BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENTAL APPEALS BOARD

> U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY WASHINGTON, D.C.

ORDER SCHEDULING STATUS CONFERENCE/ EXPEDITED ORAL ARGUMENT

IN THE MATTER OF:

LA PALOMA ENERGY : PSD Appeal No. CENTER LLC., : 13-10

PSD Permit No. :
:

TX-1288-GHG
$\qquad$ :

Wednesday,
February 12, 2014
Administrative Courtroom Room 1152
EPA East Building 1201 Constitution Avenue, NW Washington, DC

The above-entitled matter came on for hearing, pursuant to notice, at 3:23 p.m.

BEFORE:
THE HONORABLE CATHERINE R. MCCABE Environmental Appeals Judge

THE HONORABLE RANDOLPH HILL Environmental Appeals Judge

THE HONORABLE KATHIE A. STEIN Environmental Appeals Judge

NEAL R. GROSS

APPEARANCES:

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ALSO PRESENT:

Eurika Durr, Clerk of the Board

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3: 23 \text { p.m. }
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MS. DURR: All rise. Environmental Appeals Board of the United States Environmental Protection Agency is now in session for a status conference/expeditedoral argument in re La Paloma Energy Center, LLC, Permit Number PAS-TX-1288-GHG, PSD Appeal Number 13-10. The Honorable Judges Kathie Stein, Catherine McCabe, Randolph Hill presiding.

Please turn off all cell phones and no recording devices allowed. Please be seated.

JUDGE MCCABE: Good afternoon. I am Judge McCabe. On my right is Judge Stein, and on my left is Judge Hill. We are the three panel members for this case.

I'd like to welcome you all to Washington on this non-snowy day. But, first, why don't we take appearances of counsel who will be presenting for each of the parties.

MR. BENDER: Good afternoon. David Bender for petitioners, the Sierra Club. JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Welcome.

MR. ALONSO: Good afternoon. Richard Alonso on behalf of La Paloma.

JUDGE MCCABE: Welcome.

MR. TOMASOVIC: Good afternoon. Brian Tomasovic from the EPA Region 6 Dallas Office, joined at table by, from the Office of General Counsel, Matthew Marks and Brian Doster.

JUDGE MCCABE: Thank you. And do we have anyone else on the phone?

MR. RICHIE: Yes, your Honor. This is Travis Richie with the Sierra Club.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Before we begin, let me ask who will be speaking for Sierra Club? Is that just Mr. Bender, or will Mr. Richie also be speaking? Okay, thank you. Well, first of all, I would really like to thank you all, those of you especially who had to change travel plans, for being here today
on short notice, and I realize that not only disturbs flight arrangements but probably disturbs your preparation time. The good news for all of you, of course, is that we are going to do this a little differently today, so, hopefully, that won't make as much a difference as it might in the ordinary case. Before we begin, let me do a travel check as to what time your flights on leaving. I understand a number of you are eager to be back out of town and ahead of the snow this evening. Mr. Bender?

MR. BENDER: If everything goes as planned, 7:00.

JUDGE MCCABE: Seven o'clock is
your flight time. And what's your airport?
MR. BENDER: National.
JUDGE MCCABE: National. Okay.
Mr. Alonso, can I assume you're remaining in town?

MR. ALONSO: Yes.
JUDGE MCCABE: I assume this is a
representative of a company with you?
MR. ALONSO: Yes, I'm sorry. This is Sandra Snyder with Bracewell also representing La Paloma, and we do not have any travel restrictions tonight.

JUDGE MCCABE: Thank you. And from the EPA side?

MR. TOMASOVIC: My flight departs at 8 p.m.

JUDGE MCCABE: All right. Then I think we should have plenty of time. We've scheduled an hour and a half for this. We will try our best to get you out on time, so you can run for the airports. Snow is not supposed to begin until later this evening. We are doing this slightly differently than our normal procedure because this is a status conference, as well as an expedited oral argument. As usual, we'll go ahead and allocate one half an hour, approximately, to each party. But the order of the parties will be slightly different than
usual.
We will start, in this case, with the permitee, with La Paloma Energy Center, who $I$ will refer to briefly as La Paloma. I suspect the other judges will be doing that, too, for the record. Because we have some status questions for you, which I assume will not surprise you, given our scheduling order. Those answers to those questions may inform the rest of the discussion that we have here today, so we thought it best to begin with La Paloma.

Normally, of course, our practice would be to begin with the petitioner, the Sierra Club. So in this case, Mr. Bender, I'm going to give you your choice as to whether you would like to go second or third. Some people like to have the first word, some people like to have the last word.

You also have the option, if you choose to go second after La Paloma, to reserve five minutes of your time for rebuttal
after EPA. What would you like to do?
MR. BENDER: I'll combine both and do it all together.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. That's the way we'll proceed then. We'll begin first with La Paloma. Now, as we, I think, mentioned, if we didn't we should have, in our order to you, we're not expecting you or asking you to make any formal presentations today, as you would in the normal oral argument.

In the interest of time, please presume that we've read your briefs, that we're familiar with the records. And in the interest of saving time and getting you out of here, we'd like to focus right away on the judges questions. If you have anything that you would like to say very briefly first, though, please let us know that and feel free.

Mr. Alonso?
MR. ALONSO: Thank you, Judges. And we just want to first start off by
recognizing and thanking you for expediting this appeal. I believe the briefs were submitted on December 27th, and the Board reached out to us just a couple of weeks later to schedule this argument. So we're really appreciative of that. We are prepared to answer your questions presented in your order, as well as any other issue that's before the Court.

As to your first issue, you asked us to report on the status of the projects. First, let me address the construction time line. We currently have all government approvals that are required for preconstruction, as well as agreements that we need with governments. We have tax agreements that were completed. We have a water supply agreement with the local water works. We have land agreements in place. We have our TCEQ Air Permit that was finalized in February of 2013.

The two main components that we
are missing right now is, number one, financing. Financing is contingent on receiving a final PSD permit. Once we receive a final agency action on the permit, we expect to close that financing in short order right after that.

As far as construction, we have in EPC the engineering procurement and construction contract completed. That was executed in September of 2013. So shortly after this closing, we can start construction shortly right after that. That was with Bechtel Power Corporation and, again, they are standing by ready to start construction.

JUDGE MCCABE: Most importantly, Mr. Alonso, could you address whether you've selected your turbine yet?

MR. ALONSO: Yes, we are prepared to talk about that. We have preliminarily identified the preferred turbine that we would like to install at this site. It is the GE 7FA turbine. However, we are currently in
various escalation clauses of our existing contracts, including for the turbine, in the sense that we have planned to be done with this process on January 1st. Not just the contract for the turbine but for other components of the site, every day that goes on the client is paying escalation fees on that contract.

JUDGE MCCABE: So do you have a turbine contract or not?

MR. ALONSO: We do have a spot for manufacturing of the turbine.

JUDGE MCCABE: So is that like reserving a place in case you decide to put in your order?

MR. ALONSO: Correct. And that deadline is April 1st. On April 1st, we have, what happened after January is that we negotiated our escalation clauses through April 1st. Come April 1st, I think that the, well, come April 1st, we would have to renegotiate that contract. And, most likely,
we can maybe even consider selecting one of the other turbines that are in this permit.

So if we don't have a final permit in the next, you know -- and I'm not putting any pressure on you guys, but, as of April 1st, I think that the, well, I know the developer would like the flexibility to install any one of these three turbines.

JUDGE MCCABE: I'm not sure I'm completely following you. What happens -let's try it this way. What happens if you get your permit tomorrow?

MR. ALONSO: If we get our permit tomorrow, we would close our financing a couple of weeks later, and we could start, and then we would put in a notice for the procurement, finalizing the GE 7FA turbine contract.

JUDGE MCCABE: And how soon could that happen or would that happen?

MR. ALONSO: That would happen upon closing, and we would --

JUDGE MCCABE: So are we talking about a week, two weeks, a month?

MR. ALONSO: Yes. My understanding, the information that I have is that closing can happen in, it's a matter of weeks, a couple of weeks after we receive a final permit.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. So when you say you've preliminary picked this GE 7FA turbine -- can we just refer to that as the GE turbine?

MR. ALONSO: Sure.
JUDGE MCCABE: It's the only one, right, that's a GE? Okay. We'll call this the GE turbine. You've preliminary selected that. If you get your permit tomorrow, is there any reason that you'll change that choice?

MR. ALONSO: Most likely not. If we get our permit tomorrow, if we get it before April 1st, we are probably, we are most likely, yes, going to select, we are going to
select the GE turbine.
JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. If you get your permit before April 1st, you will select the GE turbine; is that correct?

MR. ALONSO: That is, yes.
JUDGE MCCABE: And my
understanding of this turbine is that it's the smallest of the three, and, according to heat rates, the least efficient, the one to which the region has assigned the highest GHG emission limit; is that correct?

MR. ALONSO: That is correct.
JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. That will very much inform the rest of our discussion. Thank you, Mr. Alonso. Do you know yet, another question on your preparation here, do you know yet where the facility will be placed in the ERCOT dispatch order and whether it will be operated as a baseload or load cycling facility?

MR. ALONSO: Our plan is to operate this as a baseload unit. However, we
will respond to the ERCOT orders as they come. I mean, in Texas, our business plan is to operate this as a baseload unit.

JUDGE MCCABE: Does ERCOT give you any preview of that?

MR. ALONSO: Excuse me?
JUDGE MCCABE: Does ERCOT give you any advanced notice as to whether you're going to be likely operated as a baseload or not?

MR. ALONSO: Our intention is to operate it as a baseload. I'm not quite sure about, we can follow up with you on that as far as ERCOT notices. I'm not prepared to talk about the ERCOT notices. But to the extent that ERCOT manages dispatching, we will comply with their orders.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. And you expect, at this point, based on current conditions, which I understand can change if other plants come online or other things happen, you expect, based on current conditions, that you'll be dispatched high
enough in the order that this will be a baseload plant; and, therefore, it will be operated at 100 -percent capacity?

MR. ALONSO: Pretty close to it. JUDGE MCCABE: On a regular basis? MR. ALONSO: On a regular basis, we would like to have, you know, utilize this as much as possible. Keep in mind, though, while we do have the, you know, as an EPA administrative record, yes, larger turbines may be more efficient. But at the end of the day, they also have higher mass emissions. And so when you look at it from an environmental perspective, to the extent that an environmental impact plays into that, the environment really feels the impact of the mass limit more than anything else, I believe. JUDGE MCCABE: Understood. Okay. Can you tell us a little bit about what was the chief factor that drove the company's selection of the turbine, how important was the capacity or size, for example?

MR. ALONSO: I don't know the ins and outs of why they selected that turbine. I believe it's just commercial terms. It was the better commercial term --

JUDGE MCCABE: Would you like to consult with your client at all to see if you can clarify that answer?

MR. ALONSO: Sure. She's here.
JUDGE MCCABE: This may help you. Some of the questions that we're also interested in are how important was the capacity or size of the unit in terms of your decision to select the GE turbine, and how do the relative heat rates or the GHG emission rates affect that decision? Did they affect that decision, if it's made?

MR. ALONSO: The way that this project was developed is that we went out for competitive bids of at least three turbines. And based on the necessary heat rate, the forecast of demand, that was the basis of the selection. It was not based on, you know, any
other factors, except for trying to meet the purpose of the project, which is to supply the load, and the heat rates and the financial arrangements that resulted from that bid process.

JUDGE HILL: Was that forecast of demand strictly internal, or was it something dictated by either ERCOT or some other external entity?

MR. ALONSO: La Paloma is a merchant power plant. We're not regulated, so it's not that we, to the extent that your question is to whether or not we had any regulatory oversight --

JUDGE HILL: Or just external information or some sort of external driver, I guess.

MR. ALONSO: Let me consult with -

- sorry, I just wasn't prepared.

JUDGE HILL: No, that's okay.
MR. ALONSO: So specific
questions. Okay.

JUDGE MCCABE: But we appreciate your coming.

MR. ALONSO: But I'm glad that Kathleen, the project developer, Kathleen Smith is here with us today. When you develop these projects, yes, they went out, they had third-party evaluations of load demand and what would fit for this market absolutely.

JUDGE HILL: Okay.
MR. ALONSO: I mean, it's --

JUDGE HILL: Let me ask one other follow-up. You said at the very outset, Mr. Alonso, that you had preliminarily identified the GE turbine, and the record before us is that certainly at the time of the application that decision hadn't been made. I'm not asking for a specific date, but, roughly, when was that determination made relative -because I'm curious how it relates to this proceeding.

MR. ALONSO: So, again, we made the selection based on closing in January, but
the selection of the turbine was made in August, expecting to be, you know, manufactured and installed in January. So to answer your question, it was August of 2013. JUDGE HILL: Did you communicate that to the region at that time?

MR. ALONSO: No, because, again, because of the timing of this permit, it is a preliminary determination. At that time in August, if we were 100 -percent certain that we would get a permit in January, sure, we probably would have, you know, told the region and maybe the final permit may have looked differently. But we couldn't put our eggs, all our eggs in that one basket at that time. JUDGE MCCABE: What was your understanding, Mr . Alonso, of what the region planned to do once you made your turbine selection? Will they revise your permit or leave in those three original limits? MR. ALONSO: We have a special condition in the permit that requires that La

Paloma submit an amended permit application to remove the other two turbines that are not selected from the permit. So it would be a deletion of the two other turbines that are not selected.

JUDGE STEIN: Why, if you've made the decision to proceed with this particular turbine if you receive your permit within the time frame that is necessary for you, would you be revisiting that question if you don't get the permit until May?

MR. ALONSO: If we --
JUDGE STEIN: Just hypothetically, if you get the permit a month after, why is it that suddenly that's an open question again? I'm having difficulty understanding that.

MR. ALONSO: Correct. Our current negotiations on the escalation clauses of the contracts, we have currently negotiated terms through April 1st. At that point, you're right, we would have an option to negotiate further or, more likely than not, we could, we
might go through another bid process to determine whether or not maybe another turbine might be more beneficial from an economic perspective to install.

JUDGE STEIN: Thank you.
JUDGE MCCABE: Just to make sure the record is clear on this, though, at this point, you're telling us that if the company gets its final PSD permit from EPA before April 1st, it will be the GE turbine?

MR. ALONSO: That is my understanding.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Would you like to qualify that statement?

MR. ALONSO: Right. The problem is that, again, we cannot make a final decision on the turbine until after we get the permit because you're only going to reserve your place in line for a certain amount of time at the GE manufacturing plant.

JUDGE MCCABE: But if you get your permit tomorrow or anytime before April 1st,
or perhaps you need a week advanced notice, then you would be choosing the GE turbine? We can rely on that?

MR. ALONSO: Yes.
JUDGE MCCABE: Is that correct?
MR. ALONSO: More likely than not, we will be selecting that turbine.

JUDGE MCCABE: When you say more likely than not or preliminary, then I'm not sure what you're telling me, Mr. Alonso. Which is it? Will you have that GE turbine be your selection?

JUDGE HILL: What else might prevent you from going ahead with the GE turbine if there were a decision before April 1st is another way to ask the question.

MR. ALONSO: To maintain flexibility. I mean, that's one of the purpose we're here. I mean, if we get a call tomorrow from Siemens saying that they're going to give us the turbine at five cents, maybe we'd go with the Siemens.

JUDGE MCCABE: So price matters?
MR. ALONSO: Absolutely.
JUDGE HILL: Price really, I mean,
but --
MR. ALONSO: The likelihood of that is minimal.

JUDGE HILL: But let's explore that for a second because it sort of takes us to the other direction. So if you, so if Siemens were to, you know -- I mean, and I can certainly relate to this. I'm trying to do some home maintenance. But so they come in with a bid you're not expecting, and you say, "You know what? That's the one we should go with," that's going to be one of the larger turbines. So what will happen in terms of your demand forecast or, I mean, how will you operate that plan?

MR. ALONSO: It may not fit the business plan at the time. I mean, we would like to maintain the flexibility of selecting the turbine as much as we can in this final
permit. Everything is in place that, if we were to get a final permit tomorrow, that the GE turbine would be used. However, we still want, I don't want to tell you that it's 100percent guaranteed. We would like to maintain that flexibility.

JUDGE MCCABE: But you understand it's your very desire to maintain that flexibility that leads us all to be here today, right? As $I$ understand it, the main issue that the petitioners have with the limit that was chosen in this case is the fact that you are reserving flexibility to make this choice after you get your permit.

MR. ALONSO: But the limit is, the limit doesn't satisfy region as appropriate and valid under BACT. What the permitee is arguing here today is that somehow we start off with a class of control devices. The region has identified combustion combined cycle turbines as a control class. That is your step one. BACT is an evolution all the
way through step five. Once you get to step five, the purpose and the intent of step five is to impose an emission limit looking at those control devices, and it's not just combined cycle. We have a whole list of technologies that were identified by the region that apply to each of these turbines.

At that point, you look at the emission unit and you develop a unit-specific emission rate that reflects the technology as it's supplied to that particular emission unit.

JUDGE MCCABE: Don't you also look at comparable units located at other facilities when the permitting authority makes that decision?

MR. ALONSO: Absolutely. You look at technologies at other, through the clearinghouse and other technical information. That is your step two analysis, absolutely. JUDGE MCCABE: Then why wouldn't you look at other turbines that are available?

MR. ALONSO: I'm sorry?
JUDGE MCCABE: Then why wouldn't you look at these other turbines that are available?

MR. ALONSO: You look at the other turbines as -- well, are you saying the other turbines that are mentioned --

JUDGE MCCABE: The Siemens turbines.

MR. ALONSO: The Siemens turbines and the GE turbines have the exact same technology installed. Again, at the end -- GE and Siemens does not make the identical products. There's going to be some variability amongst those products, and I would argue that the actual impact of these units or these emission rates aren't that far off from each other. But in step five, the region looked at the turbines and looked at, as this board has approved in the past, and in particular in Prairie State, the ability to take into consideration operational
variability, compliance headroom, and other factors made to ensure that the BACT limit at the end of the day is workable and something that can be achievable from a compliance perspective.

JUDGE MCCABE: Mr. Alonso, we'd like to go on to that subject of the relative heat rates and, therefore, the GHG emission rates of these three turbines. But before we leave the subject that we are on of the criteria that the company used, perhaps past tense, or might in the future, if something unexpected happens, use in the future to select the turbine, $I$ heard you say two primary things. And $I$ know we're several beats back on the questioning now. But I heard you say the forecast of demand, how much power you can sell -- I'm sure where ERCOT will dispatch you is part of that equation -and the heat rates. Are those the two most important factors to the company in selecting the turbine? Price, obviously, has something
to do with this, too.

MR. ALONSO: Yes. I mean, and the result of the bidding process and how that, and the third-party analysis of the energy demand and everything else. Absolutely.

JUDGE HILL: So are you really saying, to a large extent, price is the primary driver?

MR. ALONSO: No, not necessarily. I mean, it's what fits for this particular, you know, looking at the forecast --

JUDGE HILL: But it's the balance of price to demand to efficiency?

MR. ALONSO: Sure. I'm sure. There is a cost component to this, but it's not a cost component as specified in step four of the BACT analysis.

JUDGE HILL: No, I'm not doing BACT right now. I'm talking about just the decision of which one to install.

MR. ALONSO: Sure. It's a business decision, and the product developer
would like to maintain that flexibility. At the time the permit was submitted, we concurrently went and did, basically, a dual process of trying to get a PSD permit and try to come to terms with all these agreements, whether the turbine or your tax agreement, your water use agreement. And that's why our initial application had three turbines in it. To say that we had to do all that work up-front and then wait another two years to get a PSD permit, it would really delay the project and lose a window of opportunity currently right now at ERCOT, where there are some energy constraints in Texas. This is a very good time to build a gas-fired power plant in Texas.

JUDGE STEIN: I want to follow up.
Are you --

JUDGE HILL: Yes, yes.
JUDGE STEIN: I wanted to follow up on your decision of the various steps of the BACT process. I understand your wanting
to have flexibility to the last possible moment. At the same time, ordinarily, in the step two analysis, you would be looking at whether technologies are available and applicable. And if somebody was going to drive the company to say you should build a size that's too small or too large, it's my understanding that there would be an opportunity at that point for commenters to explain why a different size unit might be appropriate; and you, in turn, would have an opportunity to say, well, that doesn't work for us.

But by keeping the flexibility until the end of the process, my question is whether you have deprived either citizens groups or other commenters of the opportunity to meaningfully comment at an earlier phase of the process. And, therefore, by keeping your flexibility to the last moment, you are, perhaps you should assume the risk for having done that.

I mean, in Pio Pico, we briefly talked about the sizing issues. We've acknowledged. I understand your points on you get to pick the size. But if you pick it so late in the process that nobody else can meaningfullycomment, notwithstandingthe size you want to pick, if you pick it a little bigger, it's much more efficient, how can that happen if you wait until the end of the process to choose, to say what technology you, the company, want to go with?

MR. ALONSO: First of all, you know, recognizing BACT and step two, I'm not aware of any precedent in PSD permitting or from this board that somehow size, in and of itself, is a control device. Step two and, to a certain extent, step one is to identify control devices, you know, technology that would be applied to a given emission unit or a given source. And I believe that it's been pretty well established that the permittee has a lot of flexibility in deciding the design
factors in how the plant is designed. I would, you know, ask the Board to consider that size is not a control device, it's more a design criteria that is used by permittees when they go to design a source.

JUDGE STEIN: Yes, I'm not thinking of size as a control technology. I see the control technology as combined cycle turbines. But when you look at combined cycle turbines, you've looked at three different models. They have different efficiencies. We can get, later people can tell us whether they're comparable or they're not. But if the company is headed towards a particular efficiency and the agency or other commenters think they should be headed elsewhere, that this particular technology, combined cycle turbines, can get you a more efficient process, where in the process are they supposed to raise that?

MR. ALONSO: They could raise that in how the technologies are defined and
developed in step two.
JUDGE MCCABE: You may be hurting Mr. Richie's ears doing that so . . .

MR. ALONSO: Sorry, sorry. Region 6 identified, roughly, four different energy efficiency and processes or practices that apply to the class of this technology, which is a combined cycle class. The public has full opportunity and they had in this permit to comment on exactly that: whether it's installation, whether it's installing an efficient heat exchanger design, economizer exhaust steam. These are the control devices that apply to the class of technology which is what's known as combined cycle.

That list today is what we have today. That list was different ten years ago, and it's going to be different ten years from now because BACT evolves. That is where the public has its say.

To set a one-level, you know, allcombined cycle must be 9.0, the 909.2 pound
per CO2 megawatt hour, that's not BACT. BACT is set on a case-by-case emission unitspecific basis. What Sierra Club is basically asking this board to consider is taking that one limit, the 909.2, and apply it to two other totally different combined cycle turbines, and $I$ don't see that as what is intended by BACT.

JUDGE MCCABE: That brings us to an interesting question. Can the GE turbine, which you are most likely to select, to quote you, achieve the GHG emissions rate that the region established for the Siemens turbine? MR. ALONSO: First of all, we think that to require the GE turbine to meet that limit would be asking the permittee to over comply with an adequately-developedBACT limit. We don't think --

JUDGE MCCABE: I'm asking you for a factual answer, Mr. Alonso.

MR. ALONSO: From a factual question, I mean, I'm not --

JUDGE MCCABE: Would you like to consult with your client?

MR. ALONSO: Yes, okay. We are not prepared at this time to say 100 percent whether or not we can meet that limit. What we would have to do is possibly de-rate. We might have --

JUDGE MCCABE: Possibly what?
MR. ALONSO: De-rate the unit.

JUDGE MCCABE: De-rate.

MR. ALONSO: The unit may be not at its maximum capacity.

JUDGE MCCABE: What would that do? Explain that.

JUDGE HILL: You mean run it greater than capacity?

JUDGE MCCABE: Yes, he means if they de-rate it that they would operate it at less than its full capacity. What would that do to your heat rate?

MR. ALONSO: Probably not much. But they would have to do something
operational to the unit to basically comply with that limit. Plus, we would not have the Compliance headroom that was developed for degradation factors. We might be able to meet it day one, but who knows in ten years? And just operation flexibility. It would be really difficult to commit to that limit.

JUDGE MCCABE: Let me see if I'm understanding you correctly. I hear you say that de-rating it would be one option to meet that GHG emissions limit because it's a total limit, even though your efficiency rate would clearly go down if you de-rated it. I hear you saying that option number two would essentially be to take it out of your compliance margin, which the petitioner has characterized as generous, I believe, in its comments on this permit. Are those the only two ways that the company could meet the heat or the GHG emission limit that the region set for the Siemens turbines in using the $G E$ turbine?

MR. ALONSO: I mean, we can follow up with the Board on this, but, to the extent of whether or not there's other engineering solutions or modifications to that turbine that could be done to, you know, basically change the design of this unit, I mean, I think that's why we went through the BACT process, though. I mean, the end-of-day emission limit is based on vendor information that we obtain from GE, and the region took that and applied the control technologies to those numbers, and that's how we establish BACT limits at the end of the day is you take those control technologies and you impose them onto the unit that's supposed to be built, you work in compliance headroom, and it was, you know, and this board is generally deferred to EPA technical staff on issues about compliance headroom and what's --

JUDGE MCCABE: I don't even think that's an issue on this appeal, so you don't need to go there.

MR. ALONSO: Well, no, no, no. To the extent that you said that the Sierra Club thinks that compliance headrooms are generous --

JUDGE MCCABE: That was just a comment. They didn't raise it on appeal. MR. ALONSO: Okay.

JUDGE MCCABE: But let me ask you this, Mr. Alonso. I'm hearing, essentially, that the only two ways that you could, that the company could meet the limit on the GE turbine would be to either de-rate it, in which case you're not getting the power that you want out of it, or to take it out of your compliance margin, which is, effectively, somewhat lowering your limit really.

But I'm puzzled about one thing. Didn't the company, in its original permit application, propose to use the average of, propose to set the permit limit at the average of the GHG emission rates or heat rates of the three units, the three turbines? And if
that's the case, isn't that an admission that you can actually meet the more-demanding emission limit on the less efficient unit?

MR. ALONSO: Let me just say, when we initially submitted this permit application, we used the LCRA permit that Region 6 had processed and finalized in a period of six months.

JUDGE HILL: I'm sorry. What is LCRA?

MR. ALONSO: The Lower River Colorado Authority. They permitted a gas plant in Region 6. It was not appealed to this board. So we modeled it after that application.

JUDGE MCCABE: You modeled your application after theirs?

MR. ALONSO: To a certain extent, because it worked at Region 6, as far as this averaging. It turns out that, once between draft and final, LCRA was able to select the turbine and they selected a turbine. The
timing worked for them, given their development path.

JUDGE MCCABE: I'm sorry? You said they selected theirs between the draft and final permits?

MR. ALONSO: They did. And their final permit came out with one turbine. But, again, that's a different project, different development path.

JUDGE HILL: Well, but $I$ think the question is, you're saying that if you were to apply the Siemens emission limit to the GE turbine, that that would over comply. But if the permit limit were set at the average of the three and you would, as you apparently are almost likely to do, select the GE turbine, then you're going to meet a lower limit than the limit that would have been set on the GE turbine alone. So would you have been arguing that that was over-compliance, as well?

MR. ALONSO: I mean, the record speaks for itself. I mean, obviously, if we
submit a permit application agreeing to a certain limit, we would have to, you know, probably shave our compliance headroom. But it doesn't, it doesn't, I mean, the issue before the Board, though, I believe is whether or not Region 6 acted properly in its BACT analysis of these three turbines, of these particular emission units. Whether or not a unit can over comply or whether a permittee can take a voluntarily limit to reduce its emissions, $I$ believe that's outside of the BACT process.

JUDGE STEIN: But I think what is inside the BACT process is whether or not the emissions limit that the region has selected is, in fact, BACT. And that's what I'm struggling with. This case comes to us in a somewhat unusual setting in that $I$ don't recall, in my many years on the Board, ever seeing a situation, and it's possible that we did, in which three different emissions limits were picked for the same unit.

Now, I'm not saying it's not happening. I'm simply saying that $I$ don't have any experience with that. And what I'm more familiar with is a control technology being picked, whether it's, you know, a scrubber or something else, and, within that technology, the company being called upon through the BACT process to meet an emissions limit that reflects the best emissions limit that that technology can achieve.

And if the technology is combined cycle, then, clearly, there are certain sizes of combined cycle that may be able to achieve a better emissions than the unit that you're picking. And I don't have a problem with somebody saying to me, well, we can't do that because of $A, B$, and $C$. But my problem is whether BACT automatically gets picked by size, rather than what the class of technology is capable of performing.

MR. ALONSO: Again, $I$ think two points as to previous practices. I mean, we
have identified seven GHG permits, or, I'm sorry, PSD permits that have, throughout the country and different permitting authorities, further research identified five more where you have two or three emission units and all units have different rates. They range from California, Arizona, Florida, Oregon, North Carolina, Texas. So it is an established practice out there in the permitting --

JUDGE STEIN: Were those
federally-issued permits or state-issued permits, if you know?

MR. ALONSO: They were, well, you know, they were all state-issued permits, but some of those were in delegated states, such as Washington, the state of Florida, so they are federal permits. I agree that I don't believe that this issue has come before the Board, but keep in mind BACT is a progression. And I think, in step one, the technology is combined cycle. And you take that technology and you run it through the five steps. But at
the end of the day, in step five, if you take the design of the emission unit that's being proposed to be installed and you take those technologies, you know, the use of reheat cycles, the exhaust steam condensers, the generator design, and all these things apply to each of the three turbines.

And at the end of the day, in step five, what's the purpose of step five? The purpose of step five is to take that progression and look at the emission unit being proposed and develop an enforceable BACT limit. BACT is a limit based on technology that's being identified through the step one through four.

JUDGE HILL: That's basically the three separate applications argument; am I correct?

MR. ALONSO: At the end of the day, we could have possibly submitted three different applications, and you would have had to -- to do otherwise, you would be basically
setting sort of like an NSPS where you say all combined cycles need to meet this one limit across the board. No matter where you are, who you are, which manufacturer you use, what color your turbine is, you need to meet this limit. That's not what BACT is.

JUDGE MCCABE: Well, the problem with that analysis, of course, Mr. Alonso, is that if we take it to the full extent of what you're suggesting, you get to pick the emission limit according to which turbine you pick. And I don't believe that's what the permitting authority is supposed to do. But we don't need to debate this issue further.

We'd like to turn, before we leave you and go to EPA, to the solar issue. And my question to you is is it possible -- again, here we're talking facts, not legal conclusion -- to install some solar-generating capacity at this proposed facility? And what information in the record can you cite us to support your answer, whatever that answer is?

MR. ALONSO: On the solar pre-heat issue, first of all, solar pre-heat is not a control device to be identified in step one. Your factual question, can it be installed at this facility, in a meaningful way, no. we only have 20 acres left over after we build this project.

JUDGE HILL: Is that in the record?

JUDGE MCCABE: Is that in the record?

MR. ALONSO: No, it is not. It's not in the record because, again, what is in the record is that Region 6 determined that installing, based on this board's precedent, installing solar pre-heat or using solar as some type of alternative fuel for this plant would be re-designing the source.

JUDGE MCCABE: Well, go back to your explanation about the 20 acres. Explain to us.

MR. ALONSO: Okay. First, there's
the 20 acres. There's not enough space, land to make solar pre-heat a feasible or economic technology. Palmdale had 250-somethingacres, you know, a vast amount of land.

Second, this plant is pretty close to the Texas coast, vulnerable to hurricanes. Who knows if regulators of local communities would even let us build such a large solar field in this area, given the threat of hurricanes.

JUDGE MCCABE: Is there anything in the record for us to look at on that?

MR. ALONSO: No, again, in the record, solar pre-heat is defined as, would be redefining the source. And this board has already ruled on this issue. In Palmdale, the petitioner sought to have Palmdale install even more solar energy than it already had proposed, and this board said that that would be redefining the source.

JUDGE MCCABE: I don't believe that's what we said, Mr. Alonso. I believe we
said that redefining the source was clear if you were talking about making it a 100 -percent solar facility.

MR. ALONSO: Correct.
JUDGE MCCABE: That is quite different from what you're talking about here.

MR. ALONSO: Well, I point the Board then to Sierra Pacific. In that case, there was a dual fuel plant, biomass as well as natural gas, and the petitioner sought to have the permitting authority to force installation of solar, and this board there said it was redefining the source.

JUDGE MCCABE: And what did they base that on?

MR. ALONSO: I'm sorry?
JUDGE MCCABE: I don't believe that the Board made such a broad statement that any time you introduce solar that it would be redefining the source. Do you recall in Sierra Pacific what the reason was that the Board concluded that?

MR. ALONSO: I do not.
JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Well, I won't make you do that homework right now. We actually know that. Go ahead back to, if you would, to the factual question because that's the one we're most interested for today's purposes about whether it's actually possible and what there is in the record that tells us yes or no on that.

MR. ALONSO: Okay. Well, first, I mentioned that there's not enough land, the hurricane situation. The second issue is La Paloma is not in the renewable business. They don't have the resources to go out and do solar studies. They would need to retrain or redo their business model in order to look at alternative energy or renewable energy.

JUDGE MCCABE: Do they build their own turbines?

MR. ALONSO: They build gas turbines, yes.

JUDGE MCCABE: They build them or
they buy them?
MR. ALONSO: They don't do wind, they don't do solar.

JUDGE MCCABE: Do they use subcontractors?

MR. ALONSO: I mean, this is something that they would have to develop as a business unit and will take time to go out and get experts, hire them on staff, or go get third-party folks. It's just not part of their business plan.

JUDGE MCCABE: Mr. Alonso, what do you think the company responded the first time the first company was asked to put on an SCR?

MR. ALONSO: They probably said it was unfeasible.

JUDGE MCCABE: They probably did. They probably also said they weren't in the business. There has to be a first time, doesn't --

MR. ALONSO: No, I think that, as far as being in the business, I mean, they're
in the business of burning coal. And they know that they have to put on pollution control --

JUDGE HILL: And I think Sierra Club's argument would be that La Paloma is in the business of generating energy as efficiently as possible in South Texas. I mean, put aside the hurricane issue for a moment, but if there were enough land, you know, the stated business purpose in the application is to produce between 637 and 735 megawatts of energy. I mean, that's the stated business purpose, not to produce it, per se, exclusively with natural gas. That may be their preference, but I'm not sure that's what the record shows.

MR. ALONSO: I mean, the purpose of citing this plant is to use the reclaimed water from the municipality as cooling water. There's also a natural gas pipeline close by to this facility. That is -- and the intent is to maximize the use of that gas pipeline.

You know --

JUDGE HILL: And that is in the record?

MR. ALONSO: That is in our brief. JUDGE HILI: Okay.

MR. ALONSO: But, again, $I$ don't believe that solar pre-heat would even survive step one. I mean, you're talking about a redesign of the source by forcing folks to consider renewable energies at a fossil fuel plant where that's not the intention of the design. And this board has allowed and has recognized the ability for permittees to define the parameters of their design of what they want to build, and I don't think we, you know, well, you guys can do what you want, but to force folks that want to build fossil fuel natural gas plants to build wind turbines, I don't know, that sounds like --

JUDGE MCCABE: Do you know if there's any situation where any permitting authority has done that in the United States
yet?
MR. ALONSO: I have not seen a BACT analysis resulting in or, you know, to do as an alternative, particularly in step one, to consider the feasibility of a renewable project. I don't have any knowledge of that occurring at other permitting authorities.

JUDGE STEIN: But what about a hybrid plant? I mean, I don't think what's being suggested here is that you convert the principal purpose of the gas turbines. I think the question that's being asked is whether any component of it could be solar, and I think what the Board is struggling with is, in a situation in which solar is not already part of the plant design, is it proper or improper to raise questions about that? If so, what is the region's obligation?

I mean, I don't see this as sort of $a$ black and white issue. I see it as you're telling us there's 20 acres. Maybe that's in the record, maybe it's not. That
may be relevant to how you answer that question in this case, as opposed to some other case.

MR. ALONSO: It really goes to whether or not solar or renewable energy should be considered a control device in step one. And I would assert, no, it's a different fuel source. You're redesigning, when people go to build solar plants or hybrid plants, even hybrid plants, you go in and that's what you want to build and you have a business plan and an engineering design for a hybrid plant and that's what you want to get permitted.

But if you're out building a gasfired power plant and solar is not a component, I mean, nowhere in the record is there anything about La Paloma interested in building a solar plant. We want to build a natural gas fire plant, and that's the source that should be permitted, not some alternative design. And a hybrid plant would be forcing, basically, brand new engineering, you have to
study, you know, solar rays and the impact, whether or not it's efficient in this area. It would just be a totally different design or engineering effort to design a hybrid plant versus the plant that we're trying to permit here.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Alonso. We take your point, and you may be seated. And we will hear next from EPA, and Judge Hill will take the lead on questions for EPA, but be resting assured that we will all have questions for you.

JUDGE HILL: Let me start by asking how you pronounce your name, so I don't mess it up.

MR. TOMASOVIC: I will generally say Tomasovic but --

JUDGE HILL: Tomasovic?

MR. TOMASOVIC: -- Tomasovic is
fine if you want to go old country.
JUDGE HILL: What do you prefer? MR. TOMASOVIC: Tomasovic. JUDGE HILL: Tomasovic, okay. So this is purely a hypothetical question, but, in your experience or in the experience generally of the region, when does a permit applicant decide what their, you know, what their turbine is going to be or what their size is going to be or the precise design factors of the source? Does it typically happen before they submit the permit application, after, both?

MR. TOMASOVIC: I think it could be a variety of things, your Honor. Looking through historical permitting actions, we did find that there are a couple of cases that happened before the Board that had permit structured such as this that had permitted multiple turbine options. You wouldn't be able to see it from the face of the decisions and it wouldn't be something that you could discern from the challenges that were raised, but the Three Mountain Power decision in 2001 is one such example, and there was a case
where a petition was dismissed for being a minor source permit. But, clearly, on the face of that decision, which was Carlton, Inc. North Shore Plant in 2001, it described a minor NSR permit with multiple turbine options.

JUDGE MCCABE: Could you repeat the name of that one, please?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Carlton, Inc. --
JUDGE MCCABE: Carlton, Inc.

MR. TOMASOVIC: -- North Shore Plant.

JUDGE HILL: Do you have a cite on that, or you said it was dismissed as --

MR. TOMASOVIC: It was 2001, and it was a published decision, your Honor.

JUDGE HILL: Okay. Now, my understanding of Three Mountain Power is that they allowed for different equipment, but they only specified a single emission limit.

MR. TOMASOVIC: It does show that in the RBLC, sir, but we tracked down the
permit and, actually, what happens is different permit issuers will input different data into the RBLC. We gave you approximately ten RBLC numbers, and in almost all those cases you are going to see different BACT limits, depending on what types of BACT limit is being assigned.

And under the Three Mountain Power permit that was issued, there were multiple types of limits, other than the concentration limits. So the hourly limits, the pounds per hour limits, the annual ton per year limits, just as in our permit, show that with each turbine option different limits apply.

JUDGE HILL: And what was the control technology in those cases, or can you generalize on that? I mean, one of the things that makes this a challenging case, I think, in part, is because the control technology is all, I mean, you know, is also essentially the plant design because what you're trying to do is simply maximize the efficient use
inherently. Are those others cases, are any of those similar, or are they all about add-on technologies?

MR. TOMASOVIC: I believe these days the conventional thing is that for add-on control technology with turbines is SCR. For other limits, such as PM and carbon monoxide, you're assigning limits inherent to good combustion practices inherent to the equipment that is selected. And that's reflected in the TCEQ permit that was issued for La Paloma in this case, which, like ours, followed an application that asked for the flexibility to consider multiple options. And, as a practical matter, when the permit writer is assigning those limits, they have to look at the specs inherent to the turbine in assigning both the worst case emissions but also those emissions that reflect what's good operation on an hourly basis.

JUDGE HILL: Does the TCEQ permit have this condition that says that, once the
turbine selection decision is made, then the permit is going to be amended to basically take out reference to the other two turbines?

MR. TOMASOVIC: It does, and I believe that may be a practice that varies by permit issuer. I didn't notice that when I looked at the Three Mountain Power permit. I also have on hand a listed RBLC number for a Florida permit in 2000. I didn't notice the provision there.

For what we have as a special condition, there's no time set requirement on when they would need to come in and modify it. It's more of a back-end cost-keeping requirement where they indicate what their selection would be, and the permit issuer would simplify the permit so it's more readable for enforcement purposes.

JUDGE HILL: And that's the reason to do it? Because if you take Mr. Alonso's argument kind of to its logical conclusion, then they get to select the turbine and,
therefore, they get the limit that applies to that turbine. But you're saying that that condition was put in there just to make the permit cleaner to read, in essence?

MR. TOMASOVIC: It's not the case, as the petitioners have argued, that they get to choose their emissions rate. That's not what they get to choose. They get to choose their capacity, they get to choose the equipment and the various designs of equipment that we couldn't differentiate for efficiency purposes in assigning limits for a final permit.

So even as those limits look numerically different in the permit, we have a technical decision on the part of the permit issuer that says these are comparable and they don't implicate a weakening of the BACT requirement that we decided to assign the limits this way.

JUDGE HILL: I want to come back to the comparable because I think that that's
an important issue. But getting back to this full issue of, basically, the selection decision, Sierra Club's essential argument is that, since the control technology here is maximum efficiency within a range and given that La Paloma defined the business purpose as build a plant that's between the capacity of the smallest capacity turbine and the largest capacity turbine, that they should have to use the most efficient control technology, which, in this case, would be the most efficient turbine. Do you agree? Could the agency have told La Paloma, look, you can pick whatever turbine you want, but you've got to run it as if it were the most efficient because that's BACT? Does the agency have that authority? MR. TOMASOVIC: Speaking for Region 6 with this permit, there are multiple ways that I think permit issuers could have decided to come out in the final permit. We decided, based on the design heat rates, the best data we had for the operational factor
that would apply to this equipment, plus a consistent safety margin for all three options, that there are these three limits that come out.

And if we chose to express those limits in their different format, for instance the net heat rate, the picture would actually be quite different. So it is a distorted, a bit of a distorted picture to say that GHG BACT, on a gross output basis, is the ultimate measurement of what is efficient.

JUDGE HILL: Why would it look different? Please explain that further. What would happen if you use net?

MR. TOMASOVIC: So what appears from the face of the permit is that the largest difference in efficiency is 2.7 percent. In our response to comments on page 11, we actually provided the numbers to show what that difference would look like on a net basis, which is, I believe, the format that the limits were expressed in the Palmdale
decision, as well as even earlier permits issued by Region 6 .

And permit issuers do have discretion at this time, in the absence of guidance, to consider the comments that come in and decide which type of limit is going to be most meaningful for putting BACT in place. But --

JUDGE HILL: So I can't do math in my head, but I'm looking at those numbers. So you've got, for the GE turbine, the net heat rate would be 7527 and for the Siemens it would be 7771. Isn't that about two and a half percent, or is it less than that?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Well, I think what you want to look to is, if you can see a 945.2 number --

JUDGE HILL: Okay. That's the emission limit. MR. TOMASOVIC: -- and the 944.4 number.

JUDGE HILL: And then a 965
number.
MR. TOMASOVIC: If you were to ask what the percent difference is there, you would have one-tenth of one percent of a difference, which, expressed as gross, shows up as 2.7 percent. And this is one of the challenges with such a narrowly-written petition. It didn't challenge the reasonable compliance margins that we assigned to each option, and it doesn't bring up issues like the start-up emission limits, which, in fact, give a different rank order, if you could use that terminology for each of the turbine options.

JUDGE HILL: All right. So are you saying that if you, I mean, based on this chart on page 11, that, I mean, the response comments references the 2.6 earlier on, but it's also got this chart. And you're saying that that chart shows that it's really tiny?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Yes, your Honor. If we chose to place a final permit, final
limits in the permit on a net basis using the same calculation methodology, it would be onetenth of one percent.

JUDGE HILL: How do you decide whether you set the limit on a gross basis or a net basis? Because I know I've seen both.

MR. TOMASOVIC: In this case, we evaluated the adverse comments on the issue, we looked at what was going on, for instance, with the proposed NSPS which expresses those limits, at least in a proposal form on a gross output basis. We saw that, in general, a lot of the performance data that is out there is available on a gross output basis, so we decided that for permitting purposes, permitting administration purposes, and for the benefit of other permitting actions, it seemed that gross output made sense for this permit.

JUDGE HILL: Okay. But you had the discretion to pick net?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Well, we don't
close off ourselves from choosing net base limits in future permits if, for instance, the NSPS were to, on the basis of comments, decide that net basis really is a preferred way to go. But we have a reasonable basis for this permit to say so. And in saying that, we're not purporting to say anything that would be determinative of how state permitting authorities or even other regions might choose to assign the limits for a permit that guarantees efficiency and control of GHGs. JUDGE MCCABE: I just want to get some clarity on, again, the facts. I love facts. If the numbers here that we're going to be looking at when we decide whether we agree with the region's position that these limits are really not different, that they're comparable or whatever language you use to describe them, how would we describe that? Is it 0.1 percent are you telling us now? Is it 2.7 percent? Is it a range from 0.1 percent to 2.7 percent? The world looks closely at
the facts of what we were looking at when we draw the conclusion, so the facts matter and I'm a little unclear about them right now.

MR. TOMASOVIC: Yes, your Honor. So I'll try and go over the notes I have on the comparability of the limits in maybe an orderly --

JUDGE MCCABE: I was hoping you'd give me a sound bite in the end, but, please, feel free to go through the notes.

MR. TOMASOVIC: The first thing is that the permit actually assigns three different kinds of emission limits: the ton per year, the start-up limits which are on a pound-per-hour basis, and this gross output: when it's sending electricity to the grid, how efficient is GHGs in relation to the output?

So if you look at those three different limits and were to assign a rank order under each kind of turbine model, you're actually going to get three different orders, there different permutations. I suggest that
the net limits was another possibility for us. You would get a fourth order if you were to assign -- and actually nothing would have permitted us from assigning both kinds of limits and that limit and a gross limit, but that would have been duplicative. So we decided these are the limits for the permit. So looking just at that, the basis for the challenge, which is the gross limits, you have a smallest difference of one-half of one percent. That's the difference between 909 to 912. The largest apparent difference is 2.7 percent, which is the difference from 909 to 934.5. And this difference is not a difference in efficiency. In the commenters letter, they do throw around the term "efficiency," but sometimes that's using the context of what is power plant efficiency, which gives you a different comparison. If you're talking about engine efficiency or power plant efficiency, the 2.7 percent difference is actually 1.2 percent.

JUDGE HILL: Why is that? I was with you until that sentence.

MR. TOMASOVIC: So --

JUDGE MCCABE: I think we need a chalkboard.

MR. TOMASOVIC: That calculation and I think maybe the footnotes in the comment letter explain it as 3412 divided by the heat rate. And another issue is that the commenters use actually lower heat value for their descriptions of the heat rate, whereas our permit is using the high heat rate information to get the limits.

But that 1.2 percent difference in efficiency, that kind of efficiency, power plant efficiency we're talking about is what you may read in --

JUDGE HILL: Can you define power plant efficiency for that purpose for me?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Yes, sir. The definition of power plant efficiency would be what is the heat rate value of the kilowatt
hour divided by the heat rate for the power plant or the turbine.

JUDGE HILL: Okay.

MR. TOMASOVIC: And in our case, our limits aren't just the heat rate for the turbines, as though they were in simple cycle mode, but the heat rate for those turbines, in conjunction with the heat recovery steam generator with duct burner firing. So there's a number of things going on.

And we had explained that as turbines get larger they get more efficient. And that's actually true for several reasons, but, in this case, it's not actually because the GE turbine is demonstrated to be inefficient. That's not the case. It's actually the influence of the duct burners, which wasn't something that the petitioners raised in their appeal. Because each scenario has the same size duct burners, they have a disproportionate impact in the overall heat rate. We assigned limits that included
everything, and that's why, when Mr. Alonso was talking about de-rating, that may be a situation where is easy to figure out that you're just cutting into the compliance margin if we had decided to set them all the same limit but also might be a case where they really put limits on their use of duct burners, which cuts into the operational flexibility that they want to have as base load plant that has peaking type capabilities --

JUDGE HILL: In other words, you can't sort of size the duct burner to the size of the turbine or --

MR. TOMASOVIC: No, your Honor. In this case, the HRSG with the duct burners is assigned to be the same for all three scenarios.

JUDGE HILL: Okay, all right. So is 2.7 percent the largest, when you talk about tons per year, startup gross output, and net heat rate, is 2.7 the largest difference?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Well, sir, if you were to count the annual ton per year differences, each capacity scenario is actually about 10 percent larger than the next. If you look at the annual ton per year limits, I think the differences might be 6 or 7 percent, but you're just building up your plant with the bigger greenhouse gas impact overall and --

JUDGE HILL: Well, the reason $I$ ask that question is because, in your brief, you talk about that you don't need to look at alternative control technologies that are essentially equivalent. In response to comments, it talks about these turbines are, quote, highly comparable and there are marginal differences between them. So there's a lot of words thrown around that all seem to imply small or not significant, but which one do we use? I mean, the argument seems to be, essentially -- see, I'm coming up with a new phrase -- essentially equivalent. How do we
judge that? Well, first of all, is there a single term that is most relevant, from a legal standpoint? And then my second question will be and how do we judge that?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Well, the two explanations that we gave in the record I think are pertinent, and that is that the differences are mere fractions of the compliance margin. The compliance margins we assign to each turbine is reflective of the uncertainties in terms of variable load performance, deviations from the iso conditions, degradation over time. So if --

JUDGE HILL: Well, but how does that cut? I mean, if you accept a compliance margin at 30 percent, then, yes, everything is probably going to get swamped by that. But if you set the compliance margin at 2 percent, you might not.

JUDGE MCCABE: Or 12.6.
MR. TOMASOVIC: And we set the compliance margin at 12 percent, and I think
what that illustrates is that the difference between the 2 percent, which is approximately a quarter of that total compliance margin, shows these are all, these are all comparable. They are all going to be expected to be performing in range of each other, but we decided that there are subtle differences that allowed for the assignment of that reasonable safety factor. They are different sizes and different engines, but there's no fact-based reason for us to decide to set them all at the same limit or average them or round them up to the nearest 50 pounds per megawatt hour, although other permit issuers may well choose to do that in order to simplify things.

JUDGE HILL: If we want to give guidance to future permit writers, how would you propose we say you've got three turbines with different heat rates but they are essentially equivalent. How much discretion do you think the agency has to figure out, to declare two different GHG limits to be
essentially equivalent?
MR. TOMASOVIC: Well, I would start, your Honor, with the fact that these are all $F$ class turbines, and at the comment period there wasn't any articulated difference between the turbines in terms of the technology they have. You may find that in other cases where here's a turbine that uses dry cooling and here's a turbine that uses wet cooling, and that's a technological difference that would allow us to elaborate on it, explain perhaps why one option is necessary and the other isn't.

But in this case, where you have $F$ class turbines that are all modern, at least in the last several years, type efficiencies placed into an energy system that has its own subtle impacts on what the overall limits would be, I think the way that the Board should land on that is deference to the permit issuers technical judgment in this case, on a case-by-case basis, that this apparent
difference of 25 pounds per megawatt hour was not significant. And we made that decision without any written guidance from OAPPS or OGC, but it was based on our permit issuer technical judgment. And all is not as it seems if you were to look at, for instance, that net efficiency, which illustrates that that 2.7 percent difference, which the petitioners now complain about, is only a 0.1 percent difference.

JUDGE HILL: At what point does it become too big? I mean, you talk in your brief or the response comments document talks about, well, unless it's poorly designed or non-representative of the capabilities of the technology, is that the standard we should adopt?

JUDGE MCCABE: We're wondering where that came from, actually.

MR. TOMASOVIC: Well, that phrase, you might find a phrase in the GHG guidance on performance benchmarking. I'm not saying it's
straightly transferrable to that, to the way that we used it in the brief, but it does reference performance capabilities of technology as a starting point. And we were looking at the GHG guidance that does say, in the case of a gas-fired plant, if it's considering single cycle for example, you should consider as an option combined cycle. Combined cycle isn't broken down into the world of turbines that are available on the market. Go larger, if you can, if that shows it's more efficient.

Instead, it was more us taking this application as it came in, a conventional combined cycle plant using modern $F$ class turbines with the heat recovery steam generator and the duct burners. It's a standard type of permit. It is similar to the LCRA permit that we issued. It was the first permit issued, which, incidentally, in that case, the application came to us with the request to permit multiple options, and they
decided before public comment that the GE 7FA turbine was the one that they would go with. JUDGE HILL: So can you cite to any permit where EPA basically allowed the size or model of the main emission unit to be selected after the permit is issued, as happened here? Are the --

MR. TOMASOVIC: As far as a regionally-issued permit, sir? No. The Washington State permit that is referenced in our brief is a delegated state. Sierra Club submitted adverse comments on it, and that was one case where they, for similar reasoning to us, decided that they would defer to the applicant's request to have multiple options and not make them pick one of two acceptable turbine models.

JUDGE HILL: Okay.
JUDGE MCCABE: Just going back to your point about the $F$ class turbines, I'm wondering if what you're saying to us is that it is sufficient for the permitting authority
to look at that class of turbines and say, step one, combined cycle technology is the best available control technology here; and then when we get all the way down to step five to set the emission limit that anything within class $F$ is good enough; is that what you're saying?

MR. TOMASOVIC: No, your Honor.
The project did come to us with $F$ class turbines. You may see that in the response to comments one of the things that Sierra Club had said is choose larger turbines, make a bigger power plant, and we quickly said that we didn't believe that was appropriate in our case because they had selected, they're looking at a power plant of a certain size using three different types of $F$ class turbines.

But all of those, we're open to commenters, adverse commenters that may say, well, these three turbine models, of these three turbine models, this one doesn't show
anything that shows modern day efficiencies. But at the same time, it's likely not a good permit practice to say with absoluteness that this turbine that was designed in the last five years is not acceptable for BACT purposes or for project purposes in other cases because, if you rest solely on that one piece of information then the net heat rate expresses as the pounds per megawatt hour on a gross basis, you're not necessarily capturing all that is relevant to efficiency. JUDGE HILL: What if La Paloma had said we're going to build a plant that's 637 megawatts, no more, no less, and there's only one turbine on the market that will allow us to do it, even though there are several other F class turbines that are much more efficient? Would the region have any authority to look behind that?

MR. TOMASOVIC: I think general permit issuers do have authority to say have you considered this or that that's also
available. In that case, your Honor, I think you're presenting a case where the source is defined binarily.

JUDGE HILL: Exactly.
MR. TOMASOVIC: However, it doesn't necessarilymean that the selection of that turbine model is unjustified. If you are to look at, going back to the NSR workshop manual, $I$ believe we cited, we said in our brief in one of our footnotes that customer selection factors can be based on a number of things, including reliability and efficiency, experience with the equipment. And all of those are things that you can find in the NSR, in the NSR workshop manual as an example of how you step into the BACT analysis for a turbine. It's really something that we come in with we have a contractual commitment to use these turbines, can you see what limits would apply to it at the front end? JUDGE HILL: Let me ask if Judge Stein or Judge McCabe has anymore questions on
the turbine issue because then I want to move to solar real fast.

JUDGE STEIN: I do.

JUDGE HILL: Okay.
JUDGE STEIN: Did $I$ hear you say that another facility in Region 6 that was recently permitted is using the same turbine as will be used by La Paloma?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Yes, your Honor.
JUDGE STEIN: And does the record reflect what that BACT limit is for that facility and how it compares to the BACT limit here?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Yes, your Honor. So the name of the facility is the LCRA Ferguson Plant. And $I$ believe that was referenced in the statement of basis, as well as discussions sections of the response to comments. In all cases, looking at other facilities that are out there, including LCRA, we deemed the limits to be appropriate when they're placed in the appropriate context.

The Sierra Club presents Palmdale, which isn't reflective of the same design that we're using that we permitted here. They referenced the Pioneer Valley, and we had to contextualize the limits that were assigned to the Pioneer Valley permit because that particular facility wasn't using duct burners.

JUDGE STEIN: Okay. So if I'm correct, the BACT emissions limit for the Lower Colorado River was 918 pounds of CO2 per megawatt hour. And the limit that we're looking at here is 934 ; is that correct? I'm not purporting to say that $I$ have a correct understanding. I'm just trying to clarify.

MR. TOMASOVIC: Is this in the response to comments or statement of basis, Your Honor?

JUDGE STEIN: Oh, it's in my little cheat sheet that somebody gave me.

JUDGE MCCABE: It's extracted. MR. TOMASOVIC: I may be mistaken, but $I$ believe the limits assigned for LCRA
were, in fact, on a net basis, so they wouldn't be directly comparable. But we might well have had some discussion that tried to reconcile them.

JUDGE MCCABE: Yes, the comparability of all of these numbers is somewhat perplexing to us, so we'll address that at the end because we're thinking that we might need some supplemental briefing to try to get us on an agreed-on comparison table here so that we at least understand, and that others who read the decision can understand the import of what we're deciding. Do you want to turn to solar?

JUDGE HILL: Yes. So Mr. Alonso's argument is, in essence, that including any solar into this project would have been redefining the source. Do you agree with that, or do you think the agency has any authority to consider some solar at an electric plant, even if it hasn't been proposed by the applicant?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Your Honor, I believe that the Board's precedent on redefinition of the source allows that a permit issuer, in their discretion, may require consideration of options that may constitute a redefinition of the source. However, if that is in conflict with the fundamental business purpose of the applicant, then it is against our policy to do that.

JUDGE HILL: Do you think that the agency has some -- okay. So you believe the agency has the authority to require consideration. Do you think the agency has the obligation to do so if it wasn't proposed if somebody raises it in comments, as happened here?

MR. TOMASOVIC: I believe that the agency's responsibilitiesin responding to the comments in many ways are calibrated off of the specificity of the comments that come to us. In this case, the comments that we received on solar are not in the same shape as
they came to the board in the petition in that they've attached the exhibits for two permits that weren't part of their comments that were submitted to us, and they specifically focused on Palmdale and Victorville as two facilities that we should have had a further discussion about in our response to comments.

But in terms of how the comments came to us, which actually raised the issue of solar in a lot of different ways where, at times, it wasn't even clear whether they were referencing photovoltaic versus steam, auxiliary contributions to efficiency, I believe that the region's responses were appropriate.

JUDGE HILL: Mr. Alonso essentially argued that our decision in Palmdale said that it is appropriate to classify addition of extra solar as essentially redefining the source, and he also cites to Sierra Pacific. Do you agree with that characterization of those decisions?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Our decision is based on the facts of our administrative record and not a broad reliance on those decisions stating that. As was argued in our brief, we think the administrative record shows that the consideration of solar options, at least as we understood it coming from the commenters, would redefine the source.

The administrative record does show, in fact, that the property limits are no more than 80 acres and, from that, it can be discerned that there is, based on the footprint of the plant, not a lot of additional acres, which might approximate the 20 acres that the permittee was able to substantiate with the affidavit that they gave with their petition.

JUDGE HILL: So does the region believe it's not feasible to install any solar capacity at the site?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Well, depending on how that comment might be construed, your

Honor, rooftop solar is an option that presumably is not what the commenters were trying to talk about, although it's not always clear. In the case of the Palmdale decision, it does illustrate that as a rough measure to contribute 10 percent of that plant's total capacity.

JUDGE MCCABE: Does someone have a cell phone going? Where is that music coming from?
(Whereupon, the foregoing matter went off the record at 4:50 p.m. and went back on the record at 4:52 p.m.)

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Let's proceed. We don't have to cut Mr. Ritchie off. Lovely music anyway.

> MR. TOMASOVIC: I was saying, your Honor, as a background matter, the Region 6 was aware of the factual setting that was recited by the Board in the Palmdale case, which was the fact that, to generate just 10
percent of the capacity for that Palmdale plant, it required 250 acres. And, in fact, and $I$ believe some language in the opinion came close to this, you need acreage to be able to have power in a significant amount. You may well need more than 20 acres just to get steam that could be used in the process, but, you know, that's a different technical issue in any event.

If we were to just sort of roughly say 250 acres, 10 percent of the plant's power reduced down to 20 or 25 acres, you're talking about something that doesn't substantially influence the overall plant --

JUDGE HILL: But that's not in the analysis the region did in the record, correct?

MR. TOMASOVIC: No, your Honor. JUDGE HILL: Okay. JUDGE MCCABE: Is it the region's position that, as a matter of exercising its discretion, it would never consider solar, it
would always consider adding a supplemental solar or whatever we call it here to be redesign and, therefore, against at least the region's policy, if not the agency's, to even consider?

MR. TOMASOVIC: No, your Honor, I don't think anything in the region's response was intended to cut off comments on solar technology as a general matter for any other permitting case.

JUDGE MCCABE: You just think the comments here were insufficient to get you where you needed to go in order to give it serious consideration here; is that what you're saying?

MR. TOMASOVIC: Yes, your Honor. I mean, we had a bit of a technical discussion in there that it is the case that, for any process that uses fuel to generate heat, you can get that from something else, which might be geothermal or solar. And you could get into the myriad permutations that go on
forever in terms of whatever a commenter might bring, but it is --

JUDGE MCCABE: Comment clearly focused on solar in this case, so you don't need to go there.

MR. TOMASOVIC: However, there are other parts of the comment which seem to suggest that the, that, in their view, this project was defined to be within a range of capacity that could be energy generated by any means, which we disagree with because this is a combined cycle plant that's meant to use natural gas as its fuel and take advantage of the infrastructural advantages specific to that location, including the water availability of the pipelines and the local need for this particular kind of power to be delivered for grid stability reasons.

JUDGE MCCABE: I hate to put you on the spot, Mr. Tomasovic, but do you think you could reduce to one or two sentences the reason the region did not consider solar here
or considered it to be redesign that the region would not entertain?

MR. TOMASOVIC: In the way that the comments came, your Honor, we believe that that solar auxiliary preheat was not well defined because it was, it was actually raised as a substitute for duct burners when duct burners have a different purpose than solar auxiliary preheat. And I'm already past my two sentences but --

JUDGE MCCABE: That's okay. You're close enough. Thank you. Those are all the questions we have for you at this time, Mr. Tomasovic. Thank you. And, Mr. Bender, you have been very patient, and I bet you're watching your watch. National Airport flight at 7:00. You probably need to leave here by -- what would folks who are Washingtonians say, given that it is Wednesday rush hour before a storm?

JUDGE HILL: If you take a cab, I'd say 5:45 at the latest.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. So 5:30; will that work for you, Mr. Bender?

MR. BENDER: I think so, your Honor.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. I would hate to give you short shrift after you were so gracious as to choose the last position or to suggest that your judgment perhaps might need to be revisited the next time you're offered that choice.

MR. BENDER: I wouldn't want to miss this even if $I$ had already gone.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay.
MR. BENDER: Is this better?

Thank you, your Honors. I think, to address one thing that kind of permeates the briefs from respondents and some of the discussion here today, there's kind of two pieces or two sides of the same coin maybe. We're talking about size or capacity. We're talking about megawatts, right? And when we're talking about ERCOT or any other regional system
operator, the dispatch is to meet a load. We're talking about dispatching to meet a load in megawatts.

And the size of the units are different here. It's actually kind of a combination of things, turbines plus heat recovery, steam generator, turbine that adds up to certain numbers. It's 637 for the GE combination, for example. That's megawatts as their peak. You know, if you throttle full, that's what you're going to get.

The Siemens turbines can generate 637. It's not that you have a turbine, you turn it on, and you get 637 megawatts, or you turn it off and you get zero, and it's a binary on or off situation.

In fact, the other argument or the other piece of this argument in the briefs was that turbines, as they get larger, get more efficient. And if you want a large turbine at a reduced rate, less than full, you're decreasing its efficiency, and that's simply
not true. And that's not true based on the evidence in this record because that last increment of power comes from duct burning, which is less efficient than the turbines and steam generator.

And so as you throttle down or as you de-rate or decrease your generation, all saying the same thing, you're actually, until you hit the point where the duct burners come off, you're actually improving the efficiency and decreasing the emission. And we can see that, among other places, in one of the tables that counsel for Region 6 pointed to in the response to comments where, in addition to net and gross, there's also, without duct burner fire, on page 11 of response to comments, which is Petition Exhibit 3, you can see that the GE, the smallest of the turbines piece, is 7527.5 without duct burner firing. The biggest turbine, the Siemens 5, is 7771.7. Less efficient, right? And you only get the increased efficiency from the larger turbines
as a system because they're able to generate more of their power before turning the duct burners on.

JUDGE MCCABE: Well, does this mean you're happy to hear that they've selected the GE turbine?

MR. BENDER: If they have a permit limit that reflects what they could do. If the question is phrased differently, right? If the draft permit had come out and said our project purpose is to build a plant that's capable of generating 637 megawatts, you know, this would be a different case. The comments would have been different, and we may or may not be here.

But then we'd say, the comments would come in, among other things, something to the effect of the Siemens, you know, 5 or the Siemens 4 can generate 637 megawatts. In fact, when it does so, it does it at a reduced emission.

So we're dealing with emission
rates. The final permit emission limits are set based on operating full out. But full out is a different number of megawatts for each, right?

JUDGE MCCABE: Thank you for that clarification. Do you agree that the F class turbines are among the most efficient turbines available for combined cycle combustion technology?

MR. BENDER: I believe they're among. I don't know that they are the most efficient.

JUDGE MCCABE: Do you know of a class that's more efficient?

MR. BENDER: I don't. The question, though, is the emission limits, too, which is the end of everything. So we're talking about turbines and different turbines, but we're really talking about different turbines put in front of the same 271 megawatt steam generator in this case.

JUDGE MCCABE: Well, to you and to

EPA, of course, the emission limit is the ultimate most important thing here. But, of course, to the company, the most important thing is which turbine do they get to use and is it the one that will fit whatever their business purpose is?
Your petition -- I'm a little confused about something. Your petition says that you're not suggesting that the company should be required to pick any particular turbine but just that they should meet the lowest GHG limit that any of the turbines could meet. But aren't you, in effect, by doing that, forcing their choice of turbine?

MR. BENDER: No. It's not requiring a turbine. Whether you're forcing it or not raises some other internal issues, I think, at the company, which is, you know, their risk appetite for that headroom margin that's built in, how much they're actually going to operate because this is a 12-month rolling average and assumes operating at 100
percent, including those duct burners wide open, which is one of the least efficient ways to operate.

JUDGE MCCABE: So your preference would be that they have to build a bigger turbine and operate it at a lower load?

MR. BENDER: Our preference is they have to meet the emission limit that --

JUDGE MCCABE: But in concept.
MR. BENDER: To build a bigger turbine and operate it with less duct burning and using more of the waste heat from the turbine, the way that the three options are set up in this record is the most efficient. And --

JUDGE HILL: But that wasn't your comment, was it? Your comment was simply to pick the limit that reflects the lowest emission rate. Your comment wasn't essentially to recalculate the rate based on the lack of duct burning. MR. BENDER: That's correct.

Sorry. I'm trying to answer a question, a direct question. I'm not representing that that's what the comments were.

JUDGE HILL: Okay. Fair enough. I'm sorry to interrupt. Keep going. MR. BENDER: I should specify this is based on our understanding from the record. Because the Siemens turbines are capable of basically more heat because they're bigger but they're going into the same size heat recovery steam generators, as would the GE turbines. More of the total heat going in is coming from waste heat from the turbines with the Siemens compared to the GE, so there's less need for duct burning. That's what --

JUDGE MCCABE: What is your goal here, Mr. Bender? Are you looking for the lowest total amount of GHG emissions that can possibly come out of this facility, or are you looking for something else?

MR. BENDER: We're looking for the lowest BACT rate, but we're also looking for

JUDGE MCCABE: But the BACT rate is based on efficiency, yes?

MR. BENDER: It's based on efficiency here, yes.

JUDGE MCCABE: Do you have any objection to that?

MR. BENDER: I'm sorry?
JUDGE MCCABE: Do you have any objection to EPA's basing the BACT rate on the energy efficiency of the turbines?

MR. BENDER: Not in this petition. JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Well, it is this petition we're talking about.

MR. BENDER: Right. It's -JUDGE STEIN: But given that they have indicated that, depending on the timing, that they're going to go with the GE turbine, what is your position as to what the emissions limit should be for that turbine?

MR. BENDER: The emission limit for any of these turbines, based on this
record and the draft permit that we were able to comment on, should be -- I'll put it this way. If $F$ class category of turbines, followed by heat recovery steam generator is the control option, and that's what we were able to comment on. And if that's the control option that they'regoing to treat as the same control option through steps one through four, then in step five the emission rate should be based on the lowest emission rate achievable by that class. And based on the record here, that's represented by the Siemens F4, at least that line in the permit, right?

So depending on how your question was intended, your Honor, if they came in and said draft permit, project purpose 637 megawatts on peak 100-percent capacity, you know, we would look at what combination of turbine heat recovery steam generator gives you the lowest emission rate at that. But I want to be clear that's not this case, that's not this record.

JUDGE STEIN: Well, I'm a little confused. I mean, I'm with you to a point, but what I thought I heard the region say is that when they chose the BACT limit that they chose that they couldn't necessarilytranslate between these different turbines in quite the same way that you were doing the translation. And, I mean, if, for example, you're saying that they need to meet emissions rate $X$, what if they can't meet that with this equipment? Does that mean that they can't install the equipment?

MR. BENDER: If La Paloma cannot meet 909 pounds per megawatt hour gross with the GE equipment is the hypothetical?

JUDGE STEIN: Yes.
MR. BENDER: Yes, then they can't install that equipment.

JUDGE MCCABE: So you are forcing their choice of turbine, in effect?

MR. BENDER: Only as a secondary effect. But just like if you cannot meet a

BACT limit for S 02 on a coal fire power plant with a dry scrubber, are you forcing the selection of a more efficient wet scrubber as a secondary effect? That's true.

JUDGE MCCABE: Do you think that's a fair analogy? We're talking here about the main emitting unit and the main unit that produces the capacity of product that the facility wants to produce. The choice between a wet and dry scrubber doesn't affect that.

MR. BENDER: Well, according to the region, it's a category, and it's not affecting the category. If the category, as a region, says is combined cycle turbine with heat recovery steam generator, then you're not changing anything. You may be foreclosing business choices that are made later, but I would suggest that's true with every BACT limit. There are choices that a permittee may want to make but cannot make because they have to comply with their BACT limit.

JUDGE HILL: So Mr. Tomasovic says

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that, pointed out that the Siemens -- I'm going to get it wrong -- the Siemens 4 turbine has the lowest emission limit hourly but that the GE turbine has the lowest annual tons per year, primarily because it's operating at a lower capacity. Is your argument that the limit that the region should have set have been the lowest of each of those, or is your argument that they should use the limits that they got for the most efficient turbine, which was the Siemens 4 ?

MR. BENDER: I believe that the BACT limit is, the primary driver BACT limit is the pounds per megawatt hour, and that's the limit that we think that the La Paloma facility, whatever equipment it ultimately chooses, should meet. That will result in different tons on an annual basis, but tons on an annual basis is, I would submit, not a limiting limit. It assumes 100-percent operation. You know, it's basically, it's -JUDGE HILL: Well, but here's my
point. If Mr. Alonso had gotten up and said it's most likely we're going to pick the Siemens 5 or, I'm sorry, the Siemens 4, then there's going to be more total emissions of GHGs, a lower rate but more total emissions. So by your argument, should the region have had to pick the lowest limit for each of the three parameters on which they set the limit? And if not, why not?

MR. BENDER: We didn't address the total tons because we don't feel that it's going to limit. If they decide that they want to generate 630 megawatts, that's the number that, multiplied by the emission rate, is going to generate the tons.

JUDGE HILL: But if they had picked the Siemens 4 or the Siemens 5, they could be operating at 735.

MR. BENDER: They could be operating at 735 , but there are other things that go into it, obviously, your Honor, as I'm sure you're aware, of when they're dispatched,
how they're dispatched. And the focus here is the per megawatt hours because that's the one that the Sierra Club sees as actually limiting emissions here because the annual caps are set at such a high rate that they're not going to be approached. Even the lowest is not going to be approached.

JUDGE MCCABE: Let me bring you back to this table that's -- I don't know if you have it. It's page 11 of the response to comments. These numbers are all starting to sound fungible, so let's try to anchor ourselves again. I'm looking at the middle column here that says output-based emission limit, which is net without duct burning. And for the GE turbine, that limit is 894, and for the Siemens 4 turbine is 909 . They're picking the GE turbine. What limit do you want?

MR. BENDER: Well, first of all, I question the accuracy of these numbers because some of them are the same as the gross with duct burning.

JUDGE MCCABE: They're saying what?

MR. BENDER: The Siemens F4 number in that column is the same as the permit limit for that turbine, which is expressed as gross with duct burning. So looking at these right now, I suspect that they're not correct. Some of them may not be correct.

JUDGE MCCABE: Can we assume for the moment that these numbers are correct?

MR. BENDER: Yes.
JUDGE MCCABE: And if that turns it into a hypothetical question, so be it. I'm trying to understand where you're going there conceptually. I'm looking at a lower number, 894, you know, it's CO2 equivalence of per megawatt hour without duct burning, net without duct burning. It's 894 for the turbine they want. It's 909 for the one that you were saying was the most efficient turbine. Which limit do you want for the GE turbine? Do you want the 894 or do you want
the 909?
MR. BENDER: It depends on this, your Honor. It depends on whether we're going to set this as the ultimate rate, or if we're going to set another limit as the ultimate rate because this is a part, this is without duct burning, right? But the permit allows duct burning. So if we say we want 894.7 without duct burning and then we'll leave the duct-burning caused emissions kind of unmeasured and unregulated as a different -JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Go to the next column with duct burning. You've got 945.2 --

MR. BENDER: Yes.
JUDGE MCCABE: -- for the GE
turbine. And just a hair under that, you've got 944.4 for the Siemens 4. Are you telling us that's what you want the Board to do, to tell the region that that kind of difference is significant and that they should force this company, when it installs the GE turbine, to
meet the 944 limit for the Siemens 4? Is that what you're asking us to do?

MR. BENDER: Your Honor, if that, if the limits were set based on this as final enforceable limits, based on that, I'm not sure that we would be here on this issue.

JUDGE HILL: So how much of a margin is too big? Because the region's initial submission is that, even with the limits that they actually set, the difference is 2.6 percent and that's just not that big. JUDGE MCCABE: And looking at these latest numbers, they actually said the range for all three turbines there was, on that net with duct burning column, that the total range was 0.1 percent. So seeing how close those numbers are between 945 and 944, that's obviously a lot less than 0.1 percent. Is that a significant difference that the agency should be concerned about? MR. BENDER: The limits we're talking about are the ones in the final
permit, which are gross. And they are --
JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Would you like to point us to a different table to look at?

MR. BENDER: Sure. I'll point you to the permit, which is Exhibit 1 to our petition, and the permit limits themselves. Because the permits measured, we commented that the region should be looking at net, among other things. And the region said no. It made that choice. It made this permit the way it did, and so we're addressing it the way it came out. What we and EPA and the state can enforce are the limits, and the limits are what drive what we can count on as enforceable emission reductions.

JUDGE MCCABE: Wait a minute. You wanted the limits to be based on net?

MR. BENDER: We commented that you should look at the net emission rates, and the region said, no, we're going to base this on gross.

JUDGE HILL: Okay.
But my
question is how do you respond to the argument the region made in its brief and that Mr . Tomasovic stated here, which is, okay, so the permits got gross and the difference in these gross numbers is 2.6 percent and that's in the noise?

MR. BENDER: It's not. And the reason why $I$ know that it's too big to be insignificant is that the region thought that margins, even around that for different pieces, because the margin is an aggregate, was significant enough to start bumping the limit up. And when they got to step five, they said that's a big enough difference between these turbines that we can't expect the one to meet the limit for another. So I know because it's significant enough in step five that it should be significant enough in step one to not count them all as, you know, the same.

JUDGE HILL: So your argument, so
if their error was at step one, then what you're really saying is that the GE turbine is a different technology than the Siemens turbines?

MR. BENDER: It is a different -let me put it this way. Control option in step one should be the same as control option in step five. As counsel for La Paloma put it, it's a sequence, right? It starts at one, it goes to five, and the definition of the control option stays the same. And if, and we're saying we'll grant the argument that they should be treated as one option in step one, well, if that's the case, they should be treated as the same option in step five and the limit based on what that option, as a whole, can achieve. But if you're going to start parsing them, the appropriate time to parse between turbines, or, in this case, turbine plus heat recovery generator combination --

JUDGE HILL: Understood.

MR. BENDER: -- is step one, so that we can look at their relative efficiencies, their relative costs, what they do emit at different levels at production. It's got to be one or the other. It makes hash out of the five-step process to look at one definition of control option in step one, right? And then look at a different definition of control option and start applying limits in step five. That's the argument. It has to be consistent all the way through.

I think we would get to the same option or the same result whether we looked at them in step one as separate or if we applied the maximum control efficiency for that class, as a whole, in step five. But you run into problems when you separate them, and that's what we've done here.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Mr. Bender, could we back up again to the question that was raised by your saying that you preferred
and said in your comments that you preferred limits based on gross capacity. I was trying to use the table on page 11 of the response to comments to try to understand exactly what you want. If they're picking the GE turbine, you said the limits, these are net limits and gross is a better measure. Have you found a place where I can look at gross limits?

MR. BENDER: For what gross emissions are relative to --

JUDGE MCCABE: Is there any place in the record that we can look to see how these net limits would be stated as numbers for these turbines if it were based on gross? Is that in the record any place?

MR. RICHIE: Your Honor, if I may, this is Travis Richie. Page 16 of the statement of basis, which was included, I believe, as Exhibit AA of La Paloma's response, I believe has that same table listed with pounds of $C O 2$ per megawatt hour on $a$ gross basis with duct firing.

JUDGE MCCABE: Thank you, Mr. Richie. So glad you stayed on the phone. I have this. Do the other judges have it? Okay. It's the same thing. Well, how are these different? They look like they're the same ones that we were looking at on page 11? What's the difference between the gross and the net rates?

MR. BENDER: That's what $I$ was suggesting earlier that I'm not sure that they're correct.

JUDGE MCCABE: You're not sure which is correct?

MR. BENDER: I don't know.

JUDGE MCCABE: You don't know?
MR. BENDER: But I don't think the net and the gross can be the same number, and that's what $I$ was maybe failing to highlight before.

JUDGE MCCABE: But whatever the gross is, you would prefer it? You just don't know what it is, or you're not sure which of
these numbers it is; is that what you're saying?

MR. BENDER: Your Honor, there has to be other details in the hypothetical to know the answer. It depends on if we're measuring. If we're measuring just what's coming out of the turbines or if we're measuring what's coming out of the stack because there's another pollution-causing device in the middle, and that's the duct burner. So if we're saying what's the net without duct burning and we're measuring it, but we're still allowing duct burning, it's a different question.

JUDGE MCCABE: Yes, I understand. This gets very complicated, which is why judges usually defer to the technical expertise of the EPA people that are charged with this. Now, in this case, let's try to bring it back to sort of principles that the Board can focus on more appropriately. I was hoping, through this argument, that people
would be able to give us the numbers that we should be looking at to consider this argument that I understand the region to be making that whatever the variation among these turbines is so close, the variation in the heat rates and, accordingly, the GHG limits is so close that it is something that is essentially equivalent, to use one phraseology, another negligible difference, marginal difference. Do you agree that these are so close that they are marginally different or essentially equivalent?

MR. BENDER: Two answers, your Honor. They are not. What the permit includes is the gross with duct burning, and that number, again, I would say those are different enough that the region thought necessary to differentiate between them. And if that's true, then it's not negligible and it's not inconsequential.

JUDGE HILL: So let me ask you a question. So if the region had said they're
close enough, so we're going to set the highest one, and if they happen to pick a turbine that we could limit more closely, we're comfortable with that.

In other words, based on that argument, okay, so if the region had instead concluded they are negligible, GE looked good enough, and so we're going to set the limits based on GE. And if they pick Siemens, they get a bennie out of it, would you have a basis for challenging?

MR. BENDER: Yes, for the same reason. Because the record says that 909.2 is achievable. And then we have --

JUDGE HILL: Well, but they would conclude that 909 is not achievable for GE. MR. BENDER: I think it depends on what the record is to support that conclusion. And that's not this case and it's not this record.

JUDGE HILL: So the region's mistake was setting three different limits?

MR. BENDER: The region's mistake was setting three different limits for what it says is the same control. If it had identified them as three different control options in step one, and you have a continuity through the rest of the steps and it set three different limits, it would be a different problem, which is BACT is all limit and you would rank them and set them based on the top rank control option in step five. But, again, it depends on what happened in the prior four steps to be able to say whether that would have been a mistake or not, and that's not this record and it's not the basis that we had to appeal.

JUDGE MCCABE: Coming back to the factual question of the variation in these emission limits that the region has permitted for the three turbines, Mr. Tomasovic described them, it may not be fair to call this a range, but he mentioned numbers that, to my mind, ranged from 0.1 percent up to 2.7
percent. Is a 0.1 percent difference significant enough that the agency should have to distinguish between them in setting and distinguish between these turbine models and force the company's choice? Point one. If we just had point one. I realize there's a range, but just look at point one for a moment. Is that significant?

MR. BENDER: I think it's contextual. And I would say, although you asked that as a factual question, I would point to the Prairie State decision, your Honor.

JUDGE MCCABE: The what? Prairie State?

MR. BENDER: Because it's cited by both respondents to say when there's a negligible difference you don't have to consider them as separate control options. And I think that Prairie State actually stands for the opposite. On page 37 in the footnote, I think it's footnote 36, it rejects that
argument that just equivalency alone is sufficient to ignore a difference between two different control options. There has to be a demonstrated equivalency or a negligible difference and especially if that difference is based on emission factors or something else that is inherently also, perhaps not specific. So if it's based on an emission factor that has a margin of error, that helps dictate what amount of difference between two emission rates may be negligible and, even if they are exactly the same, that's not enough to ignore them. You have to --

JUDGE MCCABE: If they're exactly the same?

MR. BENDER: To ignore one of the control options because of the requirement that you also look at what their collateral impacts are because two different controls options may have the same emission limit but they may have different collateral impacts -JUDGE MCCABE: That's absolutely
true of a control option, but we're talking about two different turbines here. If the turbines had the same limit, would we be here? If they had the same GHG limit.

MR. BENDER: If they had the same GHG limit and it was --

JUDGE MCCABE: Because that's just the way they, say that was the manufacturer's, the vendor's number, and EPA permitted it at that number and there was no comparable that showed a better performance, why on earth would we require them to distinguish between those? What practical difference would that make?

MR. BENDER: In this record and to my knowledge, there is no other distinction between them, other than emission rates. But if you're saying, hypothetically, the emission rates are all the same --

JUDGE MCCABE: No, I'm simply following up on what you thought Prairie State stood for, that even if things are the same
you can't ignore the difference. I just think we're doing apples and oranges here because, in Prairie State, if $I$ recall correctly, and maybe Judge Stein can help us out with this, I think they were comparing, you know, much larger differences.

Here, I'm concerned that we're getting down in the margins. We are getting dangerously close to micromanaging here on what this GHG emission limit should be. So is 0.1 percent micromanaging? Is that a difference that we don't need to worry about? Is 0.5 percent -- 2.7 percent obviously is too much for you. You think that's over the level of significance. We're wondering where is that level of significance in difference? And I'm not talking about the exact numbers. I'm talking conceptually here. That's why I used percentages to iron it out.

If the range of differences between these two turbines and their GHG emission rates ranges somehow, and depending
on how you calculate it, from 0.1 percent to 2.7 percent, why should we worry about this? Why should the region be required to distinguish?

MR. BENDER: Your Honor, the equivalency of emission rates is an issue or a concept that's tied together with the topdown BACT analysis process, and that was in Prairie state. That's the point of that footnote that I cited to. If you did this, again, this is not what was done, so, in the hypothetical, if they had ranked them as separate control options and they had assigned emission rates and there was somewhere between, I think it was 0.1 in your hypothetical difference and there was no other collateral impacts differences between them, would that be enough to say -- and it was not, and it was based on, you know, some emission calculations that, themselves, have some variable in them, $I$ think, in that hypothetical, this would not be the issue for
appeal. It wouldn't be because, you know, we're assuming, we're assuming away all of the problems with this particular decision, which is they're not treated as separate, they're not distinguished in the first few steps, we don't know if there's collateral impact differences, and there's no record made to support those findings at each of the rest of the steps.

JUDGE MCCABE: So is the critical piece of your argument that they didn't differentiate between the turbines at step one? Is that really what Sierra Club's concerned about?

MR. BENDER: If they're going to differentiate between them in step five, they need to differentiate between them in step, I guess it would be one through four because then we'd have an opportunity to look at whether or not there are differences in emissions at that point and under what scenario and everything else that goes into a
five-step BACT process. And that was just shunted all to the side, and we only looked at the difference between them when we got to step five after the opportunity to address all those other issues had passed.

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. Let's turn quickly, because I'm watching your flight time here, to solar. Is it your position that solar is feasible on this site? Supplemental solar, as you've described it. And if so, please explain how.

MR. BENDER: Your Honor, the comment was, step one, you need to cast as big a net as possible to identify potentially feasible, available and applicable, and we say, yes, it's available, it's applicable. Is it feasible? Well, we don't know the acreage. They say 20. We don't -- because we never got to this.

JUDGE MCCABE: There's a site plan in the record, isn't there?

MR. BENDER: There are some maps
in the record. We don't know --
JUDGE MCCABE: Have you looked at them?

MR. BENDER: I've looked at some of the maps in the record, yes.

JUDGE MCCABE: Have you looked at the site plan?

MR. BENDER: I'm not sure --
JUDGE MCCABE: The site plans shows where things are situated on the site, where the turbines will go and the other equipment, what the footprint of the site is, how much space is open or not.

MR. BENDER: I'm envisioning a color map with, I think, that information --

JUDGE MCCABE: Mine is not in color, but $I$ saw one like that. Have you looked at that and, considering that, is it feasible? And, Judge Stein, please add your question.

JUDGE STEIN: If these maps show or you can deduce from what's in the record
that what is at play here is approximately 20 acres, do you still contend that solar is feasible at this site?

MR. BENDER: I would say, to the extent it's scalable, it's feasible. Whether it's cost effective and whether it achieves emission reductions, I don't think, I don't know and I don't think any of us know, and that's the point. That's why you go through the five steps because you gather that information at the later steps. It was --

JUDGE STEIN: So -- I'm sorry. Finish. I didn't mean to interrupt.

MR. BENDER: It was excluded from step one as not, as redefining the source. And I think it would be inappropriate to assume fact findings from what we have, the limited amount of information we have in the record to say it would necessarily be rejected in the following steps, unlike in Palmdale where the issue of incremental increase was looked at and the record was clear that there
was zero space. And the difference between zero space for no addition and where to draw the line when there's some space but it may or may not be enough to make it feasible, cost effective, and everything else is something that needs to be done by a fact finder with the public input.

JUDGE STEIN: But how much effort and work must a permit applicant go through when they're primarily building a particular kind of plant and there's fairly limited space? I mean, do they need to go do a full scale investigation and develop models in space if what you're dealing with is a very small area? I mean, that's a question I'm struggling with because, you know, this is not Palmdale, and I don't buy the characterization of what Mr. Alonso said about what Palmdale stood for in terms of redefining the source. But I am troubled by what may be in the record, perhaps not as fulsome as someone would like, but there may be sufficient
information in the record to establish that there's only a very limited amount of space there. And if that's the case, are you still insisting that people do a full-scale analysis of solar under those circumstances?

MR. BENDER: I think that, when you get into the later steps, two, three, four, the scale of the analysis is probably relative to, you know, some reasonableness, right? But in step one, the whole point is you cast the net and then you start doing that analysis. And it would be inappropriate to start making assumptions because we don't agree with all the assumptions in La Paloma about hurricanes, about other things, and we'd like the ability to develop the record in response, depending on what is said about feasibility.

But feasibility wasn't discussed until the response to comments. And then it was discussed as not, not that it was not technically feasible but it was redefining the
source. And based on, in our mind, in one of the main reasons that we brought this appeal is based on a very problematic definition of redefining the source.

JUDGE HILL: Mr. Bender, the region argues that Sierra Club's comments on this didn't really raise this issue to any level of specificity that you're now raising it in your brief or here. How do you respond to that?

MR. BENDER: When they say that, they point to one of the multiple comments looking at solar hybrid. And they say it was mentioned as an alternative to duct burning, in addition to other things that could be looked at as alternative to duct burning. Earlier in the comments, is the Palmdale permit and the CO2 BACT emission limit saying it's conservatively lower, they get that, and they get a chunk of it from solar, you need to look at solar because it's available, it's applicable, it meets the step one criteria, let's look at it. And that's what was
rejected.
Elsewhere, we said, instead of duct burning, did you consider these other things? And, yes, they're talking about the same concept, but they're talking about two different areas. So it's inappropriate to look at only one comment and say, well, that one comment about solar didn't raise this other issue when the other comment did.

JUDGE MCCABE: Are you suggesting that permitting authorities, whenever they're faced with a PSD application by someone who wants to build a power plant, have to analyze solar in all cases if they're not proposing it to begin with?

MR. BENDER: Solar hybrid in a combined cycle plant, when it's raised by the public --

JUDGE MCCABE: Okay. And that --
MR. BENDER: Then the region has an obligation to look at it.

JUDGE MCCABE: Expand on that,
please. What do you mean by look at it?
MR. BENDER: Include it in step one or deem it redefining the source based on a correct interpretation of redefining the source. And here it was an incorrect interpretation of redefining the source. It should have made it into step one when raised by the public. And to go to your question, Judge Stein, how much detail they need to do to develop whether to reject it in later steps, I would agree there's some reasonableness to it. But I don't agree that, even assuming that 20 acres is all that there is, that we can say, based on this record, that it's reasonable that that's not enough to generate solar.

JUDGE STEIN: But if you have a circumstance where the BACT analysis has been done, the regions looked at it, there's been back and forth between the permit applicant and the permittee, I mean, and the region, they proposed the permit for comment, and a
comment comes in about solar, you're suggesting that they have to go redo the BACT analysis, or can't they simply respond to the comment by saying on this particular site, on these facts, we don't think solar is feasible for $\mathrm{X}, \mathrm{Y}$, and Z reason?

MR. BENDER: That's different than the answer here.

JUDGE STEIN: Why is it different than here? I mean, I understand what the region did in its analysis of redefining the source, you know, didn't do exactly what I'm describing here, but $I \prime m$ concerned about taking us to a place where, in responding to a public comment, where there may be an answer that you have to go back to square one on the BACT analysis because I don't think you do. I think you need to respond to the comment. I think you need to respond fairly to the comment. But we'd never, I mean, how in the world would we ever get a permit out if every time there's a public comment that relates to
the BACT analysis you've got to go back and redo the BACT analysis? Yes, there may be cases where you need to supplement it, but I don't think we go back to square one.

MR. BENDER: Well, two responses, your Honor. Here we had raising solar in the context of another facility, a similar facility, that has solar hybrid and has a permit with lower limits. That's the context. So to the extent we're talking about, you know, how much or how real does this have to be to generate a more substantive response, that's the context.

In Knauf Fiberglass, I believe, K-$\mathrm{N}-\mathrm{A}-\mathrm{U}-\mathrm{F}$, however that's pronounced -JUDGE MCCABE: Knauf.

MR. BENDER: Knauf Fiberglass. The first, the 1999 decision, a comment was raised another production process for fiberglass. The response was that's proprietary to a competitor. We don't have to look at it because we'll reject it later
anyways, so, you know, why look at it? And the Board reversed and said you can't prejudge. That's the point of the process. You can't pre-judge the process. Go back, look at it, and make a record so we know and the public knows that you really did look at it and you really did document your analysis and we know you did your procedural job.

That's what should be done here, and it follows that precedent. And I would suggest, if it's distinguishable, this is even a clearer case than Knauf because it's not proprietary that we know of. You can go out and buy it. So to the extent there's a line, this is even further on the petitioner's side of the line.

JUDGE MCCABE: Mr. Bender, I'm worried about your plane. If you would like to take a minute to just wrap up, please do. And then we will let you go on your way. It's getting late.

MR. BENDER: Sure. Thank you,
your Honors, and thank you for the opportunity to address these issues. From Sierra Club's perspective, this is an important permit to get right on these issues raised. And there are other issues that were commented on, potentially other issues that could have been raised. You know, $I$ don't want to suggest that Sierra Club loves this permit, even if it's corrected, but this issue of what you have to consider and how you consider efficiency and how you consider supplemental, in this case solar, that helps improve the efficiency of a plant is critically important, especially as we start into greenhouse gas PSD permits, and getting the definition of what is the control option we're looking at correct and making sure that that's consistent all the way through the process and that we're correctly addressing efficiency. It's going to be critical, especially until we develop an end of the pipe technology that facilities start installing. The other is this now perennial redefinition of the source issue. I understand the Board's prior precedents, and, in some cases, unfortunately, they're being applied incorrectly. And this is one of those cases. And when that happens, it's important to correct it, make it clear and give guidance to not only Region 6 but other permitting authorities what redefining the source means and what it doesn't mean. And here it doesn't mean that if a control option is not within the two-sentence description of the application of the project purpose that it can't be considered because that opens a door to all kinds of problems, not just greenhouse gasses but every -- I mean, and SCR also wasn't in that two-sentence description. Thank you, your Honor. JUDGE MCCABE: Thark you very much. Well, thank you all for your presentations and for your valiant efforts to answer our very often detailed questions.

I would make one observation that there's such factual confusion, at least in the argument around the issue of how do we compare apples to apples with the emission numbers that we really should be looking at for these turbines that there is a possibility, and I regret to say this because I know it's a PSD case and we are in a big hurry, but there's a possibility that we will ask you to do a supplemental briefing on that or ask you all perhaps to confer to get on one sheet, if it's possible, to give us some basis of comparison so that we have the facts straight in our opinion. It is a lot to ask of judges like us. We have some technical training, but we are not engineers, and it is really quite difficult for us to understand which numbers we should be comparing to which here.

We will, however, make a valiant effort to go back and to see if we can figure that out. And we'll only ask you to do a
supplemental briefing if we think it's very necessary. If we do do that, we will get to you quickly on that because we do intend to move quickly on making this decision. These are not easy issues. They are important issues, and we take your point, Mr. Bender, that, as we are entering the world of GHG BACT permitting, we do need to be careful about what precedent we're setting. But we also are very, very cognizant of the need for speed here because we don't want to hold up the building of something that should proceed unnecessarily.

So with that, we'll take this matter under submission with the caveat that you may get a request for a supplemental briefing. And we will wish you all safe travels home, those of you who are traveling far especially. And good luck catching that plane, Mr. Bender.
(Whereupon, the foregoing matter was concluded at 5:47 p.m.)
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Neal R. Gross and Co., Inc.

## C ERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the foregoing transcript

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Before: US EPA

Date: 02-12-14

Place: Washington, DC
was duly recorded and accurately transcribed under my direction; further, that said transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings.


NEAL R. GROSS

