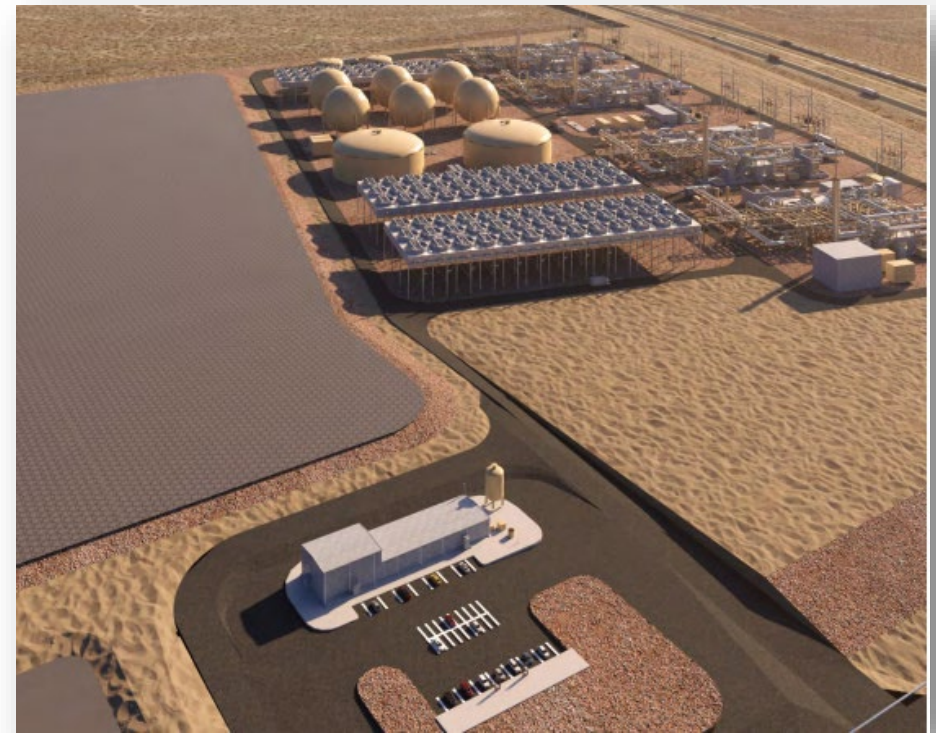




# **Public Hearing on Proposed Final Decision**

## **Willow Rock Energy Storage Center Docket Number 21-AFC-02**



*Source: Project rendering in Applicant's Supplemental AFC  
Volume 1, Part A, Cover Page*

Hearing Officer Reneé Webster-Hawkins  
December 19, 2025  
10:00 a.m.



# Public Hearing Schedule

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- Call to Order
- Hearing Officer Presentation on the Presiding Member's Proposed Decision
- Brief Statements by the Parties
  - Staff
  - Intervenor
  - Applicant
- Agency, Tribal, and Public Comment
- Commissioners' Remarks and Deliberation
- Closed Session if Necessary
- Final Decision
- Adjourn the Public Hearing



*Source: Project Simulated Condition KOP 7 Dawn Road East at SR 14 Offramp (Berm Option)  
Applicant's Supplemental AFC , Vol. II-Appen. 513A-514A*



## **Hearing Officer Presentation**





# California Energy Commission (CEC) Commissioners & Willow Rock Committee



**David Hochschild**  
*Chair*



**Siva Gunda**  
*Vice Chair*



**J. Andrew McAllister**  
*Commissioner*



**Nancy Skinner**  
*Commissioner*



**Noemí Otilia Osuna Gallardo**  
*Commissioner*

## Commissioners assigned to the Willow Rock Committee

Presiding Member Commissioner McAllister

Associate Member Commissioner Gallardo



# CEC's Permitting Authority: The Warren-Alquist Act

- CEC is the **exclusive permitting authority** for all thermal power plants 50 MW or greater. Public Resources Code §§ 25500 *et seq.*
- Applications for certification (AFCs) are **adjudicative proceedings** under the California Administrative Procedures Act. CEC Regulations §§ 1200 *et seq.* and 1700 *et seq.*
- CEC's decision makes **findings and conclusions** regarding the project's design, siting and operations:
  - Protection of environmental quality and assurance of public health and safety
  - Conformity with local, regional, state, and federal laws, ordinances, standards or regulations (LORS)
  - Public benefits
  - Enforceable Conditions of Certification
- CEC is **CEQA lead agency** under CEC's Certified Regulatory Program. CEQA Guidelines § 15251(j).



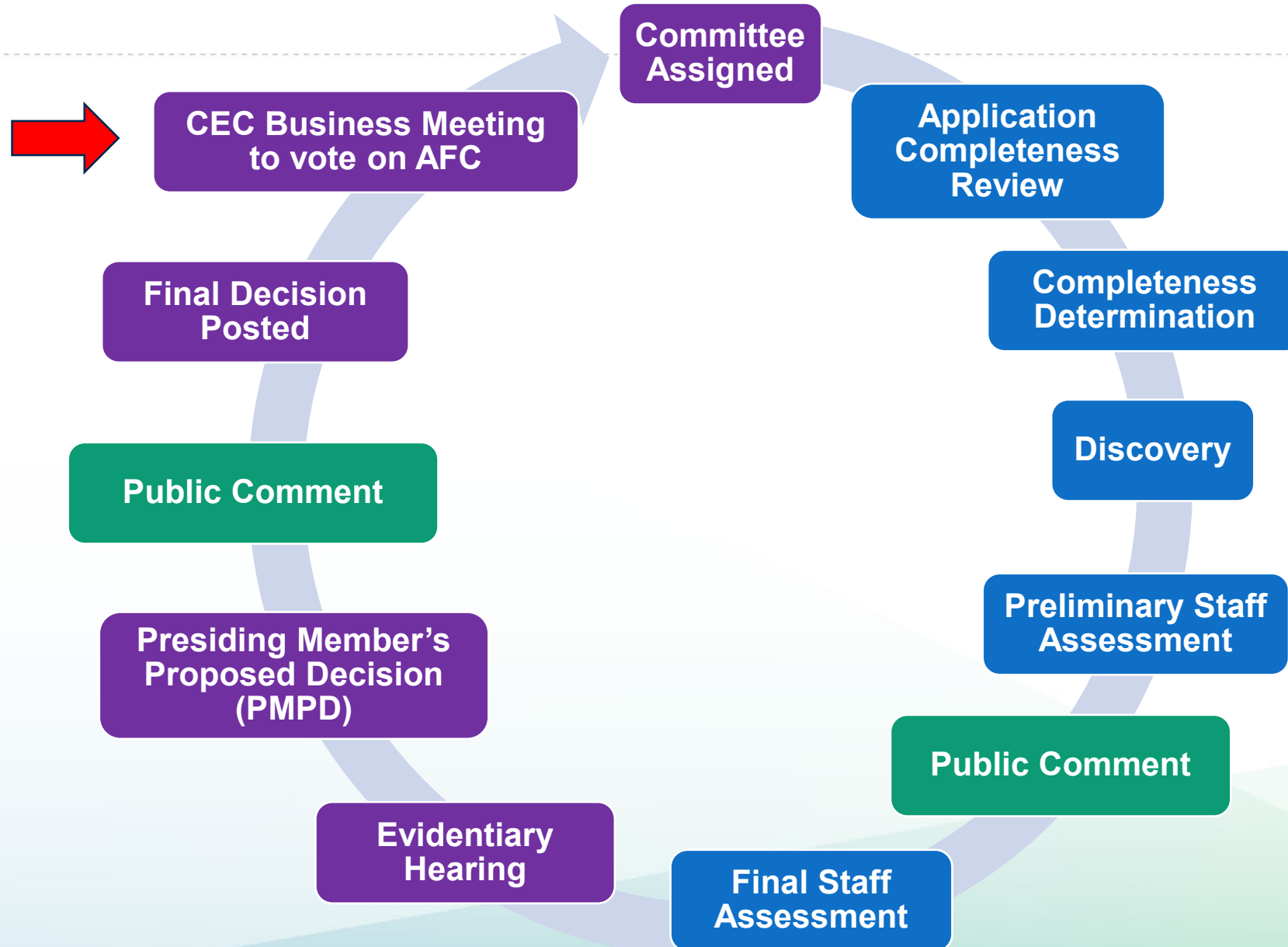
# CEC's Permitting Authority: Key Procedures Applicable to AFCs

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- CEC Staff, Applicant (Gem, LLC/Hydrostor), and Intervenors (Center for Biological Diversity and California Unions for Reliable Energy) are **independent parties**.
- **Evidentiary proceedings** are convened to receive specific written and oral testimony and evidence into the record.
- **Ex parte rule** prohibits communications between decisionmakers and Parties or Interested Persons while proceeding is pending.
- CEC Staff conducts public noticing, agency coordination, and tribal consultation on the AFC.



# Application for Certification (AFC) Process





## Topics Addressed in PMPD

PMPD considered all evidence in the record and proposes findings of fact and conclusions of law on:

- Project Description
- Project Alternatives
- Compliance Monitoring Plan
- Engineering Assessment
  - Facility and Transmission
  - Design
  - Efficiency
  - Reliability
  - Safety and Nuisance
- Public Health and Safety
- Environmental Analysis
- Local Impact Analysis
- Override Findings
- Conditions of Certification
- Agency and Public Comments





# Key Issues for Commission's Consideration

## In the PMPD

- Biological Resources
- Dam Safety Program
- Cavern Construction and Worker Safety
- Overriding Considerations for Unavoidable Impacts to Visual Resources
- Local Agency and Public Comments

## Corrections in the Errata

- Clarification of local land use review, comment and approval
- Corrections to citations to the record
- Scrivener's and digital production errors



*Source: HYDROSTOR - ZEVSAR PARCEL ACQUISITION, FEBRUARY 2023 PHOTO LOG,  
Photo 4, Applicant's Supplemental AFC, Vol. II-Appen. 513A-514A*



## **Brief Statements by the Parties**





*Source: Rendering With Architectural Berm, Applicant's Supplemental AFC,  
Hi Res Figures V1 File 1 of 2*



## **Agency and Public Comment**



# Agency and Public Comment

## Zoom App/Online

- Click “raise hand”

## Telephone

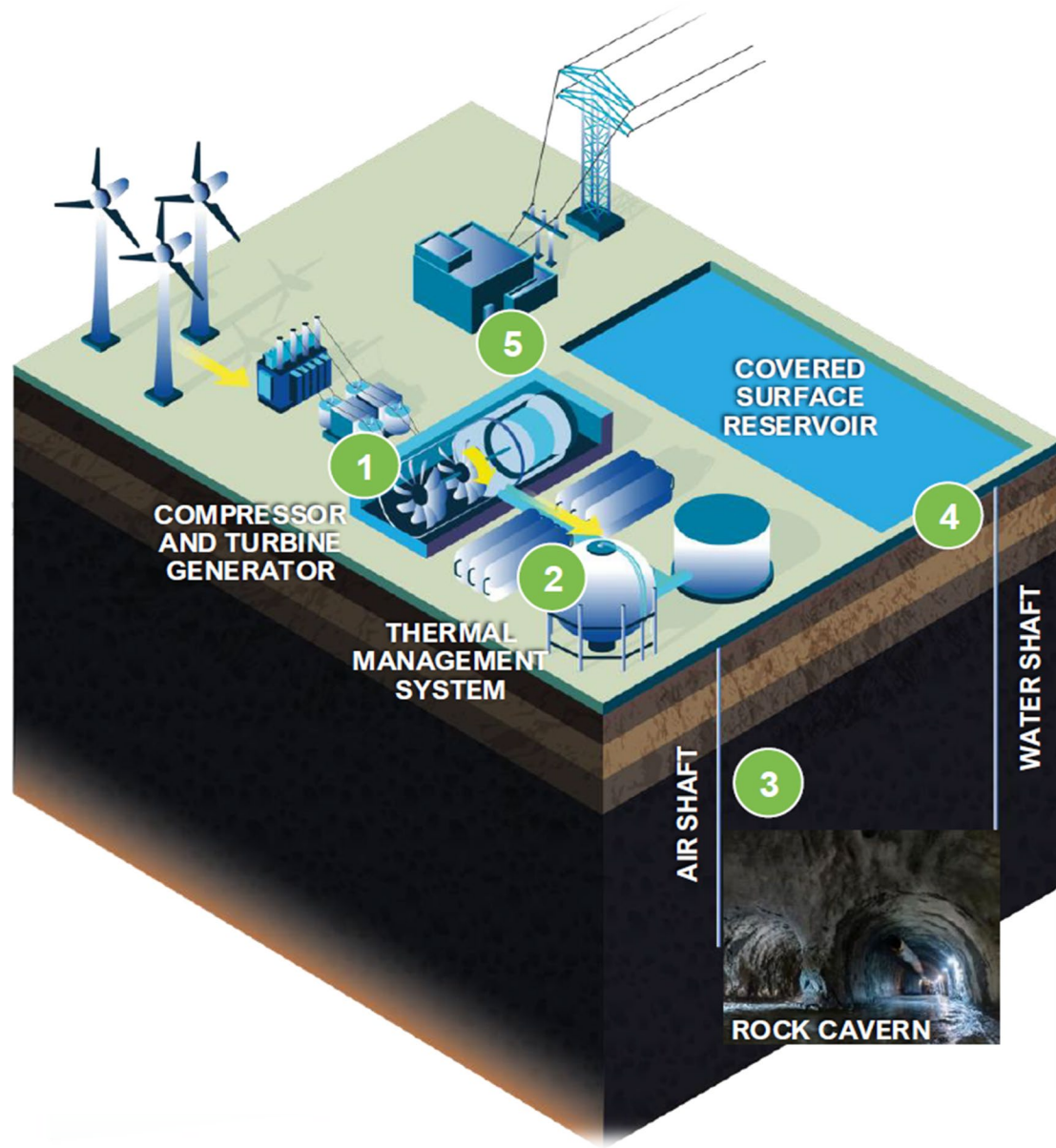
- Press \*9 to raise hand
- Press \*6 to mute/unmute

## When called upon

- CEC will open your line
- Unmute on your end
- Spell name and state affiliation, if any
- 3 minute or less per speaker, 1 speaker per entity

## 3-MINUTE TIMER





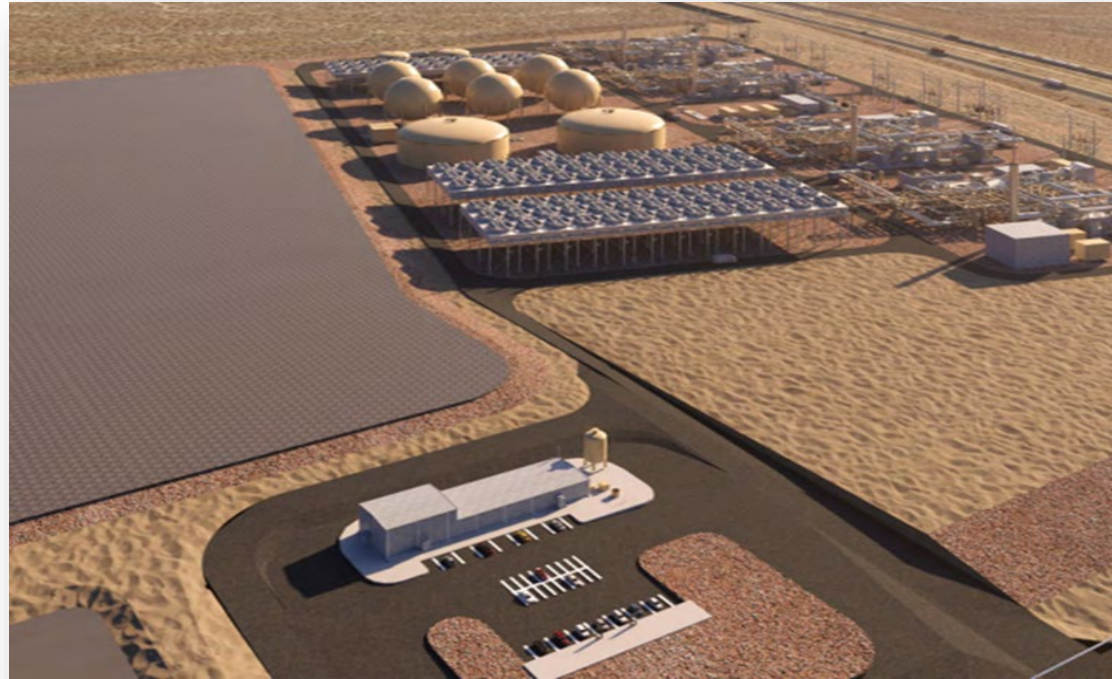
## Commissioners' Remarks and Deliberation

*Source: Hydrostor Technology Overview, Presentation  
at Informational Hearing, November 6, 2024*





# **Motion for Final Decision**



*Source: Project rendering in Applicant's Supplemental AFC Volume 1, Part A, Cover Page*

# **Adjourn the Public Hearing**