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Beyond Corporate Greenwashing: Discourse of a 'Just' Electric Energy Transition Materialized at the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine

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BEYOND CORPORATE GREENWASHING: DISCOURSE OF A 'JUST' ELECTRIC ENERGY TRANSITION MATERIALIZED AT THE THACKER PASS LITHIUM MINE

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Abstract

Thacker Pass in Northern Nevada is a rich desert ecosystem with spiritual significance to local Indigenous peoples, and it is also the site for what will be, for now, the United States' largest open-pit lithium mine. Lithium is one mineral constituent of electric batteries which are essential to current U.S. electric energy transition policy, a transition which policymakers and other public groups have called on to be done in a way which is *just.* However, what exactly a just electric energy transition looks like in places like Thacker Pass is under continued negotiation in theoretical and practical senses. Existing research has provided theoretical lenses to interpret the intersection of corporate messaging, mining and extractive industries, critiques of domination, and mapping participants in discourses. To contribute to an understanding of how a just electric energy transition is characterized at Thacker Pass, and values dominating the discourse there, the present study evaluated electric energy transition discourse around the Thacker Pass lithium mine through a textual analysis of public-facing documents from both industry and resistant groups. The analysis finds that the lithium mining company justifies extraction as part of a just energy transition, characterizing themselves as valors of climate crisis and mitigating the appearance of traditional mining harms. Meanwhile, resistant stakeholders interrupt popular notions of a just energy transition, redefining terms like green and clean in the context of mining and calling on concepts of justice to call attention to the unjust nature of mining at Thacker Pass. Ultimately industry characterizations align with popular neoliberal approaches to climate change mitigation policy that continue to prioritize production and consumption, marginalizing ideologically paradoxical value priorities such as land protection, reduced consumption, and distributing more negotiating power to Tribes. Theoretically, this study contributes to expanding the subfield of energy communication studies toward the newer context of mining for the electric

energy transition. It also offers critical theories, and frameworks such as the stakeholder model to begin the process of uncovering motivations in this new energy context taking place within familiar political and economic power structures. More practically, this study contributes to informing an electric energy transition which is just by calling attention to the material spaces where the transition is manifesting, especially new mining sites.

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To my parents, sister, and good friends, thank you for seeing me through this, I love you all.

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Chapter I: Introduction and Rationale

Mitigating global climate change through a just transition to electric energy is a popular turn of phrase as the U.S. and world at large begins to transform its energy system. For example, the Biden administration has said it will support a "strong and just transition to electric vehicles" as a part of its infrastructure agenda (Department of Energy, 2023), and that the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, known as the largest investment in climate change mitigation in U.S. history, will "advance environmental justice while building a cleaner future" by "improv[ing] public health, reduc[ing] pollution, and revitaliz[ing] communities that are marginalized, underserved, and overburdened by pollution" (The White House, 2022). As the electric energy transition progresses, the *just* nature of it remains contested as it materializes in places like Thacker Pass, Nevada, or Peehee Mu'huh in Paiute language. At Thacker Pass, Indigenous and other activists have resisted the construction of a new lithium mining operation introduced by the company Lithium Americas. The present study will evaluate electric energy transition discourse from both industry and resistant groups at Thacker Pass. Communication lenses are ideal for analyzing electric energy transition discourse, first because discourse lens communication scholars can use to study networked communication phenomena, including that which relates to climate change and energy, and also because communication provides methods for textual analysis (Tracy, 2020, p. 80) as used in the present study to interpret meaning in the nine existing texts. First, this section will introduce an expanded overview and background of the study before moving into a review of relevant guiding literature.

This study focuses on the controversial portion of the electric energy transition that requires the increase of hard metals mining to produce electric batteries. Rechargeable electric batteries are used to store energy in electric vehicles and other products, as well as providing all-

day storage, also called baseload capacity, for renewable energy generation such as solar and wind that can only be produced during certain parts of the day. Lithium is just one metal used to produce electric batteries, and Lithium Americas plans to extract enough of it at the Thacker Pass lithium mine in Northern Nevada to create over one million electric car batteries each year, almost meeting projected U.S. supply demands (Lithium Americas, n.d.). However, local Indigenous Peoples and activists have called for the revocation of permits and the stoppage of construction at Thacker Pass because of improper consultation with tribes and the ecological and spiritual harm the mining operation would cause (People of Red Mountain, n.d.; Protect Thacker Pass, n.d.). A mining operation being protested is not unprecedented, as the mining industry at large has historically been criticized for environmental injustice, or the inequity in environmental participation, benefits, and burdens, and reconciliation of harm (Raphael, 2019, p. 1088). Countries and communities which possess natural 'resources' do not always see the economic benefits from the extraction and production of those resources, referred to within the field of sustainable development as a *resource curse* (Davis & Tilton, 2005). Lithium Americas itself has been accused of human rights violations in one of its joint ventures in Argentina, including threatening and harassing Indigenous communities protesting the mine (Business and Human Rights Resource Center, n.d.), and at Thacker Pass, the company has sued protesters for monetary damages (Alonzo, 2023). As activists and scientists push governments to set and enforce climate change mitigation plans involving the expansion of electric vehicles, a paradox emerges where a so-called just transition to electric energy actually emboldens the expansion of polluting industries like hard metals mining, an issue that emerges from any large-scale production. In short, because of the long-known human rights and environmental harms of mining at large, the newly inflated demand for metals is an ethical roadblock to normative

energy transition policy as it calls for a just transition, and therefore a worthy context through which to analyze energy transition discourse.

As briefly introduced above, the present study is a textual analysis (Tracy, 2020) of electric energy transition discourse at Thacker Pass. The two primary contributors to discourse in this case study are generalized as industry and resistant stakeholders, with caution given to this generalization as the language and actions of Lithium Americas may not map directly onto similar mining corporations, and resistant groups do not share entirely identical positionalities. The first group, industry stakeholders, is represented by Lithium Americas Corporation, the owner of the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine. The second group, resistant stakeholders, is represented by People of Red Mountain, a committee of traditional knowledge keepers from local tribes, and Protect Thacker Pass, an activist organization. I have selected a range of public-facing texts from both groups, industry and resistant stakeholders, to analyze their arguments in the context of a just energy transition.

The goal of the study is to illuminate characterizations of a just energy transition at Thacker Pass and reveal value priorities dominating energy discourse in the context of lithium mining for the energy transition. This study has theoretical and practical value in communication studies and energy policy. Most prominently, I argue that it is important for any discipline which studies energy to expand beyond critiques of fossil fuel industries and instead be critical of all extractive industries involved in energy production. Environmental communication scholars can benefit from considering industries beyond fossil fuels in studies which evaluate society's relationship with energy. Further than that, communication scholars can also benefit from considering energy communication as happening within systems of discourse, where stakeholder voices hold differential weight under ideologically driven policy, in the case of the U.S. policy

which has emboldened neoliberal free-market value priorities and settler claims to Indigenous lands for extraction (Preston, 2017). It is especially important to consider how broad policy narratives like that of the electric energy transition impact not just global climate change but also localized places. As scholars and policy makers look to enact an energy transition that is ethical and just, attention must be paid to the way global and national-scale climate narratives may work to further marginalize local positionalities. By illuminating themes in the discourse at Thacker Pass, from both industry and non-industry stakeholders, this study helps to map local manifestations of electric energy discourse and how energy policy discourse, which touts electric energy as the reigning climate change solution, is insufficient in capturing the realities of electric energy policy in places like Thacker Pass.

A Case for Analyzing Energy Discourse Surrounding Thacker Pass

Thacker Pass is an especially relevant case study to critically evaluate discourse of a just electric energy transition because despite resistance from Indigenous peoples and activists, it is one of the first mines to be developed under new electric energy policy. Thacker Pass, or Peehee Mu'huh in Paiute language, is home to ancestral massacre sites, water, air, medicines, and culturally important wildlife (People of Red Mountain, n.d.). It is situated just south of the Montana Mountain Range, North of the town of Winnemucca and close to the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation, all of which lies within the unceded territory of Paiute and Shoshone peoples but is now owned by the federal Bureau of Land Management (Protect Thacker Pass, n.d.). Lithium Americas Corporation studied this area for nearly a decade, and has said that the area, which lies amid an extinct super volcano, holds the richest known supply of lithium in America (Lithium Americas, n.d.) though this claim is not verified in the present study. Lithium Americas has secured all federal and state permits to mine at Thacker Pass. The operation has been largely

welcomed as a part of the larger electric energy transition efforts, in part because of standards set by federal and state policies like the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021 and Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, which are enticing or mandating the auto industry to convert all vehicles from gas to electric in the coming decades (Metz & Sonner, 2021) and a potential one billion dollar loan that the U.S. Department of Energy has considered granting Lithium Americas for their Thacker Pass project (Dhumal, 2023). Another important federal policy in this context is the General Mining Act of 1872, which authorizes mining on federal land on a tax-free and relatively unregulated basis (The White House, May 2022), and ultimately prioritizes the extraction industry over land preservation. This mining precedent is amplified in Nevada where the state taxes the industry less than five percent of their net profits due to limits written into the state constitution and other tax deductions given to the industry (Sierra Club, 2021). Federally, The Trump administration was accused of rushing Thacker Pass through the permitting process (Metz & Sonner, 2021) and the Biden administration has followed suit by supporting battery production projects, for example with the use of the Defense Production Act, often used to prioritize materials needed for national defense, to ramp up production of these minerals, such as lithium in Nevada and other southwestern states (Rothberg, 2022). In short, the mining industry has widely benefited from current energy policies.

However, despite the policy support for batteries described above, Thacker Pass has also been criticized as an example of *greenwashing*, a term to describe when corporations promote their products and processes as sustainable or environmentally friendly when they are neither (Plec & Pettinger, 2012). Importantly, the site of the mine sits on the location of multiple massacres of Indigenous peoples, one in 1865 which is noted in written historical accounts (Sonner, 2021), and resistant groups have sued the company for insufficient Tribal consultation,

rushed permitting, and prioritizing lithium over life (Sonner, 2023). This case study, then, is an important example through which to study participants in electric energy discourse, their varying objectives, and the power structures they exist within and contribute to.

In the following sections I will introduce key literature and conceptual frameworks which have guided my analysis through the lens of communication. I will then expand on the methodology of the study as a qualitative, textual analysis of relevant artifacts. I will then present the findings of my analysis, which ultimately reveals, I argue, that industry notions of a just transition at Thacker Pass are more congruous with status quo neoliberal climate change discourse which centers global market objectives, EVs, and other electric infrastructure as priority. The implication of this prioritization is that it marginalizes more ideologically paradoxical interpretations of a just transition which centers land protection, reduced consumption, and environmental justice. Finally, I will present a discussion which considers how my analysis answered my research questions, the implications of my findings, and future directions of research.

Chapter II: Literature Review / Conceptual Framework

The purpose of the current study is to evaluate electric energy transition discourse, including what makes the transition just or moral, using a case study of a lithium mine under early construction in Northern Nevada, called the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine. To fulfill these aims, the present study draws from the following areas of literature: (a) contemporary energy and climate change communication, (b) interdisciplinary studies evaluating a just energy transition, (c) critical environmental and energy research, (d) industry climate change framing and neoliberal energy frameworks, and (e) stakeholder and discourse models. This section concludes with the guiding research questions that inform this study.

Contemporary Energy and Climate Change Communication

Energy communication is a subfield of environmental communication that allows scholars to look more specifically at the role of energy in society (Endres et al., 2016). As a subfield of environmental communication, it is relevant to introduce trends in environmental communication as the broader area the present study is situated within. One prominent topic of study in environmental communication is climate change. Climate change is related to issues of energy as it relates to reducing the consumption of fossil fuels by means which include electric and renewable energy. This section will introduce environmental communication, its foundations as a climate crisis discipline, and how it overlaps with energy communication.

The broader field of environmental communication established its role in the early 2000's as a "crisis discipline" with an implicit ethical duty to respond to threats to human and natural wellbeing (Cox, 2007, p. 5). "Crisis" has been interpreted by communications scholars as situations deemed crucially important, a point of decision making, a turning point, and a threat (Parks, 2020, p. 83) or similarly in terms of "times of crisis" which involve "formation,

challenge, or dissolution" (Condit, 1994, p. 221), all emphasizing a change or a necessitated intervention. Until recently, research in the related subfields of environmental communication and energy communication have maintained this normative crisis frame in studies aimed at responding to climate change and pollution as crises. There are, however, approaches to analyzing issues of climate and the environment which do not center a crisis framing, such as comparative studies of all types of energy, not only fossil fuels, and energy in everyday life (Endres et al., 2016).

Energy Communication Beyond the Crisis Frame

Energy communication is a sub-field of communication studies which focuses on communication phenomena surrounding energy production and consumption. Energy communication research is "the study of symbolic practices surrounding material experiences with energy resources, production, and consumption, including related practices of research, development, deployment, and policy" (Endres et al., 2016, p. 420). Historically, communication researchers who study energy have investigated phenomena such as the extraction, consumption, and production of fossil fuels, through the "normative" crisis framing. Energy communication researchers who use this normative crisis frame often design their studies as *responding* to climate change as a climate crisis, positioning the crisis frame as a given positionality of the study itself, and their research as situated amongst crises. However, energy communication which aims to contribute to just energy futures cannot stop at evaluating energy through the lens of crisis response, though that frame is still a relevant and likely fruitful one for some studies (Endres et al., 2016). Beyond the crisis framing, researchers must also evaluate societal systems which perpetuate ideologically-motivated energy consumption models. One approach is through the critique of economic systems language, for example the prioritization of neoliberal values in

energy policy language (Bloomfield, 2019; Preston, 2017). To align with the call for energy communication researchers to position research beyond a reactive crisis frame, the present study does not center itself as a response to climate crisis directly but instead an analysis of energy contexts which, though related to climate change, have independent value in analyzing beyond a motivation by the researcher to respond to climate change. The following section introduces the concept of a just energy transition, the primary concept driving this study.

A Just Transition

In this section I will introduce an interdisciplinary set of literature which investigates the concept of a just energy transition, the focus of the present study, and how to achieve it. The just energy transition is a newer turn of phrase which has immediate and ongoing practical implications as the world negotiates how to make an energy transition just. However, the newness of the phenomenon means that there is inconsistency and roadblocks for scholars looking to study a just energy transition at this point (Muinzer, 2022). This section will introduce conceptual frameworks that are being used to understand what a just transition means, and will help to situate my study in the topical area and open possibilities for how my case study can contribute to this living area of research.

Environmental and Energy Justice

Though interdisciplinary scholars have yet to fully articulate a consensus on how to interpret the meaning of a just energy transition, the best approach seems to be to turn to the related concepts of environmental justice (Raphael, 2019) and energy justice (Jenkins et al., 2016; McCauley et al., 2019) to give substantiality to the concept of a just transition. *Environmental justice* describes equity in participation in environmental decision making (process justice), equity in benefits and burdens of environmental actions (distributive justice),

protection from the harms of environmental actions through policy and enforcement (procedural justice), and the reconciliation of past environmental injustices (corrective and restorative justice) (Raphael, 2019). *Energy justice*, building on environmental justice, describes the application of justice principles to energy contexts, such as policy, production, consumption, activism, security, and climate change in applicable new societal contexts (Jenkins et al., 2016). The transition away from fossil fuels, which under current standards of consumption requires the vast expansion of electric energy technology, is spurring the important, emerging, and interdisciplinary study of energy justice (McCauley et al., 2019). But climate change mitigation and decarbonization, if they are to be done in a way that is just, "involves altering and restructuring the energy system itself, sharing benefits and recognizing the impacts and costs of any transition" (Atkins, 2023).

Nonetheless, many studies merge existing conservative moral systems with energy justice, such as in the field of sustainable development (Siciliano et al., 2021) and normative consumptive-based economics (Nakaishi et al., 2022) which focus on equitable access to consumption. This presents a problematic possibility for *greenwashing*, or manufactured branding which falsely portrays a process or product as environmentally friendly (Plec & Pettinger, 2012), among additional justice framing concerns which do not, in fact, deliver a process which could be considered just under environmental justice terms. Alternatives to conservative frames might be shifting to non-Western ones which decenter humans and consider protecting other forms of life (McCauley et al., 2019) and the intertwining of humans and nature as humanature and natureculture (Haraway, 2008; Milstein, 2011). Alternative economic paradigms to consumptive-forward ones can also serve as alternative frameworks through which to interpret a just transition, for example degrowth which calls for less consumption (Demaria et

al., 2013) and a circular minerals economy which minimizes production and waste, and prioritizes the reuse of materials rather than the maximum extraction and single-use consumption of linear economies (Earthworks, n.d.).

This section served as an introduction to the emerging theoretical conception of energy justice, an important lens for understanding a just energy transition. It is important to also introduce various lenses which have been used to study environmental and energy communication outside of the context of the energy transition in order to situate transferable environmental considerations to this study. The following two sections introduce two generalized areas of critical environmental research: resistant environmental lenses and industry environmental framing and related topics.

Land Domination and Sacrifice

This section introduces a variety of critical theoretical lenses useful for interpreting domination and marginalization in electric energy transition discourse. Namely the concepts of settler colonialism and racial extractivism (Preston, 2017) and sacrifice zones (Endres, 2012) are critical for illuminating power structures in localized mining discourse. Together the concepts open possibilities for more critical evaluations of electric energy transition discourse in the present case study at Thacker Pass.

Neoliberalism, White Settler Colonialism, and Racial Extractivism in Mining

As mentioned in previous sections, the current electric energy transition in the United States is happening under neoliberal frameworks which prioritize the production of batteries for energy consumption over land preservation and decreased consumption. This framework is traced back centuries. One example is early fossil fuel projects in Canada, where the U.S. and Canadian governments and mining industry can be described as having perpetuated settler

colonialism the Alberta, Canada region to mine billions of barrels of oil from a dirty tar sand called bitumen (Paliewicz, 2018; 2022). Another example includes an incident in Western Pilbara, Australia where sacred sites were imploded to extract iron ore (Hepburn, 2020). These examples, without using them to paint too broad of a stroke across mining activities, help to conceptualize how mining corporations can call for the desecration of sacred land for the purpose of extraction. Communication scholars can facilitate, through engaged environmental justice practices (Raphael, 2019), a comparative analysis of fossil fuel justifications and that of electric energy extraction such as hard metals mining in terms of *settler colonialism,* a concept which describes "structures that revolve around land theft and Indigenous erasure to facilitate the permanent settlement of non-Indigenous 'exalted subjects'" (Preston, 2017) and *racial extractivism*, which combines concepts to acknowledge race-based histories of oil and gas companies in justifying resource extraction (Preston, 2017, p. 356). For example, one strategy used under a racial extractivist framework uses treaties to gain compliance from Indigenous locals, treaties which promise some protections to Indigenous people in advance but have historically been signed under duress and threats, and little actual bargaining power to Indigenous peoples (Preston, 2017, p. 359). These case studies not only show the long history of emplaced energy justice issues, but the issue of white settler colonialism in energy justice issues. They point to the fact that contemporary energy transition rhetoric is not new to colonized places, and this is an important lens for just energy transition studies. The next section elaborates on the concepts of settler colonialism and racial extractivism to introduce sacrifice zones as a heuristic for understanding marginalized voices in material places.

Sacrifice Zones

A *sacrifice zone* describes a place where a small group "bears the brunt" of development to sustain the benefits it has for the nation or world at large (Endres, 2012, p. 334). This concept allows communication scholars to reveal an "incommensurability of values" in places with proposed development projects. In other words, sacrifice zones help to describe places which hold "polysemous" meaning to multiple groups (Endres, 2012, p. 330). For example, Yucca Mountain, a site in Nevada which faced a proposed nuclear waste storage facility, was viewed as sacred to Indigenous groups, while the federal government viewed it as a sacrificial remote location for dumping waste (Endres, 2012). It is important to acknowledge differential values in places which are subject to power disparity in environmental decision making because when land-use decisions are made based upon technocratic bases. For example, one set of values may be considered more rational and value-free, while others are not, a manipulated perspective which reveals and leads to the perpetuation of justice issues where local interests are marginalized for the perceived greater good. This useful concept provides communication scholars who study places of proposed development a lens and vernacular to illuminate and describe competing values within structures of power as a point of conflict in energy justice decisions.

This section provided an overview of theoretical lenses important to understanding how language works to negotiate material spaces, especially in how mining industries hold power in modern energy discourse and how that can marginalize dissenting groups. The next section will introduce an additional set of theoretical lenses relevant to analyzing corporate mining company discourse in the context of electric energy.

Industry-Focused Climate and Energy Frameworks

This section introduces theoretical lenses which lend themselves to interpreting industry environmental framings and orientations. The literature that has been introduced in this chapter thus far has offered energy justice and resistant frameworks to interpret just energy transition discourse, but has yet to entirely capture specific frameworks through which to identify and critically analyze messaging features unique to industry actors. This section fills that gap to introduce industry-specific lenses, including extractivist positionalities (Preston, 2017; Raynes & Mix, 2020), corporate social responsibility (Maak & Pless, 2022), strategic industry framings of climate change (Schlichting, 2013; Paliewicz, 2022), and greenwashing (Plec & Pettinger, 2012). Together industry-specific lenses allow for the identification of industry ideological frameworks and messaging strategies in the artifacts from the corporation behind Thacker Pass.

Extractivist Positionalities

Extractivism, put simply, is a belief in removing large amounts of raw earth materials for consumption. This terminology has been evolved into more nuanced frameworks to describe extractivism within social contexts. For example *racial extractivism* describes extractivist or mining projects under neoliberalist production and consumption frameworks as implicated under and perpetuating issues of race and colonization (Preston, 2017). In different terms, extractivist groups rely on *extractivist ecocultural identities*, or the subject positionalities of people who generally support extractive industries (Raynes & Mix, 2020). The extractivist ecocultural positionality which centers land as a resource can be in tension with ecocultural identity positionalities which center a more reciprocal relationship with/in nature (Milstein & Castro-Sotomayor, 2020). In these contexts, issues of process justice (Raphael, 2019) often emerge as community members' voices are subverted and government regulatory groups side with

corporate interest on the basis of extraction-centered policy as the morally-given course of action. This concept is useful for identifying extractivism and its underlying value priorities in texts. As mining corporations inherently depend on an extractivist positionality due to the nature of their business, justice becomes difficult to incorporate with production goals. The following section introduces corporate social responsibility as a long-standing, often paradoxical approach to ethical business.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Corporate social responsibility is a concept referring to the social and societal responsibilities of businesses (Maak & Pless, 2022). This section will very briefly overview corporate social responsibility and some of its tenets, as it is a common term used to describe corporate attempts at mitigating the social harm of their operations, and will allow for the interpretation of those efforts in corporate discourse around mining for the energy transition. Among its many interpretations, I borrow from Maak and Pless (2022) to conceptualize CSR as the social and societal responsibilities of businesses. Its lineage lies in business ethics, but CSR as a concept interprets the ethics of a business as responsibility. For example, under this framework a company has a responsibility to a carbon footprint, corporate social performance, or corporate reputation. Easily, corporate social responsibility can slip into an empty company public relations strategy used to improve the reputation of the company without holding itself to tangible results, an ethical problem.

Without exploring further critiques of CSR, this section introduces the term simply as a broad term for analytical exploration within corporate energy transition messaging. The following sections offer critical lenses which can be used to further assess the use of corporate

social responsibility language in the analysis. It will introduce the history of ethical corporate messaging specifically around climate change and energy.

Strategic Industry Framings of Climate Change

An important approach to understanding how industries talk about the environment is to assess how industry has framed their role in climate change in recent history, before the electric energy transition. Understanding pre-transition framing is a way to connect the present study and analyze current industry framings against former framings. Until recently, fossil fuel and related industries have resisted framing climate change as a crisis. However, industry actors, including mining corporations, have begun to embrace climate crisis language, not only expressing their own responsibility for reducing emissions, but further framing themselves as a *leader* in mitigating climate change (Schlichting, 2013). An extractive corporation which frames itself as a leader in mitigating climate change would suggest that the harms of industry are somehow gone, perhaps changed through an authentic new corporate social responsibility strategy. However, this ideal interpretation is unlikely as industry continues to ultimately commit environmental degradation and justice harms through pollution and their own contributions to climate change. As extractive industries evolve their messaging, the pattern reveals strategic manipulation, where industries can be seen as constructing a *corporate persona* where corporations "adapt their selfhoods" while "evading singular responsibilities" for socio-environmental harms (Paliewicz, 2022, p. 60). Importantly, these industry framings which adapt the appearance of corporate positionality offer a lens through which to interpret inauthentic or empty attempts at responsibility for pollution and related human-ecosystem harms. This is a useful lens through which to conceptualize an inauthentic energy justice. The following section expands on critiques of inauthentic industry messaging.

Greenwashing and Green Economies

Another concept which illuminates an inauthentic energy justice framework is greenwashing. Greenwashing is a term used to critique the "ecological integrity" (Plec & Pettinger, 2012, p. 459) of production, including energy production. Products and processes are referred to as greenwashed when they are presented by companies within environmental responsibility and sustainability frames, but do not in fact adhere to environmentally-friendly or sustainable standards of production (Plec & Pettinger, 2012), a sort of manipulation for the sake of profit. Greenwashing important processes like the reduction of energy consumption, fossil fuel or otherwise, can "dissuade necessary action" (p. 459) and lead to failed initiatives that may have had roots in authentic intentions to improve socio-ecological realities. For example, mitigating the effects of global climate change is stifled by the false environmental frames of corporations looking to appeal to the popularity of climate morality without actually improving climate outcomes. This greenwashing "stifles criticism" and "discourages examinations of ideologies of consumption" (Plec & Pettinger, 2012, p. 459) and corporations are therefore implicated as responsible for the harms to people and ecosystems that result.

Many critiques of greenwashing revolve around the obviously not-green fossil fuel industry. There does not, however, seem to be much scholarship on the possible greenwashing of "green" energy. Boehnert (2016) problematizes the *green economy* which describes an increasing normative-economic environmental frame where land is considered "natural capital" (p. 395). But while the green economy captures the ideological component of interpreting the value of natural spaces, it does not necessarily address the greenwashing component of "green" energies. This lack of theorizing around the greenwashing of "green" energy may perhaps be due to the global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to stifle global warming as quickly as

possible, and the fact that "green" energy seems to be the driving policy mandate to address climate concerns. However, as Uren et al. (2019) point out, there is the potential we are viewing green energy through "green-tinted glasses." In their study of pro-environmental Australians, they found that, "while participants aspired to be green, their actions were bound by cultural traditions and world views that perpetuate environmental degradation" (p. 395). It is important that we illuminate these shortcomings in conceptualizing greenwashing in terms of the electric energy transition, because though they are idealized as fulfilling goals to reduce fossil fuel consumption, "green" energy technologies may be environmentally damaging (Mills, 2022), as opposed to an alternative like "degrowth" or other strategies which offer reducing consumption as a climate solution (Demaria et al., 2013). Further, the term 'green' should perhaps be advised against for interpreting authentic environmental integrity, as the definition of green energy is controlled by those with the power to generate persuasive public messages about the sources and production of energy.

The sections throughout this chapter thus far, including this section on industry-focused environmental lenses, have introduced theoretical lenses useful in the interpretation of energy justice contexts, especially as they relate to mining for a just electric energy transition. This literature leads to the following research question for the present study.

RQ1: What characterizations of a just energy transition are presented by industry and resistant stakeholders of the Thacker Pass lithium mine?

The next section suggests applying stakeholder and discourse theories to understand networked stakeholder groups who contribute collectively to case studies of energy discourse. The following section brings the literature that has been introduced thus far toward a conceptualization of networked electric energy discourse.

Discourse Models and Stakeholder Values

The previous sections have set up theoretical and conceptual lenses for the present study, but alone the introduced literature does not capture a framework for understanding networked participants in energy transition case studies. Scholars have only begun to address ways of doing this. For example, sustainable development scholars have mapped the participants in energy justice (i.e. those who contribute to and are affected by energy transition projects) under the framework of sustainable development pillars (Siciliano et al., 2021). However, the framework of sustainable development can be problematic in that it includes economic development as a fundamental benefit that must come from a project. The present study offers stakeholder (Deetz, 1995) and discourse (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Condit, 1994) theories as a more neutral to critical guiding framework for mapping participants in energy transition justice. This section will introduce these models before concluding this chapter with the second guiding research question of the study.

Energy Discourse

Discourse is one lens communication scholars can use to study networked communication phenomena, including that which relates to climate change and energy. Discourse is conceptualized in several ways. The present study takes inspiration from a few interpretations of discourse which map dimensions of discourse (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000) and discourse hegemonies (Condit, 1994). The purpose of including discourse as a theoretical foundation in this study is not to strictly plug in the participants of discourse but to offer the possibility of considering how this study fits into the larger web of energy discourse internationally, nationally, and locally. In other words, case studies do not exist in a vacuum but are a part of larger conversations on a range of societal scales, and theories of discourse help

visualize how energy discourse might be mapped, who the participants in energy discourse are, and how power dynamics may affect the materialization of certain values over others in policy decisions.

Alvesson and Karreman (2000) conceptualize discourse as dimensional, from interpersonal to societal levels of communication. On the more tangible level, discourse can be described as everyday interpersonal relations, or events and social practices, comprising micro and meso-level discourse. This level of discourse is indicated with a lowercase 'd' for conceptual clarity and ease of differentiation. On the other hand, Discourse, denoted with a capitalized 'D' refers to larger-scale ways of constructing the social world. Put more clearly, analyzing discourse means studying text in its localized social context, whereas analyzing Discourse means studying how social realities are constructed through language. In the case of energy discourses, small-scale energy discourse might exist as a discussion regarding the construction of a lithium mine, while large-scale energy Discourse might exist as media frames perpetuating neoliberal paradigms through their coverage.

Another interpretation of discourse comes from the Gramscian social theory of hegemony and its subsequent interpretation into contemporary contexts (Condit, 1994). Discourses of hegemonic consent, or concordance, provides a heuristic for considering social and political contexts in which a social problem is taking place and the power held in hegemonic consent to materialize discourses. In other words, hegemonic discourses involve a set of interrelating participants and power dynamics to construct what is ultimately a hegemonic discourse where enough agreement is reached around a particular phenomenon to materialize normative consensus. The conception of dimensional and networked discourse can be applied to electric

energy discourse where a general compliance is reached around a normative course of action on electric energy as a climate solution, for example.

Theories of discourse are a fruitful direction for understanding case studies of energy transition discourse. Theoretical lenses which merge social structures and communication, found in discourse studies, can help interdisciplinary scholars understand social makeup and forces on new energy policy. Adding to this framework, the next section will introduce ways to interpret the participants in discourse using stakeholder model theory (Deetz, 1995).

Competing Values in Energy Discourse: The Stakeholder Model

The stakeholder model as conceptualized by Deetz (1995) is a model which considers public groups, and their values which differ from that of the company, as integral to the decision-making of companies (p. 267), rather than the needs of public groups being advocated for by the company on their behalf (p. 273). Deetz establishes that "corporate actions and decisions are value-laden… and they entail large social (though often uncharged) costs," (p. 256) meanwhile public values are not sufficiently represented under market-driven decision-making and governmental policy and regulation alone. The stakeholder model promotes an increase not only in public participation in debates regarding corporate actions but also in the public's voice (p. 255), or power, in decision-making. The model presents this model as a benefit to both the economy and society, if and only if corporate values such as profitability do not take precedent over competing public values.

In practice, a stakeholder model can serve as a vehicle for stimulating productive value debates where there is more equitable participation in discourse (Deetz, 1995). In research analyses, however, a stakeholder model can work as a heuristic for mapping participants in a discourse around a particular corporate action and/or government policy. As a model which maps

stakeholder input, the stakeholder model can also be used to analyze competing values in discourse, without inherently centering normative economic values as other frameworks have done (Deetz, 1995). For example, stakeholders in energy justice discourse at Thacker Pass would include, in part, Lithium Americas as the industry stakeholder, as well as People of Red Mountain and Protect Thacker Pass as local and/or resistant stakeholders with competing values.

Adding the stakeholder model to a model of hegemonic discourse can help illuminate otherwise silenced voices in discourse at Thacker Pass, as the purpose of a more participatory discourse is "to disrupt the discourse of consent" (Deetz, 1995, p. 277), in the case of the present study, discourses around a just energy transition. Thus, the following is the second research question for the present study.

RQ2: What do stakeholder characterizations of a just energy transition reveal about the value motivations dominating energy discourse at Thacker Pass?

This chapter has served as an introduction to the range of theoretical and conceptual frameworks which contribute to the present study. I have introduced energy communication as a research area and its lineage from climate crisis communication, followed by an introduction to the novel area of research into the just energy transition and environmental justice frames that inform it. I have also introduced a collection of critical, resistant, and industry frameworks that facilitate the interpretation of resistant and industry discourse on mining for a just energy transition. Finally, I introduced discourse and stakeholder models which together illuminate how energy discourse is made up of networked and value-driven participant groups. Together, the set of literature presented provides a lens for answering the following questions of my industry and resistant stakeholder texts. The following chapter will introduce, in more detail, the methodology for this study.

Chapter III: Method

This study is a critical textual analysis of public-facing arguments for and against the Thacker Pass lithium mining project in Northern Nevada. Textual analysis is a qualitative research method used in communication studies which describes and interprets the "content, structure, purposes, and consequences of existing verbal or visual texts" (Tracy, 2020, p. 80). This method is often combined with rhetorical analysis to illuminate themes within texts. Analyzing public texts along themes can reveal a group's values and image, and how that compares with cultural realities, meanings, and ideologies. To reveal themes within texts, this study utilizes a phronetic iterative approach (Tracy, 2020). This methodology includes elements of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014), which attempts an objective first reading of texts without research questions or guiding literature, but instead of an entirely objective reading, the phronetic iterative approach brings in guiding research questions and literature as themes begin to appear in the texts.

Background of Site and Participants

The Thacker Pass lithium mine is a project now under construction in Northern Nevada near the town of Winnemucca. The company Lithium Americas, with significant investment and supply agreements with General Motors, is constructing an open-pit lithium mine to extract lithium using an experimental method which uses molten sulfur to leech lithium from the clay soils in the area (Lithium Americas, n.d.). The mine as currently proposed will provide enough lithium to supply nearly one million electric car batteries (Lithium Americas, n.d.). Some groups have attempted to stop the proposed mine from moving forward, including People of Red Mountain, a committee of traditional knowledge keepers from local tribes (People of Red Mountain, n.d.), Protect Thacker Pass, an activist group (Protect Thacker Pass, n.d.), and to a

lesser extent a coalition called SIRGE, or the Securing Indigenous Rights in the Green Economy Coalition, an Indigenous led coalition that advocates for the rights of Indigenous peoples (Mckinney et al., 2023). Groups have been cautiously generalized for the purpose of this analysis, into an industry stakeholder group comprising the mining company and the resistant stakeholder group comprising the Indigenous and activist groups resisting the mine. Texts were collected to capture public-facing sentiment by each of these stakeholder groups in the electric energy transition and the mining operation at Thacker Pass.

Sampling Plan

For this study, I collected texts which capture the public-facing arguments for and against the mining operation at Thacker Pass. My awareness of the controversy surrounding Thacker Pass began in 2021 when environmental and social activist groups began raising awareness on social media, asking the public to submit public comment on its permitting. At that time, the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection (NDEP) was reviewing permit applications from Lithium Americas and collecting public comments as a part of that review. Activist group Protect Thacker Pass and People of Red Mountain for months posted updates on social media and websites calling for the Bureau of Land Management to rescind Lithium Americas' land-use permit due in part to insufficient or absent consultation with Tribes, and also calling Lithium Americas' environmental messaging "greenwashed" as an open-pit lithium mine would degrade the natural environment. I became interested in the paradox that the electric energy transition, a movement I thought to be desirable for climate change mitigation, would require a huge increase in hard metals mining, an extractive industry with a history of pollution. Among that paradox it became clear that the controversy of the electric energy transition existed not only in the material paradox that hard-metals mining was a major part large scale environmental projects, but in the

paradox that language appeared to facilitate the masking of that paradox and limit environmental positionalities that might clash with popular notions toward mass electric battery production. The issue of greenwashing is highly relevant in this context for the reasons described, but alone did not appear to entirely capture the extent to which language was contributing to this paradox. Additionally, as I consider myself a critical activist scholar with decolonial motivations, I wanted to understand how a mining corporation, which inherently holds extraction and profit as top priority, had found a central role in the morality of climate change mitigation. I decided I wanted to analyze the controversy to uncover potential themes and theory extensions within the discourse at Thacker Pass as a first point of inquiry.

The start of my text selection began in 2021 when I read two op-eds published in the *Reno-Gazette Journal,* an online publication in Reno, Nevada. One op-ed was written by Thomas Benson, an employee of Lithium Americas, and the other was written a week later by Max Wilbert, an activist and lawyer who founded Protect Thacker Pass. Later in 2021, the *Reno-Gazette Journal* published another op-ed by Gary Mckinney, member of People of Red Mountain, which similarly commented on Lithium Americas' project and arguments. These texts in direct conversation anchored my analysis as one which primarily aimed to identify stakeholder values in collective discourse around mining for the electric energy transition, specifically at Thacker Pass. To gather a more robust set of data, I found other relevant texts from each stakeholder group's respective websites in the year 2021, as this was the time period where the majority of permitting was taking place and groups were making public appeals to influence permitting decisions. To investigate Lithium Americas' ethical appeals, I selected their public outreach flyer, their Environmental and Social Governance and Safety report, their announcement of a community benefit agreement, and a presentation to shareholders, all

materials available on their website during this time period. I ultimately found the ESG-S report and op-ed to contain the most blatant ethical appeals, therefore justifying their use and making up the bulk of my data. To investigate ethical appeals from resistant groups, I found website content and a letter from People of Red Mountain written to General Motors, also publicized on their website, to capture sufficient sentiments from these groups when coupled with the two op-eds by Wilbert and Mckinney. I chose to utilize texts from People of Red Mountain and Protect Thacker Pass together, not because they ultimately share identical views but because they together capture resistant sentiments during the 2021 time period.

Data

To analyze discourse around mining for the electric energy transition at Thacker Pass, I gathered the aforementioned public-facing texts from Lithium Americas Corporation as well as public-facing texts from resistance groups People of Red Mountain and Protect Thacker Pass.

My analysis of industry arguments comprised of five texts. The first text is Lithium Americas' Environmental and Social Governance and Safety Report ("ESG-S") for the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine, compiled from information gathered in 2021 (Lithium Americas, 2022b). An ESG-S report, which stands for Environmental and Social Governance and Safety, is an optional and publicly available document serving primarily as a report for government agencies and other interested parties in the approaches a company will take to environmental and social responsibility. Lithium Americas prepared one of these documents in the year leading up to federal and state permitting decisions for the mine. This text is not included in the Appendix due to length, but it is linked as a reference. The second text is one of Lithium Americas' "Corporate Presentations" (Lithium Americas, 2022a). This presentation is a slideshow from Lithium Americas and was presented to corporate shareholders regarding all of Lithium Americas'

projects. This study only utilized sections of the presentation regarding the Thacker Pass mine. This text is not included in the Appendix due to length. The third text is Lithium Americas' "Thacker Pass Overview" flyer (Lithium Americas, 2022d) (see Appendix A), a flyer made available on Lithium Americas' website with general information about the mine. The fourth text is an announcement from Lithium Americas' about a Community Benefits Agreement ("CBA") with local Tribe members (Lithium Americas, 2022c) (see Appendix B). A Community Benefits Agreement was allegedly signed between Lithium Americas and members of the Fort McDermitt Tribe. This text is the announcement of that agreement made by the company. The fifth text is an op-ed written by Thomas Benson of Lithium Americas in the *Reno-Gazette Journal* (Benson, 2022) (see Appendix C). The op-ed is titled "Mining lithium at Thacker Pass essential for combating climate change." Thomas R. Benson is described in this op-ed as an adjunct research scientist at Columbia University and Manager of Global Exploration for Lithium Americas Corp. In short, Benson identifies himself as a life-long liberal environmentalist who has determined that green energy, and thus mining lithium, is essential for combating climate change.

To capture resistant arguments, I analyzed four texts. The first text is an op-ed written by Max Wilbert of Protect Thacker Pass as a response to the op-ed written by Benson in the *Reno-Gazette Journal* (Wilbert, 2022) (see Appendix D). This op-ed is titled "Mining lithium at Thacker Pass is a bright green lie." Max Wilbert is described as co-author of the book *Bright Green Lies: How the Environmental Movement Lost its Way and What We Can Do About It* and a co-founder of the Protect Thacker Pass movement. Wilbert calls green energy and lithium mining a "bright green lie" that perpetuates harmful environmental practices and instead proposes that reduced consumption is the way to a real green future. The second text is an op-ed written by Gary Mckinney, member of People of Red Mountain, in the *Reno Gazette-Journal*

(Mckinney, 2022). This op-ed is titled “Life Over Lithium: a tradition of defending the land at Thacker Pass.” The third text is the website of The People of Red Mountain, or Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu in Paiute (People of Red Mountain, n.d.) (see Appendix E). People of Red Mountain are a self-identified committee of traditional knowledge keepers and descendants of the Fort McDermitt Paiute, Shoshone, and Bannock Tribes and others. The group has resisted the mining operations at Thacker Pass. The fourth text is a letter sent to General Motors from the Securing Indigenous Rights in the Green Economy Coalition (SIRGE) and Gary Mckinney of People of Red Mountain (Mckinney et al., 2023) (see Appendix F). The letter is titled “SIRGE Coalition’s and People of Red Mountain’s Concerns: Indigenous Rights Violations Relating to Thacker Pass.” General Motors is a joint equity investor in the Thacker Pass lithium mine and has signed an offtake agreement, or a promise that the company will receive lithium supply from the mine, with Lithium Americas.

Data Analysis

To analyze the texts for this study, I used the phronetic iterative approach (Tracy, 2020) to pull themes from the texts as guided by my research questions. In short, the phronetic iterative approach is a way to analyze texts by alternating between uncovering themes emerging independently in the text, and using existing models to interpret the texts (Tracy, 2020). In other words, the phronetic iterative approach incorporates the benefit of a grounded reading, which pulls data from texts uninfluenced by researcher goals, alongside the benefit of putting the data in conversation with researcher goals and existing literature of interest. In this section I will elaborate on that process in more detail, including how I cleaned my textual data, then moved into the initial grounded approach, and finally the phronetic iterative approach.

The analysis process started with data cleaning. I gathered all of my texts and selected the portions that hold relevance to the focus of my study on justice in electric energy discourse. Because some of the texts are quite long and include less relevant sections, those sections were removed from the analysis. For example, the section in Lithium Americas' ESG-S report titled "An Employer of Choice" was not used because it primarily concerned inner-organizational and employment safety standards which is beyond the scope of this study. Additionally, Lithium Americas' Corporate Presentation included sections on projects outside of North America, and those sections were not used as they are also beyond the scope of this study. After cleaning, the remaining texts were largely analyzed in full.

After cleaning texts to eliminate irrelevant sections, I analyzed the texts through a combination of grounded (Charmaz, 2006) and phronetic iterative (Tracy, 2020) methodology. I began with a grounded analysis of the selected texts to begin to illuminate themes. A grounded analysis allowed me to consider all data as useful for understanding themes in the text, without restriction from a specific guiding theoretical framework. This approach can be described as a more objective reading of the texts. In order to identify themes, I highlighted repeated language in the texts. For example, in Lithium Americas' ESG-S report, the phrase "leading the charge" to clean energy was used multiple times throughout the document (Lithium Americas, 2022b, pp. 2, 4, 9), leading to the theme of corporate valorization to emerge. This process was repeated to capture relevant initial themes across the texts.

I then began to utilize the phronetic iterative approach where the initial emerging themes informed my research questions, as well as what literature would be useful as an analytical lens in answering those questions. Through this process, as notable themes emerged from the texts, I developed research questions and collected relevant literature to interpret those themes. For

example, I began to develop the theme of corporate valorization by looking for literature to explain the theme and the precedent for the theme, as well as additional locations in the texts that further illuminate the theme. For example, I found that corporate valorization was dependent upon the corporation's characterization of climate change as a crisis and their role as valor in addressing the crisis. Themes like this example helped me to describe how Lithium Americas is characterizing the electric energy transition, a relevant contribution to RQ1. I repeated this process to answer my developed research questions.

The following chapter will comprise the first part of this study's analysis, which is the analysis of industry stakeholder texts. The subsequent and final analysis chapter will comprise the analysis of resistant stakeholder texts.

Chapter IV: Analysis/Findings – Industry Discourse

This first analysis chapter provides an analysis of industry stakeholder contributions to electric energy discourse at Thacker Pass, and it will be followed by a chapter which analyzes resistant stakeholder texts. The first research question of this study asks what characterizations of a just energy transition are presented by industry and resistant stakeholders of the Thacker Pass lithium mine. To answer this question, I argue in this chapter that Lithium Americas justifies extraction as part of a just energy transition through strategic messaging which valorizes the global role and minimizes the local harms of lithium mining for the electric energy transition. My second research question asks what industry and resistant stakeholder characterizations of the electric energy transition reveal about the value motivations dominating energy discourse at Thacker Pass. I argue that the implication of justifying extraction for electric energy is deflecting the notorious reputation of mining as polluter, rewriting mining industry reputation as a brave, morally driven and morally valuable pursuit. This implication also erases the possibility of alternative climate change solutions driven by alternative ideological priorities such as transportation reform, reduced consumption, or degrowth. In other words, the emphasis on extraction and battery production, which echoes the larger cultural Discourse on climate change mitigation, works to dominate people and land at Thacker Pass and marginalizes alternative ideological priorities.

The first section of this chapter reveals themes of crisis and self-valorization in Lithium Americas' public-facing documents. The subsequent section will reveal themes in Lithium Americas messaging which works to mitigate the perception of mining harm and ultimately dominate local landscapes. Together these themes capture how industry is characterizing the electric energy transition (RQ1) and the value motivations perpetuated by the company's

contribution to energy transition discourse (RQ2). This chapter captures the analysis of industry texts, after which the following chapter will capture resistant stakeholder texts.

The Mining Industry as Valor of Climate Crisis: "We are in the lithium business to lead the global transition to clean energy."

This section introduces the first way Lithium Americas characterizes the just nature of the electric energy transition, which is to characterize their corporate persona as not only a leader in climate change mitigation but a valor of climate crisis. This characterization is interpreted through a few interconnecting features of their messaging which collectively valorize the company. First, the company embraces climate change under a crisis paradigm. Importantly, the crisis frame contributes to the company's ability to embrace a climate hero and climate villain binary, whereby they establish themselves as climate leaders and ultimately heroes, or valors, of climate crisis.

To provide some background on the main and sub themes in this section, I will provide some background here before transitioning to the analysis of texts. Importantly, extractive industries like oil and mining have begun to frame themselves as leaders of climate change mitigation in recent years (Schlichting, 2013). After decades framing climate change in terms of scientific uncertainty and the economic harms of government regulation, oil and other extractive companies have embraced climate change as an opportunity for business. As global society has embraced climate change mitigation as an important cultural issue, industries have not only echoed that consensus but inserted themselves into the role of leading climate change mitigation by way of technological advancement and production. As part of their messaging, mining and other companies create personas to "adapt their selfhoods" while "evading singular responsibilities" for socio-environmental harms (Paliewicz, 2022, p. 60). In this case, Lithium

Americas not only strategically frames (Schlichting, 2013) climate change as a crisis, but they construct their own persona (Paliewicz, 2022) as a valor of climate change. This gives grave importance to Lithium Americas and their mining operation at Thacker Pass on a national and global scale. The following sections will elaborate on these smaller themes which ultimately capture self-valorization in the company's messaging.

Embracing Climate Change as a Global Crisis

As a part of Lithium Americas' self-valorization, this analysis illuminates how the company embraces climate change as a crisis in their language use. "Crisis" has been interpreted by communications scholars as situations deemed crucially important, a point of decision making, a turning point, and a threat (Parks, 2020, p. 83) or similarly in terms of "times of crisis" which involve "formation, challenge, or dissolution" (Condit, 1994, p. 221). These characteristics of crisis language provide a framework for identifying crisis language in texts which introduce large changes with necessary interventions. In exploring valorization, my interpretation of crisis language in the documents is guided by these conceptual threads, which allows me to look beyond the sole term "crisis" to include terms like "global transition," "clean energy transition," "defense," and "existential" alongside actions and threat mitigation strategies like "shifting to clean energy" and "electrifying everything" all as contributing to the characterization of climate crisis. Lithium Americas embraces a few features of climate crisis messaging in their public messaging, which are discussed here.

The title of Lithium America's ESG-S report is "Enabling Transition," a blatant use of large-scale transition language, one of the tenets of describing a crisis. From a full reading of this document, it is evident that this phrasing is prevalent in Lithium Americas' messaging. They alternate between "transition" and "shift" (used 16 times collectively within the 43 pages of the

ESG-S report alone) to appeal sometimes broadly and sometimes more specifically to what is being shifted to. For example, in the report they state that, “One of the greatest global transitions is now underway - the shift to clean energy, a clean economy and the electrification of everything, from vehicles to power grids to industry - to help combat climate change” (Lithium Americas, 2022b, pp. 2, 7).

In this example, which appears multiple times in this exact language, they define “global transition” as meaning a shift to “clean” energy and thereby a clean economy, and electrifying vehicles, power grids, and industries as a part of it. The purpose of this multi-step transition, they say, is to combat climate change. This use of transition, or turning point language, along with scaling the energy transition to a global phenomenon work to characterize the electric energy transition as responding to climate crisis.

Beyond turning-point language, the analysis also reveals that the company embraces crisis by emphasizing climate change as a threat or challenge. The company’s VP of Global Exploration describes his passion for “researching green energy as a solution to the existential climate crisis” (Benson, 2022, para. 3). Climate change as an existential invites valors to resist, fight, and mitigate the threat to existence itself, presumably of all life but not specified directly here. Beyond threats to life, in some cases, the company describes national and economic security as threats too, due to anticipated over-dependence on other countries for battery components like lithium, unless the U.S. government and industry takes collective action to extract and process the materials domestically (Lithium Americas, 2022a). In this case, the threats to combat are market threats (not enough supply for the demand) and national security threats (other countries commanding supply). This places a cluster of threats as drivers of transition, and extracting at Thacker Pass specifically, rather than a concern for climate change

alone. Describing climate change, market gaps, and national security as existential and threatening shapes an adversary which Lithium Americas sees themselves as fighting that is not only the broader climate change non-inclusive of any particular climate polluter, and other countries which could use their mineral supply advantage against the United States.

A reading across texts also reveals that the company presents crisis through language which places urgency on climate threats. They urge that the transition to electric energy needs to happen quickly, propelled by the runaway crisis of climate change. Their VP of Global Exploration urges that "We need to reduce our emissions before this global crisis becomes even worse" (Benson, 2022). The urgency of the threat invites government bodies and members of the public to embrace the company's mine as a means of survival against existential threat. Adding to the urgency, the company embraces the "critical" nature of their operation citing that the US Geological Survey has listed lithium as one of 50 critical minerals to the US economy and national security (Lithium Americas, 2022a, p. 19). This places supply chain urgency as the prominent concern, and invites the public to support any and all mineral extraction as a safeguard against the threat of foreign countries controlling markets.

A reading across texts reveals that, especially in their ESG-S report, corporate presentation, and op-ed, Lithium Americas characterizes the collective problem of climate change, mineral market gaps, and national security with turning-point, threat, urgency, and formation language, along with direct reference to crisis, which creates a tone of crisis across the company's public messaging. Along with additional sub-themes, this crisis language works toward valorizing Lithium Americas within electric energy transition discourse. Another sub-theme found in the texts, which reduces climate change mitigation to a hero and villain binary, is discussed next.

The Climate Hero and Climate Villain Binary and Singularizing the Path to Sustainability

Lithium Americas also helps characterize themselves as valors of climate crisis by positioning their essential role in solving climate crisis through lithium mining, and pitting their operations against fossil fuel consumption industries. A climate hero and climate villain binary is a theory of ecocultural identities, or everyday identity interrelations with nature, which describes binary identities where a person or group can perform as environmental heroes or villains (Hallgren et al., 2020). First and importantly, Lithium Americas positions the fossil fuel extraction industry as the climate villain, and Lithium Americas on an opposing team. They state that greenhouse gasses "released by traditional oil-based energy are accelerating climate change… degrading the environment and ecosystems we rely on" and that transportation and utility sectors contribute the most to fossil fuel consumption (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 8). Meanwhile, they call lithium "The Path to Clean Energy" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 8). The "path" metaphor singularizes the path and limits alternative paths that may arrive toward similar climate change goals. They construct the path through related language such as "enabling the transition to clean energy" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 1), and "enabling the global energy transition" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 33). They also describe lithium being "essential to this transition" and "the shift to clean energy" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 2). In tandem, these terms – the path, the shift, the transition – make clear the company's emphasis on a singular path, which essentializes lithium mining's place in the transition, a role they are poised to accomplish.

Establishing a single path in the energy transition and Lithium Americas as on that path, the company is able to contribute to the environmental narrative from moral high ground. The company's VP of Global Exploration calls upon his role as an environmentalist to justify why lithium mining is in fact important for other environmentalists to support, too:

> As a liberal environmentalist who spent his childhood and career learning about the Earth and the necessity of protecting it, I never thought I would feel compelled to write publicly about the importance of mining - let alone serve as the head geologist at a lithium mining company. (Benson, 2022, para. 1)

He adds,

> This [need for batteries] poses a significant internal challenge for environmentalists. While movies like "Avatar" bias us to think all mining is evil, the fact is that oceans are rising, hurricanes are getting stronger, forests are burning and species are dying because of human-driven greenhouse gas emissions. (Benson, 2022, para. 5)

Directly addressing "environmentalists" as having a challenge to overcome together asserts the binary of climate good and climate evil, and positions for the essential role of the company in climate good. With its place as a morally superior environmental hero, this makes space to begin negotiations, including what, who, and when to assign value and sacrifice for the common good under the priority of lithium mining "for a greener future" (Benson, 2022, para. 12). The next section expands on Lithium Americas' self-established leadership in the energy transition and climate change mitigation.

Connecting Climate Crisis to Industry Importance and Leadership

Lithium Americas further establishes their role as a valor of the climate crisis through emphasizing the importance and leadership of the lithium industry and Lithium Americas in particular. Mitigating the climate crisis in terms of market gaps and national security threats establishes a reinforced three-pronged argument for why Lithium Americas, and the mining industry in general, has an essential role in solving this multilateral crisis. That is, they lead battery production for climate change mitigation, they lead battery production for filling the

market gap, and they lead battery production for national security. Lithium Americas establishes their role-as-leader consistently throughout the analyzed documents, both directly as a clean energy "leader" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 9) and through less blatant arguments for the mine such as the unique opportunity Thacker Pass presents, the necessity of mining minerals for electric energy technology (Benson, 2022).

In establishing the Thacker Pass mine as a "unique opportunity" plays to the company's ability to solve both climate, economic, and national security needs all at once. Their VP of Global Explorations says in his op-ed that

> It doesn't take a rocket (or volcano) scientist to see that the volcanic mud in the McDermitt Caldera presents a truly unique opportunity to help secure a large, high-grade domestic supply of lithium and combat the climate crisis simultaneously. (Benson, 2022, para. 11)

Under this logic, passing up the opportunity to mine lithium at Thacker Pass would fail the simultaneous crises and Lithium Americas plans to not let that failure happen.

The company further stretches their argument to suggest that by creating this supply chain, they are *enabling* clean energy, and even larger yet, that they are *leading* the mitigation of climate change "before it gets worse" (Benson, 2022; Lithium Americas, 2022b, pp. 8-9). This leadership language places their lithium product as the next step and allows them to embrace a "key role" (p. 9) in "the charge" (p. 3, p. 5, p. 9) to clean energy. To explain "How Lithium Americas is Leading the Charge to Clean Energy," a section within the ESG-S report, they say they are providing the lithium needed for the Biden administration's 2022 clean energy agenda which will expand renewable energy in the U.S. (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 9). However, Lithium Americas themselves illuminate how some steps in climate change mitigation and a

"clean energy future" are beyond the reach of their company's influence. They state that "lithium batteries are essential for a clean energy future" but that they "[rely] on the expansion of carbon-free renewable energy and emission-free electric vehicles. (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 8). This reminds readers that electric batteries do not equate immediately to renewable energy, emission-free electric vehicles, or global warming mitigation, as they will continue to utilize fossil fuel generated energy without the expansion of renewables. This narrative of industry leadership also co-opts non-industry environmental leadership and sidelines alternatives such as reduced consumption and improved public transportation for climate mitigation.

Elaborating on their leadership role, they argue that without solutions for transportation and oil-based energy sectors, the Paris agreement goals (an international agreement to reduce global warming and emissions) are unattainable. They describe how lithium batteries store electric energy, thereby "contributing to a fossil-free economy and a clean energy future" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 8). Without lithium batteries, greenhouse gasses will continue to accelerate climate change. They argue, "We need to reduce our emissions before this global crisis becomes even worse - and we can't do that without mining the materials necessary for greener energy technologies" (Benson, 2022, para. 5). Relatedly, appealing to a rationality that "all the solutions we tout for combating climate change - batteries, solar panels, wind turbines, etc. - require mining" (Benson, 2022, para. 4). By arguing that there is no other choice to combat climate change than to mine the metals required to produce batteries, the company simultaneously solidifies the path metaphor and their necessary place within it. Again, this narrative characterizes Lithium Americas in a crucial role for climate change mitigation, specifically. They say that they "work to provide the minerals that are crucial to the energy transition and will contribute to global net-zero greenhouse gas emissions" (Lithium Americas,

2022b, p. 5). By placing their role into the broader climate change story, they are able to pair themselves with renewable energy and others working to mitigate climate change, especially in a leading role as "Lithium… is critical to a sustainable energy future for the United States and the world" (Benson, 2022, para. 2). The next section elaborates how the company's use of crisis and corporate leadership language discussed thus far creates a valorized role for Lithium Americas in the energy transition.

Beyond Leadership: Industry as Climate Valor

One way to describe a *valor* is someone who shows courage and bravery in battle. The analysis in the sections up until this point have introduced Lithium Americas as co-opting climate crisis and industry leadership for moral good- not only climate change mitigation but filling lithium market gaps and reducing national security threats. This section brings together these interpretations to illuminate how Lithium Americas valorizes themselves, or characterizes themselves as courageous and bold leaders in the face of climate crisis. Climate crisis in this case will include market and national security threats as discussed earlier in the chapter and prioritized by the company.

For there to be a valor implies a battle or challenge to fight against or lead a group through. I illuminated crisis language earlier in the chapter, and the same criteria (an important turning point, threat, or challenge) apply here in thinking of crisis as a battle against a threat, and even as a conquest or colonizing endeavor toward a physical space and rhetorically constructed future. Lithium Americas embraces crisis in terms of a battle or conquest when they characterize the crisis, the perceived brighter future, and their role in leading the way toward it and through the problem. For example, the company repeats several times that

> Lithium is essential to this transition and Lithium Americas is uniquely positioned to enable a North American-based lithium supply chain and *lead the charge* to a clean energy future. (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 2)

In similar terms, they state that "We are in the lithium business to lead the global transition to clean energy" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 32). Comparing these statements illuminates some similarities, where "leading the charge" and "leading the transition" similarly capture the company as a leader in battle or conquest, and "clean energy future" might equate to the "transition to clean energy" whereby the utopic future is characterized by energy which is "clean" and uses lithium batteries. Characterizing the global transition to clean energy as a mission or conquest, leading a vague group of people toward the "clean energy future" utopia establishes the setting in terms of a strategic battle, and one that Lithium Americas is poised to lead.

Importantly, Lithium Americas claims that is what they exist as a company to do, that they are "in the lithium business" to lead this endeavor. This reads as deflection from their essential role as a profitable corporation and one which extracts and plans to extract large quantities of earth to fill self-expressed lithium market gaps and government-established national security risks from a lack of domestic supply. In similar terms, the company says they have "a pivotal role to play in enabling the global energy transition and in helping stakeholders achieve their climate change goals" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 33). The term "pivotal" suggests being of crucial importance during a turning point, which can serve as another interpretation of a valor during a time of crisis.

Some other roles the company touts is that their lithium "will significantly reduce the country's dependency on foreign suppliers" (Flyer), increase the supply of lithium ten-fold,

provide good paying jobs, Reduce America's overall carbon footprint, and support auto workers building modern, efficient EVs (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 9). They call their project at Thacker Pass "one of the most significant opportunities" to provide a supply chain for electric vehicles (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 6).

The analysis in this section illuminated some of the messaging used by Lithium Americas to characterize their role as not only a contributor to climate change mitigation but a leader and valor of climate mitigation. Together this messaging allows the company to co-opt broader environmental discourse and set the climate narrative with electric vehicles and lithium mining in essential roles. The next section introduces additional ways the company characterizes a just energy transition at Thacker Pass in ways that minimize the appearance of mining harms and perpetuate a positive perspective on mining for the electric energy transition.

Minimizing The Appearance of Mining Harms: "No matter how much we love Mother Nature, mining critical metals is a necessity for a greener future."

This section introduces the first way Lithium Americas characterizes the just nature of the electric energy transition, which is minimizing the appearance of mining harms. By justifying the sacrifice of Thacker Pass for global climate goals, describing their corporate social responsibility, dominating land use, and cleansing the appearance and reputation of lithium mining, the company is able to deflect from the harms of mining and toward social good as defined by production and consumption-based value structures.

Justifying Sacrifice

There is a precedent for extractive companies to simultaneously embrace corporate social responsibility etiquette while inevitably maintaining corporate priorities and sacrificing socio-environmental values. Scholars have pointed to a lack of discussion of values in public

participation processes for land-use proposals, which ultimately contributes to “sacrifice zones” (Endres, 2012) where a hegemonized value marginalizes other values, especially for Indigenous peoples who hold sacred value for the same land proposed for extraction and pollution In the case of Thacker Pass, pressing for extraction as part of a just energy transition ultimately serves to erase or occlude polysemous value, justifying some level of sacrifice for the national, global, and corporate good.

Lithium Americas in this case justifies sacrifices, as coded through terms like “minimized impacts” (Benson, 2022, para. 12) and “cultural mitigation” (Lithium Americas, 2022a, p. 24). By taking the role of mitigator, they justify harm, specifically environmental harm. For example, Lithium Americas is “designing Thacker Pass to be high social impact and low environmental impact” (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 10). Similarly the company says they are “committed to reducing our biodiversity impacts and to protecting local species, cultures, and natural ecosystems” (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 34). Thus far, they say this has been accomplished by moving their project out of the Montana Mountains to “protect sensitive species.” As they pledge their commitment to reducing their negative impact, they equally describe the selected site for the mine as “sage brush that has maintained fire damage and therefore lower quality habitat area” (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 34). I assert that this undermines the value of the Thacker Pass area by dictating the comparative quality of a habitat area. Similarly, despite oral and written histories, the company claims the area has “no archeological significance” (Community Benefits Agreement), negating the spiritual significance of the land as the grave site of a historic massacre of Indigenous peoples. Together these statements work to rewrite the historic value of the area under technocratic logic suitable for justifying extraction and deflecting claims of spiritual value.

In justifying sacrifice, the company's VP of Global Exploration asserts he came to learn that "no clean energy resource is perfectly green or sustainable" and that, ultimately, "No matter how much we love Mother Nature, mining critical metals is a necessity for a greener future" (Benson, 2022, para. 12). Instead of fully deflecting environmental considerations, they embrace them, place them under new logic, and justify them away for so-called global economic and climate benefit, a display of neoliberal piety where the environment will never supersede market values (Bloomfield, 2019).

This section illuminated how Lithium Americas justifies local sacrifice under extractive logic. The next section reveals corporate social responsibility appeals which also work to justify extraction within a just energy transition.

Corporate Social Responsibility and Voluntary Corporate Good: "Going Beyond Regulatory Requirements"

Corporate social responsibility is a concept referring to the social and societal responsibilities of businesses (Maak & Pless, 2022). The concept comes from the field of business ethics, and in theory holds corporations responsible for their real impacts such as, for example, its carbon footprint. However, corporate social responsibility also calls for the responsibility of a business to maintain its social appearance as a way to build and maintain a positive company reputation. Lithium Americas' messaging appeals to their social responsibility in a few ways, namely through what they've emphasized as the voluntary nature of their responsibility which, under law, is not required of them.

The company has emphasized the importance of the Community Benefits Agreement which was allegedly signed between the company and some tribal members. The agreement, not made available publicly, was announced on their website. The company argues, "Signing of the

CBA is a testament to our company's commitment to go beyond our regulatory requirements and to form constructive relationships with the communities closest to our projects" (Lithium Americas, 2022c, para. 2). Their "commitment to go beyond" what is required of them under state and federal requirements appeals to the voluntary responsibility of the corporation, reminding readers to characterize the corporation as one which is ethical and authentically good, and one which is going out of its way to create shared benefit for community members, namely Indigenous peoples.

Further than going beyond what is required, the company gestures at the novelty and grandeur of their social responsibility aspirations. They establish their "company-wide vision to be the safest, most environmentally responsible and inclusive lithium operator in the world" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 2). Lithium operators are known for committing social and environmental injustice in global lithium mining hot spots like Australia, Chile, China, and Argentina, and Lithium Americas has been accused of harassing Indigenous peoples in one of their joint ventures in Argentina (Business and Human Rights Resource Center, n.d.). To compete with the reputation of lithium and hard metals mining, the company claims they will be environmentally responsible through funding sage grouse habitat restoration, and "voluntarily funding stream habitat restoration nearby" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 35). Similarly, in its ESG-S report the company characterizes its human rights role as "upholding" the rights of "vulnerable" communities near the site. They say,

> We are committed to upholding the rights and interests [of communities]... including vulnerable communities, such as indigenous peoples and children. (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 20)

This quote illuminates a power dynamic whereby the corporation assigns itself the role of "upholding" the rights and interests of those who are only vulnerable *because* of the very existence of Lithium Americas. The company will ultimately uphold any community interests which do not conflict with the needs of the company. This reveals that ultimately corporate social responsibility appeals to go beyond requirements still work to uphold domination by the company in deeming what a just energy transition looks like at Thacker Pass. The following section will elaborate on domination in the company's messaging.

Extractive Domination

Policy in both Nevada and federally gives priority to mining operations over other uses. So long as socio-environmental permission is given through permitting (i.e. Federal Environmental Impact Statement and Land Use permits, and State Water and Air Pollution permits, to name a few), and in Lithium America's case, winning legal challenges, mines are given right of way. The company acknowledges their upper hand in negotiating for their mine in Nevada, noting in their presentation to corporate stakeholders that "Nevada is a mining-friendly state with community, state, and federal support" (Lithium Americas, 2022a, p. 24). This imbalance of procedural power allows Lithium Americas to establish dominance over land use at Thacker Pass.

Lithium Americas further establishes domination through paternalization and colonialism in their messaging. First, Lithium Americas emboldens gender-nature domination by dominating nature and local peoples under a type of paternalism, or restricting local people and ecosystems under a subordination which is framed as in their best interest. In the company's ESG-S report under "Human Rights," they assert their commitment to "upholding the rights and interests of workers and local communities across our supply chain and operations, including vulnerable

communities, such as Indigenous Peoples and children" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 20). As the corporation sets up their operation at Thacker Pass, the notion of protecting vulnerable communities with a history of colonization like Thacker Pass illuminates a kind of paternal control over both the continued domination and wellbeing of local communities simultaneously. Most notably, Lithium Americas is ultimately the entity making the local community vulnerable to begin with. They characterize themselves as "good neighbors, contributing to growth and prosperity and creating shared value for all" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 16), implying a laterally shared expression of power and blurring the appearance of domination which happens across *their* supply chain and *their* operations. Ultimately operations are in fact their own and interest and value is under their jurisdiction to provide. They say they are "protecting local species, cultures, and natural ecosystems" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 34), further illuminating their paternal role as a protector, ironically from themselves.

Additionally, the company signed a community benefits agreement with the Fort McDermitt Tribe, and a community benefits agreement would imply that the community has agreed to the operations of the mine. However, agreements like the one at Thacker Pass can occur under some degree of duress (Preston, 2017), in that in order to gain some benefits (benefits which are not required by law), the Tribe must accept inevitable harms that come with them.

Further, the company asserts that the Tribe "*participated* in cultural mitigation work completed in mid-July 2022" (Lithium Americas, 2022a, p. 24, emphasis added), a project which ultimately "found no areas of archeological significance," negating claims of spiritual significance in the area. Not only does the assertion of "no archeological significance" co-opt spiritual value at Thacker Pass under technocratic terms, but it paternalizes the role of Lithium

Americas in allowing some tribal members to participate in the oppression of others. Lithium Americas includes the following quote from Fort McDermitt tribe member and "Cultural Monitor" Whitney Smart:

> My experience was exciting out there, listening to the archeologists talk about the artifacts and answering all my questions. I learned quite a bit about artifacts, how they were made, where these artifacts came from and how they came about. To me, it looked like they were used for hunting and as tool-making materials. I learned quite a bit out there and I wanted to share my story with some of the older Elders so they can get a better understanding of what our role out there at Thacker Pass was. (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 22)

Assessing cultural history in a proposed mining site is a requirement of projects by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1970 (NEPA). Arlo Crutcher, another Tribe Member, Cultural Monitor, and Councilman, calls cultural monitoring a "good thing" as it preserves history that dates beyond oral histories. However, I am illuminating how the knowledge of the area is being (re)created by archeologists and the company, and (re)distributed among Tribespeople to discount existing oral and written histories held by local Indigenous peoples. This can be considered a strategy of domination whereby "agreements" and "community buy-in" are "developed" by and "created" by the company, work to assert extraction as non-negotiable and subordinate other on the corporation's terms and under the guise of shared "value for all" (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 17).

Cleansing the Open-Pit Mine

Finally, Lithium Americas cleanses, so to speak, lithium mining as another strategy which distracts from present and historic lithium mining harms. Cleansing the reputation and

environmental reality of lithium mining serves to rationalize environmentalism through a consumptive lens. This section illuminates how Lithium Americas makes lithium mining appear clean.

Most blatantly, the company uses the term “clean energy” throughout their ESG-S report (Lithium Americas, 2022b, pp. 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 32). In context, they say they are “leading” and “enabling" the global transition to clean energy” (pp. 1, 9, 32), and “leading the charge to a clean energy future” (pp. 2, 9, 10). Using this language of cleanliness invites readers to associate Lithium Americas’ operation at Thacker Pass with the moral aspiration of clean, renewable energies. They describe “how lithium contributes to clean energy” through the logic of electrifying the transportation sector. They say,

> The greenhouse gas emissions released by traditional oil-based energy are accelerating climate change. These changes have already had adverse effects on the world’s natural environment and will continue to degrade the ecosystems we rely on. The transportation and utility sectors are the two major emitters of GHG emissions and without reductions from these sectors, the goal of the Paris agreement to limit global warming to 1.5 C cannot be achieved… A lithium battery… can be recharged with renewable electricity, contributing to a fossil-free economy and clean energy future. (Lithium Americas, 2022b, p. 8)

The company’s VP of Operations also emphasizes the need for lithium to expand renewable energy, saying,

> The more I learned about the different energy resources, the more I came to realize that all the solutions we tout for combating climate change - batteries, solar panels, wind

> turbines, etc. - require mining… Lithium… is critical to a sustainable energy future for the United States and the world. (Benson, 2022, para. 4)

This claim by Benson along with characterizing electric energy as clean, creates a juxtaposition whereby the energy will eventually be clean but mining is required to get there. Ultimately this frame works to justify local pollution for the abstraction of global clean energy.

Not only is mining cleansed in language but in visual representation as well. The company's ESG-S report includes a large number of images throughout. Among the thirty images in the document, almost half, including the cover page, include images of nature or vast un-excavated desert landscapes. The only image which foreshadows the eventual open-pit that the company plans to build at Thacker Pass is one of an excavation machine used for digging, sitting atop earth that has yet to be excavated (p. 28). The Thacker Pass lithium mine will be the largest lithium mine in America and has potential to be the largest in the world if future expansion permits were granted. However, nothing about an open-pit mine, an expansive and deep hole in the ground filled with machinery and liquid waste, elicits cleanliness, making it an incompatible imagery to include in documents meant to construct a socio-environmentally friendly corporate persona. Other images used in the document include images of a different kind of lithium mining, which uses large salt ponds to extract lithium using evaporative methods (pp. 6, 7, 24). These images show workers gesturing toward or walking amongst vast multi-colored ponds. These ponds, in contrast to the open-pit method to be used at Thacker Pass, invoke a sort of beauty in their toxic sublimity (Peeples, 2011) where the ponds look beautiful and contained, despite their ultimate existence as contaminated landscapes.

Strategically the approach of Lithium Americas to evoke cleanliness in imagery co-opts the pristine nature of the desert ecosystem it seeks to deconstruct, and deflects environmental

harm and allows other images of renewable energy technology (p. 4), lithium ion batteries (p. 8), and electric vehicles (pp. 1, 11, 32, 39) to speak to the larger connection of Lithium Americas to a national and global clean energy transition narrative.

Conclusion of Industry Analysis

RQ1 asked what characterizations of a just energy transition are presented by industry and resistant stakeholders of the Thacker Pass lithium mine. The analysis in this chapter reveals that Lithium Americas justifies extraction as part of a just energy transition primarily through securing their role as a valor of climate crisis and minimizing the appearance of local mining harms through strategies such as corporate social responsibility appeals, establishing paternalized control over land use, and invoking cleanliness and purity in mining for the electric energy transition. RQ2 asked what industry and resistant stakeholder characterizations of the electric energy transition reveal about the value motivations dominating energy discourse at Thacker Pass. I argue that these strategies of self-valorization, and occlusion and mitigation of harms, work to justify the inclusion of mining under the dominant paradigm of a just transition which prioritizes profit and production. Lithium Americas both embraces climate change as a crisis and places their ideological priorities central to its resolution. This strategy erases alternative strategies which may equally and alternatively mitigate climate change and deflects environmental justice harms. The next chapter will be an analysis of texts from resistant stakeholders at Thacker Pass.

Chapter V: Analysis/Findings – Resistant Discourse

While the previous analysis chapter provided an analysis of industry stakeholder contributions to energy discourse at Thacker Pass, this chapter provides an analysis of resistant stakeholder contributions to energy discourse at Thacker Pass. The first research question of the present study asks what characterizations of a just energy transition are presented by industry and resistant stakeholders of the Thacker Pass lithium mine. In this chapter focused on resistant stakeholder texts, I argue that resistant stakeholders interrupt popular notions of the energy transition by a) complicating the concept of environmentalism in the context of the electric energy transition, and b) calling upon principles of justice. The second research question of the present study asks what industry and resistant characterizations of a just energy transition at Thacker Pass reveal about the value motivations dominating energy discourse at Thacker Pass. I argue that resistant stakeholders' characterizations work to complicate popular just energy transition discourse by introducing competing ideological motivations to the neoliberal free-market motivations which work to solve climate change through further production, such as spiritual and ecological land protection, reduced consumption, and improving tribal negotiations.

The following sections will elaborate on these themes found in the resistant texts, starting with how resistant stakeholders complicate environmentalism, and followed by their introduction of principles of justice.

Complicating Environmentalism in the Energy Transition

This section will introduce ways that messaging from resistant groups at Thacker Pass works to complicate environmentalism in energy transition discourse. Normative environmentalism, for the purpose of this study, refers to environmental discourse which restricts environmentalism under a neoliberal value structure that ultimately prioritizes production and

consumption to solve environmental problems. However, environmentalism is used under a wide range of meanings. Thus, I am not reducing environmentalism to one definition, but articulating how definitions are created by those with discursive power, and therefore, can be negotiated. This section will elaborate on three ways resistant texts challenge popular notions of environmentalism in the energy transition, including by providing alternative paths to climate change mitigation, redefining notions of *green* and *clean* as diametrically opposed to extraction, and rescaling the just nature of the energy transition from global to local.

An Alternate Path to Climate Change Mitigation

One way that resistant stakeholders complicate popular notions of environmentalism in the energy transition is through arguments which split or widen the normative path to climate change mitigation. "The path to clean energy" is a metaphor introduced by Lithium Americas to describe the importance of lithium mining for electric energy and eventually renewable sources of energy. In this section I show how resistant stakeholders characterize alternate paths to not only clean energy but to a clean earth.

In his op-ed, Max Wilbert of Protect Thacker Pass agrees with Lithium Americas' Thomas Benson in that "global warming is a massive problem" but "where we differ is on what should be done" (Wilbert, 2022, para. 2). Wilbert and People of Red Mountain both note that the mine will in fact produce carbon emissions of its own, and that "The water, air, land, wildlife, plants, and everything in between will all pay the ultimate price for lithium powered batteries for electric vehicles" (People of Red Mountain, n.d., para. 2). This illuminates a split in value motivations and ideological approaches to climate change mitigation between resistant and industry stakeholders. In this case, normative approaches to climate change mitigation through electrification of cars is described as sacrificing some amount of local ecosystems. People of Red

Mountain member Gary Mckinney says, “Now, in the name of a greener future, new mining projects are popping up left and right - and once, again, it is Indigenous peoples being asked to suffer the consequences” (Mckinney, 2022, para. 7). By noting that a “greener future” in this case involves mining projects which cause Indigenous peoples to “suffer the consequences” Mckinney problematizes normative strategies to combat climate change with electrification, ultimately suggesting a shift in ideological motivations from a “greener future” which involves the domination of land and people.

Wilbert suggests alternative strategies to mitigating climate change, including reducing food waste, eliminating the use of refrigerant greenhouse gasses, and tropical rainforest and peatland restoration and protection, all of which he cites as more effective than expanding electric energy. In part, he argues that alternate strategies are more effective due to the fact that mining currently makes up ninety percent of biodiversity loss and fifty percent of carbon emissions (Wilbert, 2022). This argument for alternatives to mining at Thacker Pass further problematizes the normative path metaphor used to justify mining for the electric energy transition and the sacrifice required at Thacker Pass for that path. Resistant stakeholder arguments also open the opportunity for alternate paths that would protect Thacker Pass from biodiversity loss, and as People of Red Mountain argue, protect Thacker Pass as a sacred space. The next section will describe another way resistant stakeholders complicate environmentalism in the context of electric energy by redefining what is considered green and clean in this context.

Redefining Green and Clean

A second way that resistant stakeholders complicate popular notions of environmentalism in the energy transition is by redefining conceptions of what is normatively considered *green* and *clean* in energy transition discourse. The definitions of green and clean shift in practical

meaning, but the terms are often used to describe something which is environmentally sustainable (Uren et al., 2019) or as having ecological integrity (Plec & Pettinger, 2012), and in the electric energy context they refer to the ideal perception of reduced fossil fuel emissions through the use of electric vehicles. However, for Indigenous and other resistant stakeholders at Thacker Pass, the terms green and clean in the context of mining for the electric energy transition invite suffering, loss, and toxic sublime imagery of waste piles. Resistant groups strategically redefine the materiality of what it is to be green and clean in place at Thacker Pass, or Peehee Mu'huh.

Resistant first groups redefine green and clean in part by challenging normative notions of those words in the energy transition. People of Red Mountain member Gary Mckinney says "Lithium Americas wants to build a major mine that would forever transform these sacred landscapes into piles of waste" all "in the name of a greener future" (Mckinney, 2022, para. 7). He says "For too many Indigenous communities, mining has desecrated sacred sites and poisoned the water" (Mckinney, 2022, para. 5) and calls Thacker Pass the "biased, greenwashed version" of mining (Mckinney, 2022, para. 5). Activist Max Wilbert says the mine will "destroy or degrade dozens of square miles of habitat" (Wilbert, 2022, para. 8). Resistant groups also challenge notions that a mass shift to electric vehicles will reduce fossil fuel emissions much on a global scale, People of Red Mountain say "despite Lithium Nevadas' characterization of the mine as 'green'" the company will produce tons of carbon dioxide emissions every year (People of Red Mountain, n.d., para. 2). They also point to the mining industry as responsible for ninety percent of global biodiversity loss and half of carbon emissions. At Thacker Pass specifically, they argue the mine will use valuable water resources and impact sensitive species (People of

Red Mountain, n.d.). By pointing to flaws in the materiality of what it means to be green in sites like Thacker Pass, resistant groups interrupt those terms and open them to redefining.

As an alternative to green definitions which promote sacrificial land degradation for greater climate change narratives, resistant groups introduce conceptions of sustainability which prioritize land protection for its sacred and ecological value. Mckinney describes Indigenous communities' "ancient respect for Mother Earth," and "intimate connection with the land that goes back generations" (Mckinney, 2022, paras. 2 & 11). He describes the smells of cedar and sagebrush, ancient medicine, among the serene and beautiful landscape. Max Wilbert calls on principles of degrowth, or reduced consumption, as a more green alternative to mass mining for electric energy. He says,

> Dr. Benson writes that 'mining critical metals is a necessity for a greener future.' I disagree. A greener future means learning to live with less. It means recognizing that the rights of Congolese children, native people of Nevada, and sage-grouse are more important than our entitlement to gadgets and fancy cars. (Wilbert, 2022, para. 7)

By problematizing the true ecological integrity of mining lithium at Thacker Pass to build electric batteries, resistant groups are able to redefine the terms green and clean from more consumptive motivations that prioritize mass extraction to priorities of conservation and land protection, thus challenging environmentalism in the context of climate change mitigation.

Re-scaling the Transition: Local Impacts of Global Climate Change Mitigation

A third way that resistant stakeholders complicate popular notions of environmentalism in the energy transition is by re-scaling the broader notions of the transition from global climate change mitigation to local environmental justice. All three op-eds written by industry, activist, and Indigenous voices at Thacker Pass address the phrase "in the name of a greener future" and

"necessity for a greener future." First proposed in the op-ed by VP of Operations for Lithium Americas, Thomas Benson, the phrase captures one of the essential discrepancies at Thacker Pass which asks, on what scale ought someone view the ethics of climate change mitigation? In other words, is a transition just because it seeks to mitigate global climate change, or because it takes into account justice on a local scale? Resistant stakeholders agree that climate change is an urgent problem (Mckinney, 2022; Wilbert, 2022) but they also call attention to the importance of local justice in places like Thacker Pass and other new mining sites which claim to lead the electric energy shift in the name of a greener future.

Protect Thacker Pass founder Max Wilbert asks, "Benson's argument is that 'mining critical metals is a necessity for a greener future.' But I would ask: a necessity for whom?" (Wilbert, 2022, para. 3). In Wilbert's op-ed he challenges the scale of the transition by reinviting local peoples impacted by mining sites into the more globally-centered arguments for climate change mitigation by means of electric energy expansion. Beyond Thacker Pass, he invokes examples of local mining harms like child slave labor in Democratic Republic of the Congo mines, water overconsumption and pollution in Argentina where Lithium Americas owns a joint venture lithium mine, and biodiversity loss which primarily results from resource extraction industries. At Thacker Pass, Wilbert and People of Red Mountain point out that the mine will degrade habitat for local species, pump over 3,000 gallons of water per day from the desert watershed, and "cause irreversible harm to the Fort McDermitt Tribe, ancestral massacre sites, water, air, medicines, and culturally important wildlife" (People of Red Mountain, n.d., para. 2; Wilbert, 2022). Tribal member Gary Mckinney says that "in the name of a greener future" Indigenous peoples are suffering the consequences of new mining projects (Mckinney, 2022, para. 7). These resistant arguments challenge the local sustainability of the global strategy

to shift to electric energy for climate change mitigation. The previous sections illuminated resistant messaging which complicates normative conceptions of environmentalism under neoliberal frameworks. The next section will illuminate issues of justice in resistant messaging.

The Procedural, Process, and Distributive Injustice of the Energy Transition

This section illuminates how resistant stakeholders call on notions of procedural, process, and distributive justice to characterize a just energy transition at Thacker Pass. Environmental justice is a primary lens in theorizing a just energy transition, and the concept can be broken into types of justice, including *process justice*, which is equity in participation in decision making processes, *procedural justice*, equity in protection from harm via policy and enforcement, and *distributive justice*, equity in the benefits and harms of an environmental decision. Resistant stakeholders challenge the notions of a just transition by calling on process, procedural, and distributive justice and injustice involved in the Thacker Pass lithium mining operation.

Process Justice: 'Free and Prior Informed Consent'

Resistant stakeholders address justice in part by problematizing Lithium Americas' free and prior informed consent compliance. Free and prior informed consent (FPIC) is one principle of the United Nations Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) (Mckinney et al., 2023), an international human rights standard that, though not legally binding, sets standards for the rights of indigenous peoples for projects like mining operations. Free and prior informed consent calls on mining and other companies to consult with local Indigenous peoples before a project starts. This standard falls under the concept of process justice, or equity in participation in decision making, where Indigenous peoples would have an active voice in land use decisions.

In their letter to General Motors, who is one of the major investors in the Thacker Pass lithium mine, Gary Mckinney and the SIRGE Coalition problematize "significant and urgent human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights concerns" where Lithium Americas did not follow free and prior informed consent guidelines (Mckinney et al., 2023, para. 2). Because they did not follow the FPIC guidelines, and because of lawsuits filed by the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Burns Paiute Tribe, and Summit Lake Paiute Tribe, Lithium Americas does not have a social license to operate (Mckinney et al., 2023), a common terminology which describes a company which has approval from the local community for industry operations. Because General Motors committed to the UNDRIP in their human rights policy, Mckinney and the SIRGE Coalition argue that the significant opposition from local Indigenous peoples to the Thacker Pass lithium mine render their support of Lithium Americas' venture against their own policies. Mckinney says, "Justice demands we don't mine without free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous, or any, potentially impacted communities" (Mckinney, 2022, para. 6).

Free and prior informed consent is a different concept than a community benefits agreement. Lithium Americas "claims to have signed" a community benefits agreement with some members of the Fort Mcdermitt Tribe, but Mckinney points to a bias in selecting who the federal government recognizes as representing Tribal members (Mckinney, 2022). Ultimately the discrepancy in what the community benefits agreement includes, and who signed it, remains a separate issue of process justice which came subsequently to a lack of free and prior informed consent. Moreover, calls from Indigenous peoples about improper consultation from government and industry about the Thacker Pass mining project illuminates an issue of process justice whereby they are prevented from meaningful participation in land use decisions, a relevant component of justice as it is defined in this paper. The next section will illuminate another form

of justice – procedural justice, which resistant stakeholders call on to bring justice into discourse of electric energy at Thacker Pass.

Procedural Justice: The Rights of Indigenous Women and People

Procedural justice is the equal protection from harm through policy and enforcement. Resistant stakeholders also introduce justice through the rights of women and "a history of violence" and "continued disregard" of Indigenous peoples under the 1872 Mining Law which privileges mining over all other uses (Mckinney, 2022, para. 6). Indigenous peoples at Thacker Pass are ultimately calling on procedural justice to point to legal barriers to procedural protection for themselves during the introduction of the Thacker Pass lithium mine. The 1872 Mining Law is a major federal policy which gives priority to mining uses on federal land. Mckinney points to this law's historical damage toward Indigenous peoples' rights. He says,

> It's up to our generation of Warriors to remember what started the generational trauma we know as 'Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Men, & Relatives' or MMIW (or recently MMIP). Here in the Great Basin of Nevada, it's the history of violence brought into our communities by the 1872 Mining Law, and the continued disregard for Indigenous People. (Mckinney, 2022, para. 6)

MMIW, MMIP, and also known as Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirits (MMIWG2S) is a movement which raises awareness of the disproportionate experience of violence for Native women and a lack of systemic protections and responses from those harms (Coalition to Stop Violence Against Native Women, 2023). The violent ramification of the 1872 mining law for Indigenous peoples brings concerns to resistant stakeholders for "increased gender based violence" from the construction of the Thacker Pass lithium mine. They note that their concern is due to a correlation between extraction projects and a 70 percent increase in

aggravated assault, as documented by the Department of Justice (Mckinney et al., 2023, para. 6). However, these concerns are not recognized by procedures which prioritize mining for its economic value, especially, as Mckinney points out, in Nevada (Mckinney, 2022). Because of mining laws, lawsuits like the ones filed by local Indigenous peoples at Thacker Pass continue to prioritize mining in land use decisions.

By calling on these instances of procedural injustice, resistant stakeholders challenge the broader ethical narrative of the electric energy transition on grounds of procedural justice.

Distributive Justice: A History of Colonialism and Land Protection at Thacker Pass

A third way that resistant stakeholders introduce issues of justice in the discourse at Thacker Pass is in terms of distributive justice. Distributive justice describes equity in the benefits and burdens of a given action. In the case of the mining operation at Thacker Pass the term describes benefits and burdens of the mine for local interconnected peoples and ecosystems in the area around the mining site. Resistant stakeholders call on these benefits and burdens to describe what justice and injustice look like at Thacker Pass under distributive terms.

Resistant groups say that the operation places large burdens on local communities and Indigenous peoples, namely human rights harms, environmental pollution, potential for the perpetuation of historical violence surrounding mining sites, and harms to the spiritual and cultural history at Thacker Pass which is the site of a massacre of Indigenous peoples (Mckinney et al., 2023). Mckinney notes that local people are being asked to "abandon the ancient respect for Mother Nature" and sacred land for "green energy" (Mckinney, 2022, para. 11). Wilbert similarly calls on the burden of local habitat and sacred sites degradation (Wilbert, 2022). Burdens framed as sacrifice indicate inequity in the distribution of harm from the Thacker Pass

mine, marginalizing the needs of local and Indigenous peoples for the purpose of extraction and the energy transition at large.

In contrast, resistant stakeholders indicate that benefits of the mine are slim, if existing at all for local peoples. Mckinney calls on the community benefits agreement, which was only signed by certain members of the Fort Mcdermitt tribe and he questions whether it was signed at all. Mckinney states that mines in Nevada "provide jobs for some" but those jobs come at a cost of "desecration" and "transformation" of landscapes (Mckinney, 2022, para. 5). The potential discrepancy in community benefits, whereby local groups experience more burdens than benefits, calls attention to distributive injustice resulting from the Thacker Pass mine.

Calling on issues of distributive justice at Thacker Pass, resistant stakeholders challenge notions of a just energy transition in terms of the limited benefits and prolific harms taken on by local peoples surrounding the mining site. Calling on this distributive injustice brings forward the sacrificial nature of places like Thacker Pass for the larger narrative of the electric energy transition for climate change mitigation.

Conclusion of Resistant Stakeholder Analysis

This chapter analyzed resistant stakeholder characterizations of the Thacker Pass lithium mine. RQ1 of this study asks what characterizations of a just energy transition are presented by industry and resistant stakeholders of the Thacker Pass lithium mine. The analysis in this chapter illuminates how resistant stakeholders interrupt popular notions of the energy transition by redefining environmentalism in the context of the energy transition and calling upon principles of justice, ultimately complicating popular just energy transition discourse. RQ2 of this study asks what industry and resistant characterizations of a just energy transition at Thacker Pass reveal about the value motivations dominating energy discourse at Thacker Pass. The analysis

shows land protection as a value priority for local resistant stakeholders, which contradicts with extractive value priorities of industry and popular energy policy. The following discussion section will overview the two analysis sections in this study, of industry and resistant texts, and how they help to answer the present study's research questions. The discussion will also include the implications of the findings, and potential for future research.

Chapter VI: Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to illuminate discourse around a just electric energy transition as it materializes at new mining sites like Thacker Pass which will be used to produce the electric batteries for the transition. This study proposed the following research questions: RQ 1: What characterizations of a just energy transition are presented by industry and resistant stakeholders of the Thacker Pass lithium mine, and RQ 2: What do these characterizations reveal about the value motivations dominating energy discourse at Thacker Pass? The analysis reveals a few findings. First, the analysis reveals that Lithium Americas justifies extraction as a part of a just energy transition primarily by securing their role as a valor of climate crisis, and by minimizing the appearance of local mining harms. Second, the analysis reveals that resistant stakeholders interrupt popular notions of a just energy transition by complicating the idea of environmentalism in the context of the electric energy transition, and by calling upon process, procedural, and distributive injustice on a local scale. Third and finally, the analysis reveals that industry notions of a just energy transition at Thacker Pass are more congruous with status quo neoliberal climate change discourse which centers global market objectives, electric vehicles and other electric infrastructure as priority over other more ideologically paradoxical priorities like land protection, reduced consumption, and disbursing more negotiating power to Indigenous peoples. This section will discuss how the literature informs and is informed by the findings, and will conclude with limitations of the study and future directions for research.

This study offers theoretical and practical implications. First, as discussed in the literature review, communication scholars have largely studied climate change and energy in terms of problematizing fossil fuel industries in the context of the climate crisis. Some energy communication scholars have more recently called for research which expands beyond the

inherency of crisis framing (Endres et al., 2016). The present study answers this call by approaching issues of energy communication through comparative analysis of energy sources beyond fossil fuels in broader energy discourse. Climate change can both be approached by scholars from a crisis frame (i.e. climate change as a crisis and research as a tool to solve that crisis), while also not limiting research to that frame. This study offers a direction to analyze the electric energy transition as a growing energy context relevant to society beyond the ways it solves climate change.

A second theoretical contribution of this study focused on critical scholarship of power and resistance. The analysis revealed themes of land domination and sacrifice at Thacker Pass. As the present study reveals, under a just energy transition which is often theorized under the lens of environmental or energy justice (Jenkins et al., 2016; McCauley et al., 2019; Raphael, 2019). Local stakeholders in places like Thacker Pass are experiencing the paradox of an energy transition which is for the greater good but not necessarily for them. For example, stakeholders use the terms *green* and *clean* differently across texts, for industry the terms indicate the valor of the mining industry in mining for the batteries needed for renewable energies, and works to mitigate the dirty reputation of mining. For resistant stakeholders in this context, the terms are used to interrupt normative energy discourse which prioritizes production, and therefore extraction, for the electric energy transition. In this way, the study shows how discourse like that at Thacker Pass can work to dominate and sacrifice both physical land and the values represented by the people who exist within it.

Thirdly, this study drew from industry-focused frameworks which analyze messaging around corporate ethics, such as corporate social responsibility (Maak & Pless, 2022), industry climate change framing (Schlichting, 2013), and greenwashing (Plec & Pettinger, 2012). This

study reveals that these research areas are relevant in the context of mining for the electric energy transition, as mining companies are appealing to corporate social responsibility and valorizing their role in climate change mitigation to appeal to the ethics of their business. Former studies have traced the way corporations frame their impact within climate change contexts, and this study adds to that research, showing that in the newer context of the electric energy transition, corporations like Lithium Americas are emboldening not only a leadership role but valorizing their role in mitigating global climate change. However, the analysis shows that companies like Lithium Americas continue to use standard corporate social responsibility appeals to construct their ethical corporate personas. Corporate social responsibility is broadly defined as the social and societal responsibilities of businesses (Maak & Pless, 2022). Revealing that this framework is still prominent in mining company messaging in this context shows that even mining companies operating under the goals of the electric energy transition, a widely-supported environmental cause, are using standard strategies to gain permission from society to extract, and to some degree pollute, the land. Another example of this, as revealed in the analysis, is greenwashing, or the misleading characterization of a product or process as sustainable (Plec & Pettinger, 2012). Resistant stakeholders have accused Lithium Americas of greenwashing the Thacker Pass lithium mine under the guise of a clean, or green future. The analysis revealed that strategy as the company perpetually promotes their contributions to climate change mitigation and electric energy, and avoids the appearance of local environmental harm. This suggests the existence of greenwashed ‘green’ energy, an interesting theoretical development with implications for the enactment of environmental justice in a just energy transition.

Finally, this study utilized the concepts of discourse (Alvesson & Karreman, 2000; Condit, 1994) and stakeholder values (Deetz, 1995) as an analytical tool to describe stakeholders at Thacker Pass as contributing value motivations to public discourse about the Thacker Pass lithium mine. In other words, this study used discourse and stakeholder models, in a limited manner, to situate the participants involved in the present study at Thacker Pass. These frameworks allowed me to ask RQ2, or how stakeholders' characterizations of a just energy transition reveal value motivations dominating energy discourse at Thacker Pass. The analysis illuminated Lithium Americas and resistant groups as stakeholders with value motivations (e.g. industry motivations of production and resistant motivations of land protection) and as contributing to larger societal discourses through the case study of Thacker Pass. Another important way that discourse was utilized in this study was in describing the dimension of discourse. In other words, how 'small d' discourses, or every day social interactions and events, contribute to 'large D' Discourses, or the construction of social realities through language. The different dimensions of discourse were illuminated throughout the analysis, though not always explicitly, and showed how local manifestations of discourse at Thacker Pass contribute to the larger Discourse around a just electric energy transition. Pointing to discourses at Thacker Pass as informing Discourse of the energy transition helps to connect case studies like Thacker Pass to hegemonized ideological motivations like neoliberalism and their emplaced manifestations and repercussions in places like Thacker Pass.

From a more practical standpoint, the present study offers implications for policy which aims to progress an energy transition which is just. The electric energy transition describes a mass shift to eliminate the use of fossil fuel combustion, especially in vehicles, and replace it with battery storage. The transition aims to rapidly replace all new cars with electric vehicles,

and as a result, more hard metals such as lithium are needed to build the energy storing batteries. This is at least true under normative consumptive frames, where producers and consumers expect status quo products like cars to remain widely available under new technological advancement. As this shift occurs, there are calls from political, industry, and activist stakeholders to ensure that the transition is done in a way that is *just*. However, researchers have found uncertainty in what a just transition might entail, and under what criteria to interpret how just the transition may be, often turning to principles of environmental justice as a lens of interpretation. Lithium Americas' Thacker Pass lithium project is a case study of how mining companies are being emboldened to fulfill the aims of the electric energy transition to produce electric batteries. However, local Indigenous peoples and activists have sued to stop the mine, and have displayed their dissent through various means of public facing messaging. This study reveals a paradox where the morality of the electric energy transition at large is touted to serve justice by mitigating climate change, but expanding mining across the U.S. and globally may not serve a just purpose in local spaces which will be subject to similar mining practices long known to pollute and marginalize localities. This study notions toward a need for practical improvement in process, procedural, and distributive justice in the places where the electric energy transition materializes, and for Indigenous peoples specifically. The Deetz stakeholder model (1995) has suggested a more equitable consideration of stakeholder values rather than the status quo approach of corporations which prioritize profit first and consider other values second. As the present analysis of Thacker Pass reveals, this is a difficult model to actualize as the inherent guiding function of for-profit mining and production companies is in fact profit. In the case of Lithium Americas this requires extraction of lithium at Thacker Pass despite local peoples attempting to have their voices heard and centered. To achieve a true just transition, for-profit

extraction is an ideological roadblock to truly shared value. Future mines could operate under a not-for-profit model to remove this roadblock.

Future studies should further investigate energy transition discourse and the motivations of stakeholders. Uniquely, the electric energy transition situates groups with similar intentions, namely the mitigation of climate change, under a much-too-broad ideological umbrella. Though this study analyzed industry discourse in part under a lens of domination, as Uren et al. (2019) point out, while people may "aspire to be green," their actions are "bound by cultural traditions and world views that perpetuate environmental degradation," and this is no more possible than in the context of the electric energy transition. This nudges toward a complication in understanding the potential for greenwashing when the context is "green" energy. Future studies could help to clarify methods and strategies for understanding this new tension.

Limitations and Future Directions

The present study utilizes a wide range of literature to illuminate how a just electric energy transition is being characterized at Thacker Pass. However, because of the wide range of literature put in conversation with this study, some literature is limited in its application to this study. One limitation of this analysis is that it did not map all stakeholders which contribute to a system of discourse around the electric energy transition. More specifically, the present study used discourse models (Condit, 1994) to justify why the present analysis undertook an analysis of industry and resistant contributions to discourse in this case study, which was to emphasize that the controversy between industry and resistant stakeholders is not happening in a vacuum but rather within such a web of discourse which involves many societal participants. This study did not, however, undertake a proper mapping of all the players in electric energy discourse. A future study could map, according to established models, all the stakeholders who contribute to

discourse around Thacker Pass, including mediators (i.e. the press), consumers, and various scientific experts. Doing so would help to illuminate how discourse as a system has influenced a hegemonic worldview around electric energy technologies (Condit, 1994), which is beyond the scope of the present study but relevant in the ways described.

Another limitation of the present study is that it only characterizes industry characterizations of the electric energy transition from one company, and the focus on industry characterizations only comprised half of the present study. A future analysis could focus solely on industry characterizations of the electric energy transition, and could analyze multiple corporations and mining projects, to more directly add to scholarship which has studied corporate characterizations of climate change through the past several decades (Schlichting, 2013). An analysis which continues corporate framings of mining in the context of climate change mitigation could help illuminate how corporate ethics and morality has evolved to adapt to the newer context of the electric energy transition, which is relevant to the current study but beyond its scope.

Finally, an important limitation of this study comes from its use of a wide range of artifacts. A large number of texts were used to capture more fully the sentiments from both industry and stakeholder groups regarding the ethics of mining for the electric energy transition. However, the wide range of texts illuminated many sub-themes and ultimately the analysis revealed a wide breadth of subthemes used by each stakeholder group. This breadth was useful for capturing a larger image of the larger themes, or characterizations of the electric energy transition, to answer research question one. However, future studies could approach one or two texts more closely to describe themes within the context of particular documents and their function in the larger discourse. In other words, an analysis on the ESG-S report alone (Lithium

Americas, 2022b) could be used to analyze the language used in these voluntary reports. Ultimately a closer analysis of a smaller group of texts from one stakeholder group would illuminate messaging in a more focused context and reveal deeper themes than the broader societal-level themes revealed in the present analysis, contributing to further understanding how the electric energy transition informs and is informed by communication phenomena.

Conclusion

This study evaluated discourse around the electric energy transition through a case study at Thacker Pass, where Lithium Americas Corporation is constructing a new lithium mine to provide metals needed for electric battery production. Resistant groups, including People of Red Mountain, a group of Indigenous peoples from area Tribes, and Protect Thacker Pass, an activist group, have sued to stop the mine and publicly denounced the operation. The analysis asked: What characterizations of a just energy transition are presented by industry and resistant stakeholders of the Thacker Pass lithium mine? And, what do these characterizations reveal about the value motivations dominating energy discourse at Thacker Pass? An analysis of public texts from each stakeholder group revealed that industry is valorizing their role in the electric energy transition and climate change mitigation on a global scale, and minimizing local mining harms that may discredit their participation in a just energy transition. The analysis also revealed that resistant stakeholder groups are redefining terms like green and clean in the context of an energy transition which currently depends on more mining, and calling on various types of injustice to interrupt popular energy transition discourse which depends on mining at Thacker Pass. Putting the analysis in context with popular energy discourse in electric energy policies which prioritize mining, the present analysis reveals that industry notions of a just energy transition are congruous with popular energy policy which centers global market objectives,

EVs, and other electric infrastructure over other priorities like land protection, reduced consumption, and disbursing more negotiating power to tribes. The findings from this study contribute to current understandings of electric energy discourse as it materializes in places like Thacker Pass.

Appendix A

Lithium Americas' "Thacker Pass Overview" flyer

THOUGHTFULLY DEVELOPING THE MOST ADVANCED LITHIUM PROJECT IN THE US

Thacker Pass is located in the McDermitt Caldera, approx. 60 miles north-northwest of Winnemucca, Nevada, located on public lands administered by the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

All key state-level environmental permits were approved in early 2022 and early works construction is expected to commence in H2 2022.

In January 2021, Thacker Pass received a Record of Decision from the BLM, representing their final decision to approve the project and the final national-level permit required to start construction.

Protecting the Montana Mountains and Benefiting Local Communities is Our Priority

Location: Operations will be located south of the Montana Mountains
- In 2018, the project location was moved south to avoid disturbing sensitive ecological areas

Water: We have been monitoring and studying water resources in the area since 2011
- Thacker Pass will consume less than 1% of the total approximate 350,000 acre-feet water per year pumped from wells in Humboldt County

Carbon: Aiming to be a carbon neutral project
- Co-located sulfuric acid plant will generate electricity that will power the processing plant
- Currently assessing Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions

Environmental Stewardship: Going beyond the regulatory requirements to protect the environment
- Filtered dry-stack tailings, backfilling of surface mine, extensive water recycling, state-of-the-art emissions controls systems and concurrent reclamation throughout

Community: Engaged with the local community for more than 10 years
- Years of open houses, county meetings, individual meetings and NEPA process
- Community investments including BuildNV, Safe Have Wildlife Sanctuary, Frontier Community Action, Ducks Unlimited and more

Jobs: We plan to maximize local employment
- Direct employment of up to 1,000 jobs during the two-year construction period and at least 300 permanent positions during the life of the mine

ENABLING AN AMERICAN LITHIUM SUPPLY CHAIN

The United States Department of Interior has listed lithium as one of 35 critical minerals, because of US overdependence on foreign countries for supply and its importance to American security and economic prosperity. Recently, the Biden administration announced it would invoke the Defense Production Act in an effort to secure the supply of lithium and other critical minerals necessary for the clean energy transition.

Thacker Pass presents an opportunity to develop an American lithium supply chain that will work towards President Biden's goal of achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The global lithium battery market is expected to grow by a factor of 5 to 10 in the next decade[1], and Thacker Pass is critical for the US to secure a domestic lithium supply.

[1] Federal Consortium for Advanced Batteries, Exec Summary, National Blueprint for Lithium Batteries 2021-2030

Thacker Pass will create hundreds of family-supporting jobs and enable a US lithium supply chain, essential to meet President Biden's climate and domestic supply objectives

NEVADA BENEFITS

The development of Thacker Pass will create jobs, increase economic activity and generate tax revenues for the state of Nevada.

Thacker Pass and its employees will increase economic activity within Humboldt County by purchasing goods and services from local retailers, vendors and other service providers.

During the construction phase, Thacker Pass is expected to employ up to 1,000 contractors. When the mine reaches full capacity, Thacker Pass is expected to employ approximately 300 people with family-supporting jobs for the life of mine.

Production from Thacker Pass is anticipated to meet most or all of the projected demand for lithium in the United States and will significantly reduce the country's dependency on foreign suppliers

EARLY WORKS CONSTRUCTION

Lithium Americas has a strong balance sheet and is actively pursuing strategic options to de-risk and help advance the project.

State-level permits for air, water and reclamation were approved in early 2022.

Early works construction is expected to start in H2 2022.

US DOE ATVM LOAN PROGRAM

In April 2022, Lithium Americas submitted a formal application[2] to the US Department of Energy Loan Programs Office for funding to be used to develop Thacker Pass through the Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing Loan Program.

[2] The submission is not an assurance that Lithium Americas will secure funding from the ATVM Loan Program and additional steps remain in the process.

How to Reach Us

For more information, please visit our website at www.thackerpasslithium.com or www.lithiumamericas.com, or contact Maria Anderson, Community Relations Manager at maria.anderson@lithiumamericas.com.

@LithiumAmericas

Cautionary Statements

This document should be read in conjunction with Lithium Americas Corp.'s news releases, latest Management Discussion and Analysis, Financial Statements, Technical Reports, Annual Information Form and Management Information Circular (collectively "Disclosure Documents"), available on our website at www.lithiumamericas.com or on SEDAR or EDGAR.

This document contains "forward-looking information" within the meaning of applicable Canadian securities legislation, and "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of applicable United States securities legislation (collectively referred to as "forward-looking information" ("FLI")), and readers should read the cautionary notes contained in the latest Disclosure Documents.

Scientific and technical information in this document about the Thacker Pass Project has been reviewed and approved by Rene LeBlanc, the Company's Chief Technical Officer and a qualified person under National Instrument 43-101 Standards of Disclosure for Mineral Projects ("NI 43-101"). Further information about the Thacker Pass Project, including a description of key assumptions, parameters, methods and risks, is available in the NI 43-101 technical report of Lithium Americas dated effective August 1, 2018 entitled "Technical Report on the Pre-Feasibility Study for the Thacker Pass Project, Humboldt County, Nevada, USA", available on SEDAR.

All figures presented are in US Dollars unless otherwise noted.

Appendix B

Lithium Americas' announcement of a Community Benefits Agreement with the Fort McDermitt Tribe

GlobeNewswire by notified

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LithiumAmericas

Lithium Americas Signs Community Benefits Agreement with Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe

October 20, 2022 16:14 ET| Source: Lithium Americas Follow

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VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Oct. 20, 2022 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- **Lithium Americas Corp. (TSX: LAC) (NYSE: LAC)** ("**Lithium Americas**" **or the** "**Company**") is pleased to announce it has entered a Community Benefits Agreement ("**CBA**") with the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe ("**Tribe**"). The Tribe is located approximately 40 miles from the Thacker Pass project, in Humboldt County, Nevada ("**Thacker Pass**" or the "**Project**"). The CBA establishes a framework for continued collaboration and defines the long-term benefits for the Tribe, the largest Native American community within the vicinity of the Project.

"We are pleased to have the support of the Fort McDermitt Paiute and Shoshone Tribe as we advance Thacker Pass towards construction and look forward to generations of future collaboration," said Jonathan Evans, President and CEO. "The signing of the CBA is a testament to our Company's commitment to go beyond our regulatory requirements and to form constructive relationships with the communities closest to our projects. We are focused on being a good neighbor, hiring locally and providing the job training to prepare Tribe members for long-term, family-supporting careers critical to developing a North American battery supply chain."

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opportunities, and support for cultural education and preservation. Furthermore, the Company has agreed to build an 8,000 square feet community center for the Tribe that includes a daycare, preschool, playground, cultural facility and communal greenhouse to support reclamation efforts and provide income for the Tribe.

Over the summer, Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc. ("**Far Western**"), with oversight and assistance from Tribe members, completed cultural work on approximately 13,000 acres at Thacker Pass. The cultural work was a key requirement from the National Environmental Policy Act (**"NEPA"**) process and found no areas of archeological significance at the Project.

The Company is moving ahead with all areas required to support construction start, including final selection of an engineering, procurement and construction management ("**EPCM**") contractor, evaluating partnership and supply agreements, as well as progressing the U.S. Department of Energy Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing loan program. The Company has received all federal and state environmental permits necessary to begin construction and awaits a ruling on the appeal against the Bureau of Land Management on the issuance of the Record of Decision. Following the completion of briefings on August 11, 2022, the US District Court, District of Nevada (**"Federal Court"**) has scheduled an oral hearing for January 5, 2023.

ABOUT LITHIUM AMERICAS

Lithium Americas is focused on advancing lithium projects in Argentina and the United States to production. In Argentina, Cauchari-Olaroz is advancing towards first production and Pastos Grandes represents regional growth. In the United States, Thacker Pass has received its Record of Decision and is advancing towards construction. The Company trades on both the Toronto Stock Exchange and on the New York Stock Exchange, under the ticker symbol "LAC".

Email: ir@lithiumamericas.com

Website: www.lithiumamericas.com

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This news release contains "forward-looking information" and "forward-looking statements" (which we refer to collectively as "forward-looking information") under the provisions of applicable securities legislation. All statements, other than statements of historical fact, are forward-looking information. Examples of forward-looking information in this news release include, among other things, statements related to: successful development of the Caucharí-Olaroz project and the Thacker Pass project, including anticipated production at Caucharí-Olaroz and construction at Thacker Pass; continuing support of the Tribe for the Project; plans to exceed regulatory requirements; the Company's ability to fund its development programs through debt or equity financing, including through government loan programs; expected timing and outcome of litigation or regulatory processes concerning the Thacker Pass project; and the Company maintaining permits to advance the Project as anticipated.

Forward-looking information is based upon a number of factors and assumptions that, if untrue, could cause the actual results, performances or achievements of the Company to be materially different from future results, performances or achievements expressed or implied by such information. Such information reflects the Company's current views with respect to future events and is necessarily based upon a number of assumptions that, while considered reasonable by the Company today, are inherently subject to significant uncertainties and contingencies. These assumptions include, among others, the following: ability of the Company to fund, advance and develop the Caucharí-Olaroz project and the Thacker Pass project, and raise additional capital as needed, including the outcome of the Company's loan application with the U.S. Department of Energy; uncertainties relating to receiving and maintaining mining, exploration, environmental and other permits or approvals in Nevada and Argentina, and resolving any complaints or

exploration, development and construction costs for the Cauchari-Olaroz project and the Thacker Pass project, including the accuracy of capital cost, operating cost and sustaining capital estimates; estimates of mineral resources and mineral reserves, including whether mineral resources will be developed into mineral reserves; reliability of technical data; the impact of unknown financial contingencies, including costs of litigation and regulatory processes, on the Company's operations; technological advancements and changes; demand for lithium, including that such demand is supported by continued growth in the electric vehicle market; the impact of increasing competition in the lithium business, and the Company's competitive position in the industry; preparation of a development plan and feasibility study for lithium production at the Thacker Pass project; the Company's current and future business plans and the strategic alternatives available to the Company; the impact of inflation on the Company's projects and cost estimates; currency exchange and interest rates; and general economic and stock market conditions.

Forward-looking information also involves known and unknown risks that may cause actual results to differ materially. These risks include, among others, inherent risks in the development of capital intensive mineral projects (including as co-owners), variations in mineral resources and mineral reserves, changes in budget estimation, global demand for lithium, recovery rates and lithium pricing, risks associated with successfully securing adequate financing, including the outcome of government loan applications, changes in project parameters and funding thereof, risks related to growth of lithium markets and pricing for products thereof, changes in legislation, governmental or community policy, changes in public perception concerning mining projects generally and opposition thereto, political risk associated with foreign operations, permitting risk, including receipt of new permits and maintenance of existing permits, outcomes of litigation and regulatory processes concerning the Company's projects, title and access risk, cost overruns, unpredictable weather and maintenance of natural resources,

initiation on the Company's projects, and general market and industry conditions. Additional risks, assumptions and other factors are set out in the Company's most recent annual management discussion analysis and annual information form, copies of which are available under the Company's profile on SEDAR at www.sedar.com and on the SEC website at www.sec.gov.

Although the Company has attempted to identify important risks and assumptions, given the inherent uncertainties in such forward-looking information, there may be other factors that cause results to differ materially. Forward-looking information is made as of the date hereof and the Company does not intend, and expressly disclaims any obligation to, update or revise the forward-looking information contained in this news release, except as required by law. Accordingly, readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on such forward-looking information.

Recommended Reading

October 03, 2023 16:00 ET

Source: Lithium Americas

Lithium Americas Closes Separation to Create Two Leading Lithium Companies

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Oct. 03, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — Lithium Americas Corp. ("Lithium Americas" or the "Company"), now Lithium Americas (Argentina) Corp. ("Lithium Argentina") (TSX: LAAC)...

LithiumAmericas

September 28, 2023 16:22 ET

Source: Lithium Americas

Lithium Americas Announces Details for Completion of Separation

VANCOUVER, British Columbia, Sept. 28, 2023 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) — Lithium Americas Corp. (TSX: LAC) (NYSE: LAC) ("Lithium Americas" or the "Company") is pleased to announce that the separation of the...

LithiumAmericas

Appendix C

Op-Ed written by Thomas Benson, Manager of Global Exploration for Lithium Americas Corporation for the *Reno Gazette Journal*

reno gazette journal

VOICES | Opinion *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

Opinion: Mining lithium at Thacker Pass essential for combating climate change | Benson

Thomas R. Benson

Published 8:00 a.m. PT Feb. 8, 2022 | **Updated 9:36 a.m. PT Feb. 8, 2022**

This opinion column was submitted by Dr. Thomas R. Benson, adjunct research scientist at Columbia University and manager of global exploration for Lithium Americas Corp. The opinions contained herein are his own, and not those of Lithium Americas Corp. or its affiliates or their respective officers, directors or employees, or those of any third party.

As a liberal environmentalist who spent his childhood and career learning about the Earth and the necessity of protecting it, I never thought I would feel compelled to write publicly about the importance of mining — let alone serve as the head geologist at a lithium mining company.

Lithium, widely used in batteries for electric vehicles and power grid storage, is critical to a sustainable energy future for the United States and the world. But as Reuters recently outlined, the industry faces a "talent crunch" because of individuals who, like me at a younger age, had an unequivocally negative view of mining.

I distinctly remember my 7-year-old self in Yellowstone National Park watching the Old Faithful geyser erupting and being inspired by the fact that I was standing on top of one of the world's largest volcanoes, watching it breathe! My fascination with the Earth soon transformed into a passion for researching green energy as a solution to the existential climate crisis.

It was during my Fulbright research in Iceland when I first learned that no clean energy resource is perfectly "green" or sustainable. For example, the volcanic processes driving geothermal power systems don't last forever, and reinjecting geothermal fluids back into the earth comes with its own set of environmental risks. The more I learned about different energy resources, the more I came to realize that all the solutions we tout for combating climate change — batteries, solar panels, wind turbines, etc. — require mining.

This poses a significant internal challenge for environmentalists. While movies like "Avatar" bias us to think all mining is evil, the fact is that oceans are rising, hurricanes are getting

stronger, forests are burning and species are dying because of human-driven greenhouse gas emissions. We need to reduce our emissions before this global crisis becomes even worse — and we can't do that without mining the materials necessary for greener energy technologies.

Lithium demand outstrips supply

This challenge led me to pursue a Ph.D. studying one of the most important energy-critical elements: lithium. Demand for lithium around the world is skyrocketing with the expanding electrification of the automobile industry, especially in the United States where car manufacturers have announced plans to electrify their fleets. The importance of this transition is nearly the only thing Democratic and Republican lawmakers agree on. Because of this, there is a projected lithium supply shortage before mid-decade.

As I navigated the several options for a dissertation project, a colleague alerted me to a lithium deposit in muddy sediments near the Nevada-Oregon border. They are located in the cauldron of a dormant supervolcano called the McDermitt Caldera, where a massive eruption over 16 million years ago helped create a bowl of lithium-rich mud sitting directly on the surface of the Earth.

My research was able to catch the attention of Lithium Americas, which was actively working on optimizing the process to extract lithium from the sediments in the McDermitt Caldera with a unique commitment to minimize local environmental impacts. It conducted nearly a decade of environmental surveys, process optimization, and consultation with the local communities and nearby tribes to design its Thacker Pass Project, a 40-year lithium mining and manufacturing operation on public land that was approved by the federal government in December 2020.

Sustainability by design

This 21st-century design includes an extraction process that uses carbon-free steam-powered energy, a plan to reclaim the shallow pit as the mud is mined, extensive water recycling resulting in a freshwater demand lower than most ranching operations, and partnerships to improve sagebrush habitat in the western United States.

Inspired by the company's commitment to sustainability, I now find myself in my dream job as the head of global exploration at Lithium Americas. Our global exploration efforts underscored my conviction that no other sedimentary resource on earth comes close to the size and grade of the lithium-rich volcanic muds of the McDermitt Caldera. Researchers out of the University of Nevada, Reno estimate that as much as 120 million tonnes of lithium are contained in the

sediments of the whole McDermitt Caldera, with concentrations as high as 1.2 % (by weight) in Thacker Pass. To put these numbers in context, the Earth contains an average of only about 0.0001 % lithium, and global demand for lithium is expected to rise from about 0.06 million tonnes lithium in 2020 to greater than 1.3 million tonnes lithium by 2040.

It doesn't take a rocket (or volcano) scientist to see that the volcanic mud in the McDermitt Caldera presents a truly unique opportunity to help secure a large, high-grade domestic supply of lithium and combat the climate crisis simultaneously.

No matter how much we love Mother Nature, mining critical metals is a necessity for a greener future. At the same time, we have a responsibility to minimize impacts to local environments by mining the highest-grade resources available with sustainable practices.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the writer, Tom Benson —adjunct research scientist at Columbia University and manager of global exploration for Lithium Americas Corporation — and are not those of Lithium Americas Corp. or its affiliates or their respective officers, directors or employees, or those of any third party.

Have your say: How to submit an opinion column or letter to the editor

Appendix D

Op-Ed written by Max Wilbert of Protect Thacker Pass for the *Reno Gazette Journal*

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VOICES | Opinion *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

Opinion: Mining lithium at Thacker Pass is a bright green lie | Max Wilbert

Max Wilbert

Published 7:00 a.m. PT Feb. 15, 2022

This opinion column was submitted by Max Wilbert, co-author of the book "Bright Green Lies: How The Environmental Movement Lost Its Way and What We Can Do About It," and co-founder of Protect Thacker Pass.

Lithium Americas Corporation employee Dr. Thomas Benson's Feb. 8 opinion piece in this paper ("Mining lithium at Thacker Pass essential for combating climate change") makes numerous false claims. Let's set the record straight.

Dr. Benson and I agree on one critical point. Global warming is massive problem, it's getting worse quickly, and we need to address it. Where we differ is on what should be done.

Benson's argument is that "mining critical metals is a necessity for a greener future." But I would ask: a necessity for whom? For example, do child slaves laboring in Congolese cobalt mines call this necessary? Cobalt is an essential ingredient in mobile phones and electric vehicle batteries, but those kids aren't driving Teslas and listening to podcasts all day. They need liberation, not consumer toys.

The Washington Post has exposed how Benson's own employer is implicated in human-rights abuses of indigenous communities in the Atacama desert of Argentina, where Lithium Americas is co-owner of a lithium mine. Local people have complained of declining water tables (the mines use 500,000 gallons to produce a ton of lithium), air pollution, and worse. Lithium mining is "really mining mountains of water," said Daniel Galli, an Argentine physics professor. "The thing is that the companies are lying to us," said the mayor of one community to the Post.

And what about global warming? Dr. Benson contends that producing lithium for a mass shift to electric vehicles would contribute to greenhouse gas emissions reductions. But many analyses actually find that the emissions reductions from switching to electric vehicles are quite minor. Paul Hawken, for example, doesn't put electric cars in his top 10 climate solutions. In fact, it's No. 24 on his list, with almost 10 times less impact than reducing food waste, nearly six

times less impact than eliminating the use of refrigerants which are powerful greenhouse gases, and behind solutions like tropical rainforest restoration (about five times as effective at reducing emissions as is switching to EVs) and peatland protection (more than twice as effective).

Producing a single electric car releases a lot of greenhouse gas emissions — about nine tons on average. This is rising, as the size of electric cars is going up substantially. That means that even if operating electric cars reduces emissions overall, it's not going to reduce them much. One calculation estimates reductions of 6% in the United States. That's not enough to make much of a dent in warming.

Global warming also isn't the only problem we face. Dr. Benson writes that "species are dying because of human-driven greenhouse gas emissions," but the truth is that the vast majority of species extinctions have nothing to do with global warming. Most species extinctions are actually driven by habitat destruction. Resource extraction sectors, like mining, are implicated. They are responsible for about 90 percent of biodiversity loss — and more than half of carbon emissions.

The proposed Thacker Pass mine would destroy or degrade dozens of square miles of habitat and emit the carbon emissions equivalent to a small city. And at least three sensitive, struggling species would be impacted by the mine: the greater sage-grouse, Lahontan cutthroat trout, and a snail species which lives only in 14 springs at Thacker Pass.

Dr. Benson is presenting us with a false choice. He argues that places like Thacker Pass must be sacrificed to save the planet. Unfortunately, the science simply doesn't back him up.

Morality also calls for us to protect Thacker Pass. Even beyond the impacts on the climate and non-humans, this mine would harm local communities. Farmers and ranchers have lined up against the project because of water use and air pollution. Regional native tribes share the same concerns, and also see the site as sacred because of an 1865 massacre of Paiute people that took place there. Tribes, ranchers and environmentalists have all sued to stop the mine.

Dr. Benson writes that "mining critical metals is a necessity for a greener future." I disagree. A greener future means learning to live with less. It means recognizing that the rights of Congolese children, native people of Nevada, and sage-grouse are more important than our entitlement to gadgets and fancy cars.

Max Wilbert is co-author of the book Bright Green Lies: How The Environmental Movement Lost Its Way and What We Can Do About It and is co-founder of Protect Thacker Pass.

Appendix E

Op-Ed written by Gary Mckinney of People of Red Mountain for the *Reno Gazette Journal*

reno gazette journal

OPINION *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

Life over lithium: a tradition of defending the land at Thacker Pass

Gary McKinney

Published 12:00 p.m. PT Nov. 29, 2022 | **Updated 1:17 p.m. PT Nov. 29, 2022**

This opinion column was submitted by Gary McKinney, a member of the Duck Valley Shoshone Paiute Tribe and Fort McDermitt tribal descendant.

I stood near the fireplace, and could hear the light wind as I looked out onto the landscape. I could remember the smell of cedar and sagebrush smoke in the air but this time a thought of sadness hit me. Physically standing near Peehee Mu'huh, I was near the Thacker Pass Massacre site also. I said a short prayer and waited for the sunrise to bless the beautiful landscape as the day began. In our traditional style, we had acknowledged the land and the new beginning to a new day.

Thacker Pass was once a passway between ranges. Ancestral Paiutes and other Tribes like the Bannock and Shoshones have ties together all around the Thacker Pass landscape and then some. We have an intimate connection with the land that goes back generations.

Not all of the memories are pleasant.

The year 1865 was a tragically significant year for Great Basin Tribes. Twenty-four massacres occurred throughout that year alone. These included innocents who were caught off-guard by Army soldiers while asleep in their homes. In 1879, POWs were later marched to Yakima, Washington's Fort Simcoe, a Trail of Tears of sorts, for Northern Paiutes, Shoshone and Bannock people. The United States wanted the Indians off what is now "public land" to make space for white settlers. Many came to exploit the land's gold and silver. To entice these prospectors and "settle" the West, the U.S. government passed the 1872 Mining Law. It has been questionable in many aspects.

The mining industry has run roughshod over the state of Nevada ever since. It provides jobs for some. But for too many Indigenous communities, mining has desecrated sacred sites and poisoned the water. We have seen the transformation of our homelands with each major project operating on or near culturally significant locations. The abandoned Cordero Mercury Mine

operated from 1935 to 1970 near the Fort McDermitt Indian Reservation. Another is the abandoned Rio Tinto Copper Mine 4 1/2 miles upstream of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation from the 1920s up until 1947. Both mines have tailings that severely contaminated the location and continue to have perpetual negative effects on both Indigenous communities. An unmistakable history of former mercury and copper miners and residents of either reservation had developed cancer or died of cancer after abandonment. A study has never been done, but is almost as necessary as showing the biased greenwashed version of mining at Thacker Pass. It proves after the mines are closed, the Indigenous community will forever own its negative effects.

The 1872 Mining Law still privileges mining over all other uses, including the rights and perspectives of Indigenous communities. It's up to our generation of Warriors to remember what started the generational trauma we know as "Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Men and Relatives" or MMIW (recently referred to as Missing or Murdered Indigenous People, or MMIP). Here in the Great Basin of Nevada, it's the history of violence brought into our communities by the 1872 Mining Law, and the continued disregard for Indigenous People. Justice demands we don't mine without free, prior and informed consent of Indigenous communities — or any potentially impacted communities. Until that has been achieved, what allows these projects to operate free of all damages?

We are in the midst of a big transition, from fossil fuels to renewable energy. It's an important step in responding to the climate crisis. But renewable energy and electric vehicles need minerals like cobalt, nickel and lithium that are dug out of the ground. Now, in the name of a greener future, new mining projects are popping up left and right — and once again, it is Indigenous peoples being asked to suffer the consequences. According to MSCI, 97% of nickel, 89% of copper, 79% of lithium and 68% of cobalt reserves and resources in the U.S. are located within 35 miles of Native American reservations.

Peehee Mu'huh is one of the places that would be impacted. A Massacre site from Sept. 12, 1865 is also impacted — when there absolutely was time to bring the 56 eligible significant sites to the table and invite related Tribes to protect them. Lithium America wants to build a major mine that would forever transform these sacred landscapes into piles of waste.

Tribal members have asserted opposition to this mine through a 2021 petition signed by majority of members, and opposition has been supported through two resolutions of the National Congress of American Indians (#AK-21-027) in opposition to the mine, and one from Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (30-ITCN-21). Both resolutions were to protect significant sites in Thacker Pass.

I stand in a serene landscape where many sacred fires had been stoked during the early mornings before the daily rituals began. We can see the camps, we remember them. We can smell the same medicine smoke in the air and from the smell of cedar we can hear the prayer from long ago.

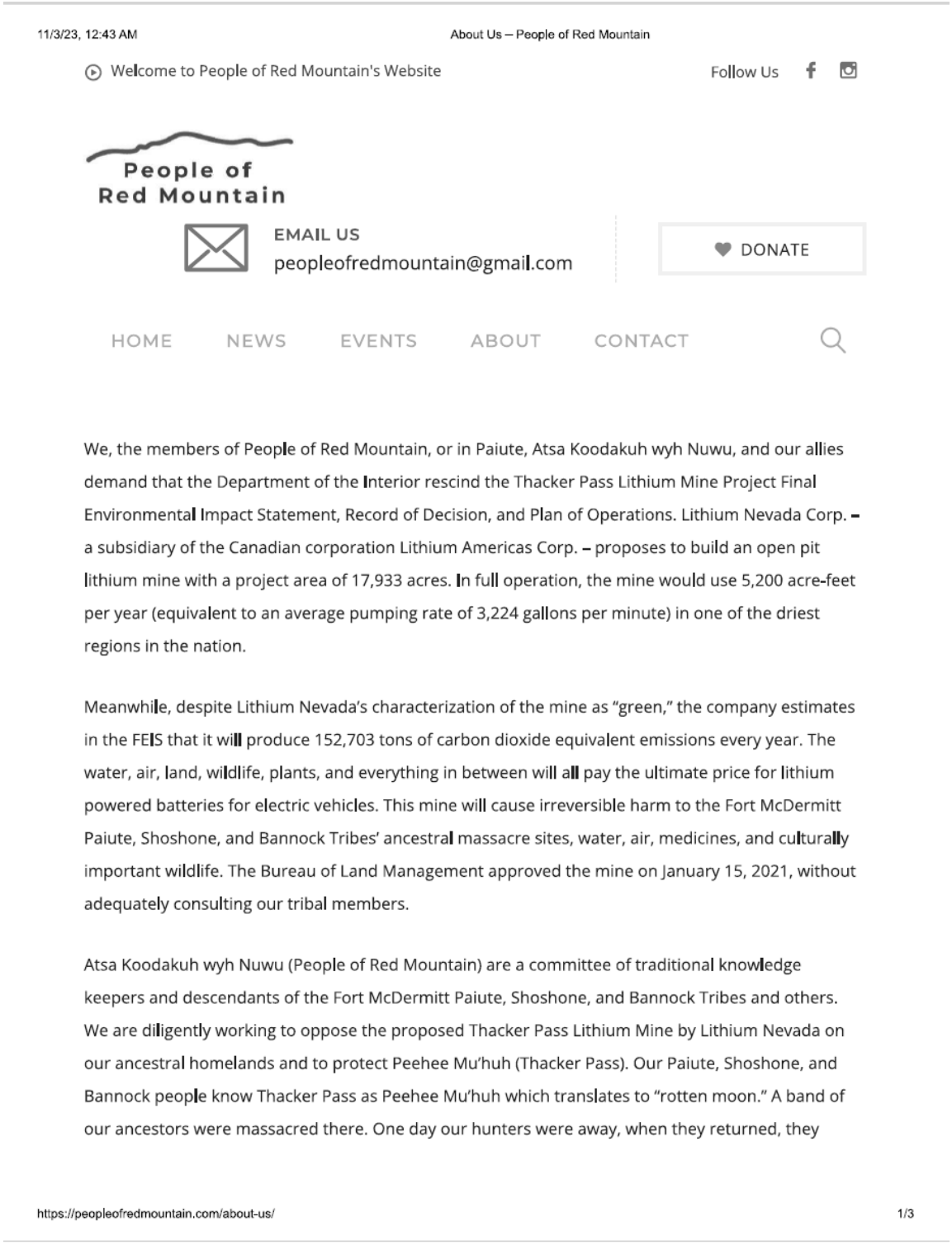
Our Indigenous communities are once again asked to abandon the ancient respect for Mother Earth. On the contrary — we will not.

Gary McKinney is a resident of an Indigenious Community affected through mining, and has been working with the Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu Committee of descendants to protect significant sites such as Peehee Mu'huh and the Sept. 12, 1865 massacre, and other areas that include what is today known as the Thacker Pass Lithium Project.

Have your say: How to submit an opinion column or letter to the editor

Appendix F

Website of People of Red Mountain, "About Us" section



11/3/23, 12:43 AM About Us – People of Red Mountain

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HOME NEWS EVENTS ABOUT CONTACT

We, the members of People of Red Mountain, or in Paiute, Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu, and our allies demand that the Department of the Interior rescind the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine Project Final Environmental Impact Statement, Record of Decision, and Plan of Operations. Lithium Nevada Corp. – a subsidiary of the Canadian corporation Lithium Americas Corp. – proposes to build an open pit lithium mine with a project area of 17,933 acres. In full operation, the mine would use 5,200 acre-feet per year (equivalent to an average pumping rate of 3,224 gallons per minute) in one of the driest regions in the nation.

Meanwhile, despite Lithium Nevada's characterization of the mine as "green," the company estimates in the FEIS that it will produce 152,703 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions every year. The water, air, land, wildlife, plants, and everything in between will all pay the ultimate price for lithium powered batteries for electric vehicles. This mine will cause irreversible harm to the Fort McDermitt Paiute, Shoshone, and Bannock Tribes' ancestral massacre sites, water, air, medicines, and culturally important wildlife. The Bureau of Land Management approved the mine on January 15, 2021, without adequately consulting our tribal members.

Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu (People of Red Mountain) are a committee of traditional knowledge keepers and descendants of the Fort McDermitt Paiute, Shoshone, and Bannock Tribes and others. We are diligently working to oppose the proposed Thacker Pass Lithium Mine by Lithium Nevada on our ancestral homelands and to protect Peehee Mu'huh (Thacker Pass). Our Paiute, Shoshone, and Bannock people know Thacker Pass as Peehee Mu'huh which translates to "rotten moon." A band of our ancestors were massacred there. One day our hunters were away, when they returned, they

https://peopleofredmountain.com/about-us/ 1/3

found the elders, women, and children murdered, unburied, and rotting with their intestines spread across the sagebrush in this pass shaped like a crescent moon.

We are working with our tribal government and other partners in solidarity with protecting Peehee Mu'huh as a sacred place. This place is essential to the survival of our traditions because our traditions are directly tied to the land. Each season is a time to hunt animals and gather plants, food, and medicines. Peehee Mu'huh holds many first foods, medicines, and hunting grounds for our people in the past and present. All this Indigenous knowledge the mine endangers.

Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu are deeply concerned that the mine threatens the community with man camps and large labor forces which are correlated to MMIWG2S. Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Girls and Two Spirit (MMIWG2S) is an ongoing problem that brings trauma to our native communities. Colonization is the root of the problem, which brings violence to our Indigenous lands and soon after, to our people. Indigenous people are being raped, assaulted, and murdered at an alarming rate. Some of our people are then sex trafficked, stolen, and silenced. We will no longer be silenced; People of Red Mountain and our allies will no longer witness the contamination and rape of our lands and our people.

Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu and our allies have been reaching out as many ways as we can. This includes outreach to Debra Haaland, the Secretary of the Department of the Interior, and attempts to re-initiate formal consultation with all tribal governments with ancestral and/or ceremonial ties to Peehee Mu'huh. We continue our Protect Peehee Mu'huh awareness with ceremonies, events, rallies, and online trainings.

Please help Atsa Koodakuh wyh Nuwu protect Peehee Mu'huh and help us pressure the Department of Interior to rescind the Thacker Pass Lithium Mine permits.

Appendix G

Letter addressed to General Motors from Gary Mckinney and members of the SIRGE Coalition

3/7/23

General Motors

Attn: Fred Gersdorff, Senior Manager of Socially Responsible and Sustainable Supply Chains, and Tina Winkelblech, Director of Commodities and Raw Materials
100 Renaissance Center
Detroit, MI 48243

Subject: SIRGE Coalition's and People of Red Mountain's Concerns: Indigenous Rights Violations Relating to Thacker Pass

Dear Mr. Gersdoff and Ms. Winkelblech,

The Securing Indigenous Rights in the Green Economy Coalition (SIRGE) is an Indigenous led coalition that advocates to implement transformative solutions to secure the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the global transition to a green economy. The primary goal of our work is to elevate Indigenous leadership and center the right to Free, Prior and Informed Consent of Indigenous Peoples in the energy transition through constructive dialogue. Our coalition includes the following organizations: Cultural Survival, First Peoples Worldwide, Batani Foundation, Earthworks, and Society for Threatened Peoples.

We are writing to you in light of General Motors' recent $650 million joint Equity Investment and Supply Agreement with Lithium Americas to develop the Thacker Pass lithium mine at Peehee Mu'huh in Nevada. We support and affirm People of Red Mountain (PRM), an Indigenous organization of Fort McDermitt tribal descendants that was formed to protect Thacker Pass as a sacred site, who have raised significant and urgent human rights and Indigenous Peoples' rights concerns regarding the proposed mine. Furthermore, the recent lawsuit filed by Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, Burns Paiute Tribe and Summit Lake Paiute Tribe shows that the proposed Thacker Pass lithium mine lacks a social license to operate among directly affected Indigenous Peoples.

We note that in your human rights policy, GM has stated its commitments to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and ILO 169 in its operations. We also note that in your Supplier Code of Conduct, you require suppliers to respect the right of Indigenous Peoples to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)."

Our concerns are as follows:

- Indigenous Peoples Rights

    - This mine is proposed on a sacred site known as Peehee Mu'huh. Peehee Mu'huh is a Paiute name that translates to "Rotten Moon" and references two massacres that were inflicted on the local Indigenous Peoples. The local Indigenous Peoples consider the site sacred due to massacres and the resulting remains of human ancestors. In a spiritual system that highly values ancestors, the ability to visit ancestors at the proposed mine site is a religious expression. Thus, this site is an irreplaceable component of the directly affected communities' modern spiritual and cultural practices. The proposed mine would irreparably destroy 5,695 acres of sacred land, desecrate graves, annually consume 2,600-5,200 acre feet of water, and result in hundreds of years of post-mining water pollution over its projected 40 years of construction and operations.
- Social License to Operate
    - Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) is a key component of Indigenous Peoples' rights. Regarding the Thacker pass lithium mine, the directly affected communities were not informed prior to the completion of federal permitting of the mine. Significant community opposition to the project began in 2021 when a petition opposing the mine was signed by a majority of McDermitt Tribal members. Opposition has been supported through a resolution of the National Congress of American Indians (#AK-21-027) in opposition to the mine, and one from Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada (30-ITCN-21). There is no consent for the project and, therefore, no social license to operate from directly affected communities.
- Women's Rights
    - Of particular concern is the likelihood of increased gender based violence that would result in the construction and operation of the mine. Indigenous Peoples have demanded action to address the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women. The correlation between extractive projects and increased community violence is well documented. A 2019 Department of Justice report found a 70% increase in aggravated assault associated with the introduction of extractive industry to a community.

In addition, it is encouraging that General Motors is a member of the Initiative for Responsible Mining Assurance (IRMA) which requires the company to ask its suppliers to be audited against the IRMA standard. The IRMA Ready standard for proposed mines is expected to be formally approved by the end of the year and thus Lithium Americas' proposed mine is ineligible for an IRMA audit at this time. However, Lithium Americas has shared to the public that they are using the IRMA self-assessment tool to analyze impacts without sharing the findings of such an assessment. It would be beneficial to this process of analysis to open conversations with the directly affected communities.

In light of the above, SIRGE and People of Red Mountain request a meeting with you to learn more about your efforts to implement your ESG commitments and to share perspectives about Indigenous rights concerns of directly affected Indigenous Peoples.

We also request that:

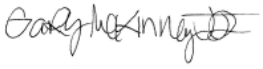
1. GM require its suppliers and partners to implement FPIC policies in accordance with UNDRIP, which is not the case with the proposed Thacker Pass mine project.
2. GM require Lithium Americas to publish the findings of their IRMA self-assessment.
3. GM pause investment in the Thacker Pass Mine to conduct due diligence on their Indigenous Rights risk exposure in the project.
4. If Lithium Americas is unable to respect FPIC, as enumerated in UNDRIP, GM rescinds their investment from the Thacker Pass Mine.

General Motors will benefit by recognizing their ongoing human rights and supplier code commitments to Indigenous Peoples by being able to report high alignment with their ESG commitments.

We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Gary McKinney, People of Red Mountain
peeheemuhuhcamp@gmail.com



SIRGE Coalition
Executive Committee

Galina Angarova, Executive Director, Cultural Survival
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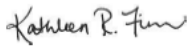

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Curriculum Vitae

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EDUCATION

December 2023 **Master of Arts,** Communication Studies
University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Las Vegas, NV
Cumulative GPA: 3.9

December 2019 **Bachelor of Science,** Earth and Environmental Science
University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), Las Vegas, NV
Cumulative GPA: 3.2

AWARDS

Spring 2023 **Outstanding Graduate Community Leadership Award**
Awarded by the UNLV Department of Communication Studies as a part of the Communication Department and Greenspun College of Urban Affairs annual student awards

Spring 2023 **First Place Research Poster Presentation**
Awarded by the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) at the Annual University Graduate Student Research Forum

Spring 2014 **Undergraduate Leadership Scholarship**
Awarded the "Leadership Scholarship" by the UNLV Student Government (CSUN)

Spring 2014 **Outstanding Emerging Leader Nominee**
Nominated for "Outstanding Emerging Leader" at the 2014 annual Rebel Awards at UNLV for work in Community Service Programs in the Office of Civic Engagement and Diversity

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

August 2023 to December 2023
Research Assistant, Department of Communication Studies, UNLV
Supervisor: Laura Marinez, Ph.D.
Description: Assisted in transcription of oral qualitative interviews regarding the embodiment of burlesque performance.

August 2022 to December 2022
Research Assistant, Department of Communication Studies, UNLV
Supervisor: David Gruber, Ph.D.
Description: Assisted in searching for interdisciplinary grant funding for Rhetoric of Science research.

June 2022 to August 2022
Research Assistant, Department of Communication Studies, UNLV
Supervisor: Michael Lane Bruner, Ph.D.
Description: The rhetorical manipulation of freedom of speech on college campuses by groups Turning Point USA and legislation writing groups ALEC and others. Assisted in initial research, writing, and conference presentation efforts.

October 2020 to August 2021
Post-Baccalaureate Research Assistant, Public Communication Initiative, UNLV
Description: Contributed to research initiatives such as mixed-method data coding for the State of Nevada Climate Strategy survey.

May 2018 to August 2018
Undergraduate Research Assistant, Department of Geoscience, UNLV
Supervisor: Brenda Buck, Ph.D.
Description: Photographed and measured asbestos particles using Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) technology to assist with a Graduate research project.

PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

Conference Presentations

Kelley, L., Bloomfield, E. F., Almanza, D., Estrada, E., Patenaude, H. (November 2023). "Spatial and Temporal Dimensions of Climate Anxiety" within the paper session "Climate Anxiety in a Time of Crisis: Understandings, Representations, and Mobilizations." In-process research presented at the 2023 National Communication Association Annual Convention, National Harbor, MD.

Bloomfield, E., Almanza, D., Estrada, E., **Kelley, L.,** Patenaude, H. (April 2023*)*. "(Im)Mobilizing Eco-Anxiety in Nevada." In-process research presented at the 2023 Environment, Justice, and the Politics of Emotion Conference, Riverside, CA.

Barnett, J. T., Bloomfield, E., DeLuca, K., Derrick, S., Ingraham, C., Jensen, T., **Kelley, L.**, McGreavy, B., Tate, J. M. (November 2022). "Author-Meets-Reader: Thinking-Feeling with Joshua Trey Barnett's *Mourning the Anthropocene*" Panel presentation at the 2022 National Communication Association Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA.

Lee, E. S., Nenque, A. L., Tetteh, B., Pajé, D., Bince, R. L., Schenck, R. V., Espinoza, J., **Kelley, L.,** Elkhalid, A. (November 2022). "Finding our PLACE in activism and social justice: A rich discussion about in-progress works from graduate students in the division" Panel presentation at the 2022 National Communication Association Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA.

Hacker Daniels, A. E., Demaske, C., Balter-Reitz, S. J., Macek, S. H., **Kelley, L.** (November 2022). "'Colleges and Universities are not Enclaves Immune from the Sweep of the First Amendment': Freedom of association, Freedom of Expression and Student Activism on Campus 50 Years After Healy v. James (1972)" Panel presentation at the 2022 National Communication Association Annual Convention, New Orleans, LA.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

June 2023 to August 2023
Graduate Assistant, Public Communication Initiative, UNLV
Supervisor: Emma Frances Bloomfield, Ph.D.
Description: Assisting with research and course building for an undergraduate-level Science Communication Micro-Credential. The two courses include a public speaking course for science majors, and a science communication course.

August 2021 to May 2023
Graduate Research Assistant, Public Communication Initiative, UNLV
Supervisor: Emma Frances Bloomfield, Ph.D.
Description: Fully funded Graduate Research Assistantship position with UNLV's Public Communication Initiative. Assists in planning, conducting, coding, and publishing original research regarding public communication, communication strategies, and topics of interest to the local community.

October 2021 to February 2022	**Graduate Conservation Intern,** Southern Nevada Water Authority Conservation Division, Las Vegas, NV *Supervisor:* Patrick Watson *Description:* Paid internship with SNWA and Las Vegas Valley Water District's Conservation Division. Assisting with renowned, commercial-scale water conservation programs. Duties include site-visits, data collection, public-facing coordination, mapping, and contributing to increasing program participation by commercial or multi-family properties.
January 2019 to May 2019	**Science Communication Intern,** Forest Inventory and Analysis (US Forest Service partnership), UNLV *Supervisor*: Brenda Buck, Ph.D. *Description:* For course credit, researched, scripted, and edited an Introductory Video for FIA's DATIM program.
January 2014 to November 2014	**Community Service Programs Intern**, Office of Civic Engagement and Diversity, UNLV *Supervisor:* Kirstine Odegard *Description:* Coordinated four community service-learning trips spanning 1-5 days each. Coordinated the largest Rebel Service Day on record where 500 students spent the day serving 10+ community organizations.

UNIVERSITY AND ACADEMIC SERVICE

Communication Studies Department, UNLV

November 2022	**Graduate Student Recruitment, 2023 cohort** Invited participant in a Graduate Student Recruitment meeting
September 2022	**"Tips for success in graduate school"** Invited panel speaker for COM 700 Introductory Seminar course for new graduate students
April 2022	**Graduate Student Recruitment** Selected as a liaison for accepted graduate students to the incoming 2022 cohort. Roles included leading a campus tour, 1:1 meetings with students, and participating in a Graduate Student Mixer
November 2021 and 2022	**Graduate Fair, NCA Annual Convention** Tabled to recruit prospective MA students to the UNLV Communication Studies Department

National Communication Association, Environmental Communication Division

May 2022 **Reviewer for Conference Submissions**
Description: Reviewed two conference submissions for NCA's Environmental Communication Division for the 2022 National Communication Association's 108th Annual Convention.

RELEVANT COMMUNITY SERVICE

Nevada Graduate Student Workers

Spring 2023 to Fall 2023 **Organizer**
Description: Volunteer contributor to UNLV graduate student organizing efforts.

Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada (PLANevada)

Summer 2022 to Summer 2023 **Mining Justice Collaborator and Volunteer**
Description: Volunteer contributor to tabling and other mining justice efforts such as testifying numerous times at the Nevada State Legislature.

Nevada State Democratic Party (NV Dems)

December 2020 to April 2022 **State Central Committee Member**
Description: Nominated as a voting member of the State Central Committee of the Nevada State Democratic Party.

***There's Nothing to do in Vegas* (Local Social Media Publication)**

January 2021 to August 2021 **Contributing Content Writer**
Description: Researched, synthesized, and wrote informational political content for social media regarding local legislative sessions in Nevada.

Global Inheritance (501(c)3 non-profit)

May 2014 to May 2019 **Environmental and Social Programs Volunteer**
Description: Facilitated recycling, conservation, and social programming at large-scale music production festivals. Utilized creative and informative programming to bring informative narratives to non-academic festival settings.

August 2019 to March 2020	**Assistant Staff Manager** *Description*: Virtually assisted with interviewing, hiring, and recruiting over 30 volunteer staff members from across the country for large-scale environmental programming at one of the world's largest music festivals.

METHODS EXPERIENCE

Communication	Quantitative open-ended survey analysis; Qualitative open-ended survey analysis (inductive and deductive approaches); Qualitative textual analysis; Rhetorical analysis

RELEVANT COURSEWORK AND WORKSHOPS

GEOL 303 Global Environmental Change
GEOL 335 Earth Resources and the Environment
GEOL 220 Mineralogy
GEOL 474 Hydrogeology
ENV 360 Environmental Methods
GEOL 333 Principles of Geomorphology
GEOL 419 Medical Geology
GEOL 476X Water Quality Challenges
PSC 403A Natural Resource Policy
WMST 301 Feminist Theory
COM 418 Rhetoric of Science
COM 710 Survey of Communication Studies
COM 730 Theories of Rhetorical Communication
COM 641 Rhetoric of Dissent
COM 711 Rhetorical-Critical Research Methods
COM 712 Empirical Research Methods
COM 787 Seminar in Advanced Organizational Communication

Workshops

April 2022	**Writing an Academic Op-Ed Workshop** Scholars Strategy Network; *The Nevada Independent* *Description*: Attended a virtual workshop for writing academic research-based op-eds for popular press.

REFERENCES

References available upon request.