:6	248:12, 16 249:2,
/ / / /	hydroelectric	24:19 25:5 30:14	12, 20, 21, 25
	216:7 355:3	31:21 33:16	250:10, 25 253:1,
	hydroelectricity	34:23 35:12 37:6,	<i>5</i> , <i>25</i> 254:2 <i>1</i>
	150:7	18, 25 39:19 43:6	255:5, 16, 23
	hydrological 157:5	44:2 45:1, 4, 10	256:8 257:9
	hydropower	46:9 52:15, 16	258:10 267:16
	48:10, 18 54:10	53:9 58:14 67:14	270:5 273:17
	69:7 73:18 92:10,	68:11 69:13	278:6 279:8
1	<i>17</i> 112:25 113: <i>16</i>	70:10, 15 71:2, 24	281:1, 4 283:25
1	143:9 144:2	78:6 84:1, 18, 19	284:2 285:16
287:5, 12 288:1,	155:22 176:2 <i>1</i>	86:16, 17, 18	288:14, 16, 23
25 291:21 292:4,	300:18 305:4, 11	87:14, 16 90:21	289:17 290:15, 20,
	325:3, 12, 13	93:11 94:8 95:7	24 292:25 293:8,
	354:17 357:17	99: <i>11</i> 100: <i>4</i> , <i>11</i>	<i>13</i> 294:7 295:21,
314: <i>11</i> 316:20	hydros 66:6, 7	104:2 <i>1</i> 105:2, 5	22 304:9, 11
	69:13 84:19	106:6, 22 107:2,	305:8 309:14, 15
	107:25 108:5	<i>17</i> 114: <i>1</i> , <i>3</i> 116: <i>3</i>	310:8, 11 311:17,
	150:8 152:2	117:2, 24 118:7	19 312:13, 14, 24
351:2, 6, 10, 24	205:19 284:23	124:19 125:6	313:7 314:6
352:1 374:24	291: <i>17</i> 316:9	126: <i>14</i> 130: <i>10</i>	318:25 319: <i>1</i> , <i>6</i> ,
375:4, 7, 12, 16, 25	339:8	131:8 133: <i>3</i>	19 322:13 326:22,
	hypothetically	139: <i>17</i> 140: <i>1</i>	25 328:18 329:11
1	254:22	143: <i>14</i> , <i>23</i> 145:22	333:6 335:5
Hutchison's		147:4 150:9	339:15, 24 340:15
376:14	<i></i>	155:8, 12 164:20,	341:11, 15 342:22,
hydraulic 338:25		25 165:6 169:15	23 343:8 344:16

345:18, 20, 25	improvement	independent	25 161:9, 11, 18,
346: <i>1</i> , <i>4</i> 349: <i>14</i>	333:16	36:20 320:12	25 162:15 197: <i>1</i>
350:17, 25 351:16	improvements	326:13	<b>informed</b> 29:13
352:8 365:16	346:8	independently	infrastructure
367:10 375:17	<b>incentive</b> 312:3, 6	71:24 320:10	198:14 263:6
377:21 378:9	incentives 292:23	342:14, 18	344:21 346:18
illustration	313:21 314:7	I-N-D-E-X 3:1	<b>inherent</b> 67:1, 13
203:14 207:22	incentivize 147:14	indicate 226:3	inherently 67:8
immediate 193:4	incentivizes 310:3	295:9	<b>initial</b> 318:13, 24
<b>impact</b> 31:8 50:2	<b>inches</b> 105:8	indicated 11:6	354:10
65:25 149:13	146:1, 24 147:6, 9,	21:25 22:15	<b>initially</b> 349:18
214:11 282:5	12, 18, 22	26:19 32:17	initiates 211:3
361:22 363:15	incidental 220:13	85:16 120:7	injured 38:9
<b>impacted</b> 374:21	incidentally 223:4	121:7 171:3	innate 83:19
impacting 88:1	<b>include</b> 25:24	173:25 218:17	87:23 128:9
impacts 49:6	26:4 63:8, 17	239:17 240:22	<b>innovate</b> 273:23
280:13 323:11, 24	64:23 214:16	255:12 295:25	innovative 290:5
339:7	375:9	300:23 352:11	input 278:23
impair 24:4	included 334:20	indicates 162:15	in-season 148:25
impediment	includes 12:8	221:11 297:11	149:20
312:18, 25	27:24 66:5 75:18	indicating 221:14	insight 301:15, 18
implement 36:9	214:17 219:18	259:3	insignificant
49:18 57:17	372:17	indication 18:12	358:12
133:9 154:13	including 53:5	indirect 201:18	instance 89:24
276:1	58:23 59:6, 16	207:19 208:2	106:22 180:5
implemented 58:6	102:1 129:25	215:2 228:13	354:8
134:1 253:20	181:24 241:17	231:9	<b>instant</b> 149:9
353:1	372:23	indirectly 208:20	instantly 66:2
imply 208:11	income 71:17	individual 38:7,	institutions 48:4
importance 208:5	92:15 138:13	16 61:8 78:25	instream 144:22
important 15:4	361:22 363:15	79:7 266:14	integral 10:14
48:2 49:15 56:11	incomes 153:1	286:3	51:15
92:10, 12 125:14	incorporate 37:11	individual-	<b>integrate</b> 325:4, 5
126:17, 24 127:3	incorrect 56:14,	agreement 211:15	integrated 142:14
132:6, 14, 24	16 113:2 337:19	individuals 91:18	335:13
139:7, 9, 10, 11	incorrectly 340:21	271:11	integrating 73:3
236:12 280:4, 24	increased 351:19	indulge 21:14	74:3 153:16
288:4 356:3, 5	increasing 201:19	23:7	intend 36:4, 13
imposes 276:20	incredible 291:13	industries 51:23	intended 255:2
imposes 270.20	316: <i>14</i>	331:16	354:1, 3
164: <i>13</i>	incredibly 59:17,	industry 48:3	intent 344:16
impounded 201:10	20	262:6	346:21 350:12
improve 294:8	incredulous 57:23	informal 50:10	352:19 354:7
345:3	incur 240:18	information 21:8	374:19
improved 291:12	241:3	153:4 156:8	<b>intention</b> 36:23
2)1.12		158:3, 4 160:19,	133:24 352:22
	I .	130.3, 7 100.17,	133.27 332.22

intentional 272:18
273:7, 25
intentionality 52:8
intentionally
273:12
interaction 324:11
<b>interest</b> 38:5, 11 50:24 57:6 58:2,
3 60:1 62:11, 14,
20 63:7, 11, 16
64:2, 12 65:3, 12
66:18, 23 67:24
70:24 76:7, 8, 9
93:14 130:9
131:2 134:16
144: <i>17</i> 170: <i>9</i> 195: <i>24</i> 235: <i>6</i> , <i>14</i>
265:9 282:7
290:15 313:15
344:15 347:8, 11,
12 360:10
interested 51:4
63:8 65:6 138:25
160: <i>16</i> 280:22 281:24 319:6, 9
327:2 329:9
<b>interesting</b> 316: <i>13</i>
interestingly
335:20
interests 23:25
24:15 56:8 59:16
63:2 <i>3</i> 64: <i>14</i> 67: <i>4</i> 81:2 <i>4</i> 132: <i>11</i>
153:23, 24 214:14
272:12, 13 310:13
317:20
interject 88:23
internal 161:5
318:17 330:5
337: <i>1</i> internally 92: <i>18</i>
365:1, 18
<b>interpret</b> 372:21
interpretation
36:18 115:23, 24
1

Interrogatories
6:22, 23
interrupt 33:5
98: <i>19</i> , <i>23</i> 124: <i>14</i>
147:5 172:5
190:15 212:1
282:23 357:20
interruption 33:25
interstate 277:11,
<i>14</i> 278: <i>13</i>
intertwined
315: <i>18</i>
intervals 52:14
interworkings
161: <i>19</i>
intricacies 329:14
intricate 273:4
316: <i>14</i>
introduce 33:10
introduced 10:22
invariable 69:17
invest 356:16
invested 50:25
investigation
10:10, 12
investor-owned
301:2
<b>invite</b> 330:21
involved 17:18
28:14 47:21
52:21 88:13
121:16 142:22
157:9 172:22
201:14 217:18
263:3 285:23
<b>ironic</b> 57:18
237:8
irrigate 69:6
105:20, 24 106:1,
3 107:3 112: <i>14</i>
113:8 144:7
198:15 248:20
336: <i>1</i>
irrigated 80:9
215:4 222:3

229:21, 25 240:15 284:25 303:12 **irrigates** 136:16 **irrigating** 107:13, 18 245:24 **IRRIGATION** 1:5 2:1, 8 8:13 9:14 24:12, 16 25:23 28:11 34:8, 13 36:7 37:4 47:7, 12 48:1, 7, 14, 15 49:20 51:19 54:9 55:6, 11, 17 58:1, 10, 21 59:4, 6 61:1 62:22, 25 66:8, 21 68:25 69:12 71:7 72:24 74:20 81:22 82:15 89:1, 3, 5 92:23, 24 93:1, 14 94:4, 7 97:3, 10 99:8, 13, 17 100:23 101:1, 8 103:23, 25 106:18 108:7, 15 111:2, 7, 8, 17 112:24 113:5, 15 114:21 116:2, 3, 5, 6, 10 119:25 121:8 127:11, 19, 21, 24 128:4 134:19 135:1, 7, 8 142:5 143:7, 14, *24* 145:*10* 149:*13* 156:14, 15, 17 157:*10* 167:*3*, *15*, *19* 172:*19* 176:*6*, 21 183:12, 13 186:*15*, *16* 187:*17* 188:*19* 189:*3*, *19* 192:*19* 194:*1* 196:*24* 198:*9*, *18* 199:7, 11, 14 200:8, 13, 15, 18, 21, 22, 24, 25 201:4, 13, 15, 17

204:17 205:8, 18, 22, 23, 24 206:1, 5, 21 207:3, 10, 15, 23, 24 208:2, 3, 6 209:2 211:20 214:3, 15, 16, 17 215:2 216:3, 8 217:12 219:1.2 220:10 225:23 229:19, 23 230:1 231:10, 16 232:10 233:11 235:11 236:12, 21, 25 239:11, 12, 15, 16 240:11 242:13, 17 243:15, 20 245:8 246:22 247:12, 21 254:2, 6 255:6 258:11 263:18 264:7, 15, 17 267:14, 15 268:3 271:8 272:10, 17 280:9 281:8 282:11 289:5.6 291:10, 25 292:10, 19 293:9 294:18 296:2, 25 297:4 304:4 312:11 316:5 325:18, 20 335:25 351:17 353:2 354:16 355:1, 17 356:6 364:23 365:5 366:19 367:3 371:9 372:4 373:4 irrigation-specific 59:5 irrigator 88:8 97:1 107:3, 13 119:21 145:23 208:10 **Irrigators** 5:19 56:17, 18, 24 58:25 59:16 62:21 63:5, 19

65:12, 19 67:19,	325:3, 19 333:6	15, 22 42:20	<b>jump</b> 326:20
25 68:5, 9, 19	354:3	43:15, 19 44:9	360:8
72:7 76:10 88:6,	issuing 311:6	45:16 47:2 77:19	jumping 274:13
12 93:20, 21	item 256:24	78:5, 21 95:1, 9	Jundeen 3:17
95:16, 17 96:8, 25	327:9, 12, 14	98: <i>11</i> , <i>15</i> 101: <i>21</i>	<b>June</b> 149:12
105:7, 20 110:19	331:2 368:25	102:7, 16, 23	jurisdiction 70:19,
119:20 121:16, 19	items 370:24	103:1, 14 112:8	21
123:2 135:24	<b>ITS</b> 1:6 10:12	123:21 154:23	justifications
136:3, 16, 17, 20	26:20 27:10, 13	167:24 168:2	73:23
137:25 138:6, 24	34:9 43:5 47:9,	196:2, 11 204:6,	justify 71:25
145:2 149:24	20, 21 48:7, 8, 24,	<i>15</i> 227:8 360: <i>17</i>	
151: <i>4</i> 163: <i>3</i>	25 49:7, 22 50:25	361:18 362:6	< K >
188:23 189:24	51:1 55:8 58:12	370:6, 18 374:10	<b>KAAPA</b> 335:19,
201:21 212:3, 17	63:14 71:12	<b>Jeffrey</b> 60: <i>3</i>	22
214:12 220:16	72:13 73:7, 17	73:16 74:3, 12	<b>Kansas</b> 300:8
233:7 234:23	74:5, 7, 19 75:4	205:2 298:24, 25	<b>Kautz</b> 3:13
235:9 239:22	105:13 113:14	299:1, 16 301:9	168:7, 8, 9 317: <i>14</i>
241:18 248:17	146:17 161:12	310:21 337:6	kbrashear@rembol
318:25 351:22	162:1 205:9	364:25 365:17	tlawfirm.com 2:12
375:13, 14, 17, 20	210:10 238:24	jeopardize 24:4	<b>KCP</b> 300:9
irrigator's 148:24	240:7 241:17	jeopardizes 235:12	<b>Kearney</b> 4:10, 18
149: <i>14</i>	242:10 244:7, 19	<b>job</b> 82:10, 13	54:21 68:3 94:2
issue 12:2 15:5	251:8, 23 267: <i>1</i>	151:25 162:7	96:22 99:24
17:9 19:20 22:12	269:13, 19 305:10	263:23 290:16	136: <i>11</i> 137: <i>4</i>
24:21 26:1 31:2	321:20 326:11	317:9, 11 333:19	140:2 <i>1</i> 141:5
38:16 63:22 64:6,	330:1, 2 343:23	334:17, 21	159:7 181:6
<i>18</i> 162: <i>19</i> 177: <i>23</i> ,	356:22, 23, 24	<b>jobs</b> 85: <i>13</i>	182: <i>19</i> 185: <i>6</i>
25 244:23 308:5	366:15 367:6	<b>Johnson</b> 79:24	195:2 207:1
325:8, 11 354:1		94:11 112:4, 5	216:15, 24 226:25
<b>issued</b> 21:17	< J >	120:18, 23, 25	227:16, 22 269:1,
22:11 317:7	<b>J-1</b> 112: <i>1</i> , <i>3</i>	148:20 205:3, 5	4, 23 270:5
366:22	205:4 310:21	264:24 266:7, 8	330:24 331:4
issues 11:14, 23	<b>J-2</b> 112: <i>1</i> , <i>3</i>	299:7, 12, 13, 16	332:8 371:5
21:20 22:23 23:8	310:21	301:9 341:22	377:15
25:2, 9 28:25	<b>January</b> 25:15	<b>join</b> 53:4	<b>keep</b> 9:3 14:18
29:2 52:21 69:21	60:2	joined 47:2	69:13 84:21
72:21 82:2 83:24	<b>Jarecke</b> 2:3, 4	<b>Joint</b> 4:5 5:13	102:9 131:6
86:13 87:6, 15	15:25 16:4, 17	158:10 159:3, 7	141:19, 20 220:13
91:3 100:23	17:3 19:22 21:6,	168:23 185:4, 6	294:21, 22, 23
117:14 122:6, 9,	10 32:19, 23 33:6,	320:2, 8 321:19	312:11 344:6
12, 19 144:12	14 34:1, 3, 5	330:23 332:7	346:21, 25
153:8 175:24	35:21, 25 36:17	<b>jointly</b> 77:10	keeping 50:4
178:20 196:24	37:13, 22, 25	<b>judgment</b> 57:5, 9	153:22 235:19
200:8 267:24	38:19, 21, 25	<b>July</b> 61: <i>1</i> 105:22	281:5
323:5 324:6	39:15, 19 40:7, 8,	187:1, 2 339:16	keeps 220:15
	11, 17 41:1, 7, 11,	353:7 369:2	305:25
L			

	1	1	1 _
<b>Keith</b> 96:24	31:21 32:13 45:5,	·	<l></l>
140:20, 24 141:1,	9 49:9 50:25	310:2, 4 312:14	label 363:22
4 180:16 181:3	72:5 77:20 82:14	313:15 315:15	<b>labeled</b> 283:18, 20
193:21, 24 194:3	83:12 84:6, 11, 18	317:14, 16 319:13	361:5
195: <i>1</i> 270: <i>14</i>	87:9, 12 90:3, 19	321:12 323:9, 14,	<b>labor</b> 330:12
371:4	91:5 96:17 99:3	20, 22 324:7, 10,	347:20
kept 342:17	103:24, 25 108:10	16, 19 325:15, 25	lack 166:9 246:25
key 52:14 63:22	113:5 114:2, 3	329:13 330:10, 19	lacks 24:21
87:22	118:5 119:24	335:4, 15 339:1, 4,	lake 48:22 56:9
kids 85:14	125:6 129:6	17 340:16 345:7	63:9 71:3 79:24
<b>kind</b> 18:11 23:13	130:4 131:16	346:7 347:14, 19	94:11 111:22
85:4 86:11 96:19	136:22 139:25	349:21, 22 351:18	113:22 120:18, 23,
113:19 121:19	140:7 146:6	353:19 356:10	25 121:2 203:13
144:11 152:25	150:17 152:6, 23	358:2 362:14	204:16 205:3, 17
179:10, 18, 20	155:8, 13 156:15,	376:19	206:19 207:4, 23
203:19 206:7, 10	17, 18, 19 158:1	knowledge 11:17	208:4, 5 214:4, 15
209:4 212:16	159:8 161:13	51:22 137:6	215:19, 20 216:10
214:9 232:9	162:17 164:22	166:9 169:22	219:5 226:22
237:8 264:4	166:16 167:23	183:24 243:5	227:19, 20 228:1,
274:19 277:3, 22	171:18 172:18	known 44:25	16, 17 232:7, 25
282:25 289:23	173:3, 25 177:19	68:2 73:16 251:1	246:12 263:7
297:7 307:21	179:12, 20 190:19,	knows 10:4	268:4 284:15, 22
313:12 318:16	20 193:4 194:3, 4,	83:11 125:7	285:2, 4 289:7
322:5, 6, 7 328:21	5, 6 201:7 203:6	130:6 359:3	303:19 314:25
329:4 333:1	210:9 211:5, 7, 9	Kreifels 2:3 34:4	315:22 316:11
335:2 336:4	212:20 214:22, 25	39:24 47:3 95:6	341:22
339:4 348:12	215:6 217:8, 17	98:1, 3, 12, 16	lakes 108:11
352:22 354:10	218:10 219:21	102:14, 20, 24	284:24 307:4
364:12	221:1 223:2	103:5, 9, 12 123:9,	land 105:11
kinds 99:6	228:18 232:23	12, 14, 25 124:2, 6	209:10 213:20, 25
255:24 308:5	234:4 235:5, 10	125:2 181:11	209.10 213.20, 23
	1		
Kingsley 62:22	237:3 238:1	201:25 202:4	231:17 247:17
81:25 204:24	241:11 242:7	237:21 282:17, 19	251:23 252:7, 16,
219:11 231:21, 23	244:2, 14 245:6,	283:1 361:24	19, 20 255:6
232:1, 3 266:17	22 246:2, 5, 6, 7	362:5, 17, 22	Landmark 2:10
297:23 298:2, 22	248:15 249:21	363:1, 7 365:25	landowner 209:12,
301:6 313:8	250:1, 2, 3 252:5,	366:6 370:8, 12,	13 213:24
344:3, 5 348:23	11, 12, 15 254:21,	14, 17	landowners
knew 12:22 87:8	24 255:5, 23, 25	Kristen 1:22	213:11
122:19, 24 125:5	256:3 266:3	16:8 17: <i>17</i>	lands 239:9
318:19, 22 330:7	267:3 273:1	Kurth 2:8 34:11	248:20
knocked 147:13	278:9 284:10	46:25	landscape's 309:5
know 10:1, 19	287:17 294:15	<b>KUTAK</b> 2:15	language 22:8
12:23 14:3 16:24	295:16 297:25	34:16	26:4, 9, 14 31:23
18:3 19:20 20:10	302:5 303:5, 6		large 61:23
22:5 23:11 29:16	307:25 308:21, 22,		206:8 217:16

223:7 235:3	leaseholders	liabilities 356:24	286:7 294:7
246:24 269:15	48:23 294:15	357:8	313:5 345:14
301:25 306:15	leases 117:12, 15,	liability 240:18	369:24, 25
335:24 344:22, 24	17, 19 118:4, 18	<b>liable</b> 210: <i>11</i>	<b>list</b> 25:2 41:13
371:10	leave 45:10, 13	242:8, 9, 20	42:14 87:5 97:25
largely 220:22	63:20 91:1 221:2	license 63:14	102:8 327:9
larger 59:23	308:5 334:24	144:20 244:20	329:5 343:16
207:9 220:11, 25	378:20, 22	245:1, 4 275:13	<b>listed</b> 76:24
236:3	leaves 29:22 45:2	357:15, 16, 17	<b>listen</b> 129:24
largest 220:12	<b>led</b> 51:21 54:15	lie 289:23 333:7	329:12
275:8 294:11	88:15 128:21	Lieutenant 331:9	listened 90:18
335:21	317:13, 18 319:4	<b>life</b> 49:6 51:15	listening 34:3
<b>last</b> 10:22 47:17	<b>left</b> 92:7 203:13	298:8 343:23	<b>listing</b> 187:4, 6
69:20 83:7 84:5	378:1	lifeblood 82:4	lists 332:21
116:9 124:20	legacy 70:2	<b>lift</b> 309:11	<b>little</b> 33:8 71:10,
146:16 151:15	legal 31:22 32:2	<b>light</b> 12:4 24:11	16, 19, 23 72:16
159:7 162:19	154:25 155:4, 11,	38:14 129:20	73:14 74:14
244:4 246:4, 11	12 189:7 190:4	206:11 216:22	105:18 179:22
251:19 310:6	212:8 312:18, 25	220:12 300:9	198:21, 22 200:2,
314:18 315:6	323:19, 20 367:8	306:9	9, 25 204:7
316:9 348:5	legally 53:4 55:25	<b>lights</b> 235:19	213:14 225:13, 14
late 277:1 348:5	<b>legend</b> 266:9	Likewise 56:7	228:7 229:11, 18,
launch 335:19	372:17, 20	<b>limit</b> 46:5	20 246:11 255:17
<b>Law</b> 34:6, 12	legislature 12:22,	limited 45:25	262:22 265:24
47:1 249:20	24 13:18, 21	252:3	284:20 285:15
250:18	18:19 19:1, 15, 23	<b>Lincoln</b> 1:14 2:4,	286:17 288:16
<b>lawsuit</b> 29:1	20:5, 17, 24 105:1	5, 11, 12 8:10	299:14 302:10
lawyer 367:12	legitimate 157:12	50:18 96:24	309:12 310:19
lawyers 218:17	length 343:15	136:7 140:2 <i>1</i>	314:4, 22 317:17
lay 246:21	<b>Letter</b> 5:6, 17, 24	141:3 180:17	355:25
lays 298:16	6:2, 13 39:7	181: <i>4</i> 194: <i>9</i> , <i>10</i>	live 57:24 80:17,
<b>leaders</b> 47:13	40:20, 21	195: <i>1</i> 207: <i>13</i>	<i>18</i> 82: <i>14</i> 137:20
50:9 52:9 53:23	<b>letter's</b> 39:16	230:14 270:14	138:6 245:12
54:3 60:9	<b>letting</b> 330:19	351:20 371:4, 11	<b>lived</b> 261:15
leading 18:8	<b>Level</b> 5:3 152:25	374:25 375:2, 9,	lives 82:20
leak 284:24, 25	215:19 223:1	13, 15, 19 376:20	<b>LLP</b> 2:4, 10, 15
learn 85:2 87:2	311:25 333:18	377:1	<b>load</b> 74:6 106:24
169:10, 23 329:10	levels 215:18	<b>Linda</b> 9:19	107:9 282:11
learned 85:9	279:17, 24	line 57:25 94:9	295:12, 20 335:22
151:20	leverage 309:15	285:17 301:8, 12,	337:1, 3 339:20
lease 88:9 94:11	335:16 344:17	16 348:13 378:3,	loads 93:1 335:21
117:23 120:14, 17,	leveraged 323:10	9	lobbying 15:9
18, 19 272:14	Lexington 4:15	lines 142:18	local 55:5 57:19,
leased 236:21	80:14 112:1, 6	219:20 220:4, 23,	21 64:7, 8 85:12,
leasehold 272:12	263:8 285:6	25 221:4, 9, 10, 22	13 140:1, 13, 16
leaseholder 94:10	344:1 377:6	225:4, 6 269:18	

141:7, 14, 17	looked 159:14	345:8, 11, 12	100:4 136:3, 5, 15,
186: <i>11</i>	237:4, 7 248:14	353:15, 16 373:19	17 140:18 183:7
locally 48:21	276:23 295:12	<b>lots</b> 69:3	190:10, 11 191:5,
54:10 186:17	323:6 326:25	low 48:7 145:25	6 349:22 350:6, 9,
located 225:8	<b>looking</b> 23:16	176:5 294:20, 21	<i>18</i> 367: <i>14</i> 368: <i>3</i>
261:14, 15	60:10 72:14 85:6	312:12 354:15	<b>making</b> 96:20
<b>location</b> 223:17	97:24 156:12	355:7	138:22 198:12, 13
lock 378:21	171:2, 13, 17, 19	low-cost 75:5	199:8 217:23
<b>locked</b> 45:1	192:12 203:12	135:18	235:14 240:20
378:21	211:9 219:18, 23	lower 137:25	243:19 265:1
logo 271:23	221:19 222:25	147:18 162:3	282:7 293:8, 11,
lollipops 334:1	245:23 252:11	199:3, 10, 17, 18,	24 294:18 295:3
lonesome 34:16	256:19 308:21	19 224:13 294:17	324:11 340:19, 25
long 20:17 75:25	342:11 351:16	295:6 309:11, 14	346:7
81:11 90:11	361:3 362:3	371:11	<b>Mall</b> 1:14 2:4, 11
146:3 172:10	363:11 377:22	lowest 294:18	8:10
198:20 199:16	looks 156:11	355:12, 14	Maloney 285:2
234:10 262:13, 19	302:13 315:16	low-head 84:18	315:22
265:24 273:20	362:2, 3 371:3	<b>L's</b> 300:9	manage 67:16
289:17 297:2	lose 235:15	luck 145:23	70:1 151:22
324:23 337:25	248:18 249:24	<b>LUDTKE</b> 2:10	152:18 153:21
340:17 344:14	334:24 373:18	34:12 47:1	168:15 215:11, 18
358:23	losing 55:4 57:19	lunch 43:17	227:14, 16 228:13,
longer 15:13	loss 65:14 247:4	172:9, 25 173:6,	15, 16 244:7
45:7 74:13	<b>lost</b> 348:21	15 174:2	273:20 287:19
246:12 289:17	<b>lot</b> 14:24 21:1		291:12 305:15, 16
358:8, 10	72:18 84:4 89:1	< M >	309:24 314:7
longest 275:9	91:17 103:24	<b>M0EN</b> 227:17	319: <i>1</i> 342: <i>1</i>
long-lasting 50:2	108:14 136:22	magenta 205:25	managed 62:12,
<b>long-term</b> 193:5	140:10 151:20	206:8	23 63:11 64:3
307:24 310:24	153:4, 7, 15	main 45:14 91:3	65:7 66:16 73:11
look 63:23 71:2	200:14 211:7, 8	235:25 286:14	75:4 93: <i>13</i>
83:23 84:6, 22	217:18 222:20	maintain 237:5	146:17 308:22
86:19 130:5	245:13 246:3	238:12 248:13	342:14
180:25 222:21	254:14 263:9	279:24 290:25	management
255:24 264:22	264:23 272:11	294:13 342:4	66:20 72:9, 11, 21,
282:24 284:2, 19	273:1, 4 279:14	maintained 65:9	22 73:8 134:19
288:15, 18, 23	284:13 289:2, 5	maintaining 135:1	148:14 151:24
295:10 306:1	293:19 297:1	maintenance	157:6 158:1
309:10, 17 317:24	298:13 302:1	72:13 307:6	208:21 234:7, 8
320:9 323:13	309:7, 22 314:3	314:24	245:11 290:20
326:19, 24 330:10	316:2 321:13	<b>major</b> 49:1	292:20 305:24
338:8 341:11	323:17 326:19	323:25 326:14	313:7 333:23
352:8 354:7	329:14 331:16	majority 18:2	353:3
370:4	335:3 343:23	48:8 58:20 68:4	manager 130: <i>1</i>
		92:15 95:17, 20	167:10 168:10, 12

160.15 16 100.10	<b>marriage</b> 106: <i>15</i>	232:4, 8, 13, 25	210.20
169:15, 16 198:10		1 232.4. 0. 13. 23	meet 210:20
199:2 262:10, 17,	281:16	233:23 246:12	214:20 215:25
20, 21 263:1, 2, 4,	marries 220:9	263:7 266:17	216:2 245:4
5, 17 264:1, 2	masters 333:21	268:5 284:15, 22	339:13
324:5 325:1	match 338:10, 23	285:4, 5 289:8	<b>Meeting</b> 4:5 6:9
managers 47:15	339:20, 24 346:11	303:19 313:9, 25	7:6 29:21 46:14
169:5 177:18	matches 92:22	314:2, 14, 25	78:19 79:2 86:4
178:22	93:4	315:14, 21 316:5,	88:16 91:12, 13
manages 49: <i>13</i>	matching 342:20	12 349:5	130:21 158:24
64:1 214:10	math 350:25	McConaughy's	159:7 177: <i>14</i>
226:19	351:23	294:9	185:4, 7 216:3
managing 66:4	matriculated	McCormick 6:5	268:11 330:7, 23
215:10 309:1	261:19	mean 39:12 65:4	331:1, 20, 23
313:8	<b>MATTER</b> 1:4, 7	83:11 84:12	332:7
manipulate 314:6,	8:16 12:10 25:7	87:24 88:2 89:3	meetings 15:1
7	30:1 40:14 61:6	107:7 122:2 <i>1</i>	28:13, 23, 25
manner 15:16	125:17 224:4	128:11 137:13	91:15 163:21
67:16	289:20 314:16	139:3 140:3	185:2 329:9, 17
manufacturers	matters 51:25	147:7 152:6	megawatts 219: <i>11</i>
106:13	53:16 59:6 73:1	165:15 166:24	294:3 296:5
<b>Map</b> 5:5, 11, 13	115:12 116:2, 5	169: <i>13</i> 194: <i>3</i>	298:3 299: <i>14</i>
180:15 186:25	118:8 119:22	210:17 227:2	300:18 336:18, 23
193:14 203:1, 11	120:3, 5, 8	253:25 254:12, 14,	337:5, 7, 9 364:25
219:18, 23 221:22	max 219: <i>11</i>	16 258:12 268:12	member 11:15
222:22 223:10, 22	maximize 303:2	272:21 278:5	12:9, 15, 19, 20
283:20 284:1	maximized 265:2	281:10 284:7	13:4, 16, 22 14:3,
288:18 289:4, 10	maximizing 142:9,	314:2 335:1	9, 23 15:21 16:7,
370:24	12	345:18 351:7	13, 14, 15, 18, 24,
maps 125:14	maximum 210:4	354:20 356:2	25 17:1, 7, 13, 16
March 20:15	267:7 305:12	358:19 373:24	18:2, 16 19:11, 17
margin 61:25	310:9	374:9 376:3	22:20, 22 23:2, 10,
71: <i>16</i> 74:2 <i>1</i> 217:2 <i>3</i> 218: <i>7</i> , <i>12</i> ,	<b>McConaughy</b> 56:10 63:9 71:4	meaning 50:21	18 29:11, 17 30:5, 14, 25 31:15 32:4
19 340:20, 25	89:8 93:8 111:23	means 8:23 31:5,	33:21 35:7 46:13,
341:9, 12	113:22 131:20	19 48:15 193:20	21 80:22, 24
Mark 43:23	139:9 144:14	213:14 221:16	82:10 83:15, 23
Marked 4:1 5:1	145:1, 25 146:15	273:5 350:25	92:4 96:14 97:21,
6:1 7:1 8:3	147:16 148:20	meant 148:10	23 98:7, 18, 21, 24
22:13 26:17 42:8,	149:7 203:13	200:13 296:17	99:18 100:1, 13,
13 123:9 332:18	204:16 205:18	330:8 352:17	24 101:5, 7, 10, 14
360:12 362:16	206:20 207:4, 23	mechanics 217:6	103:17, 19 104:2,
market 73:20	208:4, 5 211:8	mechanism	19 105:9, 17, 25
309:19	214:4, 6, 15	301:20 344:6	106:19 107:11, 17
markets 309:18	216:11 219:5	347:4	108:4, 18 110:13,
markings 221:24	226:22 227:19, 21	media 331:18	17 111:14 112:11,
	228:16, 17 231:21		18 114:17, 24

11.50 15 20 21
116:8, <i>15</i> , <i>20</i> , <i>24</i>
166:5, 18, 20, 22
167.12 21 169.5
167: <i>13</i> , <i>21</i> 168: <i>5</i> ,
<i>14</i> , <i>20</i> , <i>25</i> 169: <i>4</i> ,
12, 18, 25 170:7,
<i>15</i> 171: <i>1</i> , <i>7</i> , <i>12</i> , <i>21</i> ,
24 172:12, 23
173:9, 11, 19
174:3, 5, 7 175:15,
21 177:3, 11, 16,
<i>22</i> 178: <i>3</i> , <i>18</i>
179:5, 8 180:8, 13,
20 181:13, 19, 23
182: <i>3</i> , <i>9</i> , <i>16</i> , <i>22</i>
183:5, 11, 16, 22
103.3, 11, 10, 22
184: <i>4</i> , 7 190: <i>13</i>
192: <i>7</i> , <i>15</i> , <i>21</i>
193:2, 9, 13, 19, 23
194:7, <i>15</i> , <i>19</i> , <i>23</i>
195:10, 15 207:18
208:7, 16, 19
213:7, 9 214: <i>1</i>
215:7, 15 216:12
215.7, 15 210.12
217:5, 21 218:3,
15, 24 219:6, 8, 10,
15 17 220.1 7
<i>15, 17</i> 220: <i>1, 7</i>
226:12, 15 227:13,
17, 25 228:4, 9, 12,
21, 24, 220, 3, 6, 0
21, 24 229:3, 6, 9,
<i>14</i> , <i>16</i> 230: <i>3</i> , <i>6</i> , <i>12</i> ,
17 253:21 254:9,
19 256:17 257:2
274:15 278:17, 20
285:21 286:5, 8,
10, 13 287:5, 12
288: <i>1</i> , <i>25</i> 291:2 <i>1</i>
292:4, 8 293:7
295: <i>1</i> 304: <i>5</i> , <i>23</i>
308:19 310:18
313:4, 19 316:20
321:3 336:13, 21
337:13 339:22
340:4, 8, 15, 24
342:7 345: <i>17</i>
346:9, <i>14</i> , <i>19</i>
347:2, 7, 10, 17
J <del>T</del> 1.2, /, 10, 1/

```
348:7, 10, 11, 14,
16, 24 349:2, 8, 12
350:7, 11, 16, 21,
24 351:2, 6, 10, 24
352:1 362:1
371:14 374:18, 24
375:4, 7, 12, 16, 25
376:4, 7, 22, 25
377:7, 11, 17, 21,
24
MEMBERS 1:17
13:10, 15 14:14
17:23 18:9 19:7
23:15 29:7, 10
33:8, 9, 16 34:23
35:3, 9 44:16, 21,
24 46:17, 23
47:15 66:12, 13
75:18, 20, 22
95:16 96:18 99:4
100:8, 9, 10, 15
101:18 102:9
108:24 117:11, 16,
19 118:17 121:15
127:12 128:16
133:12 135:24
159:11 173:25
175:5 182:4
184:10 186:22
190:16, 17, 18
192:14 194:20, 21
268:20 287:3
358:19 366:2
369:1, 7
membership
186:25 369:6
Memo 4:2 25:14,
19 26:2, 12, 16, 17
27:5 31:3, 10, 17
32:3
memory 16:16
95:8
mention 48:3
110:9 266:1, 6
mentioned 76:16,
```

19 81:7 93:6

101.22 145.24
101:22 145:24
147:5 179:15
181:2 <i>1</i> 192: <i>16</i>
214:2, 4, 20
226:16 229:12, 17
232:5 248:8
311:12, 16
merge 10:4
326: <i>10</i>
merged 66:11
140:9 141:24
193:24 310:2
375:2 <i>1</i>
<b>Merger</b> 5:2 7:2 9:18, 22 10:16
9:18, 22 10:16
49:17 57:15 61:8
62:3, 4 70:15, 21,
23 72:15 75:16,
19, 23 76:2, 3
84:19, 23 122:7
126:5, 14 131:2,
<i>15</i> 146:7, 9
152:24 157:9, 20
164:5 166:11, 12,
23 167:15 170:12
185:12 186:3, 4
187:2 193:4
194:11 287:9
194:11 287:9
292:9 300:10
311:18 316:25
318:21 320:14
318:2 <i>1</i> 320:14 324:24 333:4
338:2 353:16
365:17
mergers 166:20
167: <i>12</i>
merging 47:10
167:3 177:4, 6
292:10, 11, 16
merit 10:25
merits 11:2 12:2
met 91:16, 17
143:16 158:9
278:7, 8 279:7
329:7
347.1

meter 217:11, 13 218:4, 9, 12 **metered** 199:7 217:6, 22 218:4 metering 217:7 meters 218:*13* 302:6 method 200:20. 22 281:4 296:6 346:24 364:20 methodology 365:11 **methods** 263:22 334:8 Michael 2:15 michael.degan@ku takrock.com 2:17 micromanaged 161:16 microphone 204:10, 12 mid 273:23 344:1 **middle** 35:15 207:10 247:14 284:2 291:25 342:10 378:11 **midnight** 304:10 migrate 334:9 **Mike** 34:15 61:5 **million** 51:7, 9 61:24 71:8 72:13 73:14 74:14 218:17 284:14 324:14 337:16, 18, 20, 22 338:6 339:23, 24 340:2, 5, 6, 11, 14, 18 341:4, 25 **millions** 48:25 **mind** 9:4 14:18 23:13 56:13 83:25 102:10 157:22 323:3 **Minden** 268:5 minds 87:20

	1	1	1
113:6 139:6	modifications	14, 16, 20 223:8	<b>natural</b> 18:18
mine's 362:20	209:23	224:18 235:2, 12	21:3 199:3
<b>minimize</b> 310: <i>15</i>	modified 213:1	281:25 282:10	217:20 250:10
<b>minimum</b> 210:7	<b>modify</b> 37:6, 8	285:15 289:15	252:6 331:12, 13
212:15 277:24	337:8 349:23	290:19	343:25
278:1	367:14	mountain 290:2	<b>nature</b> 10:14
minor 235:7	<b>modifying</b> 339: <i>12</i>	mountains 84:5	49:19 146:11
minority 68:20	<b>Moen</b> 1:20 29:7	303:25	147:19
minus 356:8	110: <i>13</i> , <i>17</i> 111: <i>14</i>	<b>move</b> 36:24 46:9	<b>NDA</b> 184:22, 23,
minute 212: <i>1</i>	112:8, 11, 18	84:10 130:6, 13,	25 185:7, 12
296:15	114:17, 24 207:18	16, 19 139:20	<b>NE</b> 2:5, 12, 17
<b>Minutes</b> 6:9 46:1	226:12, 15 227:13,	177:10 178:17	near 80:15 112:6
165:22, 25 259:17,	25 228:4, 9, 12, 21,	179: <i>1</i> 246: <i>1</i>	225:8 285:1
19, 23 328:18	24 229:3, 6, 9, 14	249:5 252:18	343:25
357:25 378:1, 5	285:21 286:5, 8	307:13 322:14, 24	<b>nearly</b> 53:22
minutia 326:22	moisten 60:7	327:2, 11, 19, 21	71:8 72:12
mirror 40:22	moistening 60:20	329:20 347:14	239:13 302:14
miscellaneous	moment 32:8	<b>moved</b> 213:23	315:1 316:10
272:17 297:1	33:5 50:2, 7	250:25 341:7	<b>Neb</b> 23:25 24:5,
misconception	88:23 121:7	moves 365:17	13 25:20 27:15
94:1	124:14 142:2	moving 15:2	<b>NEBRASKA</b> 1: <i>1</i> ,
misread 119: <i>12</i>	190:15 209:1	68:21 84:1, 2	2, 4, 14 2:1, 8 8:9,
missing 157:22	237:25 266:1	131:8, 9 309:25	10, 12, 13 9:10, 13
mission 51:22	302:16 321:14	319:24 322:22	12:6 14:13 16:7
52:17 129:15	357:20	Muhlbach 3:13	34:7, 13 47:6, 18
264:3, 12, 14	money 235:13	multi-beneficial	48:5, 21 49:24
266:24 267:21	285:22 296:1, 7, 8	264:21	52:7 55:25 59:2
268:6, 9, 13, 15	306:6, 23 341:17	<b>multiple</b> 148:21	60:13, 22 76:20
274:24 286:25	342:21	214:14 266:9	82:5, 21 85:15
356:1, 7	monies 141:20	303:1	131:21 140:4
misstatement	286:19	multitudes 282:8	165:4 166:15, 17
78:10	<b>month</b> 86:5	municipal 373:21	167:5 197:22
mistake 50:1	months 33:13	376:20	200:23 217:20
51:6 54:17	57:12 69:4, 10	municipalities	222:21 239:10
misunderstood	149:25 150:8	373:17	249:20 260:21
374:13	315:1, 7, 12 316:9		261:7 264:9
mitigate 280:23	353:23	< N >	265:3, 10 267:17
mix 335:11	<b>morning</b> 29:18	name 8:15 46:25	275:10 278:25
346:11	46:24 61:4 80:5,	53:18 61:5 77:9	280:21 286:18
mixing 342:20	6 106:4 378:24	79:20 197:3, 20	291:5, 19 298:7
<b>mode</b> 314: <i>18</i>	<b>Mother</b> 146: <i>11</i>	260:17, 19 332:12	344:1
model 59:15	147:19	named 18:18, 24	Nebraska-Lincoln
360:16 361:6, 17	<b>motion</b> 28:14	60:15	261:23
363:12 364:16	motto 355:9	narrowed 374:20	Nebraskans 49:7
372:3 373:3, 10	mound 88:10	native 74:5	51:3, 18 266:3
modeling 75:10	139:11 222:12, 13,		Nebraska's 266:11

9 44 10	• • •	50 7 57 11 50 15	16 260 15 265 5
necessarily 11:18	neighboring	56:7 57:11 58:15	16 360:15 365:7,
18:13 77:21	331:15	62:3 65:16, 22	20 370:14 377:19
105:13 166:23	neighbors 50:11	66:21 67:19, 20	378:12
237:14	85:7 317:8	69:11 70:18, 20,	<b>nodding</b> 174:12
necessary 10:16	Neither 22:9	25 71:9, 20 72:20,	nomenclature
13:24 20:12 37:6	270:6 338:4	21 74:13, 24	372:15
38:7 47:19	<b>Nelson</b> 3:18	78:14, 21 86:22	nomination 13:18,
<b>need</b> 18:11 21:21	<b>net</b> 71:17 361:21	92:19 93:18, 23	21 20:3, 16, 22
29:17 33:19 42:9	363:14	95:5 96:13, 14	NonDisclosure
45:4, 5 53:2 62:3	never 20:4, 12	99:20 105:25	159:20, 21 160:3
69:11, 13 75:2, 12	142:15 157:9	111:6 112:16, 21	185: <i>1</i>
95:2 102:9	160:5 253:16	114:20, 23 115:2	nonnegotiable
129:19 139:19, 20	nevertheless	116:15 121:22	88:1, 2, 3 326:3
140:7 143:23	11:23 57:21	131:22 135:20, 22	nonnegotiables
149: <i>13</i> , <i>25</i> 156: <i>4</i>	<b>new</b> 26:9 37:9	137:3, 7 138:7	87:18
190:8, 10 211:11	53:14, 15, 16, 17,	140:25 141:19	nonprofit 9:23
217:25 324:22, 23	20 54:5 60:24	142:17 146:21	nonstarter 87:17
325:10 328:20	88:18 92:17	148:8, 12 150:12,	<b>nonunion</b> 347:21,
345:5 350:17	133:6, 11 135:14	19 157:25 161:6,	25
357:23, 24 358:1,	163: <i>1</i> 2, <i>1</i> 9 169: <i>1</i> 6	9, 17 164:5, 17, 21	normally 163:5
8	193:25 258:6	165:20, 21, 23, 25	<b>Norris</b> 60:2, 10,
<b>needed</b> 86:14, 20	276:24 288:8	166: <i>1</i> 170: <i>10</i> , <i>12</i>	20 264:24 266:2
122:25 126:6, 9,	293:20 294:8	175:8 176:3, 14	North 111:22
19, 21 127:5	311:6, 19 341:21	178:7, 20, 22, 25	139:13 150:25
148:9 156:9, 10	350:14 352:23	182:12, 13, 14, 24,	214:25 215:4
163:23 247:2	354:12 357:4, 10	25 183:2, 15	216:19 225:9
277:3 324:1	371:12 372:2	192: <i>1</i> 195: <i>4</i>	226:24 285:2
325:2, 7, 17	373:3, 25 378:9	197:9 198:25	315:8, 21, 24
needs 31:24	<b>newly</b> 37:2	215:7 226:7	316:7 349: <i>1</i>
48:20 50:25	373:25	227:15 231:19	373:15, 16, 19
51:17 64:21	News 6:12 287:25	235:2, 17 240:18	375:10 377:9
107:24 112:24	newspaper 183:20	242:23 252:24	northeast 166:17
143:8, <i>15</i> 151: <i>3</i>	nice 284:20	257:2, 10 258:22,	<b>northern</b> 167: <i>11</i>
278:8 339:13	373:12	23 259:3 262:2	no's 183:4
<b>NEG</b> 74:8 76:19	nicer 299:14	265:21 281:12	<b>note</b> 8:25 12:15
negative 309:19	<b>night</b> 107:4, 18	282:17 285:22, 24	29:6 62:21 71:20
negotiate 73:20	nine 94:2 96:23	288:9 289:15, 18	76:15 104:15
negotiated 126:4	97:4 100:17, 20	290:14 297:13	177:7 195:22
negotiating 324:24	181:20, 24 182:2 <i>1</i> ,	301:1 307:22	204:10 280:4
negotiation 57:14	23, 24 270:10	308:15 310:21	337:14 363:10
59:14	350:25	314:15 316:10, 11	notebooks 101:18
negotiations	no 15:12 20:16	318:12, 23 322:14	102:13
94:11 161:2, 6	26:22 28:13, 20	326:12 328:1, 10	<b>Noted</b> 17:11, 12
neighborhood	33:21, 24 40:2	337:21 338:2, 25	57:11 61:5
294:24 317:19	42:16 45:7 50:1	343:16 348:8	371:13
	51:6 54:17 55:21	354:2 357:6, 12,	

<b>notes</b> 99:19	numbers 96:5	o'clock 44:19	17, 23 90:1 92:2
192:13 336:15	310:4 337:4	304:12 339:16	94:14, 20 95:4, 7,
<b>notice</b> 249:8	338:15 340:7	October 315:2	12, 21 96:1, 10
255:13 256:11	362:4 364:13	353:12	97:15 98:9, 13
257:5, 10 347:18		<b>oddly</b> 267:13	101:17 102:5, 8,
<b>noticed</b> 179:10	<0>	off 32:7 68:14	12, 18 103:2, 6, 10
notification 248:4	<b>object</b> 26:20	93:1 106:9, 12	108:22 110:3
253:6	29:14 40:3 55:1	107:9 108:16	112:2, 7, 22 113:9,
notified 45:8	97:11 154:24	150:18 152:25	13, 18, 25 114:8,
notify 45:6	190:4	166:14 217:21, 22	15, 25 116:13, 18
noting 58:12	objected 22:9	218:6 226:4	118:1, 7, 11 119:2,
196:22 371:9	343:9 347:22	256:23 296:4	8, 11 124:13, 25
November 81:5	<b>objecting</b> 123:3	298:10 309:12	125:3, 11, 16
191:22 315:3	173:4 367:22	310:4, 8 311:21	131:24 147:4, 21
318:14 319:8	<b>objection</b> 11:6	316:10 336:18, 23	148:1, 5, 8 154:2
NPPD 103:22	22:14 26:22	346:3 362:10	155:3, 9 166:19
104:10, 11, 13	42:16 99:1 189:6	offer 21:23 22:2,	167:14, 22, 25
144:5, 17 218:25	367:7, 18	5 26:17 43:6	168:3 172:4
234:8 244:12	objections 25:5	Offered 4:1 5:1	173:17, 20 174:9
298:16, 22 300:23	39:10, 14 40:2	6:1 7:1 102:1	175.17, 20 174.9
309:23 310:15	122:6	offering 39:3	181:8 184:9, 14
313:12 344:7		Office 8:9 30:12	185:21 186:6
	<b>obligated</b> 63:12		
NPPD's 233:23	143:13, 22 242:3,	81:9, 10 181:20	188:8, 12 190:14,
285: <i>1</i>	23 244:18	<b>OFFICER</b> 1:13	21 192:3, 6, 11
NRD 75:22	obligation 24:21	8:5, 16 12:14	193:16 195:25
78:12, 13, 19, 21	26:1, 5, 10, 15	13:6 14:11 15:19,	196:5, 8, 12, 16
79:3 279:17	52:2 242:10	23 16:3, 12, 20	197:6, 9, 11, 16, 19
281: <i>18</i> , <i>21</i>	264:6 279:18	17:4, 10, 15, 21	199:16, 19, 24
NRDs 83:20	308:14 346:5	18:23 19:14, 19	200:3 202:25
91:16 280:21	<b>obligations</b> 135:4	20:1 21:7, 11, 16	203:5, 8, 18, 21, 25
331: <i>11</i>	150:22 245:4	22:21, 25 23:4, 11,	204:3, 9, 21
NREA 14:8 15:6	258:17 344:20	20 26:23 27:4	205:11 206:6, 22,
16: <i>13</i> 17:2	346:22	30:10, 16, 21, 23	25 207:5 211:25
NTV 6:12	<b>obvious</b> 306:3	31:6, 20 32:6, 10	212:6, 14, 22, 25
nuisance 267:23	<b>obviously</b> 18:25	33:4, 15, 23 34:18	213:5 216:18, 21
number 26:13	78:8 80:22	35:7, 23 36:11	217:2 218:21
56:15 91:22	171:15 173:12	37:15, 23 38:23	220:21 221:5, 8,
97:24 121:10	occasions 57:12	39:21, 25 40:6, 10,	13 223:9, 14, 16,
221:22 233:12	occupation 80:8	15, 23 41:5, 9, 12,	20, 25 224:2, 8, 12,
266:12 329:17	occurred 99:6	16, 20, 24 42:5	15 226:9 227:2, 6,
331:7 332:18	185:4 314:24	43:11, 16, 21, 25	9, 11 253:1, 9, 12,
336:18 337:23	318:17	44:6, 13 45:18	17 255:8 256:7,
338:9, 22 341:16	occurring 315:4	46:11, 16 76:14	15, 25 257:4, 16,
362:5 368:18, 23	occurs 242:2	77:3, 11, 14, 23	20 258:25 259:8,
369:3 370:6, 10	316: <i>1</i>	79:5, 9, 13, 19, 25	12, 15, 18, 22
		88:22, 25 89:13,	260:3, 8, 16, 22

272:20, 23 274:7,
12. 17 275:16. 19.
24 276:5, 9, 12, 15,
19 277:6, 10, 13,
16, 19, 24 278:3,
11 282:12, 15, 21
283:9, 12, 15
285:19 288:20 289:9 296:9, 12,
16 299:19, 23
300:2, 5, 11 308:4,
<i>8</i> , <i>13</i> , <i>17</i> 311: <i>11</i> ,
<i>15</i> 312:5, <i>17</i> , 23
313:3 321:6, 10
328:7, 9, 14, 19
332:10, 15 334:23
336:7, 10 357:19,
22 358:13, 24 360:3 361:14, 20
362:9, 13, 18, 20,
23 363:2, 8 364:1
369:8, 12, 19
371:15, 20, 25
372:5, <i>9</i> , <i>13</i>
373:23 374:3, 8,
<i>12, 15</i> 376:2, <i>5</i> , 9,
13, 23 377:25 378:8, 14
officers 272:3
offices 81:16
official 29:25
102:4, 15, 17
off-season 69:10
280:9 304:2
off-seasons 144:8
offset 74:19 142:4
<b>offsets</b> 279:6 284: <i>17</i> , <i>18</i>
offshoot 225:25
off-the-record
32:9 362:12
Ogallala 231:6
<b>Oh</b> 39: <i>17</i> 42: <i>24</i>
69:19 77:11
103:14 110:12
163: <i>12</i> 183: <i>5</i>

195:11 226:14 227:10 235:2 237:12 240:4 243:16 321:10 326:6 348:7 **Okay** 15:18 16:21 17:4, 10, 11 19:11, 17 21:11 23:10 26:23 32:4 33:12, 23 37:22 38:23 39:19, 25 40:10, 23 41:16, 25 43:21 44:5 46:16 65:17 77:3. 14, 22, 23 79:5, 9, 19, 25 88:22 89:23 90:1 96:1, 10, 13, 21 98:13, 14 101:5, 14 102:5 104:*1* 105:17 108:18 110:6 112:7, 11 113:9, 25 114:8, *15*, *16*, *24* 115:2 116:24 119:2 120:19, 22 124:5, 25 125:11 127:13 132:10, 14 133:3, 19, 23 134:5, 10 135:14 136:1, 8, 19, 25 137:3, 22 140:11 141:13 143:21 144:1, 9 145:5, 15, 20 147:3 148:5, 23 149:19, 23, 24 150:6 151:*1*, 23 152:18 153:14, 19, 20 154:10, 16 155:9, 20 157:7 158:11, 17 159:3, 9 160:24 161:7 162:9, 12, 18, 19 163:1, 11, 14, 18 164:6, 18 165:12, *15* 166:*1*, *18* 

167:*13*, *21* 171:*1*, *11* 172:23 173:8 174:3, 11, 13 175:11, 12, 17 179:5 181:*13* 182:22 183:6 184:*4*, *15* 186:*5* 188:12 190:21 193:2 194:4, 7 195:15, 16, 25 196:5, 7 197:11, *16* 199:24 201:*13* 203:7, 10, 12 204:4, 15, 24 205:14 206:25 207:5 208:16 212:22 213:7, 20 214:1.18 218:15 219:7, 15 220:7 221:5 223:14, 25 224:5, 16 227:17 228:9, 21 229:9, 14 230:3, 6, 9, 17, 18 231:4, 8, 20, 24 232:2, 15, 21 233:1, 17, 20 234:6, 11, 14, 17, 22 235:24 236:4, 14, 22 237:2, 16 238:4, 11 239:1, 19, 24 240:7 241:13, 20 242:19, 22 243:5, 8, 11, 24 244:4 245:2 246:13 247:5, 7, 23 248:7, 22, 25 249:6, 10, 18, 19 250:19 251:3, 8 252:23 253:20 255:9, 21 256:7, 15, 16 257:16, 17, 20 258:25 259:3 260:16 262:8 268:21 271:14, 17 272:22 274:17

275:24 278:3, 4, 8

282:21 283:7, 15 286:5, 8 288:1 296:17, 18 300:6, 14 308:17, 18 313:*3* 318:*1* 321:11 328:8, 14 332:15 336:7 337:13 340:8 348:10, 24 349:2, 8 350:7, 11 351:24 352:1 358:13 360:18, 23, 25 361:7, 11 362:23 363:4, 7, 20 364:4 366:6 369:13, 22 371:25 372:13 374:16 376:23 377:24 378:8, 14 **old** 341:23 oldest 216:16 **Olson** 7:2 Omaha 2:16, 17 142:18 **omitted** 334:19 **once** 9:3 37:9 54:23 249:2 329:6 339:3 344:17 349:10 365:7 **one-on-one** 329:9 ones 64:2 82:20 192:9 236:12 294:8 310:6 335:8 one's 125:12 **ongoing** 10:24 on-hundredths 240:14 **online** 60:4 open 14:18 28:13, 23, 25 44:21 54:2 84:7, 15, 16, 22 86:5 87:21 91:14, 18, 21 129:5 134:*12* 259:*13* 

288:12 329:11	265:15 268:3	oriented 373:24	owning 24:12
378:17	281:6 291:24	374:4, 16	28:11
<b>opened</b> 163:9	317:9 326:14	original 26:3	owns 231:21
OPENING 3:5	332:22 333:3	59:18 100:17	
32:16 45:21 46:7	334:15 355:23	142:21 206:7	< P >
61:15 78:9 93:11	opportunity 11:19	265:11 268:25	<b>p.m</b> 174:22
96: <i>3</i> 99:2 <i>1</i> 179:9,	19:23 50:9 54:5	270:6 362:14	175: <i>1</i> 259:25
12 218:16 336:17	84:17, 24 160:6	originally 80:13	260:1 359:5
operate 51:10, 23	185:8, <i>19</i> 319:5	other's 169:10	360:1 378:25
176:7 281:21, 22	<b>oppose</b> 54:24	<b>outages</b> 314:23	<b>Page</b> 3:2, 5 117:2,
316:4 342:4	<b>Opposed</b> 9:18, 22	<b>outcome</b> 321: <i>1</i>	<i>3</i> 123: <i>15</i> 124:20,
344:8 345:16	50:5 54:21 76:2	327:23	24 127:6 128:8,
354:17	89:18 90:17, 18,	<b>outline</b> 126:19	<i>14</i> 132:7 176: <i>3</i>
operated 62:24	22 96:3, 8 148:2,	127:8 371:7	202:3, 5, 6, 8, 9
74:22 203:17	3 247:2 286:3	<b>outlined</b> 363:21	221:20 223:10
operates 34:25	308:3 312:10	371:2 <i>1</i>	224:16, 22 225:5
285:12	opposing 8:19	<b>outlines</b> 371:21	226:2 227:3, 4, 5
operating 24:12	25:6 45:23 56:2	372:2	228:12 282:18, 19
28:11 34:21	102:19, 21	outreach 328:6	289:10 332:12
61:22, 25 142:4	<b>opposite</b> 279:11	329:1 330:16	334:24 360:11, 12,
289:16	opposition 90:24	<b>outset</b> 326:22	20, 22 361:2, 7, 13,
operational	237:10	outside 52:20	15, 19 362:18, 25
177:24 178:5, 21	<b>option</b> 267:20	86:14, 17 140:22	363:11
operations 49:22	335:9 344:21	156:9 185:15	<b>pages</b> 43:6
50:14 52:24	357:14	324:22	123:24 172:7
55:19 72:11	<b>options</b> 255:19	<b>overall</b> 85:21	<b>paid</b> 220:17
169:10 176:21	orange 221:2 <i>1</i>	176:5 214:24	235:18
178:23 314:23	222:11	215:5 354:15	paragraph 240:9,
operators 49:11	orangish 224:9	355:7	21
<b>opine</b> 156:4	230:25 371:2	overlaid 371:6	paragraphs
Opinion 5:12	orangish-looking	overlapped 263:9	117:10
6:15 59:2 71:22	205:12	overlaps 50:21	paralegal 25:16
78:9 82:22 83:5	<b>Order</b> 4:3 21:17,	220:9	34:20
94:17 97:12, 16,	20, 24 22:4, 7, 11	overlook 44:7	parallel 16:5
17, 20 98:5	23:9, 12, 21 24:7	overlying 224:25	226:16, 18 228:1,
115:25 116: <i>14</i>	25:9, 11 30:8, 20	oversaw 263:6	7
117:2 120:4, 9, 15	61:25 63:13 69:6	overwhelming	parameters 53:5
128:1 133:24	123:13 134:24	57:20	61:20 325:24
253:24 367:13	349:14	owe 139:2	paraphrase 93:15
<b>opinions</b> 15:14	organization 12:8	<b>owned</b> 57:2	Parker 39:7
90:20	47:20 167:6	121: <i>1</i> 179: <i>13</i>	40:21
opponents 56:16	275:22 286:21	owner 240:13, 18,	parse 144:10
59:8	288:7	20 247:15 251:20	part 10:9, 16, 17,
opportunities	organizations	owners 49:11	24 11:1, 25 13:24
54:12 56:8 84:6	287:3 334:5	owner's 240:20	22:5, 17 27:1, 25
176:12 264:18, 20	organized 50:6	ownership 141:14	33:2 42:3 94:8

102:3 110:24	321:22 329:9	<b>Peck</b> 1:21 29:11,	239:16 240:15
112:12 122:19	360:1	17 33:19, 24	243:6, 12 274:19
124:16 142:19	<b>partner</b> 291:14	46:13, 17, 21 92:4	302:4, 11 339:11
153:25 154:3	293:5 336:2	174:11 259:2	340:17
155:17 167:11	partners 48:13	pending 16:10	<b>periods</b> 69:8
170:11 171:9	274:3 279:17	people 9:4 48:20	146:10 151:2
170:11 171:5	partnership 76:1	49:9, 15 56:21, 22	243:9
249:10 265:7	parts 295:12	60:12, 22 82:24	Perkins 287:24, 25
267:4 268:4	298:12 306:11	83:21 86:25 91:4	permanent 68:15
275:20 278:16, 25	311:21 324:1	93:25 106:11	permission 46:8
279:1 285:3	party 17:24 22:9	123:1 134:21	202:22
286:24, 25 288:8	35:16 138:25	137:8, 13, 20	person 18:22
290:23 295:13, 19	196:6	137.8, 13, 20	29:8 164:10, 24,
298:11 307:12	pass 163:11	156:16, 21 161:14	25 232:23 375:8
	pass 103.11 passed 78:20	1	
334: <i>12</i> 335: <i>24</i> 338: <i>6</i> 353: <i>11</i>	163:10 195:22	183: <i>17</i> 193: <i>21</i> , <i>24</i> 194:8 203: <i>6</i>	personalities 122:23
371:11 377:15, 18	passionate 54:23	208:12 211:9	
	_	208:12 211:9	<b>persons</b> 24:5 64:23 66:17
participant 288:5	pastors 49:12		134:15 135:4
participants 35:4	<b>path</b> 47:16 126:8	232:7 252:12	
349:7	129:8 131:5	254:24 264:16	perspective 66:15
participate 8:24	226:16 228:1	265:3, 14 267:9,	68:18 71:18
19:6 117:13, 18,	pattern 308:25	24 271:16 287:15,	148:24 149:14
22	pause 172:11	17 294:2 329:17	253:24 307:15
participated 11:16	pay 56:6 113:24	355:4 358: <i>3</i>	334:6 340:2
participates	235:4 242:23	373:20	perspectives
294:16	255:21 272:14	<b>people's</b> 104:17	179:21
participating	281:19 307:19	percent 24:9	pertaining 97:10
29:11 30:1	321:22 345:7, 15,	28:4 57:13 62:1	116:5
286:19	21 346:3, 6, 8, 10,	66:3, 16 74:9	pertains 99:15
particular 65:24	17 347:4	91:20 93:13	162:17
155:11 238:8	payers 296:7	110:21 111:16	per-year 337:17
345:23	paying 234:19, 25	128:14 136:25	<b>PETITION</b> 1:5, 8
particularly 82:20	255:23 280:7	192:2 <i>3</i> 193: <i>1</i>	8:14, 20 10:3, 6, 8,
220:19	286:14	217:23 218:7, 11,	18 23:23 24:3, 7,
parties 9:8, 11	payments 240:21	19 282:10 330:5	18, 23 27:9, 13, 24
21:17, 25 22:4, 15	pays 256:8 274:7	335:21 337:1, 3	28:10, 15 34:9
25:6, 8, 13 26:19	275:7	338:10, 23 340:20,	47:9 56:2 58:15
27:5, 8, 21 28:2, 7,	peace 35:10	25 341:9	116:11 125:8, 13
12, 21 29:13, 16	peak 69:4 107:6,	percentage	130:23 365:24
31:12 32:15, 17	20 293:20 335:5	136:19 192:18	366:15 367:11
33:1 36:3 40:25	336:18 337:1, 3	perfect 93:15	368:12, 16
45:9, 19, 24 65:6	338:15, 19, 23	perfectly 92:24	Petitioner 9:15
110:1 150:23	339:3, 15	114:2	Petitioners 38:15
175: <i>1</i> 195:23	peaks 93:1, 2	<b>period</b> 30: <i>3</i>	39:2 42:16
232:12 260:1	309:13 310:8	57:12 88:14	101:23
	338:10	149:4 150:3, 20	

<b>Phase</b> 4:6 5:13
39:18, 22 40:12
73:12 77:2 88:19
130:12, 13, 15, 16,
18, 19, 21 169:9
322:2 326:16, 18
327:2, 4, 6, 9, 10,
11, 19, 20, 22
329:2, 20, 21, 23
330:15, 17, 20, 23,
25 332:6
<b>phases</b> 88:19
322:1, 6, 23
330:18
<b>Phelps</b> 29: <i>1</i> 54:20 57:25 68: <i>3</i>
94:1 96:22 99:24
136:10 137:4
140:21 141:5
149:8 162:25
181:6 182:8, <i>10</i> ,
<i>15, 18</i> 195:2
205:6 237:8
238:8, 16 258:6
269:1, 3, 23 270:5
371:5
philosophy 342:10
<b>phone</b> 90:13
91:22
physical 223:17
<b>Physically</b> 228:4, 6
physics 261:22
pick 225:24
picks 204:13
pickups 87:10
<b>picture</b> 206: <i>3</i>
<b>pie</b> 154:7 214:22,
24 215:16 232:6
<b>piece</b> 138:19
154:1, 6 275:12
298:15 333:23
339: <i>4</i> 371: <i>11</i>
<b>pieces</b> 273:3
323:22 324:17
350:2

```
pipe 245:24
246:22
pipes 246:17
piping 246:19
pivot 246:1, 24
pivots 48:16
245:17, 20, 21
246:3
place 20:8 51:19
150:16 187:2
219:6 291:18
344:19 347:4
350:9 378:4, 7, 13
placeholder 335:3
places 265:10
284:11
Plan 5:6, 13 36:9,
14, 22 37:18
59:23 60:14 70:4,
5, 18 123:8, 18
124:7, 17, 18, 21
126:14, 25 130:22
132:5, 18 133:25
154:5, 13 158:21,
24 173:23 187:15
188:15 193:6
234:1, 7, 12
303:13 304:1
318:2, 7 342:12
343:19 344:11, 12,
24 345:5 349:16,
24 350:14 352:5,
10, 17, 18 353:8,
10, 25
planned 22:4
planning 174:16
plans 54:15
plant 60:4
111:19 142:20
203:17 229:1
265:10 298:8
299:8 343:25
plants 110:22
111:18 112:6
114:13 295:17
```

297:17
plateau 289:22
Platte 36:6 37:3
11atte 50.0 51.5
47:11 49:5 60:5,
25 92:17 111:22,
<i>24</i> 127: <i>18</i> , <i>23</i>
128:2 150:25
186: <i>14</i> , <i>16</i> 187: <i>16</i>
188: <i>18</i> , <i>20</i> 189: <i>3</i> ,
20 190:1, 8, 18
191:1, 5, 7, 8
102.25 202.12
193:25 203:12
220:19 225:9
258:10, 21 275:11,
17 280:6, 17
281:18, 21 285:2
286:11 287:1, 23
288:19, 24 315:8,
<i>14</i> , <i>21</i> , <i>24</i> 316:7
349: <i>1</i> 353:2, <i>3</i>
365:5 367:2
371:8 372:3
373:3, 15, 19, 25
275.10 277.0
375:10 377:9
<b>Platte's</b> 373:16
<b>play</b> 21:2
<b>player</b> 323:25
please 79:12
80:7 96:15
117:10 118:12, 14
143:17 197:3, 17
218:2 237:22
338:20 352:8
360:4, 11
<b>pledge</b> 344:14
<b>plenty</b> 75:5
293:1 306:5
<b>plight</b> 266:19
<b>plus</b> 100:20
146:22 150:25
333:14
<b>POC</b> 3:2
point 11:5, 7
13:7, 9, 25 14:4, 6,
13.7, 5, 23 14.4, 6, 13 16:8 19:16, 21
22:1 31:25 32:18
22.1 31.23 32.10

44:9 45:14 63:20
65: <i>13</i> 69: <i>20</i> 70: <i>6</i> 72: <i>19</i> 95: <i>13</i>
72:19 95:13
102:11 104:18
108.23 109.2
119:13 161:23
169:17 173:1, 22
176:2, 14 201:24
202:24 203:2
216:13 225:10
239:1 240:8
243:3, 16 251:19
280:25 311:23
322:13, 16 337:25
343:19 377:13
<b>pointed</b> 16:6
40:16 61:10
134:5
pointer 225:8
pointing 203:1
points 14:5, 24
61:9 76:15 82:15
195:20 322:12
<b>poke</b> 158:7
<b>police</b> 70:21
<b>policies</b> 176:19,
<i>24</i> 177: <i>1</i> 189: <i>1</i> ,
<i>18</i> , <i>23</i> 344:23
350:4
<b>policy</b> 334:10
341:4 350:2, 10
<b>Pool</b> 311: <i>13</i>
330:12
popularly 270:18
population 27:15
369:17 372:18
373:5, 21 374:7,
20 376:16
<b>portion</b> 10:23
13:1, 11, 14 20:15
74:5 236:18
245:9 295:2 <i>3</i>
<b>portraying</b> 202:17, 20
position 31:18
68:2 <i>1</i> 138:2 <i>3</i>

100.05 100.0
182:25 183:3
198:4, 8 263:4, 5,
6 326:4 343:5
positions 28:21
38:17 119:18
198:23 262:23
possibility 55:22
85:9 86: <i>6</i>
<b>possible</b> 52:10
82:3 176:5
338:13 354:15
355:8, 12, 15
possibly 146:3
185: <i>16</i> 357:25
<b>post</b> 237:5
<b>posted</b> 91:23
pot 342:21
potent 287:20
potential 12:4
52:25 55:2 72:22
73:10, 13 84:19
126:13 127:10
146:7 159:17, 18
170:12 185:15
313:20
potentially 39:17
160: <i>17</i> 170: <i>19</i>
343:3, 10 345:24
pots 342:13
_
<b>POWER</b> 1:2, 5, 7
2:1, 8 5:8 8:12,
<i>13</i> 9: <i>10</i> , <i>13</i> , <i>16</i>
10: <i>4</i> 24: <i>11</i> , 2 <i>1</i>
25:22, 23, 25 26:7
28:15 34:7, 8, 13
36:5, 7 37:1, 3
40:12 43:1 46:23
47:6, 8, 11 48:20
49:20, 21 50:11
52:23 54:9 55:12,
14 60:25 63:17
65:20 73:19 74:5,
8, 13, 18 75:5
77:6, 8 84:20, 24
85:6 92:18, 22
93:9 106:23
- ·

111:2, 7, 10, 11 112:14 113:7, 8 114:22 127:11, 18, 24 128:4, 8 135:18 136:21 137:14. 21 141:25 142:9, 19 143:2, 6, 14, 23 152:22 155:25 156:18, 19, 20 160:17 162:9 166:21, 24 167:3, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 19 168:11, 13 176:7, *9. 23. 25* 185:*13* 186:13, 14, 16 187:17 188:18 193:25 194:1 203:16, 17 236:12, 18 250:20 251:9 258:11, 21 263:13 264:7, 14, 17 281:16 294:17 297:17 298:4, 5, 6, 7, 22 299:3 300:8 301:*1* 302:21 311:13 317:15 329:15 330:2 333:15 340:2 353:2 354:16, 18 355:1, 9, 14 356:6, 9 360:13 365:5 366:16, 19, 22 367:2 368:4, 8 371:8 372:4 373:4 powerline 334:9 powerlines 345:14 **powers** 129:6 **PPA** 3:4 6:5 73:18 143:22 295:15 300:7 301:20 304:6, 8, 14 309:7 317:4 364:18

**PPAs** 143:*13*, *19* 160:11 162:5 301:7 **PPNID** 374:1 **practical** 239:*13* 253:19 practically 67:9 70:25 72:3, 20 153:20 practice 99:2 **PRB** 9:12 **PRB's** 10:7 **PRE** 76:25 precinct 27:11 369:24 **precious** 49:*13* precipitated 318:15 319:16 precipitation 200:17 preconference 30:8 45:20 predesignated 126:10 predevelopment 283:20 284:6 predicated 325:21 335:25 predicting 152:9 **prediction** 60:10 predominantly 163:2 200:23 201:16 207:13 **preempt** 118:22 **preface** 196:22 **prefaced** 333:13 **Prehearing** 4:3 21:15, 17, 24 22:3, 10 25:11 30:20 33:2 prejudiced 24:17 64:25 183:14 184:2 prejudicial 65:11

76:10

preliminaries 9:8 32:13 preliminary 21:14 **premise** 128:18 138:21 145:12 prepared 153:2 305:14 306:14 356:11 present 12:18, 25 31:4 36:20 100:9 101:24 110:1 117:*17*, 20 175:*1* 190:16 260:1 360:1 **Presentation** 4:3, 10, 12, 15 5:16 331:22 332:5, 11, 14.19 338:7 presentations 53:24 presented 15:15 49:16 330:24 332:6 presently 16:9 36:22 president 80:21 81:8, 12, 13, 18 90:14 99:7 129:16, 23, 24 130:3 165:7 332:13 press 228:20 319:25 327:10 pressure 309:22 Presumably 55:21 150:5 **presume** 90:14 presumed 128:3 presumption 14:15 **pretense** 150:*19* pretrial 36:2 **pretty** 91:3 140:4 152:19 243:22, 24 268:6 289:2

345:20	236:21 245:21	producing 60:21	protect 57:6
prevailing 347:11	246:6 248:14	93:9 108:6 285:7	66:23 70:8 83:21
previously 8:17	267:9 275:8	<b>product</b> 265:12	protected 173:3
46:25 101:25	287:22 289:6	production 65:20	175:24
181:2 <i>1</i>	302:12 306:4	155:21 169:1, 20	protecting 70:11
<b>price</b> 147:13	309:7 310:9	170:3 203:16	protection 83:17
304:11 310:23	313:14 322:9	236:19 263:7	244:23
<b>prices</b> 309:20, 21	333:10 360:17	professionals	protections 69:20,
<b>pricing</b> 74:1	373:20 376:8	86:25 324:3	23, 25 70:3, 7, 10
161:11 162:2, 15	problem 34:1	<b>profile</b> 339: <i>13</i>	protest 8:19
primarily 68:1	67:2 70:12, 22	<b>profit</b> 218:7, 11	38:18 237:13
73:15 157:2	149: <i>16</i> 151: <i>1</i>	profitability 92:21	Protestant 172:1
199:10, 13 263:15	157:24 265:16, 17	<b>Program</b> 275:11,	PROTESTANTS
<b>primary</b> 48:14	279:22	18, 19 276:25	2:14 3:3, 15 8:18
51:18 55:3, 7, 15,	procedure 29:15	278:16 280:6, 17	9:21 11:11 25:3
18 61:10 64:18	<b>proceed</b> 45:17	286:11 287:1	34:17 38:8, 16
66:22 132:11	proceeding 8:24	288:7 290:22	57:18, 24 58:9
176:4 297:10, 14	10:13, 17 21:16,	programs 276:1	61:6, 8 62:8
305:5 354:14, 22	22 27:17 29:24	prohibits 59:3	98:25 99:21
356:4	92:8	project 47:23	122:7, 14 161:9
<b>prime</b> 347:12	<b>Proceedings</b> 1:12	54:22 99:12	166:8 171:16
principal 236:10	8: <i>1</i> 10: <i>15</i> 11: <i>13</i>	237:11, 13 287:23	178:19
principle 171:5	13:14 45:23	288: <i>3</i> 341:2 <i>1</i>	protocol 165:9
377:8	110:2 175:2	projections 146:5	<b>proud</b> 82:10
<b>prior</b> 11:20 12:5	260:2 360:2	projects 236:8	83:14
13:19 29:14	process 11:25	307:16	<b>proven</b> 209:6
32:23 105:5	15:3 18:25 19:3	promised 60:19	275:10
157:9 158:20	20:16 52:12 91:8	proportion	<b>provide</b> 31:18
163:9 243:14	155:17 311:5	236:14, 17	54:12 60:10, 11
247:19 248:3	319:21 322:1, 7, 8,	<b>proposal</b> 311:6	63:3 81:21, 22
253:6 295:16	12, 16 337:25	353:13	114:20 134:25
<b>prioritize</b> 311:24	338:11 348:3	<b>proposed</b> 10:9	142:3 143:8
312:10	353:21	27:13, 24 28:5, 10	144:2 <i>1</i> 145:6 176: <i>1</i> 2 185:9
<b>priority</b> 112:24 113:6 233:19	processes 183:24	50:3 54:7, 19, 24 57:15 58:9 70:23	194:2 210:10
311:20	<b>produce</b> 49:1 60:7 160:19	84:23 87:16	211:6 212:3
privilege 47:5	301:23	117:17 118:4	256:18 265:15
privilege 47.3	produced 297:17	154:18 322:4	267:15 268:2
pro 212:17	producer 80:9	368:19	207.13 208.2
probably 11:7	212: <i>13</i>	proposition 71:3,	285:2 286:23
13:17 18:7, 14	producers 48:13	19, 20	291:4 292:22
97:7 111:21	49:9 54:20 57:24	prospective	326:13 330:14
136:23 138:10	58:4 246:7	117:20 118:4	355:22 368:24
140:16 142:11	290:17 291:14	prosperity 51:16	369:5
163:12 167:1	produces 113:7	265:16	provided 52:7
215:3 218:20	301:23	prosperous 47:17	56:4 75:11
213.3 210.20	1 JU1.4J	prosperous 47.17	JU.T  J.11

183:25 184: <i>1</i>	47:6, 8, 11, 14	Purchase 43:2	70:8, 9 73:24
243:4 265:6	48:6 49:20 51:7	143:2, 6 301:1	76:18, 21 78:7
293:12	52:2, 3, 4, 12	317:4 330:2	89:12 113:14
provides 205:9	53:19, 25 56:21,	purchases 74:7	123:15 124:3
240:25 282: <i>1</i>	22 57:2, 3 60:25	purple 206:1, 8	150:18 154:21
285:12 292:12, 16	81:23 82:24	219:21 220:25	155:5 156:24
providing 51:15	84:24 85:25 86:6	231:9 233:12	165:16 202:3
206:20 236:24	92:18 118:20, 21	281:13 291:25	225:22 237:19
264:16 267:7	119:4 127:18, 24	316:2 348:22	246:4 247:1
281:6 284:16	138:18 163:23	purply 280:11	254:22 255:5
285:9	166:21, 24 167:3,	282:16	272:4 273:8, 18
	1 '		274:4 275:13
<b>provision</b> 120:15	9, 10, 15, 16, 19	purported 70:7	
143:21 241:7	168:10, 13 174:16	72:15 75:1	280:8, 19 281:2, 6
256:18 257:5	179:14 185:13	purpose 55:7, 8	291:18 306:8, 23
provisions 27:18	186:14, 16 187:17	62:25 66:22	309:22 310:14
58:20 154:16	188:18 193:25	76:22 81:20, 21	311:19 320:8
proximity 50:23	194:1 258:10, 21	82:8 113:14	334:16
<b>PRPPID</b> 176:4,	264:7, 9, 14	145:16 176:3, 4,	puts 246:10
10, 18 177:2	294:17 298:7	10 236:24 241:16	315:21
354:14 355:21	318:12 319:13, 20	249:15 255:2	putting 20:5
356:16	329:2, 3 330:16	310:14 344:7	64:15 246:8, 9, 23
prudence 52:9	331:20 332:8	366:15	280:14, 22 281:11,
prudent 52:1	353:2 355:1, 9	purposeful 272:18	24 293:2 306:5
72:8, 11 322:18	356:6 365:5	purposes 8:18	puzzling 252:2
<b>PSA</b> 323:2	366:19 367:2	9:9 10:25 66:4	
<b>PSE</b> 4:6 72:17	371:8 372:4	127:16 135:6, 9	< Q >
73:12 74:2 76:25	373:4 378:18	143:24 150:6	<b>QLG</b> 336:24
77:4, 12 153:3	publicly 55:2	153:22 174:16	<b>qualified</b> 330: <i>14</i>
157:2 166:7	56: <i>3</i> 319: <i>14</i>	235:19 241:21	<b>qualify</b> 297:22
296:11, 12 320:19,	<b>pull</b> 180:15	247:12 250:12	298:14
24 321:17 323:2,	279:12	254:7 301:17	quantifiable
25 325:25 326:9	<b>pump</b> 281:8	354:13, 14, 22	210:19
327:5, 6 330:14	282:3 287:15	355:21	quantities 282:8
332:13 334:17	292:17, 18	pursuant 23:25	quantity 145:7
337:10 338:14	<b>pumped</b> 89:6	24:12, 24 27:21	213:2 233:24
352:7 364:14	pumper 286:3	28:3, 7 43:2	234:5 242:3, 16
365:12	288:12	94:15 143:2	quarter 315:9
<b>PSE's</b> 333:1	<b>pumpers</b> 201:20	144:20 252:5	question 18:17
364:8 365:7	235:4 284:18	pursuing 319:6	31:14 37:17 92:3
<b>PUBLIC</b> 1:4, 7	<b>pumping</b> 201:20	purview 350:3	105:18 107:16, 22
2:1, 8 4:3, 10, 12,	235:16 267:19	push 288:6	108:21 110:18
15 8:13 9:13, 16	280:24, 25 281:3	pushing 315:1	111:12 112:12, 18
10:4 25:22, 23	282:6	put 9:1 10:20	114:18 116:9
34:7, 8, 13, 23	pumps 217:8	11:4 20:3, 17	127:12, 14, 17
35:9, 10 36:7	punched 267:18	23:5 24:18 32:18	134:11, 13 136:23
37:3 45:3, 7, 10	Panenea 207.10	35:1 43:13 60:5	143:11 154:24
27.5 15.5,7,10		15.15 00.5	1 10.11 101.21

155:5, 11 160:21	< R >	249:11 256:23	172:20 241:1
166:6 171:2	<b>R-0-W-E</b> 79:23	257:15 265:11	252:19 254:4, 21
175:16, 18 177:17		268:11	258:20 335:6
200:14 210:15	rain 148:2 149:4	reading 118:9	345:16
213:8 218:2, 25	225:25	119: <i>14</i> 171:20	reasonable 240:16
219:9 221:15	raise 11:7 35:15	203:6 320:4	241:4, 6
256:5 257:1	38:15 254:18	reads 242:21	reasons 10:11
269:12 274:16	309:15 346:2, 6	ready 35:19 39:1	12:11 76:11
275:7 281:15	raised 75:24	45:17 78:2 108:2,	90:21, 23
285:22 287:8, 14	85:10 122:7, 10,	3 238:1 304:3	<b>Rebecca</b> 30:15, 17
303:9 304:6, 17	13 196:24	306:9, 12 339:20	REBUTTAL 3:20
308:20 309:4	ran 254:23	353:23	recall 90:21
311:17 312:3	range 271:6	real 147:17	127:14 132:8
314:11, 14 316:19	340:14 341:5	229:17 343:10	138:1 158:12
336:14 340:9	rata 212: <i>17</i>	reality 47:19	182:4 185:4
341:1 343:13	rate 75:1, 2, 12	56:14 59:9, 10	320:25 327:23
348:1 357:3	106:14 152:15	94:5	recap 26:16
364:12 368:5	235:1 240:14, 19	realized 49:4	<b>receive</b> 103: <i>3</i>
374:19 376:8, 15	347:12	realizing 59:18	105:10 136:21
questioning 378:3	ratepayers 63:21,	really 44:10	216:5 290:10, 13
questions 17:17	24 66:24 67:17,	45:13 106:5	298:10
75:15 91:4, 5, 6	<i>18</i> 139:2, <i>7</i>	122:23 147:19	received 53:25
98:20, 23 110: <i>14</i>	153:2 <i>3</i> 179: <i>17</i>	156:15 157:23	90:13 102:2
115:1 129:5, 7	234:19 355:15	162:17 178:23	160:10 161:12
131:23 158:6	rates 59:7 94:3	254:16, 25 255:1	261:23
166:2 168:6	99:8 108:17	262:7 264:4	receiving 104:6
173:12, 16 174:1,	294:20, 21 295:7	266:14 267:22	162:4 214:3
20 175:6, 9	346:2, 6	272:17 273:22	recess 109:4, 5
184:10, 15 192:2	ratios 365:14	274:20 279:3	174:21, 22 259:25
200:7 226:8	<b>REA</b> 334:8	287:20 290:18	359:5 378:23
252:25 258:24	reach 268:4	291:22 293:23	Recessed 378:25
259:1 273:5	276:3	295:17 297:6, 24	recharge 54:11
285:17 297:25	reached 18:19	306:11 307:5	55:22 56:4 58:2
323:23 324:20	33:1	310:12 313:12, 16,	81:23 82:17
348:13 352:5	reaction 20:10	24 314:19 320:10	88:11 99:12
358:20	85:8	324:22 325:24	176:11 220:13
<b>quibble</b> 244: <i>3</i> <b>quick</b> 229: <i>17</i>	read 13:11 18:21 19:9 29:25 33:2	326:18 330:13, 21 338:22 339:12	267:21 272:16, 18, 21 273:7, 25
358:1 359:2	35:2, 22 115:2 <i>1</i>	352:19 357:13, 18	274:8 275:9, 14
quickly 291:22	117:8, 9, 24	371:10, 12 373:12	281:20 282:2
quite 32:13	118:14, 25 119:3	reappropriate	285:9, 14, 23
105:6 152:7	124:19 171:25	253: <i>4</i>	286:24 291:5
170:8 232:19	172:6, 8, 11, 14	reason 14:19	294:25 297:1, 6
quotes 198:16	173:6, 22 174:18	70:23 76:5 86:19	315:25 336:1
7.50.10	175:20 183:20	107:7 131:17	355:21
	190:2 218:5	145:22 155:16	

rechargers 294:16
recharges 223:4
recharging 285.5
recharging 285:5 Reciprocal 3:3
42:15
recitals 171:8
Reclamation
275:23
recognition 68:6
recognize 36:6
37:5 59:9 238: <i>1</i> ,
4 332:2
recognized 49:4
55:25 333:25
recognizes 203:15
recollection 16:23
96:2 159: <i>15</i>
328:1, 13 332:25
recommendation
211:1 326:10
reconvene 175:4
259:24 378:16, 24
reconvened 8:6
record 10:1, 21,
<i>24</i> 11: <i>1</i> , <i>4</i> 17: <i>11</i>
21:25 22:6, 16, 18
26:24 27:2, 20
29:6 32:7, 11
41:18 42:1, 3, 12
43:14 44:1, 4
76:15, 18 77:25
78:7, 11 79:21
89:2 102:4, 10
109:3 110:4
119:14 148:10
186:7 203:2
260:4 311:12, 16
328:20 360:7
362:10 363:5
366:3
recording 13:13
29:24
recourse 70:18
<b>Recovery</b> 275:11,
17 286:11
i e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e e

recreation 56:8 82:1 267:8, 11 recreational 54:12 63:9 65:18 135:5 176:12 264:18 272:13 297:4 355:23 **Recross** 192:3, 10 195:24 recrosses 192:5 recusal 14:1, 2 recuse 11:12 12:13 15:22, 24 17:8 99:4, 14 100:3, 5 recusing 17:18 **Red** 106:5, 10 187:13 219:20 220:4, 23 221:9 364:9 371:7, 21 372:2 redacted 42:22 Redirect 3:9 184:14, 16, 18 257:19, 21, 23 **reduce** 63:*3* 279:16 **reduced** 302:23 304:2 **reduces** 201:20 247:4 294:5 reduction 373:8 redundant 230:24 **refer** 9:11 10:25 12:15 58:9 94:23 110:10 120:17, 23 123:4 128:20 186:20 220:12 223:15 225:9, 20 320:18 327:7 331:25 364:7 reference 58:11 77:2 89:6 184:21 185:2 222:13 225:19 363:4

referenced 40:18 279:2 references 36:16 78:8 referencing 37:18 137:*17* **referred** 9:14, 17, 20, 23 73:13 115:15 124:18 188:14 205:5 206:15 223:8 267:23 270:1, 8 331:*1* referring 10:2 115:17 119:18, 19 128:12 181:12 221:25 266:4 282:25 296:10 355:8 **refers** 184:23 222:18, 19 355:17, 25 **reflect** 49:19 50:3 53:20 310:25 332:25 364:24 reflects 55:24 72:20 300:20 338:22 **refreshed** 159:*15* refused 160:9 **regard** 31:1 176:20, 24 178:10, 11 187:16 268:17 368:12, 15 regarding 10:17 24:23 25:20 26:4, 15 122:7 189:2, 19 269:7 regardless 25:4 **region** 50:15, 25 60:17 141:21 268:2 regions 371:7, 16,

22 373:22

registered 270:23 regrettably 44:11 regulating 272:12 339:9 regulations 176:*19*, *23* 177:*1* 189:1, 18, 23 199:9 regulators 323:16 324:3 Regulatory 76:17 214:21 338:20 **Reida** 1:18 13:23 17:13, 16 18:16 19:11, 17, 24 29:10 30:5, 14, 25 31:15 32:4 33:19, 21 97:23 98:7 103:17, 19, 20 104:2, 19 105:9, *17*, *25* 106:*19* 107:11, 17 108:4, 18 168:5, 14, 20, 25 169:4, 12, 18, *25* 170:7, *15* 171:1, 7, 12, 21, 24 172:5, 12, 23 173:9, 18, 19 174:3 175:21 177:3, 11, 16, 22 178:3, 18 179:5 217:5, 21 218:3, 15, 24 219:6, 10, *15* 304:5 336:*13*, 21 337:13 339:22 340:4, 8, 15, 24 341:2 342:7 345:17 346:9, 14, 19 347:2, 7, 10, 17 348:7, 10, 14 362:1 **Reida's** 110:18 364:12 reintroduce 33:20 reintroduced 11:3

reiterate 339:4	relinquishing	161:14 162:13	279:5 323:20
relate 210:14	127:4	221:23 370:3	330:1
related 116:2	Relying 52:18	representation	requires 25:22
135:12 185:12, 18	remained 266:25	53:15 58:24	97:13 147:9
200:8 210:13	re-mark 44:1	78:11, 17, 18	277:17 366:17
222:12 263:17	REMBOLT 2:10	122:11 225:1	requiring 58:20,
322:1 323:3	34:11 47:1	334:2 371:1, 12	22
relation 19:4	remember 33:8, 9,	375:20	research 25:19
239:14 242:11	17 43:22 127:12	representations	271:5
relations 15:8	157:13 193:15	162:1 372:23	reseat 163:22
relationship 16:22	219:22 315:19	representative	resells 141:23
35:16 80:20	339:8 341:17	38:13 78:12	reserve 40:3
198:18 214:9	342:11 348:22	162:24 163:24	61:23 69:24 71:8
262:8 310:16	remind 9:9	representatives	123:11 306:7
relationships	182:11	53:8 78:22 326:5	307:17 308:3
96: <i>17</i> 131: <i>12</i> , <i>19</i>	removed 373:22	331:8, 11	341:3 344:22
<b>relative</b> 117: <i>14</i>	removing 371:10	represented 99:23	354:7
relatively 245:3	renamed 356:18	161: <i>11</i> 195: <i>1</i>	reserve-base
release 63:13	renewal 72:14	202:13 321:24	334:10
69:1, 11 114:11	renumber 42:9	373:12, 14	reserved 44:14
148:15 161:17	43:12, 13	representing 34:6,	reserves 307:1
232:18 233:6, 13,	reopen 357:17	12 47:1, 3, 4	341:3, 6 344:19
15 234:9 244:18	repeat 218:1	180:10 182:5	reserving 39:10,
303:11 320:1	repeating 267:11	represents 33:17	13
327:10	repercussions 27:6	230:15	reservoir 65:8
released 65:8	replace 13:23	Republican 199:3,	71:4 231:24
93:8 107:25	294:1 341:24	10, 18, 20 279:20	232:1 287:23
113:22 204:18	replacement	280:1, 2	349:5
205:17 206:19	18:17, 20 19:15	request 11:12	reservoirs 48:24
217:1 226:21	replacing 294:3	12:12 108:23	49:1 56:10
227:23 228:19	replenished	requested 240:17	108:12 120:25
314:25 349:4	303:25	require 145:6, 9	148:19 150:4
releases 93:7	<b>Report</b> 4:6 6:8,	165:4 367:13, 15	225:1 272:13
144:3, 22 150:16	15 39:18, 23 40:7,	required 26:14	303:11 339:10
241:9 303:17	12 42:18 72:19	28:18 29:20 53:3	reside 49:7 56:22
releasing 69:5, 6	77:18, 19 153:2	190:2, 25 191:1, 4	68:5 136:16
107:5	264:10 348:3	330:1 367:21	Residences 5:13
relevance 31:7	352:7	368:1, 3	residential 153:23
relevant 262:7	reporter 9:1	requirement	residents 62:8, 17
reliable 355:10	44:24 197:2	27:12 244:25	64:23 376:19
reliably 47:25	300:14 362:15	276:16, 20 336:25	residual 70:20
61:11	<b>reports</b> 39:14	requirements	<b>Resolution</b> 6:11
reliant 48:5	40:4	27:22 58:19	78:14, 20 165:23,
relied 73:7	represent 53:19	143:9 214:19	25
relieved 240:20	83:2, 3 90:6	215:25 216:1, 2	resolutions
	122:25 160:14, 18	273:13 276:2	
	,		

130:24 353:12	<b>restrict</b> 114: <i>11</i>	305:4, 5, 8, 10, 12,	149:16, 18 151:9,
resolved 54:3	restriction 338:20	20 306:2, 13, 22	20 152:17 158:14,
resource 49:14,	restrictions 281:2	308:9, 11 310:9	21 160:14 161:15
15 50:13 213:13	restrictive 132:24	313:10 341:11	163:8 165:13, 23
287:19 291:13	result 66:1	342:5 345:3	166:3 180:18
295:11 308:23	280:14 297:24	356:23 357:8	181:14 183:6
309:16 323:10	347:24	revenues 48:8	184:5, 8, 10 188:9,
331:12, 13 335:16	resulted 50:5	51:9 71:13 74:19	10 195:16 196:13
336:3 339:20	54:17	152:9 235:22	203:20 206:16, 23
resources 18:18	results 97:10	236:15, 17, 21, 24	212:4, 10 216:17,
21:3 51:16 75:4	327:10 330:23, 24	314:20	25 217:14, 19
146:17 199:3	332:6 360:16	reversible 17:20	220:11 221:21, 25
217:20 244:8	361:6 363:12	18:13	224:6, 13 231:11,
250:10 252:6	<b>Resume</b> 6:15	REVIEW 1:2	25 232:3, 4
263:23 265:2, 13	retail 65:22, 25	5:8 8:12 9:10	233:10, 14, 18, 19
273:20 277:4	66:24 67:11, 20	28:16 36:5 37:1	234:20 235:21
278:24 309:2, 24	72:23 74:23	46:23 76:23	240:24 242:17
310:6 330:6	135:18 141:23	162:9 172:25	243:1 249:2, 8
342:2, 4	153:17 155:25	186:13 327:6	250:16, 21 251:17
respect 34:9	157:10 176:9, 25	366:17, 22 368:4,	254:4, 9, 12, 19
39:10 69:23, 25	194:2 354:18	8	255:7 260:23
73:8 104:4	364:19	Revised 6:5	272:15 274:10
118:17 166:7	retain 155:16	<b>RFP</b> 73:25	276:14 277:18
233:1 263:20	<b>retained</b> 321:17	160:11, 15 161:12	278:24 279:12
269:14 320:14	323:2	162:3	290:1 292:2, 9, 15
330:12 346:22	return 72:4	<b>RFPs</b> 317:7	294:4, 9 295:14,
respectfully 12:12	115:5 142:10, 13	Richard 9:19	18 309:5, 19
respective 51:3	225:20 280:14, 16	<b>rid</b> 152:24	313:21 314:1, 4
153:5 156:6	296:20 315:17	<b>right</b> 8:6, 23	332:21 336:23, 24
158:9 188:10	316:6	13:3 16:20 20:14	341:8, 24 345:12
respects 302:14	returned 92:7	21:12 23:3 31:15	347:1, 17 348:17
respond 173:7	290: <i>1</i> 344: <i>14</i>	32:12 40:3 41:13,	350:25 352:2
<b>response</b> 161: <i>12</i>	returns 29:22	18, 23 43:15, 19	355:4 358:14
162:3	226:4	45:15, 19 46:10	359:2 362:14
responses 160:10,	<b>Rev</b> 23:25 24:6,	52:5 60:17 73:17	363:3 372:14
15	13 25:21 27:15	74:18 93:4, 11	373:20
responsibility	<b>Revenue</b> 5:3	95:8 104:2 <i>4</i>	<b>rights</b> 24:4 56:25
210:9 212:2, 7, 8,	55:15 63:3 66:8	105:12 110:4	57:1 63:25 64:5,
9 234:11	71:16 134:25	113:10, 18 119:23	22 89:10, 11
responsible 170:1,	142:3 152:3	121:10 124:1, 20	104:12 144:14
2 198:17	235:20 236:5, 10	125:18 131:25	173:2 175:23, 24
rest 86:12 219:23	271:22 272:4, 7, 9	132:12, 17, 18	209:9, 11 213:11
229:22 363:6	296:23 297:10, 14,	133:7 135:12	232:12, 15, 16, 18
restart 174:15	16, 24 298:9, 12	141:8, 11, 16	233:22, 23 251:10
restoration 286:22	300:20 301:3, 6,	142:16 143:4, 5	258:16
	21, 24 302:1, 9, 17	146:11 147:25	<u> </u>

rise 222:23 223:7	90:5 92:10 93:10	sales 92:22	scarcity 151:2
284:12 289:18	95: <i>3</i> 103: <i>17</i>	360:14	243:12
<b>River</b> 36:7 37:3	110:8 115:5	sanctioned 275:22	scattered 181:1
47:11 49:5 60:15,	117: <i>1</i> 122: <i>3</i>	sand 211:8 290:3	schedule 44:22
25 92:18 127:18,	123: <i>4</i> , <i>6</i> 124: <i>10</i>	Sandhills 315:25	99:9 123:8
23 128:3 139:13,	125:22 128:19	sands 290:1	124:16, 19, 20
<i>15</i> 186: <i>14</i> , <i>16</i>	129:11 130:12	sandy 245:23	303:4 318:5, 10
187:16 188:18, 20	131: <i>1</i> 132: <i>4</i>	Sara 25:15 34:20	321:9, 11, 13
189:3, 20 190:1, 8,	173:22 174:18	sat 164:25	327:7, 8 329:4
18 191:2, 5, 7, 8	184:20 185: <i>11</i>	satisfaction 146:19	331:2
193:25 201: <i>11</i>	186: <i>10</i> , <i>20</i> 188: <i>14</i>	<b>satisfy</b> 151:3	schedules 44:16
204:20 205:20	190:23 191: <i>11</i>	save 147:15	Schenken 3:14
215:1 225:11, 19,	196: <i>13</i> 208: <i>9</i>	saving 296:7, 8	5:6 39:8 40:21
20, 23 226:1, 4, 18,	<b>Rowe's</b> 201:2	307:1 341:17	school 80:14
24 228:3 258:10,	208:17	savings 73:14	261:18
21 268:4 273:13,	<b>rowing</b> 170:23	74:13, 15 245:22	Schwarz 3:18
15 275:11, 17	rows 246:23	294:5 296:4	science 276:24
276:17 277:3, 5	rule 373:24	330:11 333:8, 10,	278:23
280:17, 19 282:1	374:1, 9, 16	12, 15, 17 337:20	scope 21:19
284:8 286:11	<b>Ruled</b> 4:1 5:1	338:2 363:23	120:4 322:9
287:1 288:19, 24	6:1 7:1	364:6, 10, 13, 16,	324:23 326:11
290:1, 4 297:7	rules 126:10, 22	21, 22, 23 365:15,	<b>Scott</b> 196:21
315:1, 23 316:11	133:2 176:19, 23,	16	197:4, 12
353:2, 4 365:5	25 177: <i>10</i> 189: <i>1</i> ,	saw 50:9 265:16,	<b>S-C-O-T-T</b> 197:5
367:2 371:8	18, 22 199:9	17 281:17	season 149:2
372:3 373:3	349:2 <i>4</i>	saying 9:2 87:24	239:12, 16 240:12
374:1	<b>run</b> 133: <i>16</i> 169:9	93:12 108:8	242:13 304:4
<b>River's</b> 60:5	178: <i>10</i> , <i>11</i> , <i>13</i>	112:23 125:1	305:15
road 157:24	205:19 222:5, 8	137:19 150:11	seasonable 148:25
Robison 3:16	275:20 285:8	250:9 257:9	seasonal 149:2 <i>1</i>
<b>ROCK</b> 2:15	running 228:11	280:6 288:9	seasonally 303:13
34:16	runs 204:18	289:14	seat 15:17
<b>rolled</b> 303:15	218:9, 13 246:23	says 143:22	140:23 163:15, 19
<b>Room</b> 1:13 8:9	<b>Rural</b> 12:6 15:13	205:8 225:20	165:17 182:13
29:9 44:14	16:7 24:9, <i>15</i>	233:12 239:7	278:22
204:11	28:6 51:17	241:4, 8 249:11,	<b>seated</b> 11:15
<b>Rotaries</b> 330:18	374:10, 11, 12, 16	21 250:6, 8, 13, 22	15:3 34:4 164:10
rough 192:17	376:19	251:20 252:7, 9,	191:2 <i>4</i> 197: <i>17</i>
roughly 68:9	rural-focused	10, 22 266:9	seats 68:7 99:22
88:14	373:9 376:12	280:18 327:9	<b>second</b> 18:16
<b>round</b> 337:4		334:25 336:25	24:2 27:8 49:13
340:7	<s></s>	342:16 344:12	58:5 105:18
routinely 339:11	<b>safe</b> 267:9 301:8	345:6 352:22	110:24 112:12
<b>Rowe</b> 3:9 79:12,	sale 50:11 54:11	360:22 361:22	117:9 127:22
14, 15, 22 80:5	235:25 297:16	364:9	158:2 195:7
81:19 87:4, 16			

229:13 249:10	seeing 46:3	separately 10:6	19, 24 161:3
290:11 340:9	73:25 162:2	342:17	319:18 332:8
secondary 176:10	seen 23:14	separation 14:12	sessions 158:10
355:20 356:2	125:22 253:16	15:6	159:4, 25
Secondly 12:3	255:4 295:6	<b>September</b> 314:2 <i>3</i>	<b>Set</b> 6:22, 23
63:25 64:21	366:11 370:22	315:2	22:11 23:13
65:10	seeps 220:14	series 173:16	27:15 46:5 72:12
<b>section</b> 21:19	273:9, 10 315:23	<b>serious</b> 70:11	94:3 107:23
24:1, 6, 13, 24	sees 252:21	seriously 38:9	126:3, 10, 21
25:10, 21 27:18,	<b>segment</b> 118:21	52:2	129:7 132:4
22 28:3, 8, 19	119:4, 5, 6 121:3	serve 16:16 74:5	171: <i>14</i> 240:2 <i>1</i>
117:5 188:15, 25	selected 81:5	104:3, 21 143:23	265:22, 23 292:25
190:2 206:23	selecting 376:22	241:17 264:16	316:3 317:5
239:2, 4, 5 240:1,	selection 373:2	323:11	325:25
10 243:2 247:8,	sell 73:19 141:19,	<b>served</b> 81: <i>1</i>	sets 25:11 27:7
14 251:20 256:19	22, 25 142:8	138:7 227:18	67:17, 18 68:12
353:6 354:13	295:14, 24	377:16	212:23
356:13, 14, 17	selling 295:14	serves 123: <i>1</i>	<b>setting</b> 59:6 73:9
368:15	sells 67:21 73:17	289:7	325:6 326:3
Sections 27:16	74:18	<b>Service</b> 4:20, 21,	seven 193:7 338:7
<b>secure</b> 131: <i>13</i>	<b>Senator</b> 60:19	23, 24 24:17	seven-ish 100:22
security 45:6	266:2	117:12, 16, 21	<b>severe</b> 151:11
357:24 358:2	send 30:12	118:18 119:24	shaking 33:24
359:3	<b>senior</b> 216:25	120:11 137:16	shalt 345:7
see 23:12 33:24	217:3 233:19	143:8 145:5, 21	<b>shape</b> 306:19
58:3 71:18 83:24	sense 50:17	183:12, 13, 25	share 50:24
84:8 86:16, 17, 18	52:15 64:19 72:1	194: <i>3</i> 198: <i>18</i>	66:19 80:7
87:14 114:3	75:17 76:4, 5	205:10 209:8, 17,	102:21 128:15, 16
117:5 167: <i>1</i>	86:9, 17 96:12	25 212:11 231:1,	160:25
195:11, 16 224:6	108:19 113:12	15 234:18 235:1,	<b>shared</b> 52:6 54:6
229:21 230:7	243:25 304:19, 21	7, 21 237:17	317:20
237:19 239:17	311:9 321:22	238:5, 9 239:3, 4	shares 268:8
240:22 251:25	322:14 326:19	247:8, 25 251:2	shave 93:1
252:8 259:4	338:17 345:9, 12	252:13 255:24	293:20 309:12
273:22 280:11	357:16	276:1 293:12, 14,	311:20 335:5
281:13 284:3, 10,	sensitivity 338:21	15 298:20 300:24	338:15 339:3
20 288:19 289:1,	sent 97:25	307:23 313:12	<b>shaving</b> 309:16
2, 4, 5 301:25	sentence 117:25	344:4 355:5	310:3
303:14 306:22	118:15, 25 128:10	services 168:16	short 29:18 59:8
308:25 309:18, 25	251:19	198:9 212:13	105:2 108:24
327:12, 16 328:18	separate 22:19	265:7	109:3 199:22
332:12 344:10	27:3 41:13 42:4	serving 121:9	200:2 259:16
363:23 364:12	57:11 228:5, 7	213:12 295:17, 20	291:11 302:10
371:10 373:10, 15	346:21 349:10	session 11:17	shortened 9:25
377:2	356:15	20:21 159:5, 6, 11,	shortfalls 306:14
	I		I

<b>should</b> 62:15	significant 50:1, 6	six-year 81:4	218:20 234:14
85:7, 24, 25	67:2 221:17	163:13 164:1, 14	329:12
101:22 138:19, 20	305:9 310:23	180:4	<b>someone's</b> 139: <i>18</i>
152:5 156:12	318:20 343:1	<b>size</b> 131: <i>17</i>	somewhat 29:20
163:5 171:16	<b>similar</b> 34:25	133:18	44:21 93:15
172:2, 24 175:25	58:19 94:10	skeptical 51:5	297:7
194:6 210:11	229:21 302:12, 14	skip 352:6 356:13	<b>Soneson</b> 191:16,
235:25 277:20	313:5	slash 240:15	24
338:4 345:11	similarly 49:25	<b>slide</b> 202:3	<b>Sonju</b> 4:6 77:20
350:3 358:3	<b>simple</b> 349:21	246:22 332:19, 25	332:13
360:15	350:9	334:16, 24 336:14	soon 46:15
shouldn't 225:14	<b>simply</b> 19:5 66:7	340:9 348:21	sorry 33:13, 25
<b>show</b> 14:19 67:3	70:19 71:25	360:21 361:5	35:24 37:16 83:1
316:6	72:19 74:22	<b>slight</b> 209:22	110:12 111:13
<b>showed</b> 343:16	single 39:6 375:2	<b>slightly</b> 225:19	117:9 118: <i>11</i>
364:21	<b>siphon</b> 341:21	<b>slot</b> 270:25	119:9 125:4
<b>showing</b> 285:24	sir 103:18	small 24:14	148:7, 11 154:4
337:18	110:11 131:4	56:15 140:4	167:9 185:24
shown 223:21	296:24 297:12	206:16 235:7	198:5 202:6
226:22	318:6 327:13, 17	261:6, 16 263:8	243:18 269:22
shows 223:24	332:4 352:9	298:15	282:14 286:9
315:23 329:4	357:3 367:12	smaller 214:24	287:24 288:22
363:17 372:24	368:5 370:2	376:16	297:12 300:3
373:4	372:12	<b>smart</b> 266:13	323:1 328:16
shrinks 215:20	sit 12:19 64:20	smile 82:19	347:9 354:24
<b>shut</b> 106:9, 12	108:10 135:23	snap-your-fingers-	357:21 360:23
150:19	141:7 292:2 <i>1</i>	and-everything's	370:9, 15 371:19
side 136:24	352:23 354:11	353:20	374:14
139:13, 15 156:8	sits 180:1 350:1	snowballed 317:23	sort 126:7 377:1
203:13 214:25	<b>sitting</b> 108: <i>3</i>	soil 60:7, 21	<b>sought</b> 160:15
215:4 226:24	130:11 190:11	soils 245:23	<b>sounded</b> 124:18
263:13, 18 281:25	situation 146:8	<b>solace</b> 173:4	<b>Sounds</b> 243:24
293:17 323:9	149:12	<b>solar</b> 84:18	259:23
333:5 343:7	situations 69:9	106:23	<b>source</b> 55:15
346:1, 5	six 25:12 49:7	<b>sold</b> 66:7 73:19	134:25 235:22, 23,
<b>sideline</b> 113: <i>17</i>	81:18 97:7	143:1 218:18	24 297:10, 14
sides 15:4 57:25	100:19 120:2, 4	298:5 299:4, 10	305:5, 9 314:15
70:2	121:8, 12, 14, 22	sole 251:23	Sources 5:3
<b>sign</b> 106:6	180:18 338:4, 7	solely 34:12	235:20, 25 236:3,
159:19 160:2	351:3, 5 353:22	66:17 79:7 93:14	5, 10 271:23
<b>signed</b> 185: <i>3</i>	371:4 372:25	<b>solid</b> 304:16	272:5, 7, 10
248:25 251:4, 5, 9	<b>Sixth</b> 28:12	<b>solution</b> 290:23	296:24 306:2
275:8 300:8	sixth-generation	<b>solved</b> 265:19	<b>South</b> 1:14 8:10
significance 31:7,	49:8	somebody 11:24	47:18 48:4 49:24
23		35:13 45:2	52:7 60:13, 22
			111:2 <i>4</i> 112: <i>1</i>

139:15 267:17	222:22 284:1	259:13 314:13	statute 25:22
287:23 291:4, 19	spots 284:21	317:3 342:19	26:2, 6, 11 28:8
315:14	<b>SPP</b> 309:19	378:9	212:9 345:6
<b>Southern's</b> 137:15	311:12	started 50:10	366:17
<b>Southwest</b> 311: <i>13</i>	spreads 290:3	273:22 295:15	Statutes 165:4
soybeans 80:10	spreadsheet	316:15 323:1	stay 17:8 45:4
span 219:2	217:17	starting 53:7	111:9
speak 8:25 35:6,	<b>spring</b> 53:7	204:16 314:23	<b>staying</b> 15:17
15 36:17 204:6	106:7 150:5	<b>Stat</b> 24:1, 6, 13	stays 248:20
217:12 218:8, 11	283:21	25:21 27:16	steady 289:3
340:19	sprinkler 246:24	<b>STATE</b> 1:1 8:9	297:2
speaker 20:8, 18,	square 203:19	56:20 60:17 77:4	steam 343:24
24 21:4	stabilization 75:1,	79:20 82:18 87:1	344:2
speaker's 20:10	2, 12	104:15 115:24	steel 341:24
speaking 78:13	<b>stable</b> 138:11	140:4 150:15	stem 64:5
180:18 254:21	staff 25:16 34:20	167:11 197:20	step 29:17 46:14
269:14	91:19 130:1	217:19 239:10	65:13 108:13
speaks 97:13	146:4 151:24	249:21 250:3, 7,	196:17 239:19
<b>species</b> 114:10	158: <i>1</i> 166: <i>16</i>	12, 17 260:17	265:24 275:2
276:4 277:5	211:1, 4, 10	264:9 265:8, 14	289:22 290:11
specific 67:24	318:18 322:5	266:11 275:10, 20	<b>stepping</b> 46:18
specifically 208:9	330:10	278:12, 16, 25	steps 30:4
236:23 318:4	stage 32:22 42:7	279:3 280:21	stick 129:14
speculated 55:2	<b>stagger</b> 68:14	281:20 286:4, 21	sticker 123:15
<b>speed</b> 30:2	stagnant 84:3	312:22 323:16	124: <i>3</i> , <i>23</i> 125: <i>1</i>
164:12, 16	130:6	331:7	<b>Stip</b> 3:3
<b>spell</b> 197:2	stakeholders	<b>stated</b> 43:20 64:6	stipulate 36:3
260:17	55:20 63:7, 15	104:25 132:10	196:9 212:19
<b>spelling</b> 299:24	65:5 76:8 294:14	134:12 197:20	stipulated 25:13
300:13	stand 46:9 79:12	302:16 368:25	27:8, 21 28:3, 7,
<b>spend</b> 307:9, 10	184:25 202:23	statement 24:20	12 31:9, 16
321:13	204:13	25:24 37:14	369:20
spent 52:16	standard 59:7	61:15 78:9 93:17	stipulation 27:8,
<b>spin</b> 144:7	117:15, 19, 23	116:9 129: <i>15</i>	20 28:20 33:1
spinning 93:9	118:17, 18 212:23	148:17 268:13, 15	35:22 36:15, 19
150:17 307:4	238:5 251:16	STATEMENTS	37:24 38:6 42:12,
<b>split</b> 364:22	<b>standing</b> 8:19, 22	3:5 32:17 45:21	15, 19, 25 43:20
<b>splotch</b> 280:11	12:18 13:1	46:2, 7 218:16	195:23
281:14 282:16	standpoint 64:20	states 240:10	STIPULATIONS
284:4 285:3	75:17	242:10 247:11, 14	3:2 22:12 23:9
289:16 315:19	staring 160:6	249:16, 17 276:13	25:10, 12 29:4
316:2 348:23	stars 185:16	278:14 355:20	32:21 35:24
<b>spoke</b> 167:12	start 47:16 48:9	356:14	350:5
spot 164:4	50:17 55:16, 18	state's 48:2 279:4	stop 9:5 44:19,
207:10 216:14	64:17 105:21	static 222:25	20 247:23 288:16
	118:2 203:11		322:15 344:25

345:2 378:2, 10,	11, 13 320:2, 8, 18,	suggest 42:11	<b>suppose</b> 145:13
15	22 321:20, 23	75:11	152:6 369:21
<b>stopping</b> 322:22	322:7, 9 323:4	suggested 172:24	supposed 356:4
<b>storage</b> 314:3, 5	327:10	suggests 74:2	361:2
<b>store</b> 69:1 107:24	studying 85:3	<b>Suite</b> 2:5, 11	<b>Supreme</b> 14: <i>14</i>
131:19 146:14	<b>stuff</b> 87:11	summarize 22:23	<b>sure</b> 16:22 17:22
148:16 150:4	178:10, 11 262:6	291:22	23:14 31:12
208:4 233:6	274:14 298:14	summarizing	33:12, 14 43:22
291:20 303:8, 10	345:7	334:22	46:11 88:24 89:4
304:3 355:2	<b>sub</b> 221: <i>1</i>	<b>summary</b> 26:16	96:16, 20 99:1
<b>stored</b> 65:8 89:7	subdistricts 193:7,	113: <i>1</i> 117: <i>6</i>	129: <i>14</i> 132: <i>6</i> , <i>13</i>
144:14 204:17	10	119: <i>17</i> , <i>19</i> 333: <i>1</i>	134:9 139:3
213:18 214:6	<b>subdivide</b> 269: <i>13</i>	<b>summer</b> 69:4	143:20 148:9, 22
227:20 228:17	Subdivision 4:6	<b>sun</b> 106:25	149:2 151:5
<b>storing</b> 303:17	5:13 58:8 269:20	superintendent	157:4 160:12
<b>storm</b> 149:3	270:24 369:18	263:1	162:7 167:23
strategies 264:5	371:14 374:6	superiority 177:4	172:7 175: <i>13</i>
<b>stream</b> 274:4	376:20 377:14	supermajority	198:12, 13, 14
279:25 345:3	subdivisions	58:23 68:10, 19	199:8 200:14
356:23	27:10, 13 58:10,	95:22	203:4 208:8
streams 63:3	13, 17 125:17	supplement 48:15	209:7 210:23
142:4 342:5	351:19 369:15, 23	134:25	216:2 219:25
357:8	371:17, 23 372:3	supplemental	226:14 230:22
<b>Street</b> 2:16	subjects 177:1	63:3 316:5	232:17 235:15
strengthen 52:7	<b>submit</b> 43:5 75:1,	<b>supplied</b> 212: <i>16</i>	243:19 253:17, 22
strengths 83:6	8	335:23	264:6 265:1
stretch 146:2	<b>submitted</b> 368: <i>13</i>	suppliers 310:17	267:6 270:5
stretches 140:20	subsection 239:6	supplies 48:19	272:24 279:5, 19,
<b>strictly</b> 148:24	subsequent 58:16	137:14 291:15	24 281:5 282:7
<b>strong</b> 50:14	subservient 356:3	355:11	291:9, 10, 14, 16
51:7 122:23	substantial 69:24	<b>supply</b> 111:1, 15	293:24 294:18, 20
235:14	72:10 222:23	138:11 146:3	297:5 303:6, 17,
stronger 51:12	225:24 236:18	238:17 243:19	19, 21 305:11
139:19 140:10	245:9	245:8 273:24	313:6 314:20
structure 180:10	substantially	303:11, 20, 23	317:10 318:22
225:14, 15 265:20	27:14	305:15, 16 316:8	321:23 322:13
structures 138:14	success 51:1, 11	319:1 333:15	323:5 324:11
stuck 228:7	265:23	339:9 360:13	328:10 341:9
<b>studied</b> 128:23	successful 59:17,	support 47:8	344:18 355:10, 13
324:18	20 61:21 83:13	55:12 62:18 66:8	359:3 364:1
study 57:14	successfully	201:18 236:25	372:14
72:17, 25 73:12	146:17	supported 54:18	surface 48:14
74:2 77:2 156:7	sudden 342:23	supporting 135:16	54:8 55:3, 23
166:7 167:7	sufficient 213:2	supportive 90:10	56:25 62:20, 25
261:22 293:23	282:8	supports 220:16	63:4 65:12, 19
295:9, 25 296:10,	sufficiently 128:24	l	67:19, 24 68:5, 8,

18 69:12 76:9	swayed 17:25	174:13, 17 187:2	253:18 283:8
81:22 88:7, 8	18:8	237:25 250:7, 12,	314:8 317:14
89:1, 3, 5, 11, 18	sweet 49:10	13, 20 256:23	319:4, 9, 11
92:23 96:7 97:2,	switch 60:3 293:5	259:16 265:13	330:19 339:6
7 105:8 108:15	switching 283:10	273:17 306:15	362:21 371:17
110:19 111:1, 15	sworn 79:17	316:17 317:15	talks 318:12
112:14, 24 114:20	197:14 260:14	341:15 342:6	353:6 356:17
119:20 121:8, 17,	symbiotic 310:16	344:19 349:16, 23	tan 205:12 224:8,
24 123:2 127:21	<b>System</b> 40:12	350:18 357:23	10 372:6, 7
135:6 136:3, 16,	66:9 71:13 108:2	358:5, 6 359:1	tap 290:25
17, 20 138:5, 24	134:20 135:1	374:25	target 174:14
143:15 149:14, 24	142:5 153:18	taken 109:5	277:2, 23 297:7
163:2 176:6, 20	205:6 220:6, 24	144:25 162:21	targets 278:6
189:2, 19, 24	223:2, 4 225:6, 17	174:22 198:14	303:18
199:14 200:24	226:1, 4 227:1	225:10 259:25	task 19:24
201:1, 3, 4, 9, 16	229:24 234:24	320:21, 23 327:18	taste 302:24
205:18, 21, 23	236:25 238:16, 17	359:5	tax 26:8
206:1, 20 207:3, 9,	245:18 246:18, 24	takes 59:15	taxing 308:16
15, 19, 20, 22, 24	267:4 285:1, 7	149:6 186: <i>15</i>	teachers 49:12
208:2, 5 209:1	289:21 306:16	298:16 329:16	team 157:17, 18
211:20 215:3	315:18, 20 316:14	353:15, 21 368:2	technical 10:20
223:6 229:18, 22	339:9 340:10	talk 9:2 85:7	technically 10:17
231:9 233:7	342:24	87:13 91:24 97:4	12:16 145:13
235:11 239:21	systematically	136:1, 9 196:23	257:13 357:12
241:17 264:17	133:16	273:2 274:10	technology 48:16
267:14 285:25	systems 62:22	282:13 293:19	245:15 267:16
292:25 351:17, 21	72:13 73:3, 4	294:2 296:23	tell 55:6 114:10
354:16 355:2, 17	77:6, 8 108:11	298:15 306:7	139:25 155:4
surpassing 59:19	238:14 246:2	314:4 316:2, 24	166: <i>14</i> 170: <i>17</i>
<b>surplus</b> 61:23	317:20	317:7 333:24	180:21 218:20
surprises 330:8		338:25 343:21	280:12 304:16
surrender 248:1	< T >	talked 68:23	312:20 320:13
Survey 5:23	<b>T.P</b> 3:14	88:17 122:3	341:12 372:20
<b>survive</b> 84:11	table 201:19	133:18 150:23	tells 26:12
<b>Susan</b> 9:19	220:15 222:24	159:2, 17 200:25	<b>Ten</b> 259:17, 19,
suspected 12:23	223:7	208:25 268:7	20, 21, 23, 24
<b>sustain</b> 97:17	tackle 87:9, 10	273:8 274:23	tend 58:9
155:10	tad 230:23	318:19 319:17, 23	<b>tension</b> 67:13
sustainability	take 20:22 30:7	328:21 356:1	tenure 16:9
288:11, 13	36:8 52:2 65:23	365:13 377:1	142:25
sustainable	81:23, 25 108:24	<b>talking</b> 9:4 64:17	term 81:4, 15
273:25 290:24	109: <i>1</i> 126:7	136:10 137:22	89:2 90:2 163:13
335:14 355:11, 14	133:23 138:13	142:12 146:6	164: <i>1</i> 210: <i>14</i>
Sutherland 285:1	139:18, 23 143:7	166:20, 23 181:9	222:18 225:7
315:22	150:16 161:25	231:8 232:10	247:18 256:20, 24
	162:5, 10 172:10	239:7 246:17, 18	

265:24 273:20	115:17 120:5	119:2, 8, 11	8, 13, 17 311:11,
291:11 324:23	132:8 139:1	124:13, 25 125:3,	15 312:5, 17, 23
termed 298:8	185:11 188:3, 7	11, 16 131:24	313:3 321:6, 10
terminate 249:6	200:7 201:2	147:4, 21 148:1, 5,	328:7, 9, 14, 19
251:2, <i>10</i> 252: <i>13</i>	210:13 222:12	8 154:2 155:3, 9	332:10, 15 334:23
253:7 256:3	237:16 265:6	166:19 167:14, 22,	336:7, 10 357:19,
terminated 248:1	269:7 283:25	25 168:3 172:4	22 358:13, 24
249:3, 12 251:1	290:8 300:17	173:17, 20 174:9	360:3 361:14, 20
terms 16:18 36:9	302:2 322:1	175:3, 11, 14, 17	362:9, 13, 18, 23
59:7 71:19 85:24	339:6	181:8 184:9, 14	363:2, 8 369:8, 12,
96:25 99:16		185:21 186:6	
	Testiomony 3:4		19 371:15, 20, 25
105:2 126:4	<b>TEXEL</b> 1:12 8:5,	188:8, 12 190:14,	372:5, 9, 13
133:16 143:18	15 12:14 13:6	21 192:3, 6, 11	373:23 374:3, 8,
156:14 164:5, 14	14:11 15:19, 23,	193:16 195:25	12, 15 376:2, 5, 9,
180:4 238:20	25 16:3, 12, 20	196:5, 8, 12, 16	13, 23 377:25
302:21 344:15	17:4, 10, 15, 21	197:6, 9, 11, 16, 19	378:8, 14
347:15	18:23 19:14, 19,	199:16, 19, 24	<b>Thank</b> 11:9
territories 269:5,	22 20:1 21:7, 11	200:3 202:25	15:18 17:12
6 373:12, 14	22:21, 25 23:4, 11,	203:5, 8, 18, 21, 25	19:18 23:18 32:5,
Territory 5:11	20 25:17 26:23	204:3, 9, 21	24 34:14 37:20
27:23 50:20	27:4 30:10, 16, 21,	205:11 206:6, 22,	38:3, 24 46:20, 21
53:14 62:10	23 31:6, 20 32:6,	25 207:5 211:25	61:3 76:13 80:1
64:24 137:16	10 33:4, 15, 23	212:6, 14, 22, 25	90:2 95:11
140:23 141:11	34:18 35:23	213:5 216:18, 21	101:15 108:19
268:22, 24 269:1,	36:11 37:15, 23	217:2 218:21	110:6 115:2
9, 13 270:11	38:23 39:21, 25	220:21 221:5, 8,	118:10 119:15
355:5 371:23	40:6, 10, 15, 23	13 223:9, 14, 16,	121:6 122:2
372:10 373:18	41:5, 9, 12, 16, 20,	20, 25 224:2, 8, 12,	125:19 132:1
testified 79:17	24 42:5 43:11, 16,	15 226:9 227:2, 6,	166:2, 3 173:8
132:5 138:2	21, 25 44:6, 10, 13	9, 11 253:1, 9, 12,	179:6, 7 181: <i>14</i>
140:12 155:15	45:18 46:11, 16	17 255:8 256:7,	184:8, 17 186:5
191: <i>11</i> 197: <i>14</i>	76:14 77:3, 11, 14,	15, 25 257:4, 16,	189: <i>14</i> 195: <i>17</i>
208:9 213:10	23 78:6 79:5, 9,	20 258:25 259:8,	196:11, 14, 15, 18
241:19 260:14	13, 19, 25 88:22,	12, 15, 18, 22	197:18 203:10
testify 38:10, 14	25 89:13, 17, 23	260:3, 8, 16, 22	204:24 207:6
78:22 155: <i>1</i>	90:1 92:2 94:14,	272:20, 23 274:7,	219:16 220:3
168:4 232:23	20 95:4, 7, 12, 21	12, 17 275:16, 19,	226:11 227:5, 10
testifying 38:18	96:1, 10 97:15	24 276:5, 9, 12, 15,	229:14 230:18
78:25 79:2, 7	98:9, 13 101:17	19 277:6, 10, 13,	237:22 252:24
115:10	102:5, 8, 18 103:2,	16, 19, 24 278:3,	257:17 259:6, 7
Testimony 3:5	6, 10 108:22	11 282:12, 15, 21	314:10 316:21
38:12 40:5, 22	110:3 112:2, 7, 22	283:9, 12, 15	348:15 352:2
43:7 67:23 68:24	113:9, 13, 18, 25	285:19 288:20	365:21 375:25
69:3 73:6 74:25	114:8, 15, 25	289:9 296:9, 12,	376:24 377:11
75:9, 21 77:17	115:3 116:13, 18	16 299:19, 23	thing 106:4
78:19 85:16	118:1, 7, 11, 22	300:2, 5, 11 308:4,	
	, · , <b></b>		· • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •

194:16 245:7	23 201:7, 22	thought 33:7	46:4 50:5 52:16
267:8, 12 280:18	213:17 214:5, 7	85:6 86:14 169:8	60:4, 17 63:6
287:20 288:10	215:8 218:16, 22	179:22 201:10	69:7 81:17 82:6
294:10 299:20	220:21 221:20	279:8 336:16	86:15 90:11 93:4
306:10 313:14	226:17 227:6	337:17 338:1	94:22 99:9
337:15	234:2 245:19	374:16	104:18 106:1, 25
things 15:7	254:11 255:15	thoughts 211:5	107:13 114:19
21:14 61:14 84:8	256:2 257:6	thousand-year	133:16 134:6
99:11 110:10	259:4 260:5	291:8	157:12 162:20
133:24 169:9	264:22 265:4, 6	threatened 114:10	164:15 169:17
170:18 202:24	266:11 267:2, 9	three 43:6 64:14	170:6 174:2
237:15 242:5	271:4, 5 274:11,	65:2 67:4 68:1	180:6 195:24
274:25 276:23	20 275:8 280:4, 5	94:3 96:22 98:3	196:19 201:22
286:22 287:7	281:17 283:24	99:23 100:14, 21	209:19, 20 248:9
310:12, 13 311:10	286:1 287:6, 11	101:1 108:12	267:1, 6 268:24
313:6 318:20	289:14 290:5, 12	123:23 138:17	273:19, 21 274:24
320:9 323:8, 21	291:11 294:2	140:19 141:5	277:3, 5 279:12
324:21 326:21	295:2, 4 302:2, 16	142:24 163:5	294:4, 11 295:18
335:3 342:6	303:9 306:1, 2, 8,	181:5, 6, 20, 25	301:4 302:4
345:5 356:7	11, 24 311:16	182:4, 7, 10, 17, 19,	304:7, 24, 25
358:25 378:20	312:3 316:17, 23	20, 23, 24 183:4, 8	306:24 309:8
<b>think</b> 11:5, 7	318:24 320:7	238:21 269:7, 24	310:22 315:10
14:15 15:16 16:5	324:17, 22, 23	270:10, 13 313:17,	317:5, 22 321:13
18:10, 13 22:14	325:7 332:18	21, 23 314:9	324:5 326:5
31:2 32:16 33:7	333:9, 18 334:17,	315:1, 6, 11 316:9	334:18 338:10, 16,
35:14, 19 37:13,	21 339:5 340:1	319:25 339:16	24 340:17 353:4,
16, 20 38:25	341:20 342:16, 19	351:7 369:11	16, 21 360:10
45:16 76:16, 25	343:15, 18 344:16,	377:2 378:1	378:19
78:10 82:9 84:3	22 345:3 349:17	three-day 44:12	timeframe 301:25
85:16 86:7, 20	350:25 351:25	three-fifths 28:17	timeframes 311:1
93:15, 25 94:21,	352:11 354:5	58:20 95:22, 23	times 40:19
23 95:9, 13 97:13	355:25 357:22	342:19 344:13	57:17 69:2 93:2
106:20 111:20	358:1, 5, 8 361:18	346:20 350:6, 18	100:14 108:14
112:9 114:6, 25	369:19 371:9, 13	367:14 368:2	115:11 129:10
122:18 123:14	378:15	threshold 160:2 <i>1</i>	158:10 211:7
132:23, 24 136:5	<b>thinking</b> 20:14	278:7	234:8 242:1
138:18, 20 139:14	83:14 170:16	<b>tieing</b> 153:8	290:7, 8 306:3, 5,
140:7 142:17, 21	237:14 335:13	tier 108:13	12 307:2, 3, 11
145:2 <i>4</i> 150: <i>11</i>	<b>Third</b> 4:3 21:15,	ties 59:24	309:11 341:18
151:11 153:25	24 22:3, 10 24:7	till 44:15 259:24	timing 19:20 21:4
154:22 155:7, 10	25:11 27:21	<b>Tim</b> 11:10 14:24	<b>TIMOTHY</b> 1:12
166: <i>13</i> , 25 169:2 <i>1</i>	30:19 58:25	17:13 22:20	8:15
170:11 173:1, 13	118:23 315:9	25:17 30:5 46:13	<b>titled</b> 40:11
174:4 178:9	third-party	172:24 173:5	today 10:13
179:18 192:12, 22	320:12 326:12	time 9:1 22:24	29:12, 14, 21 35:4
195:20, 22 200:6,	thou 345:6	29:18 30:3 42:11	36:4, 21 42:9

44:2, 4, 14, 23	239:12 364:9	tremendous	156:7 224:2 <i>1</i>
47:2 48:12 49:17	373:5	245:22 246:7	239:2 243:1
50:8 53:6 54:23	touch 140:11	<b>Tri</b> 68:2, 7, 17	247:7 301:21
55:9 56:12, 22	247:10	136: <i>4</i> , <i>10</i> 163: <i>1</i>	302:6, 7 303:3
58:3 59:1, 22	<b>touched</b> 149:22	180: <i>14</i> 182: <i>1</i> , <i>6</i>	332:17
60:23 64:20	241:7 314:25	194:20 229:19	turned 50:11
88:15 93:12, 14,	<b>touching</b> 316: <i>11</i>	230:13 237:11	267:25 318:17
20 99:22 120: <i>1</i>	tough 145:23	270:2, 3, 4, 6	turning 69:13
121:9, 16 125:18	<b>tracked</b> 217: <i>16</i>	351:3, 5, 12	150:8
128:21 130:11	tract 213:19	<b>Tri-Basin</b> 6:9 7:6	turns 68:25
179:23 180:9, 23	239:11 247:17	tribunal 35:5	307:2 316:6
186:11 188:23	252:7, 16, 20	trickles 245:25	353:15
189:23 200:7	traction 87:14	tried 158:6 329:6	twenty-eight
258:7, 17 262:17	326:23	330:21 334:11	240:14
267:19 268:18, 19	tracts 222:3	trouble 156:2	<b>two</b> 9:4 10:14
269:3, 7, 13 271:3,	251:22	<b>True</b> 51:3 55:9	11:14 12:11 14:8,
8, 9 273:1 275:2,	trade-type 262:6	69:15 85:20	9 15:6 17:16
3 284:8 287:7	traditional 334:8	133:8 142:17	20:23 27:25 36:3
290:8 295:11, 21	351:4 373:17	147:2 251:11	40:9 44:15 53:22
306:18 315:4	trail 330:9	352:13 375:24	59:12 65:2 67:17
329:14 339:2	training 262:3	377:2	70:2 73:4 77:10
358:18 378:2, 15	transaction	<b>trumps</b> 128:8	86:5 90:8 102:1,
today's 33:11	128:20, 22 356:20	truncated 11:18	10 126:20 133:13
341:20	TRANSCRIPT	trust 64:3 70:12,	137:17 144:12
toes 305:25	1:6 13:12 18:21	13 209:15 214:6	152:11 153:5, 8
token 71:15	19:9 29:25	233:3	156:3 166:24
told 22:4 84:7	transfer 247:16	trustee 57:1	167:16 169:5
91:19 94:5, 15	248:19 251:21	213:13	170:9, 20 177:5, 7,
255:15	347:3	try 9:3 91:25	12, 18 178:22
tomorrow 44:3,	transferred 248:6	130:2 165:1	183:2 187: <i>1</i>
14, 22 339:2	transformers	276:24 304:3	193:10, 20 194:8
378:16, 24	345:15	337:11 341:16	198:21 226:3
toolbox 75:6	Transmission	357:16	235:20, 25 236:2,
336:6	76:20 142:18	trying 14:15	9, 11, 20 255:10,
tools 75:5 274:1	220:25 265:7, 8	106:20 107:1	18 293:24 295:12
336:5	267:4 345:14	115:22 119:11	298:12 303:4
top 83:25 166:14	transmissions	146:2 161:21	304:12 306:11
278:10 296:3	221:1, 3	288:6 303:2, 18,	308:24 320:17
309:15 310:4	transmitted	21 304:13 314:19	324:25 333:14
311:25 363:12	284:22	342:2	334:5 335:12
371:6	transparent 52:4	<b>Ts</b> 309:23	345:19 351:8
topic 306:8	91:2 <i>1</i> 129:7	turbines 302:6, 18	352:20 370:24
topics 53:12 54:4	319:21	307:4	375:5
total 26:13	transpired 79:1	turn 14:20	two-thirds 95:23
100:21 182:21, 23	159:23	105:23 108:2, 16	two-year 81:14
183:4 236:14	treated 211:20	117:1 152:2	88: <i>14</i> 91:8 348: <i>3</i>

4 157.20	105.05 106.2	224.11 220.16	104.17 124.16 17
type 157:20	125:25 126:3	324:11 329:16	104:17 134:16, 17,
161:18 166:10	127:5 138:23	undertook 47:18	18, 22 135:5, 16
254:5 311:7	157:17 160:12	unexpectedly	147:14 157:6
types 201:15	161:21, 23 184:22	29:20	231:18, 19 232:16
typically 45:22	202:16, 19 211:17,	unfamiliar 76:22	239:9 247:12
99:13 100:2	22 215:9 244:25	<b>unhappy</b> 17:24	248:23 250:4
105:20, 21, 22	253:22 264:13	unicorns 334:1	252:3 253:19
106:2 147:8	266:18 275:3	<b>union</b> 347:20, 22,	255:23 256:5, 12
201:10	313:6 323:7, 8, 12,	24 348:5	258:6 273:19
	24 325:16, 20	Union/nonunion	278:24 280:20
< U >	326:6 343:17	334:4	290:2 <i>1</i> , 22 291: <i>1</i>
<b>U.S</b> 266:2	349:14 350:12	<b>unions</b> 348:8	292:25 293:19
<b>Uh-huh</b> 204:5	352:25 353:19	<b>unique</b> 166:11	295:21, 22 296:6
251:13 326:7	365:11, 14 366:21	343:22	303:3 310:22
ultimate 12:1	368:2, 7 369:4	unit 73:16 74:3,	314:16 322:3
64:6	understanding	12 297:23 298:2	335:5, 7, 10 337:1,
ultimately 57:15	28:24 75:16	299:1 345:8	2, 8 340:7 363:4
62:13 63:22 64:4,	81:19 97:22	349:11	user 75:25 217:7,
10 170:1 204:25	107:7 115:25	units 63:2 65:21	10 247:12, 24
206:4 216:10	132:20 156:3	71:6 134:24	249:14 252:4
240:5 258:13	157:2 165:3, 6, 8	142:3, 24 236:1,	278:21 340:16
335:18 349:20	171:8 183:23	23 339:11 343:21,	342:9, 22
umbrella 168:23	186:23 187:3, 15	23 348:19	Users 5:17, 24
287:1 324:15	188:17, 25 189:11,	University 222:21	6:13 24:15, 16
unable 38:10	13, 17 190:7, 25	261:23 284: <i>1</i>	65:17, 18 67:10
100:19 163:21	191:6 194:9	unknown 48:19	70:11 72:7 91:15
unanimous 18:3	211:23 222:14	267: <i>14</i>	96:8 101:1, 11
321:4	236:22 244:24	<b>unmuted</b> 35:3	132:11 146:20
unanimously	258:9 268:8	unsure 33:16	153:24 183:13
54: <i>18</i>	272:1 285:13	159:12, 13	192:19 216:3, 8
Unaudited 5:9	300:16 301:19	upper 206:23	241:17 285:25
unbiased 15:16	317:16 324:1, 12,	316:2	296:8 329:8
uncertain 324:7	13, 16 326:14	<b>upside</b> 124:23	331:14
unchanged 56:5	330:4 333:9	upstream 110:23	uses 74:19 216:5
underground	342:25 352:16	111: <i>19</i> 229:23	232:24 251:17
89: <i>19</i> 291:20	354:21 355:7, 16	284:20	307:17 312:11
underlies 56:15	356:19 364:7	<b>urban</b> 266:9	342:25
underlying 28:22	366:14 367:10, 20,	376:21	Usually 20:19
220:20	25 368:22 373:7	usage 143:15	243:20, 22
underneath	375:18	Use 3:4 9:25	utilities 331:15
221:2 <i>1</i> 281: <i>10</i>	understands		utility 67:11
363:22	155:2 251:20	18:11 27:5 43:1, 4 48:13 54:10	72:23 74:4
understand 96:16,	understood 55:10	58:1 60:6 63:9,	153:17 157:10
20 98:25 99:2, 7,	88:4 286:15	16 66:4, 5 68:24	167:4 301:2
20 98:23 99:2, 7, 20 100:8, 12	293:24 313:7	74:5, 10, 11 87:3	335:13
105:15 122:10	473.24 313./	89:20 96:8	333.13
103.13 122.10	1	07.20 70.0	I

411: d 40.12	1 246.22	20.17 22 52.15	Wait 220.7
utilized 40:13	versus 246:23	28:17, 22 52:15	Wait 328:7
77:20	301:6 321:20	100:10, 11, 19, 22	waived 38:17
<b>1 1 7 7 5</b>	361:21 363:14	115:12 116:4, 10	walk 352:21
<v></v>	vertically 142:14	117:14 119:22	Waller 3:5 9:19
vacancy 162:20	335:13	120:4, 8 130:13,	Wallers 8:22
163:9 165:5	vested 265:9	16, 19, 23 158:20	want 19:10 22:6
181:25 191: <i>1</i> 2, <i>1</i> 3,	282:7	162:21 163:13	32:21 33:10
15	veto 58:22	164:5, 21 165:15,	35:12 44:25
vacant 165:17	vetted 319:22	16, 20, 21 180:5	45:13 56:5 57:21
181:2 <i>1</i> 182:25	viable 86:17	181:15, 20 182:5,	91:1 92:3 95:14
183:3	Vice 1:19 29:7	12 183:1 190:10,	96:16 97:4 98:19,
<b>validate</b> 161:10	81:18 255:15	16, 24 191:1, 3	22 99:1, 11
validity 28:21	376:14	270:24 320:21, 23,	101:17 107:3
58:12	videoconference	25 321:1, 4	110:10 115:5
valley 220:19	29:12	327:11, 18, 21, 24	134:10 140:11
246:3 289:24	view 83:5, 16	328:10 342:18	145:15, 17, 20
336:4	84:23 85:21, 23	344:13 346:20	146:7 150:7, 18
valuable 267:25	87:15, 19, 25	373:1 376:15	156:17 161:22
valuation 71:21	88:13 122:9	voted 57:13	168:4 172:8, 25
value 51:8, 19	128:16 129:12, 22	75:23 78:19	173:14, 22 186:20
52:4 70:25 71:2,	156:9, 23, 24	88:18, 19 147:17	190:23 192:10, 13
19, 20, 21 72:11,	170:8 184:6	182:24 183:2, 8	196:6, 9 199:2 <i>1</i>
16 162:6, 11	186:10, 16 188:22	321:3 329:19	206:13 221:15
267:7 327:1	265:25 305:20	343:3	230:21, 24 233:12
340:14 364:16, 19	343:8	<b>voter</b> 180:1	243:22 247:10
<b>Values</b> 5:2 7:2	<b>violation</b> 28:14, 23	182:13 270:23	248:17 249:24
variability 149:1,	<b>virtually</b> 164: <i>13</i>	373:5	251:3 253:22
20, 21 152:8	virtue 246:20	voters 57:5, 7	255:9 257:17
variable 297:8	vision 54:17	180:11 192:16, 18	274:13 279:10
variation 209:18	59:18, 23 193:5	194:11, 24 195:5	288:16 290:21
variations 209:17	264:3, 23 265:4,	270:21 271:3	294:22 299:19
301:16	12, 21 316:16	373:8 375:9	300:12 307:7, 10
variety 110:9	visionary 47:16	votes 18:5 52:13	311:24 312:15
various 214:7	50:4	99:5 140:18	313:5 318:1, 4
234:7 322:12	<b>visit</b> 331:10	322:19 328:11	348:12 355:10, 13
323:19	<b>visiting</b> 330:18	373:6	358:25 363:4, 25
<b>vary</b> 91:9	<b>visits</b> 48:25	<b>voting</b> 12: <i>1</i>	378:2, 10
vast 136:2	<b>vital</b> 48:1	16:18 17:1 58:18	<b>wanted</b> 10:20
<b>vehicle</b> 337:10	vocally 54:21	59:5 100:15	11:6 14:4 16:21
vein 84:25	voice 138:20	117:18, 22 126:13	23:13 29:5, 16
verbatim 118:3, 9	164:8, 19	371:17, 23 372:2	33:17 34:22
119:14 249:17	voices 54:23 55:6	374:20 376:18	35:17 37:16, 17
version 12:9	voids 108:11		43:22 76:21
26:3 42:23	voluntarily 248:5	< W >	77:24 86:16 90:2
248:23	<b>vote</b> 18:1, 22	<b>W/D</b> 6:15	95:12 96:4 118:8
versions 9:25	19:12 20:2, 9		119:3, 13 125:4,

18 148:6, 9	110:19, 21 111:1,	16, 25 217:9, 14,	288:4, 10, 13
169:16 186:7	15, 22 113:16, 21	19 218:6, 9, 13, 18	289:7, 25 290:11,
200:4 227:12	114:20 117:12, 15,	219:3 220:13, 14,	14, 17, 24 291:2, 3,
308:18 311:20	21, 23 118:18	15 222:24, 25	4, 12, 15, 17 292:1,
315:11 320:12	119:20, 24 120:11	223:3, 5, 6, 7	6, 17, 18, 19, 20
323:5 328:20	121:8, 17, 24	225:10, 16, 22, 24	293:1, 2, 14
329:10 336:11	122:11 123:2	226:21 227:14, 19,	294:21, 22, 23
372:14	127:11, 21 128:4,	23 228:17 229:18,	295:3, 4, 7 296:8
wanting 122:23	7 131:13, 20	22 231:1, 4, 5, 9,	301:22 302:1, 17,
wants 19:5 140:5,	132:11 134:16, 17,	15, 16 232:3, 13	24 303:1, 3, 5, 7,
6	18, 19, 22 135:5, 6,	233:2, 6, 7, 13, 14,	10, 20, 24 304:10
wastewater 60:6	12, 13, 16 136:3,	15, 18, 22, 24	305:13, 15, 16
watch 13:13 19:8	16, 17, 20 138:5,	234:1, 6, 9, 18, 19	306:21 307:7
29:23 92:7 246:8	11, 16, 24, 25	235:1, 2, 7, 11, 12,	312:4, 8, 9, 11
watching 34:24	139:23 143:15, 23	21 237:17 238:5,	314:19, 24 315:13,
35:13	144:14 145:1, 5, 7,	9 239:3, 4, 8, 12,	21, 23, 25 316:4, 5,
Water 4:18, 21,	10, 17, 21 146:2,	14, 21, 22 240:12	8, 11 319:1
23, 24 5:17, 24	14, 17, 25 147:9,	241:2, 17, 18, 23	323:15 325:18, 23
6:13 24:16 48:1,	15, 22, 23 148:14,	242:3, 11, 16, 23	326:1, 8 329:7, 15
14 49:14 51:20	15, 16 149:7, 13,	243:4, 9, 19, 20, 21	331:14 333:22
52:18, 19 55:3, 23	14, 24, 25 150:4,	244:8, 12, 19	335:23 340:16
56:17, 21, 25	12, 19 151:3, 8, 19,	245:13, 16, 21, 25	341:22 342:2, 9,
60:11 61:12, 18	21, 22 152:13	246:8, 11, 19	22 343:6 345:1
62:5, 18, 20, 25	153:24 155:16, 18	247:1, 4, 8, 11, 12,	346:12 349:4
63:4, 5, 8, 11, 16,	156:8 157:6	16, 19, 24, 25	351:17, 21, 22
18, 19, 25 64:3, 5,	163:2 166:9	248:1, 5, 13	355:2, 11, 17
9 65:6, 7, 12, 17,	171: <i>14</i> 172: <i>1</i> , <i>19</i>	249:14, 20, 22	364:22
18, 19 66:4, 5, 18,	173:2 175:23, 24	250:3, 4, 7, 11, 21,	water's 152:1
20 67:10, 19, 25	176:2 <i>1</i> 183: <i>1</i> 2, <i>13</i>	24 251:2, 10, 16,	211:10 213:25
68:5, 9, 18, 24	189:24 198:9, <i>13</i>	22 252:3, 13, 15,	216:10 242:1
69:1, 2, 5, 6, 11	199:8, <i>14</i> 200:8,	18 253:2, 4, 13	272:15
70:11 72:6, 7, 20	16, 18, 24 201:1, 3,	254:16 255:7	way 11:25 18:1
73:5, 8 75:25	4, 8, 9, 16, 18, 19	256:10, 12 257:12	20:6 28:20 49:25
76:9 81:22 83:11,	203:22 204:17	263:23 264:17	62:2 107:23
17, 21 84:4 86:20,	205:4, 8, 9, 10, 15,	265:18, 20 267:14,	114:18 120:20
22 87:2, 3, 22, 25	17, 18, 21, 23	15, 19, 24 273:1, 3,	122:24 141:19
88:1, 7, 8 89:1, 3,	206:1, 19, 20	8, 18, 24 274:4	142:22 161:10, 17
5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14	207:3, 9, 15, 22, 24	275:3, 14 276:17	164: <i>17</i> 169:8
90:25 91:1, 15	208:2, 5 209:1, 8,	277:20, 25 278:21	192:25 214:7
92:22, 23 93:3, 4	9, 11, 17, 25 210:1,	279:9, 13, 22	235:13 236:8
96:7 97:2, 3, 8	10, 23 211:20	280:8, 14, 16, 18,	248:16 252:3
99:10 104:4, 6, 12,	212:3, 13 213:1,	22 281:7, 8, 11, 16,	257:15 267:15
17, 21, 24, 25	11, 18, 20, 23	25 282:3, 9	278:24 291:18
105:3, 4, 8, 12, 14	214:4, 5, 11, 15, 19,	284:13, 15, 22	292:22, 25 310:5
106:18 107:5, 24	23 215:2, 3, 4, 12,	285:4, 7, 25	344:8 345:16
108:1, 2, 16	16, 18, 23 216:5,	286:23 287:19	348:23 357:13, 18

ways 50:12	289:15, 20 296:5	360:6 362:11, 21	150:17 303:16
234:10 273:24	300:11 303:15	378:15	wisdom 51:23
290:5 345:12	309:10, 14 310:11	west 226:24	wish 38:1 39:20
WebEx 1:18, 21	312:5, 23 315:5, 8,	261:6	within 61:19
13:12, 13 19:8	13 319:18 331:18	Westar 300:9	64:24 92:17
29:12, 23 34:21,	335:9 338:15, 16	wet 146:18	130:9 131:17
24 35:13 46:9	349:15 351:22	149:12 290:3	141:20 176:17
92:5 204:14	356:21 360:10, 23	307:1, 3	180:1 199:9
259:3	361:16 362:6	we've 20:12	234:15 241:8
website 237:6	366:4 370:5	40:16 43:5 68:23	242:14 248:19, 20
weeds 288:15	wells 106:9, 12	82:15, 16 83:20	270:21, 23 287:13
week 20:19, 22	279:11 281:9	84:7 89:1 91:16,	322:12 345:25
285:6	Wendell 3:16 6:8,	17 129:2, 3, 4, 5	351:18 372:24
welcome 173:10	15	147:12 150:23	without 14:17
welcomed 53:25	<b>Wendell's</b> 42:18	151:20 152:21	22:14 39:4 53:12
well 13:17 15:16	went 86:8 88:19	160:5 219:18	58:11 73:8 87:24
21:17 22:1 37:7	105:7 110:8	257:24 269:7	103:11 117:11
39:13 41:5 47:22	128:7 129:4	273:21 275:9	151:18 171:19
53:1 55:1 75:1	261:21 322:8	306:21, 23 308:2	190:24 213:24
78:16 82:7 83:8	we're 10:13	315:10 338:12	223:2 224:24
84:1 86:16 88:6	12:16 17:19	349:17 369:20	withstanding
89:4 92:21 93:7,	33:25 34:5 35:19	378:1	10:24
25 97:15 100:16	38:25 39:13 42:9	whatever's 313:25	witness 35:8
104:11 105:12	45:16 64:13 72:1	what-ifs 254:15	39:9 46:9 78:4
106:11 113:3, 13	84:1, 2 94:6	whatsoever 157:6	79:10, 16, 22 80:2
117:25 118:15	108:24 109:1	wheel 93:9 144:7	88:24 89:4, 15, 21,
127:1 128:16	110:4 115:1	whereases 171:10	24 94:18 95:11,
129:24 134:23	128:8 131:8, 9	wherewithal 99:16	19, 24 96:6, 11, 21
137:3, 10, 12	136:10 139:15	white 101:18	99:8, 25 100:6, 16
138:9, 23 142:11	142:12 146:6	125:12	101:3, 6, 9, 12
146:9 149:6	172:10 173:12	wholesale 63:17	103:18 104:1, 9,
152:19 154:12	177:6 179:18	65:20 141:22	23 105:15, 21
155:1 156:9	203:11 210:21	176:9, 22 354:18	106:2 107:10, 15,
159:9 170:2 <i>1</i>	229:10 232:10	wide 87:20	21 108:9, 20
171:18 172:3, 14	239:4, 6 247:9	widespread 149:3	111:5, 20 112:4, 9,
175:10 177:13, 20	249:20 254:16	<b>Wildlife</b> 114:7, 9	16, 21 113:3, 11,
186:18 192:7, 8	255:23 271:5	139:9 144:5, 23	17, 23 114:1, 3, 5,
194:18 201:9	283:5, 6 285:23	216: <i>1</i> 276: <i>1</i>	<i>14</i> , <i>23</i> 116:22
202:14 210:21	292:14 294:19	312:19	118:6, 10 119:6,
216:7 218:3	303:2, 13, 16, 17,	<b>willing</b> 290:19	10, 15 123:11, 16
223:16 227:14	18, 20, 21 306:19,	WILMOTH 2:4	124:1, 5, 22 147:8,
231:25 234:1, 6	24 308:21 312:9	34:5	24 148:3, 7 154:4
253:21 254:11	314:8 317:6, 11,	<b>winter</b> 69:10	155:7 166: <i>3</i> , <i>13</i>
256:25 279:14	18 319:2, 19	149:25 150: <i>16</i>	167:8, 18 168:1, 9,
280:7, 10 281:22	321:9, 21 342:2	wintertime 93:6	17, 22 169:2, 7, 14,
282:3 284:21, 24	357:23, 24 358:15		21 170:4, 10, 21

171:6, 11, 18, 23
172:3, 14 173:8, 13, 15, 24 175:6,
12 15 24 155 6
13, 15, 24 1/5:0,
10 176.2 177.6
<i>19</i> 176:2 177:6,
13, 20 178:1, 7, 24
13,20 176.1,7,24
179:7 180: <i>3</i> , <i>1</i> 2,
19, 24 181:10, 18,
22 182:2, 7, 11, 18
183:2, 10, 15, 19
185.2, 10, 13, 19
184:3, 6 185:24
188: <i>11</i> 190: <i>20</i>
192:20, 24 193:8,
12 22 104.5 14
<i>12, 22</i> 194:5, <i>14</i> ,
<i>17</i> , 22 195:6, <i>14</i> ,
18 196:15, 18, 21
197:4, 8, 10, 13, 18,
<i>22</i> 199:2 <i>1</i> 200: <i>1</i>
202:22 203:4, 7,
10, 20, 24 204:2, 5,
8, 13, 23 205:13
206:18, 24 207:1,
21 208:15, 17, 23
212:5, 11, 18, 24
213:4, 17 214:13
215: <i>14</i> 216: <i>9</i> , <i>13</i> ,
20, 23 217:4, 10,
<i>25</i> 218:8, 22
210.4 12 14 25
219:4, 13, 14, 25
220:3, 8 221:2, 6,
10 223:12, 15, 19,
23 224:1, 5, 10, 14
226:20 227:4, 10,
<i>15, 18</i> 228:2, <i>6, 10</i> ,
13, 10 220.2, 0, 10,
15, 22 229:2, 5, 8,
10 230:2, 4, 10, 16
237:20 253:5, 11,
<i>15</i> 254:8, <i>13</i> , 20
255:18 256:13, 22
257:14 259:7, 9
2001112
260:11, 13, 19
272:22, 25 274:9,
18 275:18, 21, 25
276:7, 11, 14, 18,
21 277:8, 12, 15,
<i>18</i> , <i>21</i> 278: <i>1</i> , <i>5</i> , <i>15</i>
282:14 286:1, 6,

12, 16 287:11, 13 288:3, 22 289:1, 11, 13 292:3, 7, 15 293:16 295:8 296:11 299:22, 25 300:4, 7 304:13, 20, 25 308:7, 10, *15* 309:3 311:2, *14* 312:2, *13*, *21* 313:1, 18 314:10 328:8, 12, 17, 23 331:17 332:11 335:2 336:8, 20, *24* 337:21 340:1. *6*, *13*, *22* 341:*1* 343:12 346:4, 13, 16, 23 347:6, 9, 13 348:1, 9, 20, 25 349:3, 9, 25 350:8, 15, 20, 23 351:1, 4, 9, 14, 25 360:18 369:10 371:19, 24 372:1, 7, 11 374:2, 5, 11, 14, 23 375:3, 6, 11, 14, 23 376:11, 17 377:5, 10, 13, 19, 23 Witnesses 3:3, 9, 12, 15 31:4, 17, 21 32:2 38:*1* 195:2*1* 196:2, 4 **wonderful** 106:*16* 170:17 **wondering** 223:21 282:23 won't 13:21 14:3 35:2, 3 38:15 46:5 138:12 146:9 203:2 244:3 309:8 311:7 344:25 345:1, 2 376:21 word 14:16 118:23 132:23 162:*1* 329:*6* 

words 100:25 229:12 290:21 304:9 343:5 work 15:10, 13 29:21 47:18 50:12 53:21, 22 87:13 92:1 94:4 104:22 129:25 130:1 139:21 156:11, 22 177:14, 21 179:25 180:22 199:1, 13, 17 263:9 264:4 267:11 268:1 274:3 275:5 290:6, 17, 19 291:8 293:25 297:9 303:5 304:6 320:14, 16 324:2 329:18 334:11 338:12 347:23 349:3 353:16, 18 357:18 364:8 **worked** 76:*1* 199:11 243:17 263:12, 14 266:16 322:5 338:14 **workforce** 333:16, *17* 334:*4* workforces 50:21 **working** 306:*4* workings 161:6 works 21:4 24:12 28:11 275:3, 10 302:25 world 294:12 **world's** 131:6 146:22 worry 138:*12* worth 58:12 71:4 83:9 108:1 324:14 335:6 would 8:25 10:4 11:11 12:11, 14,

24 13:7, 9, 22, 25

14:6, 24 15:2 16:4 17:22 18:7, 11, 21, 22, 23 19:4, 5, 10, 12 20:7, 11, 17, 23 22:5 23:24 24:3 26:17 27:10 29:6 30:3 34:19 37:4, 5, 7, 8, 10 42:11 44:2, 25 45:20 46:6 52:14, 22 53:13 55:11, 13 56:9 57:16 59:10 62:21 63:17 64:23 71:25 75:11 76:6, 11, 15 79:11 80:7 82:7, 12 83:8, 16 84:23 85:11.20 86:24 87:4, 5, 17, *25* 91:*4* 93:*17*, *19* 94:8 95:19, 24, 25 97:24 99:9, 12, 14, *15* 100:21, 22 105:3, 4, 5 107:3, 4, 5, 12, 14 108:14, *16* 111:6 113:3 114:7, 18, 19 117:2 118:14, 24 122:9, 16 126:3, *12* 127:3 128:*1* 129:11, 22 130:11 133:*3*, 20 134:*13*, 22 135:22 136:23 137:12, 24, 25 138:4 139:8, 12, *23* 141:*12*, *17* 142:13 143:5, 12, *17* 144:2, 8, *15* 145:2, 4, 7, 10 146:20, 21 147:14 148:23 149:25 150:*14* 151:*13* 152:5, 10 153:3, 6, 21 154:1, 6, 7, 8, *17* 155:20 156:*1*, 3, 21 159:18, 22

161:2, 5, 7, 9	319:25 320:14, 16	20 156:10 166:22	90:8 94:5 115:20
163:15 164:2, 10,	321:22 322:6, 17,	168:2 175:21	129:3 142:16
13, 25 166:16	19 323:9 324:13,	177:16 178:1	146:16, 18 147:11,
167:5 168:19	14 327:7 329:12	195:11 198:3	12, 17 152:19
169:2, 8, 11, 12, 14,	331:25 332:18	201:5 215:14	198:21 199:22, 25
15, 16, 21, 23, 25	334:1, 2, 3, 12, 19,	227:4 228:3, 7	237:10 246:4
170:5, 7, 12, 13, 14,	20, 22 338:2	229:5 233:4, 21	252:14 254:23
22, 23, 24 171:4,	339:9 342:10, 23	235:17 239:18, 23,	256:11 257:9
14 172:8, 13, 21	345:25 346:6, 7,	25 240:23 244:16	262:16, 22 266:12
173:3 176:2, 14	10, 14, 23 347:3, 4,	246:21 250:6	279:15 288:5
177:7, 14, 20, 23	11, 12, 15, 16	251: <i>14</i> 252: <i>1</i>	291:1, 15 306:22
178:9, 11, 13, 15,	349:19, 23 350:10,	253:11 255:3	337:18 338:4, 7
178.9, 11, 13, 13, 17, 19, 24 179:3	17, 18 361:4	256:22 267:2, 8	341:14, 23 363:18
180:5 182:8	364:18, 24 365:9	270:7 277:12	year's 164:15
183:25 185:8	367:13 368:24	283:2 292:23	303:23 304:4
	369:5 371:7		
186:10, 12, 15	375:17 376:5, 15	300:3, 4 311:2 312:13 319:19	<b>yellowish</b> 229:23 <b>Yep</b> 138:3
187:17, 19, 20, 24	377:8		_
188:22, 24 190:2,		321:18 322:4	141:15 152:12, 14
8, 10, 11, 14, 16, 25	wouldn't 107:12	324:9 326:6, 7	163:4 204:5
191:1, 3, 7 192:25	126:16 156:6	327:21 328:3	206:24 211:24
193:7 194:1, 8, 24	161:4 170:10	330:17 331:9, 13,	278:1 300:2
196:22 197:2	203:6 226:21	16 335:2 340:22	364:3, 4
201:3, 6 207:8, 12	273:17 305:10	341:7 343:14, 18	Yes 11:9 16:3
208:23 216:9, 11	338:3 346:11	346:5 348:2, 20	17:15 21:6, 10
223:1, 15 228:19	Wow 119:10	351:5, 14, 23	22:21 30:21
232:22 235:13, 25	wrapped 320:11	353:15 354:24	31:20 32:1, 19, 23
236:2, 9, 11, 15, 20	write 340:20	356:21 357:4	37:14 38:3, 21
238:19, 25 239:2,	writing 73:9	358:21 362:2, 3	39:12 41:2, 7, 14,
22 240:3, 5	written 25:15	365:14 370:8, 18	19 42:24 80:2, 19,
241:12 242:4	wrong 17:19	year 49:1 73:21	25 81:6 84:14
245:15 250:21	114:9 123:15	150:8 151:15	85:19, 22 89:16,
254:24 255:22	124:24 312:15	152:9 163:12, 14	21, 22, 25 93:7, 22
256:10, 18 258:5,	336:23	164:1 244:4, 5, 19	94:18, 19 95:6, 10,
12, 13 259:12	Wyoming 275:23	245:3, 17 272:5, 6	25 98:11, 12, 21
266:24 267:17	286:18 316:4	285:8 291:3	101:9 102:25
268:7 271:25	. <b>T</b> 7 .	302:12, 13 303:14,	103:5, 15, 18
274:25 290:17, 19	<y> Value 2.17 6.15</y>	20 311:3 314:16,	110:15 115:18
291:2 292:24	Yahn 3:17 6:15	17, 21 337:20, 22	116:23 117:7
293:4, 25 294:1	yeah 40:1, 18	338:1 339:23, 24	119:7 120:16
295:9 296:24	78:5 86:3, 9	340:3, 5 348:5	121:11 122:1, 8
297:21 301:6, 11	95:19, 25 101:12,	years 14:8, 10	123:12, 20, 21
305:3, 5, 20	21 103:19 110:13	15:7 51:23 53:22	127:15 132:9
306:17 307:9	116:12 119:1	54:16 61:13 72:8	133:22 134:22
308:11, 25 311:18,	124:2 125:2	75:3 80:16 81:1,	135:2, 13 136:14,
23 312:1, 6, 19, 21,	132:1 140:16	3, 14, 18 83:7, 9	18 137:18 140:14
22 317:18 318:4	152:6, 7 154:12,	84:5 85:5, 17	143:4 145:14

148:3, 4, 7, 18	332:3, 9, 20, 23	
149:23 150:2, 5	337:7 352:9, 12,	
151:10, 13 153:6,	15 358:12 360:24	
10 154:15 155:19,	362:22 363:13, 16	
1	· ·	
23 156:1 158:11,	365:13 366:10, 12,	
13, 19, 22 159:1,	24 367:1, 4 368:6,	
<i>13</i> 160: <i>1</i> , 23	9, 11, 14, 17	
161:2 165:14	369:13 370:13, 22	
	_ ·	
171:6 173:19	372:19 376:4, 8	
174:12 181:10, 18,	<b>yo</b> 197:2	
22 184:16, 24	<b>youth</b> 261: <i>16</i>	
185:20 186:12	•	
	.7.	
187:7 188:7, 16,	<z></z>	
24 189:21, 25	<b>Zero</b> 92: <i>19</i> 315: <i>6</i>	
191:3, 23 193:8		
195:14, 18 198:7,		
19 200:11 202:15,		
25 203:9 207:17		
209:3 210:3, 5, 16		
212:5 216:12		
221:12, 14 222:2,		
10, 15, 17 223:19		
224:23 225:3		
226:6 229:2, 8		
232:24 233:9, 16		
1		
234:2 236:3		
237:22 238:7, 10		
241:24 242:18		
244:6 245:5		
250:15 251:7		
256:21, 24 258:8,		
12, 18 262:12, 18		
263:15, 24 264:11		
266:23 268:16		
271:21, 24 283:11,		
14 286:12 288:2,		
25 296:22 298:23		
299:18, 22 301:20		
304:19 305:7		
307:18 311:14		
313:18 316:20		
317:1 318:6, 9, 11		
320:3, 5, 20, 23		
321:5 327:17		
328:2, 5, 11, 13		
331:3, 19, 21, 24		