

**TRANSCRIPT**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**RURAL UTILITIES SERVICE - USDA**

**PROJECT: DRAFT EIS - WTE - ENERGY ANSWERS ARECIBO LLC**

**August 20, 2015**

**PLACE: PROFESSIONAL COLLEGE OF ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS**

**OF PUERTO RICO - ARECIBO CHAPTER BUILDING**

>> MODERATOR: First of all, we want to welcome everyone on behalf of the Rural Utilities Service from the United States Department of Agriculture. We appreciate your coming to this public hearing. My name is Julio Aisa.

I work at the Louis Berger Company, which has been hired by the aforementioned agency to evaluate the possible impact of the electricity generation project through the conversion of solid waste into energy about which the Rural Utilities Service Department of Agriculture should make a decision about whether or not to provide financial support to this project.

The aim of this public meeting is to allow the general public -- those of you here today -- to participate and voice your opinion about a document, the Preliminary Environmental Impact Statement, which has been available for two weeks at the Nicolás Nadal Barrento Municipal Public Library in Arecibo. It is also on the Solid Waste Utilities website.

In this document, which is the pamphlet that you received at the entrance, is information about where you can consult the aforementioned document.

This Environmental Impact Statement is available for public evaluation and to receive feedback.

Before giving the microphone and the floor to Miss Lauren McGee from the Rural Utilities Service I want to explain a little about how we want to lead this public meeting so that everyone present can take part in an orderly manner.

Ok?

After Lauren's turn to speak, we want -- we will proceed by calling the people that signed up today to make a verbal comment either by their name or number. They will then be recorded by our audio system.

All these comments -- as well as those from those of you that want to submit a written comment, there is a form which you received at the start - this form can be given to us, can be left on the table or you can send it by mail to the address you can see on the back here.

Ok?

There are three simple rules to maintain public participation in an orderly fashion.

First, verbal comments will be recorded for three minutes and you will be able to see the time that is left on the computer screen. If this isn't enough time and you want to participate again your name will simply be put back at the bottom of the pile.

We're going to continue calling the participants until 8 o'clock this evening, as we have rented the hall until then.

Nonetheless, there is another way to submit your comments, as I have already mentioned.

Today, you can submit your written comments or if you prefer, there are two other ways, through the website of the United States department, the address of which is on the pamphlet we gave you, there is the address. Or, you can send it by regular mail. Ok?

If there are no more questions, I'd like to introduce Lauren McGee.

>>MAN: [away from the microphone]

>> MODERATOR: Sir, we haven't started the questions yet.

There's going to be an introduction by the people from the Rural Utilities Service.

And then you will each be called by number according to the list.

>> MAN: You said [away from the microphone].

>> MODERATOR: What is your question?

>> MAN: [away from the microphone]

>> MODERATOR: If it's short, yes. What is it?

>> MAN: Good afternoon. My name is Iván Elía. I'm a resident of Arecibo and I have taken part in the public hearings the different agencies have held concerning this matter.

You gave us some environmental impact regulations about 300 pages long.

>> MODERATOR: Can I clarify something for you?

>> MAN: -- along with a 3000-page Environmental Impact Statement that was drawn up in Puerto Rico.

>> MODERATOR: Excuse me, but I thought your question was about the organization of the event.

>> MAN: Yes.

The question is, how do you expect us to comment on the shortcomings of this process of the federal Environmental Impact Statement in three minutes?

How are we supposed to do that--?

>> MODERATOR: Excuse me, --

>> MAN: -- unless it's a farce, an event just for appearances' sake?

>> MODERATOR: As I mentioned, there are three ways to submit your comments about the study.

>> MAN: Look at the people here. There are more than 150 people here.

Trying to listen to what the speakers are going to say whether there are 25, 30, or 40 of us, the other people are here to listen to us because that way they can take a stance on the matter. If you don't let us speak, because that's what you're planning, that we won't be able to speak, look I've already been talking to you for four minutes. So in three minutes we're not going to be able to do what you're telling us to, which is to evaluate the project's significant impacts.

At other hearings, including one with the EPA, I talked for hours. So in three minutes you want me to say what it took me an hour to say elsewhere. That's impossible.

>> MODERATOR: Out of respect for everyone that wants to speak we'll give you that exact amount of time and you can --

>> MAN: There's another way. You can set a date for another day, convene a public hearing on another day, that's what has been done other times. It's customary even for an Environmental Impact Statement, if the citizens ask for it, and if a meeting to clarify the issue is considered necessary, to allow people not only to give their opinion, but also to ask you and the agency's officers questions, so that we can understand what the document says.

I mean an informative meeting before the public hearing.

You want to rush us; in two weeks you put a document of over 200 pages with an appendix which is the previous EIS, which is 1300 pages, 2000 pages long, about which you want us to answer in three minutes.

>> MODERATOR: Please allow me. Look, thanks for your comments, this meeting and its comments and any other comment that you'd like to write will be accepted until September 28th.

You'll have all that time to analyze the document and send in your remarks.

Now I'll give the floor to Lauren McGee.

Thank you. Lauren?

>> LAUREN McGee: Is the mic on?

Welcome. Energy Answers has expressed interest to the USDA Rural Utility Service -- in applying for a loan, or a loan guarantee

from the electric programs. Prior to agency acceptance of a loan application--

>> (Audience booing)

>> MODERATOR: I need to make a point. Ladies and gentlemen, let me explain. She will make her introduction in English because we want it to be recorded for the audio recording of the meeting. That's the procedure. After I can summarize in Spanish, all right?

So you could say it in English--

>> (Audience booing)

>> MODERATOR: Sorry, but that's the procedure that has to be followed.

>> (Members of audience raise their voices)

>> MODERATOR: Ladies and gentlemen, please. Ladies and gentlemen, can we have order please. As I said, the beginning has to be in English and later I'll go over it, I have the same notes that she's going to use for the audio recording of the meeting. That's the procedure that has to be done.

Rather than argue about this, she can give her speech in English and then I'll draw your attention to the pertinent aspects in Spanish.

>> (Audience complaining)

>> MODERATOR: Say it in English.

>> LAUREN McGee: I'm going to speak in English because this is the procedure.

Julio will translate in Spanish. Right now I am speaking.

If you don't like it you can leave the facilities.

Energy Answers has expressed interest to the USDA Rural Utility Service in applying for an electric program loan or loan guarantee from the agency's electric programs.

Prior to agency acceptance of a loan application, RUS must complete an environmental review process, in accordance with the national environmental policy act. RUS will conduct a more

detailed technical and financial review after Energy Answers submits a formal application.

The purpose of today's hearing is to receive comments on the EIS that RUS has issued for the draft project. In addition to receiving oral comments today, RUS will continue to receive written comments sent or postmarked by Monday, September 28th, 2015.

The comment form and handout, provide an e-mail address, mailing address and phone number and fax number where written comments may be sent.

Oral comments received today and written comments submitted by the September deadline will be considered equally.

After the conclusion of the comment period, RUS may prepare a final environmental impact statement. The second document would be noticed in the federal register, and local newspapers, and would have a 30 day review period before RUS can issue a record of decision.

The record of decision would focus on RUS's environmental review of the project and conditions that would be associated with a potential loan or loan guarantee. They were not by the agency to a financing decision. My name is Lauren McGee Rayburn; I am an environmental scientist who is responsible for coordinating the agency's environmental review of this project.

Today we also have Lauren Cusick who is also an environmental specialist and Gregory Snearly, loan specialist with the agency.

Press inquiries may be directed to Ms. Anne Mayberry in Washington DC. All questions concerning the review of this project should also be forwarded to Washington, D.C., and not the Puerto Rico office here associated with Rural Development. Thank you.

>> MODERATOR: If you'd like to take your seat, I'm going to give a summary of what Lauren McGee, who is in charge of the study, has just said.

Energy Answers Arecibo a company that has expressed interest in that the Rural Utilities Service, a United States Department of Agriculture agency, can provide funding for energy projects.

Before this agency makes a decision to grant this financial support, some requirements must be fulfilled - especially the environmental ones. A review of the environmental documents in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, or the NEPA, to use its English initials.

The RUS, which is the Rural Utility Service, will be able to carry out new technical studies concerning the comments it hopes to receive either verbally or formally during the process of the document review. The reasons for today's meeting with the agency, is that we hope to receive comments to the assessment -- to the Preliminary Environmental Impact Statement, a document which has been made available to the public.

We can also receive -- as we have already mentioned --, any written comments, either on the forms which we gave you today or through the Rural Utilities Service web site until Monday September 28th 2015.

All the comments, whether they're verbal and recorded here today or sent by e-mail or formal mail, will be taken into consideration to carry out the study, the final Environmental Impact Statement.

After the review period, which will take place until September 28th, Rural Utilities Service will draw up the final Environmental Impact Statement after having evaluated the comments noted at today's public hearing and all the significant written comments sent before the previously mentioned date.

Lauren McGee is the person in charge. She is the environmental engineer, an environmental specialist, from the RUS responsible on behalf of the agency for the review of this project.

Today we also have Lauren Cusick and Gregory Snearly.

Any questions from the press, must be directed to Miss Ann Mayberry at the address which is on the pamphlet we gave you. And any questions that you have will have to be sent to either Lauren McGee's or Anne Mayberry's e-mail that you can find on the page. That was her introductory statement. Thank you.

All right, now we're going to go ahead with the cards.

Ok, there is -- Ok, to clarify, we have asked for more chairs for the people standing at the back. They're going to bring more

chairs if you just give us a moment. There's water for the people that are thirsty, there's water outside in the lobby.

The first person that signed up was Maribelle Marrero, please go to the microphone.

Maribelle, this is the timer. On it you will see when your time is up, if you still want to share your opinion we'll put your card back at the bottom of the pile.

>> MARIBELLE MARRERO: Thank you.

>> MODERATOR: Go ahead.

>> MARIBELLE MARRERO: I'm Maribelle Marrero, vice-president of governmental affairs at ConWaste. I have already submitted my report in English and in Spanish. I will proceed by outlining it for the benefit of those present so I will proceed by quickly reading the document. I wish to note that both reports were submitted at the entrance.

>> MODERATOR: Correct.

>> MARIBELLE MARRERO: Thank you.

I worked for 16 years at the Environmental Quality Board and for 14 years in this private company and I had the opportunity to personally review the document. But now I'm going to read the opinion of company that I represent. ConWaste is grateful for the opportunity to participate that the agency has provided. Together with its associated businesses, since 1993, we have dedicated ourselves to providing comprehensive services for the handling of public and commercial solid waste all over Puerto Rico. That includes the collection of waste, recycling, transfer stations and landfill system operations, we are honored to have over one thousand full time associates in our ranks, 60 municipalities and more than 2000 clients for commercial collection, for waste handling and disposal and for recycling operations.

Our services include collection, transportation and possession, and management of recycling plants in addition to zero waste branches.

We are proud to have established recycling plants which are considered leaders in recycling programs in Puerto Rico in both Guaynabo and Carolina, which we did in collaboration with those



municipalities. Therefore, we consider ourselves to be a leading company as well as experts in waste management.

We are also proud members of the growing industrial recycling sector in Puerto Rico together with other organizations like East Coast Recycling, North Community Recycling Corporation, Pronatura, Viva Recycling, among many other public and private entities dedicated to developing the industry.

Energy Answers' business model assumes that the 2100 tons a day of public waste that it will receive as prime material for incineration and recuperation of energy will have already gone through pre-classification, material recuperation and recycling.

Its operating model is aimed at burning as much domestic waste as possible, particularly that which has a high calorific value such as plastic, used tires, paper, wood and cardboard among others. This operating model will be implemented totally unconnected to and separate from the municipal recycling programs in direct conflict with those efforts.

We consider that this type of business model will promote greater incineration of domestic waste to meet the expectations of the PPCs and sale of energy from the Energy Answers plant. It would discourage recycling initiatives and undermine the waste prevention and reduction programs, in addition to endangering the municipalities' effective implementation of reduce, reuse and recycle.

The EIS doesn't contemplate or analyze that this is incompatible with the increase in recycling efforts by the municipalities affected, and obviously it would supply -- it's necessary to supply the incinerator with enough domestic waste to comply with its revenue targets and obviously the project's economic plans.

As recycling increases, the availability of waste for incineration will presumably -- oh my time is up. To summarize, our company is opposed to this plant, it is aimed at undoing the municipal and industrial recycling efforts. That's our position. Thank you.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Next, attorney Raúl Santiago. Sir, if you have any remarks on the Environmental Impact Statement, we would appreciate your participation.

>> RAÚL SANTIAGO: Yes. A very good afternoon to the esteemed committee that is serving today, and good afternoon to all the Puerto Ricans here. I've come to represent the Puerto Rico Mayor's Federation which consists of 31 mayors. In addition, the municipality of Guaynabo is also here represented, by its mayor Héctor O'Neill and he has also come to represent the mayor of Fajardo and the mayor of Toa Baja, who along with the Federation will present their report which is in the record.

Obviously as I have so little time I want to start with the conclusion -- the Federation, just like the other institutions that I represent, is vehemently opposed --

[Applause]

-- to the approval of the Energy Answers plant. Here are two points that have always concerned it from an environmental point of view, as I have so little time, we'll have to assume that we understand that the process that Energy Answers is taking is not the most effective. We also need to deal with the economic aspect, which is the second aspect here, because there has indeed been an agreement between Energy Answers and the Solid Waste Authority, which cites who, as responsible for the payment of these funds? The municipalities that have been invisible in the process because we have never been included.

The studies that we have evaluated at the Federation of Mayors show that the costs, as you're aware, as part of this process, it is intended that all municipalities in the northern area make their deposits in Energy Answers to add up to the 2100 tons they supposedly currently need to operate the plant.

However, what has not been clearly established is that the municipalities in Puerto Rico, since the creation of the Autonomous Municipalities Law in '91, have been operating plants -- have signed contracts with private companies. They have made huge waste management developments, one example is Guaynabo's recycling plant. In Carolina - and they have indeed signed long-term contracts and now these people are secretly trying to reach an agreement in violation of private agreements that the municipalities have with these companies.

Besides all that, you know that as part of the garbage collection, they want to charge four times more. They want to force municipalities to deposit in Arecibo, and they want to charge four times the tipping fees charged. And where is that money going to come from? You know that the municipalities don't have the money to afford such an expensive process. The Government doesn't have the money either. And haven't you stopped to think about where they're going to get the money? Perhaps they want to charge for the residential garbage collection? I don't know. Check that out.

As part of the procedure, and with the utmost respect, I want to state that the Energy Answers' contract really violates the Contract Impairment Clause and the Federation of Mayors intends to go to the state and federal courts if necessary, and if I may remind the Commission that in the seven seconds I have left, to look at a case in the United States Supreme Court, which was held in New York State, the event is included in my report, which stated that it is unconstitutional and in violation of the equal opportunity of commerce, commerce development clause, to force companies to deposit their various solid wastes to the benefit of a private company.

The Supreme Court established --

>> MODERATOR: Sir -- if you could please conclude your statement, because your time is up.

>> RAÚL SANTIAGO: Of course. My last point is that, obviously I want to inform you about the case I'd like the commission to look into, a United States Supreme Court case that determined that what Energy Answers intends to do in Puerto Rico is illegal and no law will allow it. Thank you very much.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

The next person is Osvaldo Rosario. Osvaldo Rosario. Please, seeing as we are recording, why we don't let the speaker finish, and after if you'd like to applaud, you can. If you do it while the speaker is talking, his comments won't be recorded. Take that into consideration. Go ahead sir.

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: Yes, I'm Osvaldo Rosario, I'm an environmental chemistry professor at the Universidad of Puerto Rico - Río Piedras Campus. First of all, I want to protest against this method that limits one's opportunity to express oneself because the continuity and effective explanation of the material communicated is lost.

I have a series of comments and criticisms regarding this Environmental Impact Statement and I will say them according to the sections where they are found in the Environmental Impact Statement.

Starting with section 1.33. Energy Answers states, Energy Answers is making a big deal out of nothing in this proposal with a supposed declaration of energy emergency made during the last administration. To start, that declaration has already expired. They want to make it seem as if this is an electricity generating plant when its main function is to burn garbage. The electricity generation is a secondary component in this process, and that's what we'll see with the items to come.

According to Energy Answers itself, Puerto Rico has a capacity of over 6000 megawatts installed; this plant will hardly generate - because some they will use themselves -- 67 megawatts net. This represents barely 1% of the installed capacity. This won't have any effect on any of Puerto Rico's energy needs because there aren't any anyway. We have more than double the capacity of what we're consuming right now, about 2800 megawatts. There's no need for another electricity generating plant but they want to depict it differently which is why they made a big deal. It's obvious that there's no such energy emergency.

I wonder, what would the United States Congress think, and more so, the taxpayers in the United States, if they knew that their money that's partly going to this agency that a project is being considered under these ridiculous conditions? And on top of that there's the possibility they could help finance such a project. I will work to make sure that Congress knows about this futile exercise.

[Applause]

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: If you calculate the cost of generating that electricity -- investment in the plant, and maintenance, the amount of electricity that they are generating, that would be

the most expensive electricity in history. It's also because of this that it's ridiculous that the project is being considered.

In section 2.1. 2 6 of the EIS, different incineration technologies are cited and each one of them are criticized, including mass burn technology. Nevertheless, if you go to figure 2/4, which shows the technology that they intend to use in this plant, it is exactly a mass burn technology. The only thing that differs is that they're going to take out the metal pieces before burning it, but it is mass burn despite the fact that in the same proposal they define that alternative as unacceptable.

Regarding water resources listed in Section 2.13, possible sources of water are listed. In this section they have not committed to any of them because obviously they have not got any of the permits. However, in the section below, 2 2 2 8, they give to understand that the water they will use will come from the Caño Tiburones, taken from a point called El Vigía where there is a series of pumps that move water. They allude to it even though I understand that as of today they don't have a permit. How come they can proceed with a proposal including such information in an EIS when DRNA has denied giving them that water? This is yet another example of deception and lying from Energy Answers.

>> MODERATOR: Ok. Mr. Osvaldo, if you'd like, you can put your card to the bottom until you can speak again later.

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: How many more people will speak before I can take part again?

>> MODERATOR: There are many people registered. Susan, how many do we have registered?

>>WOMAN: [Away from the microphone].

>> MODERATOR: 41 people.

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: I'll wait, but that's a ridiculous system.

>> MODERATOR: Yes. No. But I'd like to make it clear, there are ways to submit everything that you wrote through our forms and on our sheets, or you can make it available to us via email.

>> WOMAN: Look, if you'll allow me.

>> MODERATOR: The next person is Julio Viera Olivieri

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>> WOMAN: If you'll allow me, sir, I would like to raise something.

>> MODERATOR: And you are --?

>> WOMAN: Would it be possible -- Excuse me, I have a question. Would it be possible if there is someone who is to speak that they can give up their five minutes to Mr. Osvaldo Rosario? He has a lot to say.

>> MODERATOR: If so, let's see -- so turns must be taken in the order that they signed up.

>> WOMAN: Excuse me, but this is a public hearing and what we want is to allow the people's involvement and the public hearing should decide who they want to give their turn. You should not say when we are going to talk. Mr. Osvaldo Rosario --

>> MODERATOR: For this we've put this [Away from the microphone] --

>> WOMAN: Excuse me. One moment. I'm trying to organize this a little better, all right? We know who Dr. Osvaldo Rosario is. The community wants to hear what he has to say. Therefore, it is really important for us to listen to Mr. Osvaldo Rosario, if people want to give him their five minutes, then the turn will be canceled and it's the same as when it's his turn. They can give him their turn.

>> MODERATOR: That's what I'm saying. Provided they are on the list they can give their place or not to the person. I'm calling Mr. Julio F. Olivieri Viera. If that person wants to give up their turn, they can. But since that person wouldn't have taken part, it is out of respect for all those who were registered.

>> WOMAN: Yes, that's right. We understand.

>> MODERATOR: Mr. Julio Olivieri.

>> WOMAN: It's just that -- with all due respect it is not in the order you say. For example, Mr. Menendez -

>> MODERATOR: Is it in the signup list order. That's what we want to check.

Pardon?

[Away from the microphone]

Well, when it's your turn, if you want to give it to the doctor later, but right now I'm calling Mr. Julio -  
Does Mr. Julio want to participate? Mr. Julio Olivieri.

>> WOMAN: Look, excuse me, look sir. This cannot be a mere formality. This has to be a public hearing where the community is entitled to know the details of this project, this is going to involve everyone, therefore --

>> MODERATOR: Madam, and with respect I'll explain -- we have an order. If Mr. Julio Olivieri doesn't want to participate -

>> MODERATOR: Why do you think that --?

(People in audience speaking)

>> WOMAN: Of course.

>> MODERATOR: I'm not disturbing the order.

>> WOMAN: He is disturbing the order for him.

(People in audience speaking)

>> MODERATOR: Let's see. Simply --

(People in audience speaking)

>> MODERATOR: -- The order is, according to the speaker list and we were giving you the chance to speak. Mr. Julio Olivieri, if you don't want to participate we'll continue with the next person.

(People in audience speaking)

>> MODERATOR: No, I'm allowing the order in which people registered, out of respect for those that registered. Everyone has three minutes. If later you want to--

>> MAN: Hello, hello, good afternoon.

My name is Julio Olivieri, agronomist from Arecibo, native of Arecibo, and I've lived in Arecibo my whole life.

>> MODERATOR: Let me make consult something, please sir. Let me consult something.

So, I call the next person. He didn't present himself. What people are asking is if somebody could give their time [Away from the microphone], I told them when the next person comes out, if he wants to then he would [Away from the microphone] -- Ok.

Let's continue. I'm told that we'll follow the same registry order. If the next person wants to give their turn to the previous person, they can, but otherwise we'll continue going through the cards until we eventually return to Mr. Osvaldo, who is the last one. Now, are you Mr. Julio Oliveri?

>> JULIO OLIVERI: I have no problem giving him my time, but also want to use my time. The time that I -- three minutes.

>> MODERATOR: Yes, you Mr. Julio Olivieri.

>> JULIO OLIVERI: [can't be understood]

>> MODERATOR: Excuse me?

>> JULIO OLIVERI: Can I start?

>> MODERATOR: Go ahead.

>> JULIO OLIVERI: Well, I'm going to say good afternoon to all the neighbors in front, and those in the back. Do you see this yellow paper? That's how Puerto Ricans, are going to look with that plant the want to put there to put the people of Arecibo, Puerto Ricans who want to put that plant there. That's it.

[Applause]

My account says, I've taken an article by Joseph Gordon from the very interesting magazine, June 2015. He is host of the Hora Electrica, broadcast on Tuesdays at 12:30, 8:30 pm on channel 22. That's the issue if you want to know if anything came of it, ask if you can [can't be understood]. You heard that, right? Given as an example, if a bank goes bankrupt, it doesn't suffer, a bank doesn't suffer. Humans and animals do suffer. What is



suffering? What is happiness? If we can't achieve happiness, we can achieve any goal that we set and still never be satisfied?

This brings us to the question of decision making, to choose between heaven and hell. There have been several revolutions in technology, economics, politics, etc. throughout history. But the greatest by far is the reproduction of the body and mind.

What will be really revolutionary about the future won't be weapons and vehicles but ourselves. There is a lot of fiction and stories about the world. The big question is, what is really real if we must decide between those who bring suffering and those who bring happiness. The book *You Shall Be as Gods*, by the writer Eric Fromm, raised this problem clearly. Human beings are free to choose their path but must accept the consequences of their choices.

This part I'm going to read is my own. We could add, is the deterioration of the environment, our health, etc., a crucial issue for our existence? Of course it is.

Then, we must fight against everything that we believe causes us suffering, and defeat any acts which are unfavorable to our fight. Thank you very much.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: The next person, Luz María Serrano Delgado. Luz M. Serrano Delgado. Thank you.

>> LUZ M. SERRANO DELGADO: Good afternoon, good afternoon to everyone here, to all my colleagues here behind me. I'm Mrs. Lucy Serrano de Matos, and I've come to represent all the women, all the grandmothers, the mothers in the dear town of Arecibo.

[Applause]

>> LUZ M. SERRANO DELGADO: All the women in this town feel quite affected because we're not appreciated for the work we do in raising our families, providing for them and caring for the wellbeing of each of them.

It's very hard for us to see them bring this plant to our town knowing it's going to turn it into a giant dumpster. We've

already been through a similar situation when we had sugarcane and they burnt it and our homes were always covered in ash and all the smoke and everything. That smoke was just as harmful to us as this one.

Now, you listen to all these people coming here talking about what Energy Answers wants to do with us, they want to kill this town and the people in it, they want to harm our children, harm our elderly, people with asthma and people in general.

It's not just Arecibo that's going to be affected by this plant because, if you think about it, and you've probably heard, Puerto Rico is a very small island and what happens in one end of the island affects those that live in the other side of the island. I mean, everyone is going to be affected.

When you leave, if this plant is lucky enough to stay here -- because I understand it won't be --, you're never, ever going to remember this town. You won't even know what Arecibo is. You'll hear about Puerto Rico, but won't even remember what it is. But we're going to stay here and feel what it is to die slowly inside our homes.

I urge you to think about it some more, to understand this town, to see it's not just about fighting, or a political party, or colors or race. It's about life. It's about health. We're fighting for the health of each one of us.

[Applause]

>> LUZ M. SERRANO DELGADO: Someone needs to go out to the streets and defend us. Right now I could be home relaxing with air conditioning watching some TV show, but to me it's more important to be here, because I'm needed here.

Everyone needs to understand that this plant is not what we need. What we need is help. What we need is to be seen as human beings. And when you leave this place, say "I'm going to do something for Puerto Rico, something positive." Please, say NO to Energy Answers in Arecibo.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

The next person's last name is Dentos. Number six. Ivhadzen Dentos.

Please.

>> MAN: [off microphone]

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Go ahead.

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: Yes, in my previous intervention I was refuting this sham of a power plant Energy Answers is trying to use to come here and deceive you as well to get financed. The amount of electricity it's going to generate is minimal, as I just indicated.

Another deception is they make you believe the bottom ash is a useful construction material, and you could even retrieve metals for construction or industrial use. That is a lie. This is such a complex and toxic mix that it's not economically feasible to try and separate useful materials from it. It's so bad that no one wants it, even if it's free.

So what they're saying in their EIS about the bottom ash being useful material is a lie, because otherwise there would be a line of people trying to get the ashes. Look at what's happening right now with the coal plant in the south coast that generates hundreds of thousands of tons of ashes per year and the problem it has created here in Puerto Rico to dispose of those ashes.

Approving this plant and the creation of this plant would generate a similar problem, or even worse than the problem generated by the coal plant in the south coast. We are in a position to avoid that, to improve the health of our people here in Puerto Rico.

Over the last five or six years, Energy Answers has been saying that it is their intention for all recyclable materials from their waste to be recycled; that they would only burn materials that cannot be recycled.

Now, in the EIS, they have come up with the term "readily recyclable," meaning that only if they're in bulk or large quantities they can easily remove, then they have the intention to recycle. We know that the way Energy Answers is going to get the garbage, compressed inside a truck, that it won't be possible to separate materials.

So they have been lying over the last five years, and now they're exposed in this EIS, so we know Energy Answers has no intention of recycling materials that can be recycled. If they were really going to remove the materials that can be recycled, those materials represent the highest caloric capacity to keep the boilers working. If you remove the recycling materials, what's left cannot sustain heat in the boiler.

So that's part of the scientific reason that also refutes this veil of deception they said about having the intention to recycle. They're saying here in this Environmental Impact Statement that they're going to generate about 20% of their burning waste in ashes, that's where bottom ash is, and even worse, fly ash.

These ashes are loaded with toxic and contaminant agents, like I just said. They represent a huge disposal problem for them. We know the controversy around their intention of taking them to a landfill. That is completely unacceptable because it also perpetuates the existence of landfills that we as an organization, and against this incinerator, we also oppose landfills as well. What we want is the concept of zero waste.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

[Applause]

Next person: Jose Manuel Santos, Jose M. Santos Valderrama.

Jose M. Santos Valderrama.

[Applause]

>> WOMAN: Excuse me. I just want to make an announcement to make sure everyone here has signed the attendance list. It is important for everyone to sign that list. If you haven't, any time you can --

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. José, go ahead.

>> JOSÉ M. SANTOS VALDERRAMA: Good afternoon everyone. I'm José M. Santos Valderrama, a social work student and I'm here in representation of [unintelligible] of Arecibo, a youth organization of MIN.

In our country, at an early age, we're taught to think we live in democracy. However, granting the permit to build an

incinerator in Arecibo is evidence that there's no democracy in societies subjected to despotism and oppression of tyrant governments that only represent the economic interests of rich and powerful sectors.

This whole evaluation and research process has been branded by contradictions that expose the corruption and thoughtlessness of those who promote and support a project as obsolete and disastrous as incineration.

Those sons of capital, sworn in every four years to serve the people to then make use of their resources selling their conscience to an infernal capitalism that will destroy everything for money.

They have lost common sense and aren't brave enough to face the greater economic interests that corrupt their consciences and fill their pockets. They tend to be infamous and create a false state of emergency to promote incineration as a salvation technology against solid waste management issues. This way, they develop a scenario of alleged crisis and fear only the rich and powerful sectors benefit from.

As young men and women, we acknowledge that these difficulties are the result our nation's political crisis. Solid waste management issues are directly linked to the misery generated by capitalist economic systems that promote an irrational overconsumption that generates mountains of solid waste.

The people cannot be sacrificed on behalf of this alleged progress that will only benefit a few and will destroy the lives of our people.

In conclusion, incineration is immorality disguised as progress and salvation. A project aimed at the accumulation of wealth that attempts against the present and future of our nation. Incineration will only benefit Energy Answers and the corrupted and indifferent politicians that prefer profit over the dignity of our people.

This project is not the solution for the disposal of solid waste, so we remind Puerto Rican men and women that this fight against incineration is the continuation of the resistance of a respectable and solidary people. That national unity has historically fought against the oppressing forces of capital. A heroic people that defeated a mining exploitation project, defeated the American Navy in Vieques, defeated the gas pipeline

of death, and triumphed in La Poza del Olimpo in Arecibo. The fight against incineration goes beyond recycling as a sustainable alternative. It is a moral issue that invites you to transform a political-economic model in which profit prevails over life.

Structural criticism is necessary to help build spaces to promote solidarity and citizen participation. Not like what's being plotted here today.

It's about building a new nation in which the people can recognize its strengths and understand the reality around it, creating new cultural patterns enabling the development of a critical and ecological conscience. Today we invite you to reflect about an unfinished struggle that gets stronger to defeat the incinerator of death.

Yesterday - listen to this, Energy Answers - yesterday we triumphed in Vieques. And tomorrow we will triumph in Arecibo. History shall remember us. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

Next person: Dr. Obed Garcia.

Dr. Obed Garcia.

(People chanting unintelligibly)

>> MODERATOR: If you'd like to yield --

Just like the doctor here submitted a written document, as I told you in the beginning, we can receive any written comments here at the table. Thank you. Go ahead, doctor.

>> OBED GARCIA: My name is Dr. Obed Garcia. I represent the Surgical Doctors Association, and we oppose incineration.

On August 3rd of 2015, the President of the United States, Barack Obama, had a presentation in which he proposed a plan to deal with global warming. This plan he called the Clean Power Plan looks to deal with global warming by reducing CO2 emissions into the atmosphere. This presentation can be downloaded at the website [www.whitehouse.gov/climate-change](http://www.whitehouse.gov/climate-change).

President Obama established the following. Human activity is dangerously changing our climate. 2004 was the hottest year ever recorded in history.

14 out of the 15 hottest years recorded occurred in this century. Climate change isn't a reality only for future generations. It is a reality for us today.

President Obama called climate change a threat to our national security. President Obama indicated that although a number of efforts are in place, they are not enough and he expects to implement the plan called Clean Energy Plan. According to him, this is the most important and significant plan ever created by the United States against global warming. President Obama said there are no federal or state regulations on the amount of CO2 released by power plants into the atmosphere. President Obama spoke about establishing a Clean Power Plan, by limiting the levels of CO2 released by power plants.

President Obama talked about setting reductions to CO2 emissions into the atmosphere. President Obama established that within the Clean Power Plan they intend to carry out the following by 2030: a reduction by 870 million metric tons of contamination by carbon. The economic benefit of the Clean Power Plan exceeds its cost. We're talking about an estimate cost of 8.4 billion dollars and a profit of 54 million dollars in public health and climate benefits. We're talking about \$85 of yearly savings in power bills for US residents. We're talking about estimated savings of 155 billion in CO2 manufacture between 2020 and 2030. We're saying the Clean Power Act would create thousands of new jobs in the long term, something impossible with incineration.

We're saying that establishing CO2 level reductions would mean a significant improvement in reducing other atmospheric contaminants. We're talking about approximately 318 thousand tons of sulfur dioxide to be reduced, and we know this is related to COPD exacerbations, asthma exacerbations, asthma attacks. We're talking about a reduction of 282 tons of nitrogen dioxide, nitrogen dioxide --

>> MODERATOR: Doctor, could you conclude your presentation?

>> OBED GARCIA: -- nitrogen compounds are related to cancer. In conclusion, this project is inconsistent with President Obama's current policy. If we're talking about CO2 reduction, we cannot support a plant that releases 2.5 times more carbon into the

atmosphere than a coal plant, a plant that generates two or three times more sulfur dioxide than a coal plant.

The policy proposed by President Obama is inconsistent with supporting this plant. You're going to support one thing or the other, but not both at the same time. There's no way. That makes no sense.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you, doctor.

[Applause]

Next up is José Menéndez Sierra. Jose Menendez.

>> JOSE MENENDEZ: If Dr. Rosario would like three more minutes, I can yield my three minutes.

>> MODERATOR: Go ahead.

[Applause]

Doctor? Thank you.

Doctor, once again please state your name every time you participate so that the audio record states it is you speaking and not the person I named.

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: For the record, Osvaldo Rosario on the microphone.

In my last turn I was talking about Energy Answers' deception regarding the ashes, as they state it is useful material for construction despite the fact it's filled with toxic agents and carcinogenic compounds. But one other component they will also be generating in the long term, by thousands of tons, is one I didn't see in the Environmental Impact Statement and it is the activated carbon and lime material they use in their traps for the emissions coming out of the chimney. There, according to Energy Answers admission, are trapped toxic and carcinogenic compounds. That is the purpose of those traps allegedly used to minimize what goes out to the environment. They will be loaded with this toxic waste. However, in the Environmental Impact Statement, I didn't see what they intend to do with that waste containing large amounts of activated carbon and lime that could potentially represent even a greater risk than the ashes they will be generating.



Those traps are part of a strategy called Best Available Control Technologies - required by the EPA. But despite this technology, if you read Energy Answers' table on what's going to go out to the environment, and assess what in chemistry is known as the mass balance, because matter cannot disappear. If I burn 2100 tons of matter, I need to create at least 2100 tons of product. If you add the products Energy Answers states it will generate, they come short by nearly 40% of matter unaccounted for. We know what's accounted for, the potential of great poisons and toxic agents. What could there be in that 40% unaccounted for? They don't even know what's in there. And it's surely not regulated.

We can't take the risk of establishing a facility that's going to have to release these large amounts of unknown materials into the environment, and won't be efficiently trapped. EPA is wrong in allocating that 40% to CO2 and water, but CO2 and water are accounted for in Energy Answers' table. It can be derived from there. So EPA itself doesn't know what's in that 40% either, that's the risk for the people of Puerto Rico in allowing the creation of a plant with 40% of what it will generate as unknown materials, an additional exposure for the people.

Another deception and another lie by Energy Answers as to the materials they're going to burn in their - they intend to burn in their incinerator, but we won't allow it.

[Applause]

If you go back to the regional proposal, you'll find - and they mention it in the EIS, they just don't publish the numbers, but the original proposal says it - that additionally to garbage, domestic waste, they intend to burn automotive shredder residue, construction wood waste and automobile tires.

If you add up the amounts they have in their general proposal, they reach 72% of the 2100 in the EIS. They talk about these materials as supplementary fuel when the truth is what they're going to burn there are the main materials and the supplementary fuel ends up being the domestic waste. They claim they're going to solve a domestic waste problem in Puerto Rico when that's not the main thing they're going to be burning. That's another deception and another lie in the Environmental Impact Statement to expose this -- --

>> MODERATOR: Can you conclude?

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: Yes, I have four, five additional items --

>> MODERATOR: You'll have more time. Thank you, doctor.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Next up, professor Jose A. Garcia Nieves.  
Professor Jose A. Garcia Nieves.

Is he not in the room?

Professor Jose A. Garcia Nieves.

The next person is Ismenia Gonzalez Colon.

Is it you? Go ahead.

I yield my turn to Dr. Osvaldo, please.

[Applause]

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: I'm going to change the order a bit to make sure --

>> MODERATOR: Your name?

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: Osvaldo Rosario, for the record.

Under meteorology, in the Environmental Impact Statement, Energy Answers states that the winds in Cambalache come mainly from the north during the day and go - I'm sorry, they come from the south during the night, basically in a north-south axis, not east-west as the prevailing trade winds. And based on this assumption, they generated an entire computing model and reached the conclusion in their dispersion models that it doesn't represent a risk of exposure for nearby populations, especially in the Arecibo city area.

However, this goes against the reality. They assure this is a phenomenon occurring throughout the north coast of Puerto Rico. But if we look at the direction of every airport runway throughout the north coast, they're directed towards the east and northeast. The FAA, the Federal Aviation Agency, requires airplanes to take off in the same direction the wind comes. From there, we can conclude that such assertion in their Environmental Impact Statement is in direct conflict with FAA regulation and requirements. That is a fundamental point to clarify because I'm sure the data used by the FAA is reliable; I

don't trust the meteorology data of Energy Answers and, again, that would invalidate the entire foundation on which they justify that there won't be an impact on the wellbeing of the surrounding communities. That is fundamental and critical to clarify. I don't know how the EPA missed this. Um --

I got off track.

The area where Energy Answers wants to establish itself - I'm sure other speakers will also talk about this - is classified as incompliant for lead. That means this entire area is contaminated with lead. This is one of the criterion substances taken into consideration to issue a permit to establish a plant, especially a plant that's also going to generate lead.

It is inconceivable under every concept - and this is being challenged in Court - for an air emission permit to have been granted, and this agency is in the position to look into this in more detail for a plant's emissions in an incompliant area. I need to point this out because the contamination condition will not improve with the operation of this plant. On the contrary, it's going to get worse.

>> MODERATOR: Doctor, your time is up. Can we continue? You're very kind. Thank you.

[Applause]

Next person: Sergio Colon Lopez. Sergio A. Colon Lopez.

>> SERGIO COLON LOPEZ: Good afternoon everyone. I yield my turn so that Dr. Rosario can finish, continue.

[Applause]

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: I'm losing my train of thought with this system of yours.

>> MODERATOR: Your name again.

>> OSVALDO ROSARIO: Going back to the concept of mass balance, and I think this is fundamental for you to measure if the people's health is truly safe. It's already doubtful based on meteorological questioning due to conflicts between FAA information and what Energy Answers says. But also based on this concept of mass balance, what we prove is that the so called best available control technologies do not guarantee the

people's wellbeing. The EPA came to tell us, almost selling it at one point, this technology saying there was no way people's lives would be at risk. However, when you see this data saying that even with the best technology available, defended by the EPA itself, you can't account for all contaminant agents, what it proves is this technology has its limitations.

An example of this is nanoparticles. Although I recognize that the backhouse technology they propose is going to hold - or catch some of those nanoparticles, they're not reduced completely. Nanoparticles are always going to be released into the environment, as an example of one of the categories that represents a risk for the people's wellbeing. These have the ability to penetrate into the smallest parts of the lungs and migrate from there to other organs in the body. Nanoparticles have even been found in brain tissue, that's how easy they enter the body.

Energy Answers says nothing about the risk of nanoparticles on people's health. All they say is part of them will remain in the back house filters, but they lie making us believe there's no risk in nanoparticles with that comment. There is a risk and I'm sure that part of that 40% unaccounted for includes nanoparticles that are not getting caught.

To conclude, I believe I've stated plenty of critiques to shed doubts on the credibility of that Environmental Impact Statement. It is clear that there's deception, that certain data has been chosen selectively and that they have even lied with information and you need to look closely into each one of those facts. They are fundamental in the decision of whether you're going to support this project or not.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much.

[Applause]

The next person is Attorney Gregorio Suarez Igartua.

>> GREGORIO SUAREZ IGARTUA: Good afternoon. I am Attorney Gregorio Manuel Suarez Igartua and I am here in representation of the autonomous municipality of Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, and its honorable mayor Jose Guillermo Rodriguez.

Everyone knows that the corporation Energy Answers, LLC wants to build in Arecibo, Puerto Rico a solid waste processing and incineration energy-producing plant. It is also a known fact

that the Rural Utilities Service, as a Federal Agency, plans to finance the incineration energy-processing and solid waste plant project.

The financing of this project is expected to be done with a loan in which Energy Answers Corporation plans to put up as collateral the funds to be obtained from municipalities as per the agreement signed between the Solid Waste Authority and Energy Answers Corporation. The autonomous municipality of Mayagüez, Puerto Rico states a determined and categorical opposition to this project.

[Applause]

This kind of agreement, according to the numbers estimated by the municipality of Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, would cost the municipality an additional 6 million dollars per year in the processing of solid waste. Such amount is unsustainable from a financial and legal point of view.

We warn Rural Utilities Service, the entity giving the loan to Energy Answers, that municipalities will sue to challenge this agreement. Litigations can last more than five or six years and the Rural Utilities Service would be disqualified to grant this kind of loan.

The municipality of Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, will under no circumstance grant a single penny to Energy Answers Corporation, so the loan would not be funded and Energy Answers Corporation would be incapacitated to receive financing.

The municipality of Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, is clear that no agreement will be signed and under no circumstance will contribute with the people's money under these circumstances and will go to the latest consequences before the corresponding forums to oppose this agreement. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Mr. Attorney - did you want to submit --?

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: -- one moment. Order.

>> GREGORIO SUAREZ IGARTUA: Yes. We have submitted the corresponding legal pleas in writing.

>> MODERATOR: Gracias.

[Applause]

Next person: Carlos M. Garcia Berrios.

>> CARLOS M. GARCIA BERRIOS: Good afternoon. For the record, my name is Carlos Garcia Berrios.

>> MODERATOR: Berrios.

>> CARLOS M. GARCIA BERRIOS: I'm here to state something very important to the Federal Department of Agriculture. The people of Arecibo and the people of Puerto Rico do not want this project. If your ear is to the ground, you'll see how heavy it is. I believe the RUS had never celebrated a public hearing such as this one, where the people overflow to oppose a project. So we want to warn you not to invest a single penny on that project because if you don't listen to us and do it, if you grant the loan, you're going to lose every single penny because that project will not be completed. The people will not allow it! And making use of our legitimate right to self-defense, we're going to do everything in our power to stop it. Thank you very much.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

[Applause]

Next person: Ela M. Cruz.

Ela M. Cruz, next person.

Ela M. Cruz.

>> MAN: I want to ask, are you understanding what people are saying in Spanish?

Are you understanding everything that the people are saying in Spanish?

>> MODERATOR: Everything that's being taped is also being translated into English. Just in case.

>> MAN: But I, I'm worried whether you are understanding what people are saying, whether you want to direct some questions, in case you want to direct some questions.

>> MODERATOR: Puerto Rico Rural Service Agency staff members are also present.

>> HOMBRE: Yes, but do they understand what they're being told?

>> MODERATOR: The next person, Angel Gonzalez.

Excuse me, Ela M. Cruz, go ahead.

>> ELA M. CRUZ: Good afternoon. For record purposes, I'm Ela Cruz and I'm here in representation of the Citizens of el Karso organization.

I'm going to make a brief summary of the presentation to be put to your consideration for inclusion.

As many of you know, El Karso is characterized by an outcrop of limestone, mogotes, sinkholes, caves, caverns and other cavities, including underground water currents. It has been recognized by Federal, State and conservationist organizations as an area of great social and ecological value for the Puerto Rican society and is differentiated from others due to certain factors.

It is the recharging area for large part of the northern aquifers, from where they extract 75 million gallons of water every day, the equivalent to the daily consumption of over 460,000 persons daily in Puerto Rico. These aquifers provide quality water to most pharmaceutical plants and dairy farms in the northern Karso, helping maintain the over 100,000 jobs generated by this industry. And nearly 80% of these dairy farms that make up the Puerto Rican dairy industry are located in the north, from Arecibo to Quebradillas.

The law for the physiographic conservation of el Karso, Law 292 of August 21 of 99, declares as public policy of the Commonwealth to protect, preserve and manage the karst physiography for the benefit of present and future generations. It constitutes one of our most precious non-renewable natural resources due to its geomorphology and particular ecosystems developed in the region.

The wildlife law also declares as public policy the protection of wildlife species and their preservation and management for the benefit of present and future generations. The natural resource or Caño Tiburones, from which 2.1 million gallons of water would be extracted each day for the proposed project is the largest wetland in Puerto Rico, of which only a portion has been declared a natural reserve.

Wetlands bring significant benefits for humankind - for humankind, and are of use for flood control, underground water reinstatement, protection against storms, retention and exportation of sediments and nutrients, among others.

It is important to point out that by 2025, UN estimates that 30% of the world's population will suffer from water shortage. I say we don't need to wait until 2025 to see what we're already going through, although by then they're projecting an 18% increase in water extractions in developed countries and up to 50% increase in developing countries, and I think that's what we're looking at here.

Therefore, it is of utmost importance to protect Puerto Rico's water supplies, such as those in the Karst region, including Caño Tiburones, in order to safeguard the wellbeing and the development, the real development, of our society. We know that as we extract water from Caño Tiburones, we reduce the aquifers' reload capacity, thus affecting the aforementioned companies.

Moreover, continuing to artificially alter the wetland's reloading process will have adverse effects on the established flora and fauna. Reducing the wetland's water level will allow the entrance of saltwater, causing a negative effect in the aquifer due to salinization.

>> MODERATOR: Ela, can you wrap it up?

>> ELA M. CRUZ: Well, in conclusion, what we want to promote is for Puerto Rico to implement projects representing real development for our society, and that's why the citizens of El Karso, in defense of the water of all Puerto Ricans affected by this project, tenaciously oppose the establishment of the incinerator in Arecibo.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much.



Next person:  
Angel Gonzalez.

Go ahead, Angel. Thank you very much.

>> ANGEL GONZALEZ: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Angel Gonzalez and I am a member of the Committee for Public Safety. My name is Angel Gonzalez, I am a member of the Committee for Public Health at the Medical Association.

In the first place I wanted to mention - for the record - that last week I submitted a request for information through the Freedom of Information Act and received a letter, that I have here, saying that there is nothing in any file at the Department of Agriculture regarding information on a petition or pre-petition - or whatever you wish to call it - pre-application of Energy Answers for this loan, which seems unusual. Just imagine, they have prepared an Environmental Impact Statement, so I wanted to clarify this.

I think with the information you already have, the USDA and RUS specifically have an obligation to determine whether the person or corporation to whom you are going to grant this type of loan, has the ability to repay it.

Of all the information that has come up here today, you must conclude that Energy Answers will not have the raw material. The municipalities are not going to give up their solid waste to be burned in this incinerator, therefore it will not be able to engage in business, and will not be able to repay. So we advise you to consider this carefully, because Energy Answers will not be able - - if they build this - will not be able to repay the loan. This is one of the things I wanted to say. So it is your responsibility.

The Federation of Mayors has already said here, Mayagüez said it here, yesterday Carmen Yulin on the radio said they will not send their solid waste to be burnt in this incinerator. San Juan, Hormigueros, Comerio, all are opposed to this. The Association of Mayors is opposed. The only one who does not oppose this is the mayor of Arecibo -

[Audience booing]

>> ANGEL GONZALEZ: - So it's your responsibility not to grant this loan because if you grant this loan it will not be paid, as already mentioned, and this will fall on your shoulders.

I wanted to mention - the truth is that the presence of Homeland Security at these hearings is a bit annoying.

[Applause]

I cannot help mentioning this because supposedly these people are fighting against terrorism and those sort of things and those sort of things [sic], I do not know. And here we are as citizens basically demanding our rights, so I wanted to make that other point.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Mr. Angel if you could conclude.

>> ANGEL GONZALEZ: Well, I have much more to say.

>> MODERATOR: You can write your comments and mail them or deliver them right here. Or, if you like, you can put them -

>> ANGEL GONZALEZ: Well then, then give me another turn.

>> MODERATOR: Alright then. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

The next person, Ingrid Vila.

[Applause]

>> INGRID VILA: - Good afternoon. First I want to point out that on the card -

>> MODERATOR: Yes, it reads Luis Fernando Rodriguez.

>> INGRID VILA: Luis Enrique Rodriguez, Professor Rodriguez is giving me his three minutes, so I would appreciate it if you do not interrupt me.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: No, sorry. But there is only one requirement here.

>> INGRID VILA: We were told that we could both register since we represent the same entity, so he is giving me his three minutes.

>> MODERATOR: This is not possible.

You have three minutes, proceed.

>> INGRID VILA: My name is Ingrid Vila. I have come accompanied by Professor Luis Enrique Rodriguez, we stand before this forum on behalf of Fundadores de Cambio, a non-governmental organization that promotes sustainable development for Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. Although we will be submitting over the coming weeks substantive comments on the many problems affecting the draft-EIS submitted by RUS, we take this opportunity to express our outrage over the actions carried out by RUS in this process.

First, it is insulting that the draft EIS incorporates many of the same errors contained in the local EIS prepared by Energy Answers, even when we drew attention to this and identified them for RUS in plenty of time during the scoping process. I mean the use of erroneous figures, studies and data in work improperly applied to the situation before us. As an example, we highlight that 2006 Census data are used that show a population increase in Puerto Rico and are interpreted as an increase in the amount of solid waste.

The use of this data is irresponsible and misleading because data from the 2013 Federal Census reconfirms a decrease in population, estimated to continue to decrease until 2050, and thus there is a downward trend in the production of solid waste on the island.

Another example is the superficial and inadequate discussion of alternatives including no action, which clearly shows a breach of RUS with regards to NEPA requirements. Since an incineration project is primarily one of the ways to manage solid waste, RUS is bound by NEPA - and interpretative regulations and case law to discuss and present in the IES all available reasonable alternatives.

Second, it is suspicious that RUS is considering financing a project that is incompatible with health and environment

protection and that would generate less than 0.026 of the energy demand of Puerto Rico, especially when it does not provide any energy benefits for the alleged rural area which is the intended target impact area for this investment of federal funds. The project is simply incompatible with the public policy that justifies the very existence of RUS.

Third, it is inappropriate for RUS to consider funding a project that is clearly contrary to law since it violates the United States Constitution Interstate Commerce Clause, the Puerto Rico Recycling Act, the Puerto Rico Autonomous Municipalities Act, and the Environmental Public Policy laws consistent with the comments and the information already obtained by the scoping process, including the opinion of the former Secretary of Justice of this same administration, Luis Sánchez Betances on June 4, 2013.

Fourth, it is contradictory for RUS to abandon its tradition of serving and meeting the needs of rural communities to consider giving financial support to a project that is unfriendly and has been rejected outright by the community where its operations will be located, as well as by the community to which the toxic ashes generated are proposed to be taken.

It is even more contradictory that RUS considers supporting a project that is rejected by the two organizations representing all municipal governments of Puerto Rico. I refer to the Association and the Federation of Mayors of Puerto Rico. This community and government rejection comes from actual RUS customers, and is clearly stated in the comments which are the result of the scoping process.

Moreover, this rejection means that Energy Answers does not have an ensured supply of waste, which makes the project, in the first place, unfeasible, and in the second place, high risk in terms of securing repayment of the offer of financing which is being evaluated.

Given the economic and fiscal challenges facing Puerto Rico, it would be irresponsible of RUS and the federal government to contribute to the crisis by imposing another burden on the

shoulders of the people of Puerto Rico, as it is the people who will end up repaying this loan.

We want it to be clear to RUS, and the Federal Department of Agriculture, that these expressions of outrage towards RUS will not stay here in Arecibo or on its Web site.

[Applause]

These claims, this struggle, we will take up to your very door. We'll take it to the American people, to Congress, to the White House - through the Puerto Rico Task Force created by the President of the United States - to the federal courts, and to the international community. If you do not know how far the Puerto Rican people will go when they are indignant...

[Applause]

- how far the Puerto Rican people will go when they are indignant, then I advise you to research in Google under Vieques struggle.

Thank you very much.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: The next person, Myrna Conty.

Myrna Conty, go ahead.

>> MYRNA CONTY: - Good afternoon. My name is Myrna Conty, I am the Coordinator of the Anti-incineration Coalition, and would like to begin by saying that the truth is I'm so angry I cannot believe the members of the panel that are here do not know Spanish. We are wasting our time talking to the walls, to I don't know who, because they are the ones that will make the decisions and I want this on record, for it to be very clear that we strongly oppose being sent people who do not know Spanish. It's Ok if you know, but they do not know. They are the decision makers. Sorry, but this is essential, to take up to the Secretary of Agriculture.

[Applause]

Second point. It is outrageous, we here are not criminals. We are people that want the good of Puerto Rico. And here we are, vigilant, to ensure that things are done correctly and make sure of this ourselves because you and other agencies do not protect us. Therefore, I request that you also take to the Secretary of Agriculture the message to avoid bringing police and even less police dogs, as if we were drug dealers or something. That is outrageous. It offends me.

[Applause]

I want you to know that I am offended, that you offend all Puerto Ricans with that dog sniffing us every time one stands near. No, I do not want to see that ever. Please, for the next hearing, the hearing for the final IES, let everything be settled and also let them bring people who know Spanish. It is important.

Third, the other thing I would like to add, I support the speakers before me, but it is indispensable, and Ingrid has just brought it, how it is - and it is extremely irresponsible of this agency, and it's a falsehood. I was given to understand, for example, that you had already approved this loan. This is simply a protocol. How do you consider an environmental impact statement made six months ago and -you were here because I remember you were here - how could you have considered all this data, which by the way, has so many mistakes? And you have used this data to draft the same environmental impact statement. I also want to highlight this, supposedly you were going to draft a completely new one, not copy and paste from the old one.

No, you should have been responsible and gone through all the data to confirm that what you were given was true. You copied and I also object to this.

The other thing I would point out, related to the contract between ADS and Energy Answers, here clearly you must take them the message because the members of the panel are not going to take it because they do not understand what we're saying, it is important that you ensure - because you are Mr. Luis Berger, right? -for everyone to know this. It is about the company that prepares the Environmental Impact Statement. It is important that RUS and the Secretary of Agriculture- because federal funds

are public funds - that they know that there will be no repayment.

There will be no repayment because it has been clearly stated here that the Association and the Federation is not supporting this project, much less, they will challenge this contract and there will be no repayment. I know this agency is using this contract as if there was a condition of repayment. It is extremely important to consider that because they will - as Carlos said - grant a loan with no one to pay it back - it's lost money. And this is 800 million dollars.

Then, the other thing I would like - also -

>> MODERATOR: If you could conclude, please.

>> MYRNA CONTY: Ok, but with regards to the contract. The contract, so that you look at it carefully, the contract between ADS and Energy Answers, implies that you have already granted this loan. Energy Answers - they are in the habit of providing false information - because they are constantly providing false information to confuse, and how is it possible that the agencies will allow them to do this? You are responsible for ensuring that what they set down in black and white is real. In that contract they say that you are carrying out some calculations with regards to your loan. Therefore the contract itself should not be valid. I wish to conclude with this.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

[Applause]

The next person, David Galarza Santa.

>> MAN: What number are you?

>> MODERATOR: 19.

>> DAVID GALARZA SANTA: Good afternoon, good afternoon. I come from the town of Brooklyn. Do you know Brooklyn? Sorry people, I will speak my comments in English. I find it a little easier. I am here - the good lawyer Pedro Sade] makes a lot of sense in this hearing today.

They're saying, hell no to the incinerator! Hell no to this incinerator! [unintelligible] but I'm going to say a few more. Cause I'm not here on vacation, I'm here to take care of my Mom, and I'm here to take care of my motherland.

So here we are in Arecibo, Puerto Rico. And I'm here on behalf of the [unintelligible], from New York City. And I'm here also because my mother, my maternal mother but also my motherland is in a lot of trouble. My mother has some health ailments right now that have required that she be in the hospital. But my motherland is being attacked by Energy Answers and other companies like this that want to attack the Earth, and attack our nature and our natural environment.

We're here to defend by all means and at all costs Puerto Rico. I learned a lot from the struggle against the gasoduct. In New York City we had a committee called New York Against the Gasoduct, and we waged a good battle.

Like the battle for Vieques, like the battle against the gasoduct that was victorious, that has a lot to do with the solidarity that we have both from Puerto Rico and the Diaspora.

Many of us even got arrested in that battle. We're bound to do that again no matter what it takes to stop Energy Answers from building this incinerator.

[Applauses]

Now, I am going to ask you in Spanish. How many of you love your mother? How many here love their mother? How many of you here are willing to fight to the death to defend your mother?

We love our mother to death, both our maternal mothers and our motherland, our Puerto Rican motherland here, and we're bound to do whatever it takes to defend her, even get arrested, even fight to the death.

I still cannot understand the logic of this proposal and the logic of this agency to even consider funding it. Since when is the US Department of Agriculture involved in planting toxic incinerators? Makes no sense, absolutely no sense.

[Applauses]



The town of Arecibo where we are today has been described by a blogger as a dead town. Is this project supposed to bring it back to life? How?

At a time when Puerto Rico is facing an epic drought, historic exodus, a massive brain drain, punitive taxes, double-digit unemployment, being pursued by rapacious hedge fund vultures that we're fighting in New York City. This is the best that the Federal government can do? This is the best that the town of Arecibo can do to promote tourism, to promote economic development, to promote the health and safety of its residents?

>> MODERATOR: David, if you can conclude, please.

>> DAVID GALARZA SANTA: Yes. We are here fighting as human beings, as Boricuas, no matter if we are in Brooklyn or in Arecibo. We know that this is a just fight and we are willing to do anything, even though we live in New York, to communicate with anyone. I'm very close to Energy Answers in Albany, New York. It takes me roughly the same time to get to Albany as to come to Puerto Rico and you better count on it. You have to believe that we will do everything possible, no matter whether in Albany, in Washington, DC, or right here in Puerto Rico to fight against Energy Answers, and we will have a report with greater detail because we are also working in Brooklyn, New York, to have a more detailed report on the EIS. Thank you. We say no to the incinerator!

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

The next person, José A. Colón Lopez.

Jose Colon Lopez.

Your name?

>> JOSE ANTONIO COLON LOPEZ: Good afternoon, for the record my name is Jose Antonio Colon Lopez. I represent the Puerto Rican Ornithological Society.

>> MODERATOR: If you can approach the microphone so as to be heard.

>> JOSE ANTONIO COLON LOPEZ: José A. Colón Lopez, on behalf of the Puerto Rican Ornithological Society.

The Puerto Rican Ornithological Society is the organization dedicated to gathering information on, studying and protecting birds and their environment. We are the leading organization in this subject on the island of Puerto Rico.

Up to now we have spoken mostly about effects on humans. But we are not taking into account the effects on wildlife, particularly birds, which are indicators of environmental conditions and serve as indicators when there is an environmental problem.

Birds have a respiratory system that extends into their bones, a pneumatic system. Any pollution in the atmosphere - even if minimal, even if most of the pollutants are removed by the traps which would be installed in the waste incinerator - part of that, even a fraction of 1%, it is cumulative and would represent tons of pollutants into the air per year. It could reach all wildlife, all the birds that live in Caño Tiburones, in the area surrounding Arecibo. The prevailing winds of Puerto Rico in this area are from the north, northeast, which is to say that the winds sweep inland. What is south of where they want to build the waste incineration plant? The Puerto Rican Parrot aviary, and for the record, the Puerto Rican Parrot is one of the endangered species in most precarious conditions in the world.

I lived through the experience of when there were only parrots at 'El Yunque', there were only 13 of these parrots in the world, and they are protected by the Endangered Species Act, the federal act. For the record, the Puerto Rican Parrot is one of the MOST endangered species in the world, it is protected by the US Endangered Species Act.

Ok, it has recovered from 13 individuals in the whole world to about 500. The population center of the Puerto Rican Parrot is in an aviary in Rio Abajo forest, located just maybe about 10, 15 miles away - I think it's less - eight miles. I'm over-estimating the distance. In other words, the winds - the incinerator's exhaust will reach the aviary. Birds are very sensitive to this. It could derail this project that is

protected under Federal law, which is a federal program that has been in place for more than 30 years.

We are currently celebrating the success of this project and now there is an attempt to build something that is most likely to affect this parrot. I'm not sure if the US Fish and Wildlife Service, environmental services, is issuing opinions in this forum but I imagine they will issue them in written form and I hope they take into consideration that detail.

We, at the Ornithological Association, recognize that the protection of birds, environmental protection, and wildlife protection is ultimately the protection of human quality of life. And for this reason we strongly oppose the construction of this waste incinerator in the town of Arecibo or anywhere on the island of Puerto Rico.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

The next person, Mary L. Guzman.

>> MARY L. GUZMAN: Good afternoon, but not before expressing our strong opposition to the Energy Answers plant in Arecibo, I want to cede my time to Dr. Angel Gonzalez.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Doctor, can you mention your name when speaking please?

>> DOCTOR ANGEL GONZALEZ: Again, Dr. Angel Gonzalez. I wanted to mention a couple of points more for you to realize how misleading this corporation is.

Remember that this company, Energy Answers, from the beginning told us that their investment would be totally private. I do not know if you remember that.

Now it turns out that they have been unmasked with this loan request, as what they are trying to do is to take advantage of public funds, because Federal Department of Agriculture funds are public funds.

In addition to this, we have to be aware that they are also going to take advantage of state tax exemptions and other advantages.

So this is a sample of how opportunistic this company is, which is expecting to fill their pockets at our expense. This excuse or disguise of Energy Answers with regards to waste incineration, selling themselves as a producer of energy when the amount of energy they would produce is completely negligible, -this counts - Hello (to someone in the audience) - it is another example of the falseness of this proposal.

Cambalache, as a matter of fact - RUS is supposed to be providing funding for infrastructure in remote isolated rural sites. Energy infrastructure, water treatment, etc., and Cambalache is less than two miles from the center of the city of Arecibo. So analyze this to see if it is logical, to be even considering this funding.

I also wanted to denounce these people, I insist - it is a kind of blackmail, the issue that allegedly they will provide 4000 odd jobs, they change this all the time.

And they swear that one is a fool, because, however, this same company has an approved project in Baltimore for 4000 tons of waste daily and yet there they say they will only create 400 jobs. In Puerto Rico they say they will create - the last thing they said was that they will create 4800 jobs, so this is further evidence of how they try to deceive us, just as four years ago they were saying that the project would cost 500 million now it costs 800 million.

One factor that I also wanted you to consider in addition to the reduction of the population of Puerto Rico is the issue of the aging population, population as it ages tends to consume less and tends to produce less solid waste.

>> MODERATOR: Doctor, if you can conclude your participation.

>> DOCTOR ANGEL GONZALEZ: Did you give me less time?

>> MODERATOR: Your time is up, but please conclude.

>> DOCTOR ANGEL GONZALEZ: Well, I am enormously concerned as to what these people will burn. As you know, burning plastic inevitably produces dioxins. Dioxins are some of the deadliest toxins known to mankind. These people will burn plastics; barbarously in this incineration they will burn plastics and will expose this toxin -by means of air emissions - the dairy producing area of our country, it is bio-cumulative an- can put at risk production work for more than 20,000 workers that work in the dairy industry.

>> MODERATOR: Alright then. Thank you very much doctor. We grant you - it is already considered.

[Applause]

The next person, Lorenzo Padro Monge. Is this correct?

>> LORENZO PADRO MONGE: Yes, I am present to express my opposition to incineration, but I'll cede my turn to Dr. Gonzalez so he can continue his presentation.

>> MODERATOR: Ok sir, thank you.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Doctor, your name once again for the record.

>> DOCTOR ÁNGEL GONZÁLEZ: Doctor Ángel González. In this environmental impact statement, a quite significant deficiency that we noticed is that it does not explain, in relation to about 500 tons of ash that will produce daily, it does not explain how they will carry the ashes and through what roads they will transport them. This is very important because, if they are generated in Arecibo, and are to be transported to the south of the island, there are communities that may be exposed to possible contingencies, truck accidents, in which the ashes are discharged into the atmosphere. These communities should be advised so that they too can participate in these public hearings and can express their concerns. So, it's a deficiency that we understand needs to be corrected.

This project, which is billed as an energy project, does not consider and does not do a comparison - and this was something recommended by Dr. Paul Conetz [approximate sound] when he came

to the scoping meeting, a comparative analysis with other forms of energy production, such as wind and solar. And this is a serious deficiency of this environmental impact statement. The study by Arcadis Consultants [approximate sound] in relation to the health effects of this project did not study the health effects, the possible health effects of the ashes produced by this project. Okay?

Neither does it explain what would happen, as it could happen, if the ashes Energy Answers generates are determined by studies to be toxic. I have come to find out that there isn't a single landfill in this island for toxic ash so this would have to be exported and this would increase astronomically the cost of handling these ashes. However, this is not considered in the environmental impact statement.

What would happen in the event of financial failure? We know, for example, that the city of Harrisburg, which is the capital of Pennsylvania, went bankrupt - in fact, we cannot ignore bankruptcy here - it went bankrupt precisely because of its poor investment in an incinerator a few years back . And Detroit, which was in bankruptcy recently, 1.2 billion of its debt owed was due to an incinerator.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much doctor.  
The next person -

[Applause]

- Ruben Marin.  
Is Ruben Marin here in the room?

>> RUBÉN MARÍN: Good afternoon all, especially the people of Arecibo that are fighting for the environment, health and economic development of our people without an incinerator.

[Applause]

I am here representing the Puerto Rico Chemists Professional College, license number 1984, representing the board led by Rebecca Soler.

In addition to this, I am also here as a municipal legislator for Arecibo under the Puerto Rico Independence Party, which the Arecibo municipal legislature at no time has endorsed or supported any resolution to allow Energy Answers to install an incinerator here.

[Applause]

I will present it later - I want to be brief because I have to do two things, the presentation of the resolution by the College of Chemists - but I am going to read the second resolution.

The 1500 endorsements in support of the project that the Energy Answers has collected through its meetings in Arecibo only represent 1.4% of the population of Arecibo. These endorsements have been the result of false promises such as creating thousands of jobs or solving the solid waste problem. The vast majority of Arecibo does not endorse this project due to its adverse environmental and health consequences.

I also want to clarify that Mr. Carlos Molina, mayor of Arecibo, cannot speak on behalf of the municipal legislature nor in the name of the town of Arecibo regarding any endorsement of construction of this project.

[Applause]

It has been falsely publicized in the media that the municipality of Arecibo favors it. These ads are paid by Energy Answers. If the mayor wants to make any endorsements for the construction of the incinerator, he must do so in his personal capacity, but not on behalf of the people of Arecibo.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: Doctor, if you can conclude your presentation.

>> RUBÉN MARÍN: Yes of course. If you allow me, I have the resolution from the Professional College of Chemists of Puerto Rico which certainly refuses to support this incineration project in the City of Arecibo.

[Applause]

Resolution of the College of Chemists approved by its governing board and signed by our president Rebeca Soler.

Whereas, the College of Chemists of Puerto Rico, as an informed and knowledgeable community in the science of technology, has the duty to advise the Puerto Rican people regarding matters that require our skills. There is information to establish that, due to its specific geographical location, and in light of the

environmental, economic, agricultural and health consequences of its emissions and the disposal of the ashes generated, and its high potential to discourage the reduction of solid waste, together with the risk that Puerto Rico could be forced to import solid waste.

Whereas, the plant proposed by Energy Answers in Arecibo is not a solution to the solid waste disposal that is compatible with the sustainable development of Puerto Rico to which we aspire. First, the debt that Puerto Rico's government would incur for this project would be better used for other purposes consistent with our health and sustainable development.

>> MODERATOR: Doctor, can you conclude?

>> RUBÉN MARÍN: And finally, that Puerto Rico needs to use as its solid waste management strategy the hierarchy of reduction, reuse, recycling and recovery of energy in an integrated manner, in that strict order. That it cannot, as a matter of public policy, import solid waste into Puerto Rico for any endeavor. The validity of this resolution will be immediate.

Thank you very much to all.

Thank you all.

[Applause]

>> MODERATOR: The next person: Pedro Saade Lloreas.

>> PEDRO SAADE LLOREAS: Good evening. Part of what I say will be in English and part in Spanish. I have no illusions you really care what we say tonight. I have no illusions you really care what we say tonight. Why do I say this? Why do I say this? Because the Draft EIS is so poor, so irrespectful (sic), so disrespectful to these people that I have no doubt that you will approve the Final EIS and give Energy Answers the money. I have no doubt, judging from your conduct that is RUS, that you will approve the final EIS and that you will grant the loan.



Since 2013, since 2013 [sic], the clinic has tried to get information on the type of financing.

Since 2013 we've tried to obtain information Through the Freedom of Information Act on the type of loan. You never provided us any. However, however, Energy Answers in a contract specifies loan conditions.

However, Energy Answers in a contract put specifics of the type of loan you will obtain. So, I feel deeply frustrated, I am extremely frustrated with RUS, with RUS because of you have not provided information, you have prepared, Louis Burger has prepared a very poor, an Environmental Impact Statement that is disrespectful to this town.

But again, I don't have any illusions you will care, but I will tell you a couple of points and we will use the opportunity, we will use the opportunity to submit written comments.

I ask you how many doctors, toxicologists appear in the list of preparers of the Draft EIS. How many doctors or toxicologists appear on the list, the list of drafters? Zero. That's all. Engineering projections, air models, these are all models of air dispersion models and you assume that they are final and definite on the health of people.

And you, on the basis of these models, assume that they are definitive. There is not even one sentence of discussion of the limitations of air dispersion models. There is not a single word on the limitations of these models. That's why this is disrespectful. That is why you do not respect our people presenting that type of document.

Another example of lack of respect, another example of lack of respect. The EIS concludes that this incinerator is going to be good for global warming. And one of the conclusions from you is that this will be good for global climate. That is a very complex conclusion which needs computations which cannot be found in the Draft EIS but nevertheless you reached the conclusion that this will be good for climate change.

Therefore, you are not respecting our people. You come to conclusions that this is good for global warming without

sufficient data support for such an important issue. Another example. Another example -

>> MODERATOR: Mr. Pedro, can you conclude?

>> PEDRO SAADE LLOREAS: No, just a moment. Another example, another example, you reached the conclusion that nanoparticles are reasonable to be ignored. I have examined this calmly. You reached the conclusion that nano-particles are not reasonable to be controlled without any support. In fact, the only study supporting is one which is done by an institute, which receives more than 50 per cent from the auto industry and you know that? That's why you do not respect our people.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Sir, if you want to participate later we can include you. Please conclude.

>> PEDRO SAADE LLOREAS: You do not respect this people when you use data from an institute that receives more than 50 percent from the automobile industry on particulate emissions. These are only some examples. Actually, there no alternatives are considered. Here the impact of transportation of the ashes is not considered. There is no discussion, serious discussion, of alternatives. There is no discussion of transportation of ashes. Where they will go? How much will it cost?

There is not one sentence, not a single sentence on the economic impact of this project on the municipalities and our people. There is not one sentence on the economic impact of this project. Was this ignorance or good faith? No, because in the scoping meeting it was reiterated, you were told again and again and you deliberately chose not to discuss it. And you purposely choose not to discuss the economic consequences of this project. ¿Where are the numbers? ¿Who is going to pay for this? You listen already to the municipalities, the Association, the Federation. This will be an economic disaster. I do not know why RUS has reached this point. I am disappointed. This was a wonderful opportunity in the Draft EIS to say stop, we cannot go on with this stupid program.

(Applause)

RUS has good programs, has good programs. I do not understand why you are getting into this crazy project. I see the faces of the Puerto Ricans that work here. There are good relations with municipalities, with municipalities. What kind of influence or money or lobbying is explaining this? What kind of money or influence is pushing ahead this crazy thing?

Those are some of the things, of the shortcomings of this Environmental Impact Statement which I have studied carefully. There is no alternative, there is no consideration of health and everything is based on mathematical models, and it is unclear what will happen to our children and our people during the next fifty years. But be sure we are fully committed to fight this project. You've heard us, is sincere and we will do it. Do not put your money in this project.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. The next person: Mr. Ivan F. Elias Rodriguez. Come forward.

(Shouts and chants of the public).

>> IVAN F. ELIAS RODRIGUEZ: Here in this public hearing you are the ones being exposed. You who come to Puerto Rico to carry out an illegal act, an act not legally allowed under federal law. Supposedly you cannot come finance an energy project in a country that has energy to spare, unlike the country from which you come, where systems are not necessarily connected, Puerto Rico has only one single, connected system. If one part of the system crashes, it recovers elsewhere. Here there is a power surplus.

Therefore, this is not an isolated rural area. Arecibo has 100,000 inhabitants; this is not a county of 50,000 or less. You do not have the legal authority to do what you are doing. You are breaking the law and we will request that your actions be criminally investigated.

(Applause)

You must have taken money, or what happened? I ask, what can account for you to be so irresponsible as to come here and try to shut our mouths giving us three minutes to analyze a project

that requires a lot of evaluation due to the mediocrity of what you are doing.

What the previous speakers have said shows that you do not know what you are handling or you have us here as puppets to approve a project that is not worthwhile, that threatens what you say you are supposed to defend, because you say that RUS is here to protect people and to protect ecosystems and that's a falsehood. This project threatens people and ecosystems and species.

Let's just look at some examples. Let's start with lead. Arecibo is contaminated with lead. Therefore, you propose a project that will increase lead contamination. Recently, a study was published by the University of Puerto Rico that states that 3 percent of our children, I repeat, 3 percent of our children, are contaminated with lead, with high lead levels, above standard levels. You were told all these things and you were told at the scoping meeting. You decided not to take any notice of us and not to consider our proposals. You were told that this project was not an energy project, therefore, you do not have to be involved in this. There is sufficient energy here, so this is just a big money deal for the proponents and those who are taking money from the proponents.

That's the problem here, those taking money from the proponents who are involved in public policy and are going ahead with this ominous project for our people. This project is proposed in a flood area, and we also told you this at the scoping. This project does not comply with federal regulations on flood areas and therefore is located in the floodway of the Rio Grande de Arecibo. What will happen when the Rio Grande de Arecibo rises?

>> MODERATOR: Sir, if you can go finishing your participation.

>> IVAN F. Elias Rodriguez: Yes, give me a little while longer.

What will happen when the Rio Grande de Arecibo rises and washes the project away? The pollution of our waters, our rivers, our seas will be caused by your decision to approve this project. You were told all these considerations and you chose and included data from an irregularly drafted IES in Puerto Rico, which was no good and which you were told was no good, but you insisted.

One of the things we told you was, look, compare the wind data collected by NOAA itself and the NOAA wind data do not coincide with their wind data used in their mathematical model.

Therefore, there is a contradiction here, you have a federal agency that can tell you, look, these wind data are useless. We told you and you did nothing, we told you that you were threatening the Puerto Rican Parrot and Caño Tiburones, ecosystems and species in danger of extinction, in which federal funds have been invested because NOAA is part of the project of the Puerto Rican Parrot, ten kilometers away. That is less than six miles away from the project there is a Puerto Rican Parrot Aviary, a project that has federal funds and you did not consider this either.

I repeat what I said earlier, this is a farce. You came here to show your lack of respect for us, to try and give the illusion that you were complying with the rights of Puerto Ricans to hear about the Environmental Impact Statement. You came to lie to us. You are a huge package of misrepresentation, just as Energy Answers is deceiving our people. You are joining the people who come to deceive and lie to us. You are as much liars as is Energy Answers.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. Attorney Aleida Centeno Rodriguez.

>>ALEIDA CENTENO RODRÍGUEZ: Good evening. In the spirit of Attorney Pedro Saade and the speaker who preceded me, I will speak to you.

Section 3.2.1.1 of the EIS that you considered clearly states that Arecibo has Prime Land real estate. Prime Land is the best real estate that a community can hold. It also states that, at the moment construction begins, eighty acres of this land will be lost for agricultural use, page 76.

To begin with, Energy Answers is announcing that they will leave us with no food. Furthermore, it assumes no responsibility for the level of contamination that may result to the water and the effect it may have on our Ceti, which is one of our primary foods.

Energy Answers alleges that it comes here because there is an energy crisis. However, it did not submit the determination of the Energy Information Administration of the United States Department of Energy to prove the alleged crisis, which is a requirement of their laws, not ours. And violating your own laws, you are here telling us that the EIS is ready for review.

This is not the only fact regarding which Energy Answers does not comply. Energy Answers does not comply with the requirement that it be a rural site. United States Code 1926 B13 states that rural land is defined as a place with 5,500 people or less. Energy Answers does not comply with this code in Arecibo. We have 309 people per square mile and the 2010 census reported 96,000 people in Arecibo.

However, that is not the worst part about the EIS. The EIS says it submitted the Arcadis report which had been submitted in the previous EIS. In that Arcadis report a series of accusations against the Environmental Protection Agency had been made. Why? Because Arecibo is not analyzed. That EIS talks about Cataño, San Juan, in order to find there a comparison for analysis. It does not recognize that Arecibo has pollution sources like the Battery Recycling Company, ITON (approximate sound), General Electric Caribbean, Thermo King, PREPA, Safetech Corporation Carolina, Sanjo, Merck Sharp & Dohme, Pfizer, Abbott, Avis, Safety-Kleen, Golden Hammer and Macom Inc.

Nor does that EIS take into account that in 2011 the EPA issued a Toxics Release Inventory that says Arecibo has, let's start, lead, cyanide, trichloroethane, dichloromethane, ethylene, xylene, copper, hydrochloric acid, nitric acid, sulfuric acid, 1.1. 1 trichloroethane, sodium hydroxide, ammonium sulfate, zinc dust and gases, styrene, xylene, cyanide compounds, nickel compounds, zinc compounds, phosphoric acids, copper compound, ammonium sulfate, monochloropentafluoromethane solution, dichlorofluoromethane, nickel compounds, ammonium sulfate, nitrate compounds, antimony compounds, lead compounds, cobalt compounds, chromium compounds, cadmium compounds, aluminum oxide, phenols.

>> MODERATOR: Madam.

>> ALEIDA CENTENO RODRÍGUEZ: 1, 2, 4, (off mike) - no, I will not stop.

>> MODERATOR: You need to conclude. If you could finish.

>> ALEIDA CENTENO RODRÍGUEZ: --trimetilbenceno, n-hexane, ammonia, formaldehyde, disociolotes, benzo (ghi) perylene, naphthalene, lead, mercury compounds, manganese, propylene, antimony and silver compounds.

All of those are hazardous wastes that are here in Arecibo and Arcadis's omits them. Not only do they omit them, they omit the fact that Energy Answers is proposing that 30 percent of their garbage will be from tires, wood contaminated with insecticides or lead paint and plastic parts for motor vehicles, all hazardous waste.

You say that you come here to validate your agency's public policy, the RUS. No, you are not here for that. Arecibo's water is contaminated with lead. The report at my home's water reads like this: for 2011 the measurement was 5.5 when the standard is .0015 parts per million. By 2012 it was 7.2, for 2013 it was 8.8, for 2014 it was 6.0. That is, Arecibo has a population that daily receives water contaminated with lead.

It's not just that the air or the soil is contaminated with lead. It is the water that is contaminated with lead. But it does not end with that. Energy Answers announces that it will dredge the Río Grande in Arecibo and already has a permit from the Corps of Engineers to dredge the river. There has been no public hearing here. They say they will raise the land where they will build 21 feet above sea level and that its land is below sea level. So it is more than 21 feet that they will be raising. What are we talking about here?

>> MODERATOR: If you can conclude, ma'am, please.

>> ALEIDA CENTENO RODRÍGUEZ: We are saying that this agency is sponsoring a project that will destroy nature, destroy our lives, and destroy our sustainability.

And what is this project? It is about setting the foundation for the 2020 plan and mining, and you as an agency are facilitating this process and we say here, all of us, that's not going to happen.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: The next person, Hector Quinones Concepcion. Mr. Hector Quinones Concepcion? The next person, Jesus Garcia Oyola. Come forward.

>> JESÚS GARCÍA OYOLA: My name is Jesus Garcia Oyola. I am the president of the Regional Advisory Committee of Arecibo, comprising thirteen towns from Isabela, Quebradillas, to Manati, including Florida, Ciales, Utuado, Jayuya, Adjuntas and Lares.

Through this committee that I chair, we provide service through legal services, to all indigent peoples and we are greatly concerned that this project will affect all of these people that I have mentioned because agriculture is essential in these towns. The dairy industry will be greatly affected in these towns, including Arecibo, Hatillo and other towns that have large herds will also be affected. If you give that money to the project, the project will pollute all the towns I have mentioned, because air pollution rises into the air and falls on the grass in those fields. The cows will eat the grass and milk will be contaminated, meat will be contaminated, along with every one of our grandchildren, because we are all already a little older, but our grandchildren will be affected and we are fighting for the future generation of Puerto Rico because they are the ones that are going to be greatly affected (Applause) and we say to you that for the sake of the future of Puerto Rico do not grant this project to these people, because these people will not do anything for Puerto Rico, they are only coming to steal the money and steal the money that you are going to give them. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. The next person, Cristina Rivera Roman. We are on number 29.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: Good evening to you all. My name is Cristina Rivera Roman. I belong to the group Madres de Negro de Arecibo (Mothers in Black of Arecibo). Mothers in Black of Arecibo is a community organization dedicated to environmental protection, promotion of waste management alternatives and in opposition to the use of contaminating technologies. We are from Arecibo, Villa del Capitán Correa and the Ceti capital.

Arecibo has an agricultural valley comprising the water basin of the Rio Grande of Arecibo. According to the United States Agricultural Census of 2007, Arecibo as the third most important agricultural valley on the island, with an economic output of about 35 million dollars annually. It has several important geological formations, the rock formation known as the karst region being highlighted and whose most important feature is water production.



According to the book *The Puerto Rican Karst - A vital resource*, Arecibo receives about 100 million gallons of fresh water daily that feeds all the business activity in the northern area, an average of 200 companies. These companies also use about .5 million gallons per day of groundwater that Arecibo produces.

Arecibo has an importance as a water basin, which feeds agricultural economic activity in northern Puerto Rico and includes the surrounding towns of Hatillo and Camuy, whose main industry is livestock. As the head of district for the 2010 Census, 96,440 inhabitants were counted, with a population density of 306.9 inhabitants per square kilometer.

Our language is Spanish, as you have seen. The location area where the proposed Energy Answers LLC would be less than two miles from the town of Arecibo. It would be immediately adjacent to the Rio Grande of Arecibo, a flood zone identified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, FEMA, and consisting of the agricultural valley, identified by the Agricultural Federal Census, which in turn is the location proposed for the installation of Energy Answers Limited's incinerator, hereinafter Energy Answers. Energy Answers' immediate neighbors would be Dominguito Ruiz ward, Domingo Ruiz, Santana ward, Bajadero, Santana Parcelas, Rodríguez neighborhood, Arecibo Gardens, Arecibo neighborhood where I live, and the town center of Arecibo. It is upwind to the Coto ward, Víctor Rojas 1, Víctor Rojas 2, Hoyo de los Santos, Hato Arriba ward and University Gardens, Las Mesetas, García neighborhood, Ocean View, Jardines de Arecibo, Vista Azul and the San Daniel ward.

Energy Answers proposes the burning of refuse derived fuel made of thirty percent daily tire derived TDF fuel automotive shredder residue, ASR, and unused urban wood process.

All these components are defined by international law that manages the transborder movement of hazardous waste, as hazardous garbage if it has been exposed to leaded gasoline, lead paint or insecticides and others.

>> MODERATOR: If you can conclude please.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: Pardon me?

>> MODERATOR: If you can conclude your presentation please.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: That is all? Look what's left for me here.

>> MODERATOR: It's three minutes for each person.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: Let me tell you that you have wasted a lot of time here because you were really disorganized and it's not fair.

It's not fair that we have taken out of our time, sick people here that we've been like me, I'm sick and I came here. And, ever since I saw the note that you only get three minutes, that's an abuse and we should not allow it.

>> MODERATOR: But, you have other ways to present. In fact, if you would like, you can even turn in the document.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: So the people here that do not understand Spanish came just for decoration, too? I did not come as a decoration. I came to talk so that they would understand Spanish.

>> MODERATOR: Yes. And each person has three minutes. In fact I'm asking that you please conclude your presentation.

(People shouting).

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: What are they here for? This is what I said. Could they tell me what I said here? This is a waste of time for them.

>> MODERATOR: It is not a matter of answering questions, it is to hear your petitions, put them in writing and address them in the final environmental assessment.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: I ask you. These few pages that you let me say here: when they are translated for them, would they have translated, not just mine, but everyone else's, correctly? Who guarantees us that everything has been translated? Because they are here almost like flower pots. You know what flower pots are, right?

>> MODERATOR: I will answer you.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: You know what a flower pot is, right?

>> MODERATOR: I will answer you. All material and verbal presentations are being recorded and they will all be individually addressed, too. And there will be a public means to address those comments.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: I really doubt it because if in previous hearings you have put what we say here where the sun doesn't shine, nothing guarantees us that all this charade that you have assembled here this afternoon, that it will arrive wherever, and truth is reached. Because the ears, I was looking at all of you, and it really seems like you have deaf ears. Good evening.

>> MODERATOR: There will be a document that allows you to see the answers. Thank you very much.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: Are going to send that to everyone here? To all these people?

>> MODERATOR: The information will be made public. Yes.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: Well, you better do it.

>> MODERATOR: Just as the study is public, that is public.

>> CRISTINA RIVERA ROMÁN: You had better do so because this has actually been illegal, completely illegal! Good afternoon.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: The next person, Javier Biaggi.

>> JAVIER BIAGGI: My name is Javier Biaggi Caballero. I am a resident of Arecibo, the founder of Basura Cero of Puerto Rico.

The fact is that this has been a lie from day one. The paperwork we were given in the scoping session was produced entirely by Energy Answers. All papers and everything the USDA said, was not done by any of you, it was them.

Now, having said that I want to tell the people here that with or without them this will not happen.

(Applause)

Puerto Rico is moving toward what has been denied, toward what it has tried to destroy: recycling. All recycling laws, all efforts, have been to discredit recycling in Puerto Rico.

The facility we are speaking about here, they say there's money for it. But, in Villalba there is a 300 ton MRF plant just sitting there because they haven't got a penny and the government doesn't want to give them any. And there is a plant in Toa Alta, another giant MRF for recycling all the garbage and it's just sitting there, abandoned and destroyed. There is another MRF in Hormigueros, that belongs to the government, which is completely destroyed and abandoned, and people beg them to operate it and they say no.

There is a conspiracy here to favor Energy Answers and all its evil technology that is incineration.

This project needs 2.1 million gallons of water. You do not have it nor will you. They speak of that water as if it is wastewater from an ecosystem. What scientist in this country or in this world will say that the water in an ecosystem that nurtures another ecosystem, that is invaluable to another ecosystem, is just wastewater? Comparing the Caño Tiburones water with water from an effluent treatment plant as if it was like comparing water to water. At no point in that EIS does the value of that water appear in terms of biological components. They will destroy the Ceti fish of Arecibo, which is already disappearing.

They will kill all the coastal fish, with the Fishermen's Association, they will kill it, and that's agriculture. And you, that's your problem. And they have to-- they say they need 2,100 tons. Lie. It's 3,000 tons and do the math. Do the math because they say that they will put 25 percent dry into 2100 ton boilers.

Ok. There's a (unintelligible) percent of the weight of 2100 which needs to be added, but it's a 35 percent moisture reduction that that waste has plus all the old garbage and filth that will be taken out before. So it's 3,000 tons of garbage that they will look for here in Puerto Rico. Where will you find it? Across the entire island.

The third thing they need is to deposit the ashes. Where are they going to put them? Here they have tried to defraud the Autonomous Municipalities Law from every angle and now the ADS ashes case is being heard and that is the same case that will be

seen some day here, if they, by means of this conspiracy, approve this thing.

>> MODERATOR: Very good.

>> JAVIER BIAGGI: Ok. What is it that they have that has allowed this Project that is so bad for Arecibo and for Puerto Rico to continue forward? What they have is political influence. And where does this political influence originate? They might have the money, as people say, but we are the people.

>> AUDIENCE: That's right!

>> JAVIER BIAGGI: Here we are. Now, who are the people behind Governor Fortuño and that were behind Governor Agapito? Who are they?

>> MODERATOR: Can you conclude?

>> JAVIER BIAGGI: Yes, I will conclude.

>> MODERATOR: Please.

>> JAVIER BIAGGI: Those people have names and surnames, and one is named Federico Sanchez, the owner of Interlink. Him and others, and now I'll tell you the names, but since you will not give me the time -

(Shouts from the audience).

>> MODERATOR: Your time has concluded.

>> JAVIER BIAGGI: You do not want to give me a chance. You want to know the gossip? Well, hey, I'll tell you. You have Federico Sanchez.

>> MODERATOR: Your time has concluded. Out of respect for others we wish to continue.

>> JAVIER BIAGGI: Sure. Well, the last thing I will say, in this very place, in 1998, Energy Answers came with former Governor Fortuño as a corporate lawyer for them.

>> AUDIENCE: UUUh.

>> JAVIER BIAGGI: Now you see how this sounds. Right? After the governor, they came back. But, that's not the thing. He, Richard

Carrion and two or three more came. Here is where it began and here this will end.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: The next person, Paula Rodríguez Homs. Come forward.

>> PAULA RODRIGUEZ HOMS: Mrs. Paula Rodríguez Homs speaking to you, former representative of the people of Arecibo and Hatillo, former Commissioner for the Public Service Commission and currently the proud teacher of children in fifth and sixth grade.

(Applause)

So, I want, first of all, to give many thanks to the people, the mayor of Mayagüez who sent the lawyer to speak up against the incinerator, the leaders of the Federation and the Mayors' Association. And it's very sad, he is the only, the mayor of Arecibo, he is the only one who seems to be in favor of Energy Answers, very sad indeed.

I was against it in the past and the people here know that. I was the only public servant who always said no to the incinerator. I was the only one.

(Applause)

And today I am against the incinerator. I am against you giving money for its development. I come from Bajadero ward in Arecibo, born to a woman and a father who raised me with much character and was asthmatic for many, many years. And in my house we all talked and this morning I told my son told that I was coming here in the evening, he was headed out to his college classes this morning and he told me to ask you how much is health and life worth? It's priceless, I replied. He took out a dollar bill, that's what they're looking for here, money. Money to build Energy Answers. He took the bill and told me this is all that I have, but ask them if the health of the entire Arecibo community, of my son, my husband, my family and all of you is worth something. Of course I said yes, it is worth dignity and respect, because health is priceless. And, as health is priceless, this US bill that you represent and us too, on the back says In God we trust. And, as we trust in God, I fully trust in God that you will not give money and that the incinerator in Arecibo will not be built.

We cannot think here that this is the life of human beings, because it is not. Life is priceless. Life needs to be respected. Health is to be honored. And this woman who raised me, who died twelve years ago, taught me that he that has dignity that has value that has respect does not sell himself. That is why I tell you that this cannot go on. No, why? Simply because we, all of us here, are for the health of the people. And, as I believe in God, I repeat again, God will not allow you to give money to help Energy Answers come to Arecibo. So, stand up and fight hard against the incinerator! Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. The next person is Rafael Pitre. Thank you very much. Come forward.

>> RAFAEL PITRE: Good afternoon. I am Rafael Pitre, President of the Fishermen's association of the Jarealito ward here in Arecibo.

There has already been mention here of health, of the water from Caño Tiburones and other things that I was going to say and I will omit them in order to not repeat them.

But in this world, the two largest oceans we have are the Pacific, which the Japanese have already contaminated with radiation. That everyone knows.

We cannot let Energy Answers start killing the Atlantic Ocean. And I will explain. Now, they want to install a super pipe about sixty feet from the Fishermen's Association. What's the problem with that? Energy Answers wants to install a pipe in an estuary that will suck up two million gallons. That means that someone is not doing the homework because that pipe will destroy all the crustaceans, the fish. All of this will be a vacuum cleaner there. And that is an estuary all along the pipe. We can't even fish there, as commercial fishermen, because it is a fish hatchery, the starting point for a whole variety of fish.

This means that if the pipe is installed there, fishing in all of Puerto Rico will soon end, for the whole area of Arecibo. Us 400 fishermen in the area? All dead in the water. So we cannot let them put that pipe there or anywhere else, because it will kill all marine life in Arecibo. And, the Fishermen's

Association supports neither the pipe nor Energy Answers' incinerator. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Very good. Thank you very much. The next person, Maria Rodriguez Gonzalez. Come forward.

>> Maria Rodriguez Gonzalez: Good afternoon. I am Mrs. Maria Rodriguez Gonzalez de Carreras, widow of Carreras. Very glad to be here with my colleagues and to meet you.

I am very surprised that people as smart as you are allowing the Energy Answers company to convince you to support them in this project that is so sinister. I suffer from asthma. My daughter also. I worked with mentally disabled children because my major is in mental health technology.

I worked with seniors. And it is sad to see people dying of asthma, children with mental disabilities, because all Energy Answers will bring here will be illnesses: psychological, they will bring asthma, they will foul our waters, we have a beautiful sea, we have rivers.

I live near the town center. This beautiful town of Arecibo that is less than a mile, a mile and a half from where Energy Answers, using their mafia-like tricks and traps, asks for permission saying they have no money, and I do not lie and God knows, when I went to a meeting with my colleagues Madres de Negro, we were in a TV program ..., some colleagues that gave us an interview, and Energy Answers offered me work. I told him no, I was already retired. And my husband too, because my husband told them about the dangers involved with this incinerator, because my husband was a veteran. Unfortunately I lost him two years ago.

They offered me a job and I said no because I was not going to betray my people by supporting them, working for them when people would die. They were promoting death in this town. They have to respect us here in this town.

And I ask of you, I lived for 28 years in New York and 10 years in Arizona, because my husband was a veteran and worked and taught nuclear classes - the poison that killed the Vietnamese, all this, the incinerator, everything that the smoke stack will spew out and that they will toss on the ground.



This is going to spread, it will damage our soil, our agriculture, milk from our cows, our children. And the worst thing is to see a child dying from asthma.

You have to have children. Look at them tonight as they sleep or play and think about how we will suffer when we see our children, our grandchildren, and our elderly. You who are young, perhaps you will not be here. But those who live here are the ones who will suffer the greatest consequences. This is a crime. This is genocide. For me Energy Answers can go to hell.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

>> MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ: To hell without mincing words. I was born to help and tell the truth, and anyone who does not like it can wallow on the floor, and I will help you stay there.

And if there is anyone here from Energy Answers, prove that I'm a liar, come and disprove that they offered me a job when we were at the TV program "Entre Nosotras" and I said no, because I had a job and it was to take care of my family and my community, because since 1910 I, together with colleagues from all groups, am defending this town, everyone has tried to play with our health and character.

We are not anyone's guinea pig. Our people, you have to respect our town.

We have students here, we have retirees. My family was a family that was devoted to serve, police, FBI, nurses. All who are here are professionals, we are not some suckers for those who want to take us for stupid and play with our intelligence. Ok.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

>> MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ GONZÁLEZ: Thank you.

>> MODERATOR: The next person, Luzmar Soneira.

We want to make an announcement; it is now eight in the evening. The time will be extended for a half hour. We will continue to

call people who are signed up and move along as much as possible. Three minutes and no more.

>> LUZMAR SONEIRA: Good evening. Basically what I want to say is Uncle Sam is historically so inconsiderate, right?

I was a sailor for some time and was in the Caribbean when the Monserrate volcano was erupting and ash covered everything so much that ashes radius was almost 50 miles, we had to go around behind the volcano to make it through. The implications of this incinerator in Arecibo are not micro-level implications.

You say in the Environmental Impact Statement that the borderline danger limit is 565 meters, but this cannot be seen as micro; you have to look at the macro level of the entire ecosystem.

All migratory birds coming from Canada every year, generations after generation, century after century, all along the coastline north of Puerto Rico; all these birds are going to die. This is not even - it transcends the Puerto Rican parrot-- This is something international. This transcends beyond the issue of Puerto Rican citizens. This is a matter of world citizens.

Pollution is a hot topic, where all countries of the world are coming together to produce less toxins and, so, this project is basically saying within 565 meters there cannot be any neighbors. But, yes it does, it has neighboring farmers in the town of Hatillo, it has farmers in all the neighboring towns on the island, all karst sinkholes will get all that ash and all that water that already doesn't exist because there is a drought in the country. We are talking about 2.1 million gallons of water per day that we don't even have in the country right now. Where will they get the water to cool those boilers, if there is no water now?

My mother died of respiratory failure and I lived for seven years the agony of someone who could not breathe. I cannot even imagine the high incidence of cancer that the town of Arecibo and the surrounding towns will have. To have a human being, a relative, a neighbor dying of not being able to breathe is a more, more, more catastrophic agony than any person can have. And we are not going to allow it, even if you approve the funds, and even if you give them the money as a result of bribes, Puerto Rico is not for sale. We will not allow it.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. The next person, Jeyma Garcia Mateos. I don't know if I said it right.

>> JEYMA GARCIA MATREUS: It's fine. Correct. Good evening. I am going to give my turn to Guarisa Arias. I am gonna concede my turn to Guarisa Arias, who will represent a group of agriculture workers, so please.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Please give your name.

>> GUARISA ARIAS: Good evening to all. My name is Guarisa Arias and I speak today on behalf of the National Boricua Farmer Organization and Agroecological Farmer.

First of all, I join with the others who have passed through here and have said it is disrespectful of your agency to come before us and present this EIS.

First and foremost, when the Spanish version on the second page says that because of ambiguities that may occur the official version is the English translation, when we have a population that does not speak both languages, like those here today do not speak Spanish. Ok?

Second, I want to emphasize that I find that this project fits Energy Answers under the organic RUS law. Why? Because this agency, which you represent, has always been responsible for providing energy, water and communications to rural communities.

Energy Answers is not going to supply power to any rural population.

Second, the rural areas in Puerto Rico are quite different from the rural areas in the Americas or in the United States.

Third, I want to emphasize part 3.10.2.2 of the EIS, where there appears the ambiguous language and study on pollutants describing something hypothetical, a hypothetical situation where a person who consumes milk, eggs, etc. from a single farm that is ten kilometers or 6.2 miles, will not have adverse effects on their health. On the one hand it says that it does not relate to cancer. Elsewhere it says that the study does relate to cancer.

As our colleague Dr. Osvaldo said today, this part is wrong because the wind study presented by Energy Answers does not correspond with the NOAA data on the winds in Puerto Rico, which is located in the passage the trade winds, which is one of the most constant wind currents in the world running east to west. West of this incinerator lies most of the dairy industry of Puerto Rico; and as an association and organization of farmers we are strongly opposed to this and I want the members of the organization I represent tonight to stand; and all those who need a farmer day after day to also stand.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: If you could continue, please.

>> GUARISA ARIAS: Finally, I would like to say that the construction of this incinerator will adversely affect agriculture in Puerto Rico, especially our number one industry, which is the milk in Puerto Rico.

I know my time is up, but I've been waiting to talk until now, I think it's rather unfair that my time is limited.

>> MODERATOR: Very well.

>> GUARISA ARIAS: Thank you.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

>> GUARISA ARIAS: Finally, we are strongly opposed to this and believe that your agency must terminate this project and not consider it, because it is crazy.

On behalf of all farmers among the people of Puerto Rico we hope that you will desist from this madness and correct it and not consider it again and show such disrespect to us like this. Thank you very much and good evening.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. The next person, Alejandro Miró. 36.  
Alejandro Miró

>> FERNANDO E. BETANCOURT: Excuse me. We are on 36, right?

>> MODERATOR: Yes. Mr. Alejandro Miró.

>> FERNANDO E. BETANCOURT: It's just that I have 43, but I want to catch the last turn.

>>ALEJANDRO MIRÓ: Good evening. My name is Alejandro Miró. I am a biologist and ecologist. I'm here in a personal capacity as a concerned citizen, but also as a representative of the Puerto Rican Organization of Organic Agriculture and Permaculture Self-Sufficient Ecological Cooperative for Puerto Rico.

I will never have the eloquence to re-articulate what has been said so eloquently, right? by other colleagues. However, I wanted to mention that a book published in 2005 called "The Puerto Rico Atlas" has a chart of the lifespan of landfills in Puerto Rico. They all ranged from about six to eleven [years], maybe a little more - and that was published ten years ago; so it seems extremely absurd to contemplate burning trash before contemplating composting it.

Is it not true that a good program, well-coordinated, well run, municipal, integrated at the island level producing compost would be a huge benefit for organic farmers? And it's a real proposal, which could provide the same or more money to what is being brought to the table and we have people able to develop these plans, saying these things and ready to implement this. We are professionals; we are not just anyone saying this, right?

We do not believe this facade of benevolence; it does not deceive us, we are acutely aware of the reality and for us it is clear that garbage is not just garbage. Garbage is business; and with the economic crisis we have and the 73 billion of foreign debt, this project is not a business for the people of Puerto Rico. This is an environmental disaster that will bring pollution and will continue to draw money from the island, right? This does not represent the people's interests.

This incinerator is not something that we are asking for. This is a thing of colonialism. This is colonialism. We can self-manage a different Puerto Rico; and I am here as an individual, as a representative of my cooperative and of this Boricua Organization, saying that we condemn and denounce this project.

[Speaker speaks in English]

And if you guys need a translation, I am more than happy to give you one. The general sentiment is that your project is full of holes and we know it, and we will not be duped. We, Boricuas, people of Puerto Rico do not want you here, and we will do

everything necessary to make sure this project does not go forward. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. The next person, Dr. Cruz Maria Nazario. If you would state your name please. Go ahead.

>> CRUZ MARÍA NAZARIO: Good evening. My name is Cruz Maria Nazario. I am an epidemiologist and public health professional. Tonight I want to read the resolution of the Graduate School of Public Health at the University of Puerto Rico unanimously opposes the establishment of the incinerator in Arecibo and anywhere in Puerto Rico.

(Applause)

For those of you that do not know Spanish, I will try to translate the best in English. I am a professor of the Graduate School of Public Health and we have a resolution that was signed by all members of the Graduate School of Public Health against the establishment of this type of management of the waste in Puerto Rico. We all oppose incineration.

Waste incineration indisputably produces persistent substances, irritants including carcinogens, respiratory obstructions, and other substances harmful to human health. Of particular concern to us public health professionals are dioxins and furans, substances that are highly toxic to humans and that result from burning waste.

The Energy Answers Company has promised that pollution control equipment will operate perfectly all the time; to achieve the full and continuous removal of all contaminants; that all fuel flow waste will be diverted all the time.

They have used models that generate only approximations of what really happens, because Energy Answers is not a company that has experience in handling incinerators. They are builders. So they are promising us a fairy tale, Fantasy Island, with the establishment of an incinerator that will never be able to achieve that they're saying.

Whereas, as a result of the incineration of solid waste there will be contamination of land, water, and bioaccumulation of contaminants in the fat in the milk. This is the milk that my grandchildren who live in Trujillo Alto will be drinking,

because what happens in Arecibo will affect everyone in Puerto Rico, not just the people in Arecibo, but all of Puerto Rico.

(Applause)

Whereas, it has been shown that there are better ways to solve the problem of solid waste, including waste reduction, reuse of waste and recycling leftovers. These alternatives are in all the platforms of all political parties competing here in Puerto Rico every four years.

Therefore, the Faculty of the Graduate School of Public Health, Medical Sciences Campus, of the University of Puerto Rico opposes the installation of solid waste incinerators in Puerto Rico considering that it is not the best option due to the risks to health and the environment.

Public health professionals, guided by the fundamental principles of protection of human health of residents of Arecibo and of Puerto Rico and around the planet Earth, say no to incineration. Thank you.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you, Doctor. The next person: Maria Alvarado Guau.

(Applause)

>> MARÍA ALVARADO GUAU: Good evening. First of all I have to say that as a Puerto Rican and as a farmer that this is disrespectful to the people of Puerto Rico. It shows a lack of respect from you as an agency, which supposedly represents the interests of farmers and agriculture, to allow the expropriation of land, which will be exposed to pollution, and that is clearly -- as explained here -- the damage is visible and undeniable, and likely. But this is part of what is a supposedly green economy, under the rhetoric of sustainability and conservation, to maintain a capitalist system of excessive consumption, under the rhetoric that it will protect and will mitigate that damage, this wasteful consumption that is causing inequality, poverty, violation of human rights and other social ills.

And we, as stated above, as an agricultural organization we tenaciously oppose this type of project and any alleged green energy project, misleading, they're looking to get rich on

speeches, speeches that are not real and are obsolete. So we demand to be respected, as an island and a nation.

It is not the first time that this project is proposed. When Governor Rosello, it was proposed for Guaynabo and Arecibo; and thanks to the people's struggle it did not succeed. And this time will be the same. This project is not going anywhere. That's all I have to say.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. The next person: Francis Torres Fernández.

>> FRANCIS TORRES FERNÁNDEZ: My name is Francis Torres Fernandez. I wanted to take the turn only for consultation; the Mayors Association of Puerto Rico presented its position in writing. [Speaker speaks in English] The Mayors Association of Puerto Rico, which is Composed of 47 of the 78 mayors, and presented a written statement Already you have it in your records.

And, I wanted to note that, you're going to be receiving a hard copy, formally a hard copy by mail. [End of English] And you will get it.

Essentially the Association opposes the Environmental Impact Statement, saying that it suffers from a lack of economic studies, because the economic impact is not evaluated in the municipalities involved, which are required to bring their trash to the incinerator. [Speaker speaks in English] The municipalities are objecting to the failure of the EIS due to a lack of economics evaluation and studies of their impact for hauling waste to Energy Answers. [End of English]

In addition, they warn that they will go to court to challenge the contract that is the basis for its financial model. [English] They warn RUS that they are intending to file a lawsuit in the courts against the contract that is the cornerstone for their financial model. [End of English]

In addition, they are announcing that they will submit additional comments to the EIS before the deadline of September 28.

>> MODERATOR: Correct.



>> FRANCIS TORRES FERNÁNDEZ: Thank you very much.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

(Applause)

The following person: Ángel Rodríguez. Go ahead.

>> ÁNGEL RODRÍGUEZ: Good evening everyone. My name is Angel Rodriguez. I want to remind everyone that before you came here, we had a few environmental murderers like you, that was the Corps of Engineers; and myself with other people who are here, we were the group that sued and they picked up everything that they had done and they left.

[Speaker speaks in English]

For you that are looking with those faces that even don't know where you are, we sued the government of United States, the Core of Engineers for coming here, dredging our harbor and disposing all the sand and sedimentation on top of our live reef.

Now, I am telling you right now, what you guys are doing it's completely illegal and we are here; and we are going to go all the way against you guys and we don't care about nobody, no government, because we are the government, and you guys are doing..., you are assassins, so you better pick up your things and just get the hell out of here! Right? That's all I've got to say  
[End of English]

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. Go ahead. The next person: Carmen Sánchez.

>> CARMEN SÁNCHEZ: On behalf of the mother of all living beings on Earth, which is our mother Earth, this says: "They want us to allow the incinerator, but all we want is for Puerto Ricans to breathe. What happened to health for the people? (Sound of breathing).

The solution is not more poison; it is never to pollute. The solution is to reduce, reuse and recycle. They want us to poison the humble people, the common people, black people, the poor and those living on the edge; and that is best known as environmental racism. We will not accept burning or ash or incineration or poisons. We are ready to fight for environmental justice!

(Applause)

{The audience, chanting, the incinerator they want to assign [inaudible]), but all Puerto Ricans want to breathe. Health for the people. Never contaminate. The solution is to reduce, reuse and recycle. Oh oh. They want to poison us, the poor and blanks, and that is best known as environmental racism. We will not accept burning or ash or incineration or poisons. We are ready to fight for environmental justice! Oh oh.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you very much. The next person, Doctor Víctor Ramos. Go ahead, Doctor.

>> VÍCTOR RAMOS: Good evening. I had the technical explanations of why to oppose the incinerator, but as President of the Association of Physicians and Surgeons I have to tell the United States: Where has the US been during the drought in Puerto Rico? Where has the US been during the economic problem? Where has the US been on the health problem that 60 percent of the population will not have access to health in two years? And we are giving away money to these guys with a criminal enterprise. It's not possible. I hope the bitch [literal translation, "small female dog"] will explain why this is wrong and why we will not allow it.

A month ago, the company lobbyist sent me a letter, that if I spoke out publicly against the incinerator again, he would sue me. So sue me! Here I am!

(Applause)

And they are going to have to give more money to the US Department of Corrections for more jails because they won't have enough room for all of us, the people who are going to stop this incinerator!

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. The next person, Mr. Fernando Beltran Medina, is it? Attorney Fernando from the Broad Committee of Arecibo.

Attorney Fernando Beltrán.

>> Betancourt.

>> MODERATOR: Betancourt. Sir, go ahead. Could you tell us your name?

>> FERNANDO E. BETANCOURT: No, I want to be the last one. So, I am going to give the closing argument.

(Noises in the audience).

>> MODERATOR: As you like. Teresa Sánchez.

>> TERESA SÁNCHEZ: Good afternoon. My name is Teresa Sánchez. I belong to the group Madres de Negro.

We were the ones who started with a Broad Committee in Arecibo against this project five years ago. There have been five difficult years for everyone. However, I want to tell you something: It truly is a lack of respect what you have done to us. We are speaking here and you are looking at a mirror and understand nothing. For me it is an insult to our culture, against our people.

I think you had to bring bilingual people here to understand what we are doing. You are treating us like people ... as if we are not educated. To me that is not acceptable.

Secondly, I want to add that I recommend that you do not approve one penny to this company called Energy Answers. In case you missed it, everyone here is against this project. How many people have come here? I've gone and I have participated in so many public hearings that I know honestly they honestly do not have the people. What you see here are our people.

We are opposing and we will continue to oppose this project because it threatens the health, threatens the quality of life of our country and threatens the environment. We're not just talking about the environment in Puerto Rico; we are talking about global warming. We have to think what we are: I am a citizen of the planet; therefore, I do not want the incinerator in Arecibo or in Puerto Rico or anywhere on our planet. We have to defend our planet because we really have high concentrations of CO2 in our atmosphere and especially in these times of water crisis around the planet. Especially in our country there is a water crisis. How is it possible that this company threatens our resources? We are here today, we will continue to be present, we will keep fighting until eventually we tell the Energy Answers

the incinerator will not happen! We want alternatives, because we are not here protesting just to protest. We think that waste management, we have problems with solid waste, a philosophy should be applied as in California, as in Europe, called "Zero Waste". We need to educate our people and we want that.

If you want to come to our country, if you want to give money in times of crisis, I think you should invest in projects that are truly healthy for our country and our planet.

(Applause)

So it's important that you be aware that we the people are here. Tell me how many of those people who support the project are here. They have the money, as our colleague said, but we are the people; and I think the people must be respected and I hope you will recognize that.

I want to ask a question.

>> MODERATOR: In conclusion.

>> TERESA SÁNCHEZ: There are many people who could not participate and so they are not here. Can you indicate where people have to write? For all the people who are here, I urge you to write to all their friends and flood the Agency, saying that we do not want the incinerator.

Please, would you be so kind as to tell our people what is the email address where they can write?

>> MODERATOR: Allow me. In all the brochures that were delivered at the last point it says: steps to follow. The e-mail address is there.

>> TERESA SÁNCHEZ: We don't have it. I don't have it. They did not give it to me. That's why I'm asking.

>> MODERATOR: They were handing them out to everyone at the entrance.

>> TERESA SÁNCHEZ: Ok.

>> MODERATOR: They handed out over a thousand of these leaflets.

>> TERESA SÁNCHEZ: If they handed out over a thousand, how do they say that there's only 200 people here? That does not make

sense to me. Ok. Because the media are saying that if you say they had a thousand and they gave away a thousand, how are they saying that there only 200 people? That isn't consistent; it is illogical.

But, finally I tell you to think this carefully: do not give a cent to this company, it will threaten the health, environment and quality of life of our country.

>> MODERATOR: Thank You. If you could please wind it up.

>> TERESA SÁNCHEZ: Here we are all fighting together and we do not want this project. That is all. Good evening.

(Applause)

>> MODERATOR: Thank you. The next person: Elisa Llenza.

>> ELISA LLENZA: With your permission, I am going to speak in English because I do not want to depend on them translating what I have to say.

[Speaker speaks in English]

I am going to speak to you in English because I don't want to rely on anybody translating what I have to say to you.

First of all, I like to let you know that Puerto Ricans are usually very nice people and hospitable and I know that you guys that are sitting here and are not really the responsible people and you are receiving this reaction because this is a horrible proposal and our life is tied to it, and that's why people are upset, because we have not been treated fairly, but usually we are not this type of people, and this is horrible that you have to sit there for all this time. I feel embarrassed for you, that your Agency will send you here, when you are sitting here for a proposal that does not follow the line of the goal of the United Stated Department of Agriculture. And it doesn't even follow the RUS utilities; you know, the RUS utilities service parameters for this. And I am gonna explain to you why I think so.

And besides, three minutes for a public hearing is not correct, because if you only want to know what we have to say you could only ask us to submit the papers. The public hearing is supposed

to be so that everybody can listen to what other people have to say and, unfortunately, during this whole process, even though they take and they make transfers, we see the transfer, so the permits are already given. So, nobody has an opportunity to read and react to it before it's too late. And this has been going on for a long time. I had been trying to locate documents because not all the documents are available for us to see.

You don't have dockets like, usually agencies have, where everything is posted in chronological order, so nobody can really get the facts right, and nobody can even trust anything because we don't have time to look at anything.

This is a complicated issue and you guys have scientists on your side, but we are citizens, so we have to get help from people and we only have two, three weeks, to go through a lot of paperwork. That's not fair.

The reason for the Agency to exist is to promote and protect and facilitate the production of healthy food for all citizens. This incinerator proposal is in total contradiction to all the goals of the agency as well as the EPA Official National Policy, which was recently reaffirmed with the Clean Air Act, with the Clean Water Act and with the national priority to protect our watersheds in times when water is scarce and fossil fuel emissions are affecting our climate and our planet.

Even the U.S. Fish and Wildlife in Florida has been having to advise the indigenous people that they cannot eat the fish that they had eaten all their life because it is contaminated with mercury and other types of toxics. This is what you are setting us up for and we have been going through this set up for a long time because we are industrialized here.

As this is a small island, if something happens, you just can't go down farther. Everything is interconnected. We can't even

predict hurricanes because the winds are so crazy that you have winds going uphill and all over the place every time we have an event.

We have ashes that are deposited right now from a coal power plant and you should see the mess they have on the east coast of Puerto Rico. This is not good for food or for the food chain.

This contract would bind us, our country, for over 30 years. When the world is desperately shifting to genuine clean and renewable energies that are not fossil sources.

This whole thing about naming an incinerator as renewable energy is a farce and it passed because there were people that were lobbying with a lot of money behind them for this type of a project.

This is not renewable. Renewable is the sun, the water, the wind and other things that are naturally in the environment and that happen all the time and we can access them, and they are totally compatible with agriculture which is what your business is all about and that's what we want here.

>> MODERATOR: Can you conclude?

>> ELISA LLENZA: The World Health Organization has determined that there are toxic substances that are killing and affecting people and causing cancer.

Puerto Rico is struggling to acquire food security and to become agriculturally sustainable. We have a lot of young people that have decided they want to work the land for the first time in a long time and a lot of them are back there. I take classes with them. Ok?

We want an opportunity to have our land to produce food and we have ways to manage the trash in other ways. We are reducing trash and we are reusing it and we don't want this project. And we should have an opportunity to get it done.

>> MODERATOR: Can you conclude, please?

>> ELISA LLENZA: Yes, a moment more, please.

>> MODERATOR: Go ahead.

>> ELISA LLENZA: The Company has a history of submitting false documents in order to obtain a water franchise from our local Department of Natural Resources. This was publicly informed in February of 2014 when the permit was denied for the water franchise.

They falsified two graphs which they had the audacity to state as a reference, a 1984 U.S. Geological Survey and the graphic does not exist at all in that study; and the other graphic they made was supposedly consisting of water level register from the protected Caño Tiburones wetland. When the Department of Natural Resources checked the numbers of their water registers with the points on the graphic, they did not coincide, and they will deny the permit.

I think that that is illegal, to submit and try to fool the government to get a permit. If they did it to the Natural Resources Department here, they are probably doing it to you with the paperwork, documents that we have not been able to see because we now find out that there's no application, which was originally said to us that existed when you presented the Federal Register a notice in January of 2014. It talked about that you were gonna prepare and EIS related to the proposal submitted by Energy Answers. And this was supposed to be something that you wanted all the information, so that you wouldn't - you know -- make the mistake of giving somebody the money for the wrong reasons, under the wrong parameters.



Then, in April 12, you start talking about that this would be something that would attract residential and rural jobs. Well, people don't want to live close to an incinerator and they don't want to work near one either.

Finally, I am surprised that in August 7, in the Federal Register, when you notified of this meeting, you no longer talked about an application. Now you say that this plan is to request financial assistance for the proposed project and then it talks about a pending application.

So I've been calling the office because I wanted to see the contract and all the paperwork that Energy Answers has filed in, to see, what they allege is what they are going to do with this, and there is no paper for that because it's pending the application. You are spending all this money making this EIS and having this meeting, but they haven't even formally submitted an application from what I understand. I don't understand that procedure.

Finally, I want to say one last thing. Supposedly this is to benefit agriculture and to lower the cost of energy. This is what the parameters of the Rural Utilities Service has money allocated for. There's other ways of energies to do it and the contract that they have for selling the energy to the Puerto Rico Energy Authority is higher than what the Puerto Rico Energy Authority costs now from them to produce the same kilowatts because fuel has gone down. So you are not even going to get a price, and if the percent of energy - this goes into a whole pot, it's not going to be directed to a community. The energy is sold to the power company and it's part of the energy that is going to be distributed to all the island. This energy is not destined to agriculture communities, and the price is not gonna change. Thank you.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

(Applause)

The next person: Rafael Bey.

>>RAFAEL BEY: Good evening. My name is Rafael Bey Nazario. I am a resident of Arecibo. I live in the Martell Urbanization. For the past 30 years I thought that I was living in the urban area. Today, I found out that I do not live in the urban area, but in the rural area. Thank you for correcting this false notion that I had.

The damage caused by incinerators is known to all. Since their inception in the last century, large incinerators have been a source of death, destruction and disease. The Energy Answers proposal is exactly that: to perpetuate that legacy, genocide of populations for profit.

Our government has become an accomplice of these actions. All executive departments in Puerto Rico have been accomplices in what they are attempting to do with us. You are here because Energy Answers has bought the will and conscience of our politicians and our public servants with big money. What Energy Answers brings to Arecibo is disease.

I live 1.6 kilometers from the area where they will build the incinerator and I suffer from chronic bronchial asthma, like thousands of Puerto Ricans.

The main effect of incinerator emissions in the short term is on the respiratory system. So we can expect that if it is built, my lifespan will be shortened by a lot and it will increase disease in our region.

Tonight I will not talk about technical things that have been beautifully presented by our colleagues, also the legal and health issues.

In the same way that I hold the government of Puerto Rico, its agencies, Energy Answers and all investors in this Project responsible for the deterioration of my health, I hold each of you accountable for not just my deteriorating health, but that of all citizens of Arecibo and adjacent regions.

>> MODERATOR: Can you conclude, please?

>>RAFAEL BEY: Yes, in conclusion, I don't want to forget to thank these people for your concern for our safety. It has reached the point that they are here are accompanied by the national security forces, to protect us. So, thank you for your kindness.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

(Applause)

We have two more speakers.

The second to last: Miguel Sarriera.

>> FERNANDO E. BETANCOURT: Excuse me. Can someone allow me to finish, he stepped out.

>> MODERATOR: Later, due to the time, and you were all warned half an hour ago. Mr. Miguel Sarriera is next and then you are the last person, and that's it, the hearing will conclude.

>> FERNANDO E. BETANCOURT: With all due respect, you cannot come here to tell me ... You cannot leave that person without speaking. You can wait three minutes. Let's make peace.

>> MODERATOR: Everyone has had their chance. Now, Mr. Miguel Sarriera, if you please.

>> FERNANDO E. BETANCOURT: (inaudible) who missed his turn, he asked me, he is there and I want you to allow him.

>> MODERATOR: Why not, instead of wasting this time, allow us to let Miguel Sarriera participate?

>> MIGUEL SARRIERA: Good evening. To me, regarding this whole process of the incinerator, the main concern I have is related to our planet's problems. What I mean is that we have a global crisis that we are living every day on our planet: mine, yours and yours, too. There are many problems that we have, but I'll mention two, which I understand are related to what is being proposed here, to this incinerator. One is global warming and the other is the depletion of resources. Global warming caused by CO2 emissions, climate change; no need to talk more about that; we all know what it means.

And resources exhausted by overuse of the earth's resources unsustainably. If we have problems of this nature, we must take them seriously. And take them seriously means starting to consider them at all times when we have to make a decision on how to address a problem. And here we are to address the problem of waste disposal, solid waste.

We must necessarily look for an alternative that is consistent with a policy that protects the planet, that addresses these

issues and that will reduce and eliminate it if possible. And there is no doubt that for solid waste management the right path is recycling. You do not burn the recycled material, you do not emit CO2 and you recover the materials so that your use of resources on the planet is less and your impact is less.

That would be a decision that is consistent with the problem, with a logical decision, consistent with a solution to global problems that plagues us.

But what are we doing here today? We come here today because what has been proposed to solve the problem is to burn garbage, emitting more greenhouse gases, to compound the problem, and destroy resources that otherwise could be recovered, further aggravating the problem of resource depletion afflicting the planet. So this has no logic and makes no sense.

But how have we come to this process after so many public hearings and discussions? Yet this irrationality, which is contrary to the best interests of our planet and ours, incomprehensibly, is still alive. Well, there must be a reason; and the reason is that this system does not provide mechanisms to address these problems.

There is much talk in the federal government about the problem of global warming and here we see the federal government willing to put \$800 million into a machine to destroy resources and emit greenhouse gases in the atmosphere! That makes no sense.

>> MODERATOR: If you could finish, please.

>> MIGUEL SARRIERA: Yes, I'm going to finish. This system does not provide solutions to our problems. I will not go into the issue of how these Environmental Impact Statements work because this is a fraud that will not in any way address the global problems that affect us.

If we really want to address the problem of the incinerator, we have to participate here; it's very important to educate and create pressure, but we have to strangle them economically. We must go to our mayors. We need to lobby them. We need to lobby the candidates. We have to force them all to not sign a single contract with the incinerator, to deny funding. That's how they won this battle in Baltimore and this is how we will win here in Puerto Rico.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you.

(Applause)

The last person: Mr. Fernando Betancourt. This is the last participant. We appreciate your cooperation.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: I wish to correct you. The last one who is going to talk is Morirmes Alps. This is the second to last.

>> MODERATOR: No, this is the last person, Mr. Fernando Betancourt.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: Look, excuse me, I beg you, brother, not to enter into a dispute over one person. It's only three more minutes.

>> MODERATOR: Look, that's it. Everybody was ...

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: But, look, brother, that's not everyone. The man signed and left. He's here. And I think you will violate ... you cannot violate ...

>> AUDIENCE: Let him speak! Let him speak!

>> MODERATOR: As I said, there are several mechanisms to submit questions. Still open. That's the last person. Whoever is next is the last person.

(Audience: Let him speak! Let him speak!)

If you are going to be the last person, go ahead. If you are going to give your time to the gentleman, that's the last person.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: Excuse me. [In English] Hello, hey, excuse me I wanna) leave an (inaudible), an annotation for the record that there is one other person that missed his turn and wants three more minutes. Excuse me. I wanna speak to you guys respectfully and this guy comes here to tell me that he doesn't want to (inaudible).

>> MODERATOR: Excuse me, sir. But I have just been informed that you will be the last person and you have three minutes.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: [In English] I wanna speak to the examiners. Sorry I am speaking to the examiners. I am an

attorney and I'm going (inaudible), so shut your mouth out and then, do you know? This is a constitutional violation of his freedom of speech and this act. So you make the ruling. I want you guys to make the ruling. Concede the please, guys.

>> MODERATOR: Sir, if you want to take advantage of the three minutes, you can use them now, but you will be the last person to talk.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: Listen, are you the examiner sir?

>> MODERATOR: As I said, there are other mechanisms for participation.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: I wanna speak to the examiners. I wanna know, are you the examiners? You have to decide.

>> EXAMINER: Sir, it's time to end the meeting.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: Are you an examiner?

>> EXAMINER: Yes.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: Ok. Respectfully, I will present the motion for you because this guy (Inaudible) and he came, because he make. When I came here (Inaudible). So (Inaudible), listen; freedom of speech. We are in America please. So I beg as a lawyer, as a friend.

>> EXAMINER: Sorry, you have the opportunity to provide comments. Again we are recording this right now so we are getting your comments. Comments are due September 28. Right now it's time to end the meeting.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: I beg you respectfully as an attorney don't make this mistake. Give me the three minutes. Please. I beg you as an examiner and I am advising you as an attorney that you should do. This is a freedom (Inaudible) violation for the record.

>> EXAMINER: Sir, we are ending the meeting. Thank you all for your participation. Good night.

>> FERNADO E. BETANCOURT: Excuse me.

>> MODERATOR: Thank you all for your participation. We have taken all cards. Any written comments you wish to add we are here to receive them.

END