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THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE
AND
TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
COLONIA RESIDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, July 18, 2006
El Paso Self-Help Center
15371 Kentwood
El Paso, Texas

Mr. H.S. Buddy Garcia
Deputy Secretary of State
P.O. Box 12697
Austin, Texas 78711-2697

Mr. Homero Cabello
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Reported By: Mayela Lopez, CSR, RPR

***Italicized Segments Translated From Spanish to English
by Maria Foraker, Interpreter, on 07/31/06 and 08/02/06 at
the offices of Brannon Rasberry & Associates*

COPY

1 MS. ARCINIAGA: Good morning everybody.

2 Welcome. Welcome to the Agua Dulce Center
3 in the County of El Paso. Thank you very much for being
4 here and we have (inaudible) here in El Paso.

5 Thank you very much for coming. We have our
6 C-RAC meeting first time here in El Paso. I'd like to
7 just briefly, before I turn the meeting over to our
8 special guests, briefly introduce our office. Rosemary
9 Neil, our director; Jack Alayan, division manager; our
10 construction specialist, very important, Tony Gonzalez;
11 and Lupe Ibarra, our housing coordinator, also very
12 important element and our right hand out here at this
13 office. And, of course, I'm Martha Arciniaga, the program
14 coordinator out here. So if I may please turn over the
15 meeting to Homero.

16 MR. CABELLO: We'll let Buddy speak.

17 MS. ARCINIAGA: Buddy, okay.

18 MR. GARCIA: A very good morning to you. I
19 am the Deputy Secretary of State.

20 Thank you for coming out today. My name is
21 Buddy Garcia, I'm the Deputy Secretary of State of Texas.
22 As a result of last session in the legislature, a bill was
23 passed that changed some language regarding the Colonia
24 Resident Advisory Committee as well as the Colonia
25 Initiatives Coordinator, which is the Secretary of State's

1 Office. So, as a result, we are meeting -- looking for
2 advice from the colonia residents trying to develop a
3 strategy to address the ongoing needs of colonia residents
4 of Texas and make -- we will make recommendations to the
5 legislature based on your comments as well as the advice
6 and consent of several other state agencies. So we are in
7 the process of tallying all of your comments, hopefully
8 recommendations that we can articulate to the legislature
9 and hopefully represent your thoughts adequately to the
10 legislature.

11 Homero Cabello, with the Department of
12 Housing Community Affairs, myself, with the Secretary of
13 State's Office, and a number of other agencies that have
14 border affairs divisions that -- we will come together and
15 try to encapsulize [sic] your thoughts and the needs --
16 the ongoing problems, obviously water -- waste water.
17 Homero and I drove around and he showed me a couple of
18 colonias in the area.

19 Just by way of background, I'm originally
20 from Brownsville, Texas. I've been working in state
21 government for the past 15 years. I was appointed to this
22 position a couple of years ago by Governor Perry and it is
23 my honor to be here and my privilege, but I'm here to hear
24 from you, the experts, the people who live in the colonias
25 about what we can do. And if I can answer any questions I

1 will, but mostly we are looking for ideas that you can
2 help for us to convey to the legislature and for action at
3 the state level.

4 Obviously, the issues of the county overlap
5 with the state or the federal government. We can take all
6 recommendations and try to make heads or tails of them,
7 but I appreciate your attendance here today. It is a very
8 important part of what we hope to create, which is a
9 better communications system and a better systematic way
10 of dealing with these issues that concern you all.

11 So with that, I thank you again for having
12 me here. I will ask Homero to make a few comments. I do
13 want to recognize a few dignitaries in the audience. I
14 know that we have the privilege to have the Mayor of
15 Socorro, Trini Lopez, here. Thank you, Mayor, for being
16 here.

17 MAYOR LOPEZ: Thank you.

18 MR. GARCIA: Congressman Reyes is
19 represented by Sal Payan. Thank you, Sal, for being here.
20 It's my understanding the County Judge -- Fort Hancock
21 County Judge Walker is going to be here. She's on her
22 way. As well as my thanks to the County of El Paso and
23 the Self-Help Center. To all of you who put this
24 together, thank you so much for accommodating us here.
25 Without you all we couldn't do this, so thank you again

1 very much.

2 But with that, I would like to introduce
3 Homero Cabello.

4 MR. CABELLO: I think I know the majority of
5 you guys. My name is Homero Cabello and we're assisting
6 the Secretary of State's Office with the implementation of
7 this bill. Buddy pretty much stated all the work that's
8 going to be undertaken in trying to come up with
9 recommendations on how to assist the colonias for the next
10 legislative session. I think the report is due at the end
11 of the year, December 1st -- December 31st. The time is
12 getting smaller and smaller. This is the last hearing
13 that we're having. We had one in far [phonetic] last
14 month from Del Rio down to Brownsville. We had about a
15 hundred people that spoke there or that were in the
16 audience. And we know that El Paso is always far away and
17 it's hard for you guys to get down here from time to time
18 so we decided to do one here in El Paso and invite
19 everybody over here.

20 Before we get started, I would like to go
21 around the table and see who's here and who is who. And
22 then I don't know if the Mayor or Mr. Payan want to say a
23 couple of words before we get started. So Rosemary?

24 MR. GARCIA: Please, everyone, just sign in
25 before you leave, that is very important for us.

1 (Introductions by everyone in attendance)

2 MR. CABELLO: *Okay. Well, thank you. Well,*
3 *we can make our comments in English or in Spanish, both*
4 *Buddy and I speak both languages. We are here with the*
5 *court reporter, and she will be doing it only in English,*
6 *but we have the cassette to listen to it to make it clear*
7 *on the report. So then we will begin.*

8 Sal, you want to make any comments?

9 MR. PAYAN: *Formal or just?*

10 MR. CABELLO: *Whatever you'd like.*

11 MR. PAYAN: *Really, I'm glad you guys are*
12 *here.*

13 *We want to thank you for being here and I*
14 *would like in this meeting and as always (inaudible). The*
15 *problems that you are having are problems that we hear*
16 *from Anthony, Texas all the way down to Fort Hancock.*
17 *Trash, problems that the colonias are always experiencing.*
18 *I hope that always with the comments that we get from the*
19 *residents of the colonias (inaudible). There is much*
20 *need. Water, the trash dumps, these are problems that*
21 *exist and we would like to hear the comments of the*
22 *residents and, again, would like to thank you for being*
23 *here.*

24 I think it's a great thing that you're
25 doing. I wish that we would had a little more opportunity

1 to hear from our neighbors up in the Upper Valley,
2 Anthony, Canutillo. Rosemary will tell you there's a lot
3 of need for water, waste water, trash collection issues,
4 but, thank you.

5 MR. GARCIA: Just so you'll know, this is an
6 on-going effort to communicate. So as you get our
7 information to whomever or we can obviously e-mail or
8 phone or fax or continue to take input. I think there is
9 a very realistic situation where poverty knows no
10 boundaries, not just the border, as well as some issues
11 that are going to fall into county jurisdiction or federal
12 jurisdiction or state. And we're not here to necessarily
13 critique any recommendation. I think we're here to
14 collect and then maybe we'll report back to the
15 legislature, illustrate the diversity of the issues.

16 One of the issues that you brought up
17 already, and has been brought up in the valley, the Rio
18 Grande Valley, was trash collection. That falls into the
19 county's jurisdiction. That's not a state or a federal
20 responsibility, but obviously, we're -- it's necessary.
21 There's a certain health component, right? And I think
22 the colonias, in particular, can benefit from recognizing
23 ways that we can lobby, if you will, more effectively,
24 whether it be the federal government or the state
25 government.

1 Initially, a lot of the colonia attention
2 came because of health concerns, tuberculosis, other
3 diseases that were going to creep into the United States.
4 And for that matter, a lot of these issues were considered
5 to be vital on the border. Now there's an effort around
6 the state for the colonias to spread it with the rest of
7 the state because there's poverty all over the state. And
8 these are issue that I think we need you to get refocused
9 on and try to figure out how can we best articulate the
10 concerns of the residents to the legislature to fund these
11 sources so that the money stays in the border and so that
12 the issues of health, whether it be due to water waste,
13 water disease, what have you, garbage, are addressed
14 adequately without watering it down at the expense of the
15 border. So that's kind of where I hope we can kind of
16 take some of the recommendations and turn them into
17 directly reporting back to the legislature.

18 MR. PAYAN: One of the things that -- if I
19 may be specific about one issue that I think would go a
20 long way to address a lot of these issues, as far as the
21 colonia development, which really boils down to the basic
22 problem in the colonia development is the ordinance
23 enforcement powers of the county. Because the county
24 doesn't have the enforcement authority to enforce zoning
25 and building and, you name it, all those issues that are

1 directly affecting the development of these colonias.
2 Things are going to continue the same way. The root
3 problem is that county or the local governments don't have
4 any enforcement power to really attack this problem at the
5 very base.

6 MR. GARCIA: But, actually, the laws will be
7 changed to give them more authority.

8 MR. PAYAN: But, you know, the answer we get
9 locally is that the county doesn't have the authority to
10 enforce the --

11 MR. GARCIA: They may not have the manpower
12 to do it, but they do have the authority. That's been the
13 change of the past 10 years. They gave counties more
14 ordinance authority along the border and the problem also
15 comes with higher standards. The -- the standards that
16 come with trying to enforce these new codes also come with
17 a cost. When you start to enforce these new codes because
18 it has -- you have to have a certain new standard attire.
19 But, yes, your points are all well taken. The counties
20 actually have a lot of enforcement authority, but often my
21 experience has been that the ability to enforce those laws
22 that are already on the books has not been followed with
23 it, or, for a variety of reasons, a lot of times counties
24 have not been able to enforce those codes. I don't know
25 if you have any --

1 MR. CABELLO: No, I think there's different
2 types -- I mean, there's a wide spectrum of colonia issues
3 and they might have enforcement powers on certain issues,
4 but maybe not on the building codes. And I don't think
5 the counties have enforcement powers on those, but they
6 have enforcement powers on other issues. So it just
7 depends on the issue that needs to be addressed, but I
8 think a lot of the -- I think Buddy hit it on the nail,
9 where like -- as the director of colonia issues for our
10 agency, during the legislative session, you hear other
11 representatives and other senators and you hear them say,
12 You know, we've got similar issues in our part of the
13 state.

14 So we need to articulate and state the
15 reasons why we need to continue funding these programs and
16 how funding these programs is going to benefit the rest of
17 the state. Because you're addressing the problems here.
18 People migrate north or east or west, well, not west --
19 east or -- so, I think that's part of the point.

20 And that's how the colonias were able to get
21 a lot of funding in the '90s, because they didn't want
22 these third-world condition diseases going up to the
23 panhandle. So those elected officials voted and said,
24 Let's provide the funding and let's address those issues
25 on the border before they get up to where we live.

1 And so the colonia -- the word colonia
2 doesn't carry as much as it used to and we need to refocus
3 and state the case as to why we need to continue funding
4 these programs.

5 MR. GARCIA: And you're right on the head,
6 though, but it's a two -- it's a double-edged sword. You
7 provide the county with more rules and more enforcement,
8 but the rules -- let's say model subdivision rules now
9 make it even more expensive to build homes. And along the
10 border, where you're going to be eligible for certain
11 colonia monies, you have to have these certain rules
12 enforced. A lot of times counties are not equipped to
13 enforce those rules. So there's an argument on both sides
14 whether or not it's worth their time and effort sometimes
15 to enter into these new realms of enforcement if they
16 themselves aren't going to have the funds to enforce those
17 rules once they are given the --

18 But those points are well taken. And at the
19 state level, I don't think that's been much the issue to
20 me as much as people around the state saying, Well, wait a
21 minute, we've got poor people in my part of the world,
22 too. Why don't we tap into those colonia funds?

23 And you sit there and tell them, Well,
24 because the needs are still very great on the border, more
25 so than the rest of the state. So it becomes a balancing

1 act.

2 So we need to return, I think, with
3 initiatives and recommendations that are going to help
4 reenforce exactly what you're saying. What needs to be --
5 what needs to be from the residents, from these various
6 agencies that deal with these issues. What is it you need
7 most. And then report to the legislature and say, This is
8 what you all need to focus on.

9 So, already, your points are well taken. I
10 just need to go over the reports and be something that we
11 take back to -- and don't overlook your state legislators
12 as well. They are in the business of making these laws
13 and so that's always a good place to go.

14 MR. PAYAN: I know that's one of the
15 problems the Congressman is constantly fighting at the
16 federal level because he says he has some of the -- he
17 wants to address the issues and focus the issues on the
18 border, yet some of these other northern boundary or
19 northern states say, Hey, I've got those problems, too.
20 So they figure out a way to tap into those federal funds
21 that are for the border.

22 MR. CABELLO: So, yeah, this is on a bigger
23 scale. Those northern states, and, you know.

24 MR. PAYAN: But, again, thank you very much.

25 MR. CABELLO: Thank you. Mayor?

1 MAYOR LOPEZ: To everybody, good morning to
2 everybody. Well, here we see our condition and here we
3 have a map of the region.

4 I have known Homero for about 15 years since
5 we first began with the problems that we have in this
6 region. And I have known maybe four secretaries of state
7 during this time. And I have always known that this
8 region has been considered as a colonia. And for this
9 reason funds have been allocated and have been approved to
10 help our colonias.

11 Socorro, which is where I live, and the city
12 which I presently represent, is in the same conditions as
13 a colonia. And, for me, that is something that causes me
14 indignation because the state has not given us the
15 sufficient funds for the services that this city requires.
16 San Elizario (inaudible).

17 How can it be possible that the city of
18 Socorro, being a city with a government and with laws to
19 be enforced, cannot impede the people -- the throwing of
20 trash. That we are receiving so little funds. I ask you
21 to please take this message to the Secretary of State.
22 And not because we have only a population between 10 and
23 50,000 people are we to be relegated to a second place.
24 These people also have the same needs and they are cutting
25 them from this region.

1 And like Homero said, just because we are at
2 the edge of Texas, it seems like less comes this way to
3 this region. Someone once said that they didn't know
4 whether we were from Texas, from Mexico, or from New
5 Mexico. And that's okay, let's say that we are from
6 Texas.

7 Homero, you know (inaudible) Daniel and
8 other people that have been dedicated to providing
9 services for this area. Help us. (Inaudible) has been
10 allocating a lot of money to El Paso, a very large city
11 with all of the organization in the world, with museums
12 with staffing of all sorts. And this is my message to
13 you. This is my request for you to take this message to
14 Austin.

15 I know that we have legislators in Austin
16 that are (inaudible), but we need for you who go directly
17 there to help us. In the name of all of these people, I
18 respectfully request -- I have been requesting an
19 interview with the governor and we have talked and they do
20 take my calls, but they tell me that I have to wait.
21 Maybe you, or through you, we can have this done. I want
22 to take a group of people from this area there, people who
23 have voted for the governor, and we would like those votes
24 to be translated into funds.

25 Thank you very much.

1 MR. CABELLO: Okay. County Judge Walker?
2 Hi, welcome. Do you want to make some comments?

3 JUDGE WALKER: Not right now.

4 MR. CABELLO: Not right now. Okay. Thank
5 you, Judge.

6 MR. GARCIA: Hey, Judge, just as a recap for
7 your -- the only thing we've covered so far is just a
8 brief introduction. I'm Buddy Garcia, I'm the Deputy
9 Secretary of State, and Homero Cabello. We came in from
10 Austin. Part of our mandate from legislature that passed
11 last session was to meet with citizens -- citizen
12 residents, advisory folks, among other agencies, to
13 develop their recommendations, you-all's recommendations
14 for the legislature. So we're making our way up and down
15 the border to do that. And so far what we're doing is
16 just taking input for colonia-related advice and/or
17 recommendations that we will take directly back to the
18 legislature for our report due in December. So that's why
19 we're here and thank you for being here.

20 JUDGE WALKER: Okay, thank you.

21 MR. GARCIA: *Who's next?*

22 MR. CABELLO: *Raul Sanchez, do you want to*
23 *speak?*

24 MR. SANCHEZ: *Now I can, huh? As I was*
25 *saying before --*

1 MR. CABELLO: *Could you please give your*
2 *name -- your name in English?*

3 MR. SANCHEZ: *My name is Raul Sanchez and*
4 *I'm here with Alianza supporting Mr. Ortiz (inaudible).*
5 *Also, I want to talk about the dump. We had already*
6 *talked about this and that had all been said. So I don't*
7 *know why now we insist on talking about all of this. It*
8 *is that the dump is very close to where we all live in the*
9 *colonias (inaudible). And when there are high winds there*
10 *is a stinking smell, possibly of dead dogs, and a lot of*
11 *garbage. And that's not right.*

12 MR. CABELLO: *Is this a dump that the state*
13 *has given a permit for or is this just any dump?*

14 MR. SANCHEZ: *Well, it's a dump that has*
15 *been out there for a long time.*

16 MR. CABELLO: *Well, tell me who manages the*
17 *dump?*

18 MR. SANCHEZ: *Well, it's just a dump.*

19 MR. CABELLO: *Is it a city dump?*

20 MR. SANCHEZ: *Yes. And there's a lot of*
21 *flying paper that is carried all the way over to the*
22 *colonias. And you will know that they throw anything they*
23 *please, oil, and such.*

24 *I have been here in the United States living*
25 *in San Antonio since 1936. And since then I have been*

1 living in a little house there. And what they do there
2 when somebody is going to build a house, right away they
3 pave the roads and they put in all of the services. Even
4 in the ranches there's water.

5 Here -- here -- I came from San Antonio in
6 the -- in '88 here to El Paso and then I started to build
7 my little house here in the colonias in 1993. In 1993
8 when I bought this land the owners promised me that in one
9 year they were going to put in the water. And then after
10 a year went by in 1994 we started with the meetings and we
11 have been getting together in meetings talking about the
12 water, and the water, and the water. And this is the
13 reason. And this is the first time that I say this here
14 in El Paso because -- this about the water in San Antonio.
15 I never had to talk about this battle with the water. San
16 Antonio has grown and it is because of the cooperation
17 among everybody because the people there also pay and it
18 is good for the town because it continues to grow.

19 MR. CABELLO: In which colonia do you live?

20 MR. SANCHEZ: I live in the Colonia De El
21 Paso. The one that's right here, right here, near here.
22 That's the name of the colonia, it's called Colonia De El
23 Paso and it is the one that is behind the landfill.

24 MR. CABELLO: Oh, okay. Okay.

25 MR. SANCHEZ: And that is why I say that I

1 don't know why this hasn't been able to get done. Over
2 there in San Antonio they have the dump way, way over
3 there. Way over there on the outskirts, out there in the
4 boonies. And that is why I say since I've lived here in
5 the United States this is the first time that I have had a
6 problem like this. I don't know, I don't know if it's
7 because we're Mexicans, or what.

8 MR. CABELLO: We have to investigate about
9 this colonia. I don't know about taking water, but that
10 is why I was asking you in which colonia you lived.

11 MR. SANCHEZ: This dump, no, we're going to
12 continue fighting because this dump, no. And we're going
13 to continue moving forward.

14 MR. CABELLO: Thank you.

15 MR. SANCHEZ: Thank you.

16 MR. CABELLO: Mr. Sanchez, do you want to
17 give another comment, or is that all?

18 MR. SANCHEZ: That is all.

19 MR. CABELLO: Benancio Banderas. Do you
20 have any comments?

21 MR. BANDERAS: Yes, good morning, and thank
22 you. Good morning, my name is Benancio Banderas and I am
23 from (inaudible) College Park. You probably don't even
24 know that that colonia exists, do you?

25 MR. CABELLO: Oh, yes. I have heard. They

1 have taken me there.

2 MR. BANDERAS: Well, I think that now we're
3 on the map because before we weren't even on the map.
4 Well, the problem that we have here in these colonias is
5 that, in the first place, a priority that we have is that
6 if you or -- you being a way of helping us to get a
7 clinic, a large clinic. Because the -- in the clinic that
8 we have here we get people from everywhere. They come
9 from Montana, they come from the colonias and we've even
10 gotten people from Socorro. And so the clinic is always
11 full. So then when we have a problem of somebody that
12 gets sick, we have to run all the way over to the
13 hospital, to Thomason Hospital. It's a very small clinic
14 so they can't take care of emergencies. It's only more
15 for family matters. And, so, I think it's a priority, for
16 you who can take this matter over to the governor, that we
17 could get something. Something where we can take the
18 children.

19 About two months ago one of my kids got
20 very, very sick. Seriously sick. And if it hadn't been
21 because I took her over to Thomason, my child would have
22 died. She had an emergency operation the next day.
23 (Inaudible) is 46 years old and is handicapped and is not
24 mentally capable. So, then, it is very, very, very, very
25 urgent that you please take this up to the governor to see

1 what we can do. And as the gentleman from Socorro said,
2 Socorro has been there for many years and it is in the
3 exact same condition.

4 And now it looks as if water is going to be
5 brought here to this colonia. Yes, we're going to have
6 water here in these colonias, but we don't know when yet.
7 And now they have been -- this is a project that they have
8 been talking to us about. And now we don't know if we're
9 going to have the water by 2008 or 2010.

10 I have lived here in College Park since
11 1990. And here we have been bringing water in little
12 carts and in any other -- and by any other means that we
13 have been able to bring water. And then now, thanks to a
14 committee that came from I don't know where, from far, far
15 away, they gave us water, and they also gave us the tubs
16 in which the water was kept for free. So at least now we
17 have water in our homes. It was a great struggle and it
18 is a struggle that we still have right now.

19 That's my first point. And my second point
20 is garbage. Very nearby, if you just turn the corner
21 right there, really, really close by, there is a dump. A
22 dump where people come and throw their garbage. And here,
23 right next door, we have the dairy. Less than a mile away
24 we have the dairy, but they have taken the cows away, but
25 we still have all the manure. And when it rains we have

1 all of this stinking smell.

2 So it is a problem that we have and you
3 could help us by making these people hurry up to pick up
4 all of that -- because it is a focal point for infections.
5 And this dump that we have next door is also a focal point
6 for infections.

7 Near here they're going to drill two wells,
8 according to this, for water. And that soil is going to
9 be contaminated for those wells that they're planning to
10 drill. So I'm requesting that -- for you to please help
11 us. You -- for you to please talk to your superiors.

12 Thank you very much for listening.

13 MR. CABELLO: Thank you.

14 MR. GARCIA: One comment I'd like to make
15 based on Mr. Banderas' comments in English for our court
16 reporter, in regard to hospitals or clinics, sometimes the
17 economy's -- the cost of trying to build something from
18 the ground up may not be as easy to do. But it raises a
19 very interesting point that maybe if there was
20 transportation provided or available, public
21 transportation sometimes for colonia residents to be able
22 to get to the services that the state is providing or
23 building on. I know that there's expansion and the need
24 to expand the medical school and services in El Paso, but
25 the idea of trying to bring a hospital, or build one from

1 the ground up in a world that requires profit to be
2 made -- to build hospitals, and insurance problems, what
3 have you, it may be something -- I'm just thinking out
4 loud here, maybe try to focus some recommendation on some
5 transportation to achieve that very need of health
6 services. I'm just thinking out loud here.

7 And then in regard to the dumps, for illegal
8 dumps, obviously that's a problem statewide. It's a land
9 owner issue. What do you do about cleaning them up? Work
10 with the county, of course, their jurisdiction in trying
11 to address some of these things.

12 But all your points are well taken and an
13 ongoing health concern. So, again, your recommendations
14 will go directly into our report, but if asked to
15 elaborate or expand, I'd be happy to explain to them
16 certain limitations and then maybe we can (inaudible)
17 involve some recommendations, like I mentioned
18 transportation, which appears to be sorely lacking.

19 Homero was kind enough this morning to drive
20 me around. We drove around the Sparks Colonia and the
21 dairy farm around here. So I'm aware, not only from my
22 own experience, that there are certain issues of distance
23 that, how do you get to these services that the state or
24 the federal government provide if we can't get there?

25 So your points are well taken. I appreciate

1 your comments, Mr. Banderas, and we'll work on that, but I
2 really could see a difficulty in building a hospital, for
3 example. I just don't see the cost that would go with it.
4 But it's obviously a point -- I mean, a problem when
5 you're dealing with all the way down to Fabens, that the
6 number of miles you're dealing with out here. So, thank
7 you again. I just wanted to add my two cents.

8 MR. CABELLO: No, I was just -- my thoughts
9 were I know we used to work with that clinic years ago
10 when we first started the Self-Help Center and I can't
11 recall what their funding sources are, but a thought would
12 be maybe to expand it a little bit more, make it a little
13 bigger to be able to cover some other activities. Maybe
14 expand it's services. I'm not sure where they get their
15 funding sources. I believe it's part of the government
16 funding and -- but it's a thought to maybe see what it
17 will cost to expand that clinic just down the road. Those
18 where thoughts that I had in the economical scale that
19 Buddy was talking about. Hospitals are most likely
20 privately owned and they're profit-driven, obviously, and
21 is it cost effective to do those types of things?

22 Jack, you want to make any comments?

23 MR. ALAYAN: Well, I'd like to say -- I'd
24 like to make a comment, absolutely.

25 MR. CABELLO: Okay.

1 MR. ALAYAN: Good morning. My name is Jack
2 Alayan, I'm the (inaudible) for the El Paso County.
3 First, I'd like to say thank you for coming for all of you
4 (inaudible) to understand or hear your concerns. Thank
5 you very much for coming, Deputy Secretary of State.

6 My comment would be this, is that in order
7 for anything to happen here in the county level, we have
8 to connect the dot between where the funds come from,
9 which is from the state, all the way to the El Paso
10 County. And in order for this to happen, the state needs
11 to understand what is the capacity that we can do here?
12 What can we do here? Do we have the resources to be able
13 to do these types of activities or to answer all the
14 questions?

15 I think the state definitely understands
16 what goes on here, or what's the issue. I mean, of
17 course, keep repeating it would be just so we can say as a
18 reminder, but I feel in order for anything to happen in
19 the future there's got to be some kind of a planning
20 process in order for this to take place. And the
21 frustration on our part, basically, is that, yes, we do
22 understand. We do hear it every day, what the people say
23 at the county level. But in order for us to move forward
24 we need to understand who do we contact. Who -- where are
25 the people in the state level that could help us, at least

1 to give a better answer to all these people here today.

2 MR. CABELLO: You're saying that for -- as a
3 county, what are your point of contacts? What are the
4 resources you all can apply?

5 MR. ALAYAN: Exactly. There are so many
6 websites. There are so many, how do you say, agencies,
7 but to find one -- basically, I could be planning for
8 something. I could be designing to go after certain
9 funds, yet there's another nonprofit or somebody like that
10 that is doing the same thing. That, to me, is a wasted
11 effort because we could, basically, all of us come
12 together and come up with a better application or proposal
13 to help the community here in El Paso.

14 MR. CABELLO: Instead of competing.

15 MR. ALAYAN: Absolutely. I think the state
16 could help us to resolving that. To me, that's exactly
17 one of the issues that I feel could always result in
18 frustration, because somebody else could be applying for
19 the same type of application or certain proposal when, in
20 fact, we could get together because we're sending the same
21 people.

22 MR. GARCIA: I appreciate that, and the only
23 comment I would make about that is there -- really, a lot
24 of the sources come from different -- not just the state,
25 not just the federal government, but also from the church

1 communities, the University at Texas A&M, and they are not
2 consolidated sources.

3 Oftentimes, what our state agencies do,
4 let's say the water development board, is try to look at
5 what NAVDA [phonetic] can offer. Maybe the water
6 development board can put the line in the ground, but
7 NAVDA can offer the money to connect the line to the home
8 and things that by law are required because -- or not
9 allowed to the state. So it's not all just the state.

10 Your point is well taken. It would be nice
11 if everyone was consolidated and we were all working in
12 one area, but I think as a result of a number of different
13 missions, churches might have their own mission,
14 humanitarian mission, the state and the federal government
15 may handle health issue aspects that they're trying to
16 knock out, but maybe not as much equality of life. The
17 county, very much so strapped for resources, may have
18 jurisdiction over a lot of these issues in a perfect
19 world, but given the lack of funding and even what does
20 exist, very limited funding. EDAP money is pretty much
21 all used up, whether or not the state is going to
22 re-authorize a statewide bond again, things of that
23 nature. These are things that are ongoing.

24 That's one thing I think I was going to
25 report directly in our report, which is that communication

1 needs to be a little more transparent between the variety
2 of interests. And something that we can work on. I'm not
3 sure you can make, by law, everyone work together or even
4 if the sources are outside of the state jurisdiction, but
5 you're definitely right that we need to figure out a
6 better system to make our time worthwhile and the money
7 well spent.

8 MR. ALAYAN: Because it does help us. For
9 example, I do get calls where people ask me, Where do I
10 get this? In fact, I got a call about who basically right
11 now is handling the CPLP. If there's anybody in C-RAC
12 still have that funding. Then we have so many chance to
13 find out if anybody actually is. And then, if -- can we
14 apply, you know, under this nonprofit organization or do
15 we need to -- these are the things that it takes a lot of
16 effort just to find out a simple answer. And that's what
17 I feel that is there some kind of a -- either give us a
18 list if you are looking for this or tie the knots. Maybe
19 they can apply for a certain part of the grant and then we
20 can come in to do another piece, complete the whole
21 project.

22 And that's basically -- anything that we
23 could, you know, by you finding information from us and we
24 getting information to you and at the end come up with
25 something to help us, either a flowchart or something.

1 MR. GARCIA: The Secretary of State's Office
2 has an ombudsman division which can help directly with any
3 question. We may not have the -- be the agency that
4 solves it, but we're supposed to, through our ombudsman.
5 And we have one in El Paso that's supposed to help you
6 find those answers.

7 Another source, I would say a very easy call
8 to the Attorney General's Office when it's regarding
9 enforcement, but if I can be of any service, you have my
10 card here as well to connect you with our ombudsman
11 locally here, if you are not already. I would love to
12 make that available to you as a source for any of those
13 questions. If they're not doing that, they should be.

14 MR. ALAYAN: Thank you very much.

15 MR. GARCIA: But I will make sure that
16 they're available to you.

17 MR. CABELLO: It's -- the El Paso ombudsman,
18 does the VOP [phonetic] meet with them and try to
19 coordinate these services?

20 MR. GARCIA: Have you ever met him?

21 MR. ALAYAN: No.

22 MR. GARCIA: Rick Chew [phonetic]. But you
23 have my information. I'll be happy to make that happen
24 and make sure if they're not, that that's what they do and
25 he'll be available to you.

1 MR. ALAYAN: Thank you very much.

2 MR. CABELLO: Thank you, Jack.

3 Anibal?

4 MR. OLAGUE: Mr. Garcia, welcome to El Paso
5 again. I'm glad to see that you're taking the time to be
6 here.

7 First of all, my name's Anibal Olague and
8 I'm with the Border Fair Housing and Economic Justice
9 Center. We're a civil rights agency that's funded by HUD
10 to investigate housing discrimination. We're a nonprofit
11 that does private enforcement on federal and state laws
12 pertaining to fair housing and fair treatment. Our
13 service area covers the four border states of California,
14 Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. We have an office in El
15 Paso and we have an office in Las Cruces, New Mexico. We
16 are soon moving to McAllen, Texas as well to cover those
17 areas of the border. As I mentioned, our main issue is to
18 really focus on fair housing and we have a fair housing
19 problem, the predatory lending in the colonias. We
20 consider that to be one of the base problems in allowing
21 our families to grow or to progress.

22 A contract for deed problem is an issue
23 that's affecting mostly protected families in the Fair
24 Housing Act which are different nationalities, national
25 origins. Land developers have been taking advantage of

1 our community for many years. Taking advantage of the
2 limited English proficiency by -- how the way they're
3 doing their contracts. And I'm talking to land
4 developers, real estate agents, anybody who is involved in
5 the real estate industry. Unfortunately, this problem is
6 expanding to other areas of the border, not only in El
7 Paso. We're now starting to see that contract for deed
8 problem in areas like Houston. Enforcement of -- as Mr.
9 Payan mentioned, the enforcement responsibility is one of
10 the biggest problems that we have. Counties and state
11 agencies have a limited capacity or enforcement authority,
12 but I think that's where we need to take advantage of
13 private enforcement agencies such as Border Fair Housing
14 Center, to be able to partner and enforce those laws. The
15 problem is the resources. That will be my next point.

16 Personal resources -- anybody who receives
17 CDBG funds is required to (inaudible). How do you do
18 that? In order to comply you can enter a poster contest
19 or you can enforce -- I mean, or you can provide funding
20 to really enforce the Fair Housing Act. Unfortunately,
21 many entities, including the State of Texas, has
22 allocated -- I mean, has complied with this requirement by
23 doing pretty much the poster contest. In recent years we
24 have seen a small change, and I think -- I mean, I know
25 that TDHCA has taken a step forward and starting to look

1 to see how to (inaudible) the fair housing. It's nice to
2 see the County of El Paso has also looked into ways on how
3 they can fund or look for ways to educate the community on
4 the Fair Housing Act.

5 We need to take it a step further. Agencies
6 like ORCA, who receives a one percent technical assistance
7 fund. Who do we use to do the enforcement?

8 Enforcement is one area and education and
9 outreach is another. When we're talking about education
10 and outreach we need to voice to the communities and
11 educate the public with their rights and also look for
12 solutions on how they can prevent being a victim of
13 predatory lending or housing discrimination.

14 Capacity building is a big issue that the
15 communities are facing in communication. When I'm talking
16 about capacity building, I mentioned that we have counties
17 and entities that have limited capacity to provide these
18 programs or enforcement. But as nonprofits we have taken
19 the responsibility to do the work for our communities, to
20 empower communities, to bring that -- those resources, but
21 we're still very limited in capacity. We have agencies
22 like Alianza, for example, that's working throughout the
23 El Paso colonias for many years and has limited staff and
24 has limited allocations because the money that comes in
25 from the State of Texas, a big percent of the

1 administrative funds are kept at the state. And one
2 example is the HOME program and many of these other new
3 construction or redev- -- (inaudible) programs where the
4 state gives up mostly -- and a very small percentage, four
5 percent, goes to the agency to implement the full program.
6 That puts a barrier into our agencies in order to provide
7 or meet the demand of affordable housing. So we need to
8 look into alternatives to be able to provide that. When
9 I'm talking about capacity building, we need to have our
10 nonprofits have a support to be able to apply for funding,
11 to communicate, to be able to apply for grants. We had
12 mentioned -- besides the State of Texas, there's other
13 agencies or other private entities that have funding, but
14 we do need that communication.

15 I really agree with Jack that we need to
16 have better communication between agencies. And I'd like
17 to thank your offer of your colonia ombudsman because I
18 think that we should be using that office to really
19 communicate. And although he doesn't have the
20 responsibility over private entities or other federal
21 agencies, but communication is a -- I think, it's a key.
22 And we need to start with a dialogue and be able to work
23 with your office in providing these types of solutions.
24 And also make ourselves accountable once we make those
25 solutions, and also be able to evaluate and see what

1 really -- put in what's in our agencies or our individual
2 support to make this a solution.

3 So I want to let you know that we're a
4 resource to you. We'd like to begin, or continue with
5 that dialogue and be able to implement many of these
6 solutions that -- and hopefully we can continue to have
7 this dialogue instead of just have a public hearing, but
8 also have some type of a sessionary [sic] board or, I
9 mean, evaluate or --

10 MR. CABELLO: I agree.

11 MR. OLAGUE: Thank you again. I want to
12 thank you for your time.

13 MR. GARCIA: Let me ask you something. You
14 mentioned private enforcement of the law. How would we go
15 about, other than the Attorney General's Office or
16 someone, I don't know how you would deputize a private
17 entity to enforce the law. Let's say that I'm a predatory
18 lender or I'm engaging in some kind of discrimination.
19 Why would I listen to some private individual saying
20 I'm -- you're breaking the law. I'd say, Hey, you're not
21 the Attorney General, you're not the police, why should I
22 listen?

23 Would it require -- and I'm just thinking
24 out loud, some type of change in the law to make that
25 happen or what are you thinking there? Having legislation

1 there or something?

2 MR. OLAGUE: The federal government has
3 taken the concept -- our agency is a FHIP, Fair Housing
4 Initiative Program, was replaced by HUD, funded by HUD to
5 conduct this enforcement. The way we do, we get our
6 capacity building to the federal government on federal and
7 state levels. We're praying on a process on investigating
8 a fair housing complaint. Using a fair housing scenario,
9 somebody feels they're being discriminated or abused by a
10 land developer. They go to the fair housing agency. The
11 fair housing agency will educate them on their rights.
12 After they do that, they will conduct testing. For
13 example, we have community leaders that we train as
14 testers, mystery shoppers. We send them out. We do the
15 research necessary. We do everything that the counties or
16 the state government does not have maybe the time or
17 capacity to do. Once we put a complaint together and we
18 feel the we have the necessary evidence for prosecution or
19 enforcement, we will refer this complaint to the
20 appropriate agency. In this case, could be the Attorney
21 General. By the time they get a file, the file's already
22 investigated, it's researched and everything else, but it
23 will be easier for them to make a determination or an
24 enforcement option, but that requires support.

25 MR. CABELLO: Funding is an issue. I heard

1 you bring up the one percent DA?

2 MR. OLAGUE: That would be one option, and
3 that's one of the solutions we're offering through ORCA.
4 I approached ORCA. I met with the executive director of
5 ORCA two years ago. In another two years I am going to
6 Austin --

7 MR. CABELLO: And then the other -- the
8 other enforcement you have is filing lawsuits against
9 these land developers or apartment owners. How could they
10 enforce some of those?

11 MR. OLAGUE: We have two options when we
12 find a case. We either refer it or seek private
13 enforcement -- I mean, public enforcement, or we take this
14 case to court. And that's been very successful throughout
15 the nation. We're the only FHIP that works along the
16 U.S./Mexico border, but there's several hundred FHIPs
17 throughout the nation. So we would like to begin a
18 dialogue. We have more information that we can provide to
19 you in case you would like to follow up with that request.

20 MR. GARCIA: Very.

21 COMMISSIONER TERAN: good, thank you.
22 Commissioner, good to see you. Thank you for being here.

23 MR. CABELLO: Commissioner Teran, you want
24 to make some comments? Do you want to listen to other
25 presenters before you make your comments?

1 COMMISSIONER TERAN: Yes, I would much
2 rather do that.

3 MR. CABELLO: Sergio Vasquez? You're fine.
4 Teresa Caballero?

5 MS. CABALLERO: *Good morning. My name is*
6 *Teresa Caballero, I'm a survivor of domestic violence.*
7 *Approximately three months ago I had a very big problem*
8 *with my husband. He abandoned me in the desert and he*
9 *took my two children with him. And he was very drunk.*
10 *The sheriff is the one who finds me thanks to a phone call*
11 *that was made to 911. That call was the one that saved me*
12 *from that violence because not any neighbor, nor relative,*
13 *or not even myself had the nerve to call 911. Knowing the*
14 *aggressor, I knew it had to be someone who wasn't close to*
15 *me, someone who wasn't a relative, somebody who wasn't a*
16 *neighbor, so as not to get them in trouble because of --*
17 *the information that I was given about domestic violence*
18 *was that the aggressor had the right to have in front of*
19 *him whomever dialed 911.*

20 *For that reason it was -- I was quiet for*
21 *nine years waiting for an opportunity to protect my life.*
22 *I do not know who the person that dialed 911 was. I am*
23 *very grateful to that person because when I was in the*
24 *desert I didn't know that the sheriffs were going for me.*

25 *Thank God there was a sheriff, but he never*

1 saw me because it was 10:30 at night and I was coming on
2 the side where my husband had left me. So they were going
3 upwards on Harrington. It's totally desert. There's no
4 light, there's no homes. When I came across those four
5 patrol cars I said, Thank God. They are here to pick me
6 up. But when I saw that they just moved forward, They
7 must be going to some emergency, they're not coming for
8 me.

9 The fifth patrol unit that went up, went up
10 very slowly but found me. And that is when the person
11 comes back to ask me some questions. Asked me my name. I
12 said, Teresa Caballero. And that's when he says, Why are
13 you coming down running the hill at this time of the
14 night? Because this is where my husband left me in an
15 area above. And then he said, Were you one of the persons
16 that was struggling in a truck up there? And I said, Yes,
17 sir. He said, Okay.

18 And that is when he called the rest and they
19 called and said that they had found the victim. And I
20 said, Thank God. And from here I will never go back, I
21 will never go back to the aggressor.

22 The next day that aggressor comes to my
23 house where the sheriff left me and it's in my daughter's
24 house. And at 7:00 a.m. he's asking me to come back. I
25 told him, I'm going to return because I still have to come

1 back with you. I have to get my documents and clothes
2 ready to get out of the house. And he said, Yes, Mija,
3 whatever you want.

4 And what happens immediately after as a
5 victim as I am they don't give us the necessary
6 information in order to be protected. We're mothers and
7 we think about our children. Where are we going to take
8 them? Where am I going to survive? If during nine years
9 that I have been wanting to escape from this violence he
10 gets me out from wherever I go and I can't get him away
11 from him.

12 The aggression is worse when one comes back.
13 They know how to manipulate the family very well. I was
14 quiet for two years because my parents are older people.
15 However, on the 4th of May I get some correspondence from
16 an attorney that puts my life in danger. I had already
17 been receiving help from civil protection of how to have a
18 strategy to be able to get out of my house in case of an
19 emergency because my doctor sent a social worker and that
20 social worker only told me, Keep handling the situation if
21 you think you can keep handling the aggressor.

22 And I was thinking about my documents, about
23 the doctors, about my children, protection for my children
24 while I got out of that house, which is where the
25 aggressor was. That social worker only told me, If you

1 can continue managing the situation, continue doing so.

2 And then on the 4th of May-- I mean, the 3rd
3 of May, I get that correspondence from a defense attorney
4 and tells my husband that he has a warrant for his arrest.
5 I didn't know anything about that. I thought, No
6 correspondence has arrived, nobody has given me a call.
7 So I thought the sheriff had protected me and had left me
8 in a safe place. That attorney tells my husband to take
9 me to sign a document. So I call Patricia Vikiki,
10 [phonetic] who is a detective, asking for help, asking her
11 what I should do. Thinking of my daughters who are
12 little, and a son who is 18 years old, who just turned 18.

13 And that's when I told myself, What is going
14 on here? Why are you taking me with that attorney to sign
15 documents if I don't know what charges you have?

16 I don't know, he just asked me to take you
17 to sign those papers because I have a warrant for my
18 arrest.

19 When I went to see the attorney I was
20 curious to say, Well, I also want to know what is going
21 on. And Lorena, the social worker, simply tells me, Go
22 there and if they make you sign any papers say that you
23 are signing under threat. Okay?

24 So that day we went and Mr. Israel Parra
25 asks my husband, Have you talked to her so she will sign?

1 And he said, No.

2 Then he asked me, Are you going to sign?
3 And I said, No, sir, I am not going to sign that document.
4 Because that document had writing on top, blank in the
5 middle, and I was going to sign on the bottom.

6 When Alianza started to visit the colonias
7 for the meetings relating to the water I would see a woman
8 that was a very hard worker and I told myself, I have to
9 have the courage to get out of here because that woman
10 seemed to be telling me, You are going to grow wings to
11 get out of here.

12 My voice is my need and it is the need of
13 all of the women, and maybe men, also, have domestic
14 violence. But if we say we are going to cut the circle of
15 violence, unfortunately, we are not prepared to do so
16 because we still have threats, aggressions. We still have
17 insecurity among us women thinking, Where will our
18 children be while I am able to get out of this domestic
19 violence? That attorney made me leave my house because my
20 husband says -- when he sees that I am not going to sign
21 he says, So then you are not going to sign? No, sir, I am
22 not going to sign.

23 So would you please leave this office
24 because I need to talk to your husband. So then my
25 husband asks me, So why aren't you going to sign? And I

1 told him, Because I don't know what your charges are, they
2 are totally unknown to me.

3 Then he said, Why are you here? And I said,
4 You never asked me if I wanted to sign. I want to know
5 what is happening, what is going on, because I am
6 involved.

7 And we as mothers owe ourselves to our
8 children because those chicks seek the protection of their
9 mother. I was sure that that man, the father of my little
10 girls, protected them one hundred percent. And I was
11 willing -- listen to me well -- in order to get away from
12 that aggression, to leave my two minors there in that
13 house because I would tell myself, They have a safe home.
14 They have a father that takes care of them and protects
15 them. Because the aggression was against me and my oldest
16 son, and it was his stepson, so he would always protect
17 the girls.

18 That day he tells me when he goes to see the
19 attorney, You better not do anything against me -- and
20 even then the aggression continued -- because you don't
21 have any signs, marks of all of the harm I have done to
22 you during these nine years that we have been together,
23 okay?

24 And that was when I thought I had lost the
25 blood in my body and that is when I made the decision.

1 From this moment on, Alfonso, I want a divorce but you
2 have no right to touch me. The threat continued and he
3 would tell me that when nighttime came, he would be able
4 to convince me that you should sign that paper.

5 That night I couldn't spend at home. At
6 that moment was when I dialed 911 personally. The sheriff
7 arrived. My oldest son, who by then feels threatened,
8 doesn't move away from me when I walk out to meet the
9 sheriff. My husband, while I was talking to the sheriff
10 and telling him of what was happening, I hear my two girls
11 crying and I start looking for them and I find them in the
12 back of my house hugging each other and crying. And I ask
13 them, What are you doing out here if you were inside the
14 house with your father? And they said, My dad brought us
15 by the hand out here and he ran and he said he would come
16 back and pick us up. Please don't take us there, take us
17 to where the sheriff is.

18 If I was one hundred percent sure that that
19 man was going to take care of my girls, now I am only ten
20 percent sure. Why did he use the girls to get out of the
21 house? Why, if the sheriff, if my back is to the house,
22 saw that that man went out of the house with my two
23 minors, and they didn't do anything?

24 I went into the refuge area. There is a lot
25 of security there. And thank you for that protection that

1 you give us, but the rest of the population follows all of
2 the new homes that are being built.

3 How many women have domestic violence? Of
4 one hundred percent, let's say 65 percent. Where do we go
5 with those two, three, or four children without any
6 clothes? We have nothing with us except documents because
7 not even the teddy bear, nor the nicest memento of the
8 children can be taken with us. We arrive with nothing to
9 these refuge areas to a small room where only two bunk
10 beds fit, and a nightstand. The children get sick of
11 diarrhea, they vomit. There are no clothes to change them
12 in to, and thank God there are washing machines and
13 dryers.

14 And to the aggressor -- because at that
15 moment that blessed attorney took \$400-plus dollars from
16 him, the defense attorney of my husband. And I would
17 think, If I couldn't even get him to give me money for a
18 pair of shoes, how come he can spend that amount of money
19 to defend himself? And why my children -- and I'm
20 speaking not only about my own, but on behalf of all of
21 those children of mothers who happen to come to these
22 areas where you have to protect your children from
23 aggressors because they are children. Aggressors learn to
24 be aggressors. They are children that become rapists
25 because they see how the father raped the mother.

1 We don't sleep, sir, in order to be watching
2 the children 24 hours because you have to share the room.
3 Who is that person with which you are sharing? Is it fair
4 to have to come to a refuge area as a victim? I don't
5 think so. Those children that we try to save from
6 domestic violence deserve something better. Maybe the
7 furniture. At this moment I am in a small apartment with
8 a refrigerator that doesn't work, with a small stove. I
9 don't care because I know I am not under the aggression.
10 Myself, and those two little girls. What fault have they?
11 And in that area of refuge there are mothers that take six
12 and seven children. I thank God I only went with two,
13 because my 17-year-old just took me there and said,
14 Mother, I have to get out of here. I can't stay here. I
15 can't quit school because I will soon graduate. So how do
16 you think I was, knowing that the aggressor was close to
17 my son? Then it is a total change, thank God.

18 But if there are funds I request, on behalf
19 of all of these mothers, that an area be built. Even if
20 it is only a loan, but it is just in the meantime while we
21 can make a decision. We are willing to work to escape
22 from the aggressor. We're working mothers, but I do ask
23 on behalf of all of those mothers of domestic violence.
24 Our children deserve something better, because if we are
25 confused, those children deserve something better.

1 Because, Mother, why are we in this bed? Why don't we
2 have cold milk? Mother, I need water. Later son, later.
3 And when will that later come? And I repeat, Where is the
4 area of the defender? Where is the money of that
5 defender? Where?

6 I repeat, the population is intense. There
7 is a lot of housing, but I say that if we have an area as
8 women where we can go when we don't want to stay or if
9 there is an opportunity like mine to be able to get out of
10 that domestic violence, be able to say, Okay, I have a
11 place to be able to take my children. And, now, I will
12 fill myself with courage and get out of this circle so
13 that my children will not continue in this domestic
14 violence and pass it on to my grandchildren.

15 That, unfortunately, is what happens. We
16 make the decision to get out of that aggressive area, away
17 from the domestic violence. And what happens to the
18 children? They start with drugs, they are lonely,
19 abandonment. Because now we're going to do the job of two
20 people. No. And that is where the cholismo begins.
21 Where the gangs begin. Because, I want that, not what
22 schools give me. The school takes 70 percent and we are
23 left with the other 30 percent which are three or four
24 hours and eight hours of sleeping time at night. And the
25 next day when they go on vacation, where are our children?

1 Where do we take them for entertainment? Where do they
2 grow up? What support do they have? Psychological help,
3 moral support?

4 So I ask for your help. Those youngsters
5 are disoriented and we as mothers ignore where violence
6 begins and where it should end. How is Mother going to
7 get us out of all of this? To what secure area is she
8 going to take us?

9 My youngest daughter the other day turned
10 around and asked me, Mom, it is the moment that you should
11 go and see my dad to see if we can get close to him. The
12 person who just went for me, I was surprised and she said,
13 I was surprised, that is what we told you when we came
14 into the refuge area.

15 And my little girl is still waiting for that
16 moment because she simply says, Mother, where are my
17 things? Where is my room? Mom, why do you have to go to
18 work? Mom, why does somebody else have to take care of
19 me?

20 I ask for help. The older they are, more
21 psychological help they need and more moral support.
22 Sometimes they see that we are strong because we learn
23 since we are young to pardon the aggressor. To be quiet,
24 to obey, but we hardly learn how to survive. Our parents
25 don't prepare us for that. And that's not what I want for

1 my girls. I said, My girls are going to be professionals.
2 My children aren't going to go into a relationship where
3 they will be raped and abused.

4 We are in the refuge which is full of
5 people, and we get out of there for necessity. We go in
6 there for necessity to be protected and you leave for
7 necessity to protect your children so that they won't get
8 sick. So that they won't get diarrhea. So that they
9 won't vomit. So that they won't have contact with other
10 people. How is it possible, when we see that the
11 population is growing, that the help area is nowhere to be
12 found? There is the population. And as the gentleman was
13 saying, we have many needs and are blocked from the rest
14 of the city. But we are also in a country that knows how
15 to handle aid very well and can distribute the money.
16 They do not ignore us.

17 But I would like that on that red paper
18 domestic violence would be written, because we have this
19 with us from a very young age. But they don't show us how
20 to end it. We come to classes, and do you know what they
21 tell us? Can you handle the situation? And when I was
22 ready to get out of domestic violence you say, Be careful
23 because that aggressor has the right to have the person
24 who called 911 in front of him who dialed that number. So
25 then I can't get out of there yet because that person is

1 going to assault that person who helped me.

2 So then where is the orientation? Where is
3 the help? How am I going to tell a person -- it could be
4 a male, who is suffering that violence? If I could tell
5 him, Here, hold my hand, I am going to take you to a
6 secure area. Look, here you have a little household, but
7 you're going to have security. And he will prefer to be
8 in that small space but with security, with my children.

9 And here we need a lot of help, preparation
10 for the social workers. And be very careful with the
11 words we use to help. Now when I think about it I
12 remember every word, every letter, every expression that I
13 use when speaking to another person. And I simply tell
14 them, We are only victims, survivors of domestic violence,
15 but our children won't be. Our males will know how to
16 respect our females and we don't show them.

17 That is my request. Thank you for the
18 opportunity of expressing this need of millions of
19 mothers.

20 MR. CABELLO: Thank you.

21 MS. CHAVEZ: Good morning and welcome to El
22 Paso. My name is Delia Chavez, I'm the Executive Director
23 for the El Paso Collaborative for community and colonia
24 development. And I have a few comments that I needed to
25 make, but I wanted to ask you Mr. Garcia, you mentioned a

1 local ombudsman. Is he here present today?

2 MR. GARCIA: No, I do not see Richy here
3 today, but I will be more than happy to make sure that we
4 connect after this weekend visit. And through my e-mail
5 address or my contacts, I'll be sure that he gets in
6 contact.

7 MS. CHAVEZ: Okay. Thank you.

8 MR. GARCIA: We have an ombudsman, just for
9 the record, the legislature created this program ombudsman
10 and placed him in the Secretary of State's Office based on
11 population, the colonias, the counties with the highest
12 colonia population, Hidalgo, Cameron, El Paso, and Webb
13 County, I believe are the five -- and Maverick County. In
14 fact, they cover the entire border area, but there's two
15 people assigned to Hidalgo, and two people assigned to
16 Cameron, and one here in the El Paso. And the idea has
17 been to collaborate, as we're trying to do today. The
18 legislature expanded on the last session, and to be able
19 available for any number of things where we can connect,
20 whether it be the Attorney General's Office, the water
21 development board, yourselves, and the colonias program.
22 And we're here trying to figure out ways to make it,
23 obviously, better. So we can discuss that. I may have
24 given you my card, but we can discuss this afterwards.

25 MS. CHAVEZ: That would be good. That

1 office would be a very good resource.

2 And, very briefly, the El Paso Collaborative
3 is a nonprofit organization. We are celebrating our
4 tenth-year anniversary this year.

5 MR. GARCIA: Congratulations.

6 MS. CHAVEZ: Thank you. And we facilitate
7 affordable housing throughout El Paso.

8 We -- I want to reiterate one of the things
9 that Anibal Olague mentioned in terms of funding that we
10 get from TDHCA. The four percent that is allocated for
11 administration is just not sufficient. And I'm sure that
12 you've heard this time and again, as nonprofit
13 organizations we are always having to raise additional
14 funds in order for us to be able to implement the programs
15 that we -- that we get from the state. I don't know if
16 there's any possibility of perhaps addressing this to our
17 next legislative session. If there is some kind of a
18 formula that needs to take place to see if there could be
19 more allocation for administrative fees. That's one of
20 the points that I wanted to make.

21 The other point that I wanted to make is
22 that the Collaborative is a recipient of a deconversion
23 grant. We were awarded 500,000 last year, and this is to
24 assist ten families in the colonias. And we were very
25 pleased because we thought that we are going to be very

1 much on target and on time in completing this grant. Not
2 that we're not going to, but we had identified our
3 applicants. And as we interviewed our applicants, we
4 found out that the applicants did not have running water
5 or sewer systems. They have above-the-ground water tanks
6 and then they have septic systems. And when I
7 communicated this to the department, I was advised that
8 they were not going to be able to qualify by virtue of the
9 fact that they had above-the-ground water tanks. Well,
10 ironically, these individuals were former clients of the
11 Collaborative in terms of a grant that we received
12 directly from HUD. And this was to provide them with
13 water tanks. So it's just inconceivable for me to
14 comprehend how federal funds can be used for -- or to
15 obtain water tanks and yet TDHCA funds are not allowed to
16 use -- to help these individuals for deconversion and
17 rehab.

18 So I think that there is a -- something that
19 needs to change there so that TDHCA funds will be allowed
20 to use on families that have the water tanks. I have an
21 evaluation form that was given to me -- or to the
22 Collaborative on the last HUD grant. We were commended on
23 the success of our program. And I wanted to give you a
24 copy of it so that you can see where the HUD funds allowed
25 us to use the water tanks as part of our activities.

1 The other point that I wanted to make was,
2 even though four percent is not enough, why do we apply
3 for TDHCA funds? Well, obviously, because the need is
4 there. And I have here, also, a copy of a letter that I'm
5 going to give you, and it's a copy of a letter that is
6 signed by Dr. Magana, which is the director of the El Paso
7 City County Health and Environmental District, where he
8 confirms the need. Basically, what this district does is
9 that they go out there and they find families that have
10 septic tanks that are not compliant. And then parallel to
11 that activity, then those families have to go before
12 Precinct 6, which is Judge Ruben Lujan, and they have to
13 pay a fine. And, so, Judge Lujan's letter indicates that
14 they process approximately 1,200 families a year.

15 Now, what the Collaborative does is that we
16 try to provide them with -- as a CDFI, we try to provide
17 them with a low interest rate loan to help them comply
18 with their septic tanks. But this is a loan, this is
19 money that people have to pay back. When there's grant
20 money we would love to provide them with grant money, but,
21 again, there's that problem that we can't do that because
22 of the issues of the requirements that the department has.

23 So, those are my comments and I would like
24 to convey that to the next legislative session. Hopefully
25 there'll be changes made. And I'll leave you with copies

1 of the letters of Judge Lujan and Dr. Magana.

2 MR. CABELLO: A couple of things that I
3 wanted to respond to. We -- I mean, I sent you that
4 letter on the tanks.

5 MS. CHAVEZ: Yes.

6 MR. CABELLO: I'm waiting for an official
7 response from HUD, but in the meantime, the clock is
8 ticking.

9 MS. CHAVEZ: Right.

10 MR. CABELLO: And that was the issue. What
11 I didn't realize, or maybe I did, that you utilized
12 RSGBD [phonetic] funds for water tanks. And what I can
13 assure you is we will send another letter and maybe get
14 our new executive director who used to work at HUD and the
15 governor's office to make a phone call and see if we can
16 answer that sooner. This will help and hopefully we can
17 get another letter out by the end of this month.

18 MS. CHAVEZ: Okay. And I think I speak on
19 behalf of several of the other nonprofit agencies that are
20 present here that have -- that are also recipient of the
21 deconversion.

22 MR. CABELLO: Right. And I understand with
23 the federal funds, like with the CDBG funds, we can buy
24 water tanks. But with the HOME funds, which is another
25 funding source, may not allow us to utilize that. So

1 there is conflicting with the federal funds. So I'm going
2 to take that a step further with this letter and get our
3 new executive director to sign the letter and make a phone
4 call and see if we can get that resolved soon. But in the
5 meantime, we've got to continue working to try to spend
6 those dollars because that clock is ticking on.

7 MS. CHAVEZ: We've got to turn around and
8 identify some other new families, but these are the
9 families that are in most need.

10 MR. CABELLO: Right. And I agree with that.
11 There was another issue, the other issue -- the agency is
12 getting ready to announce a HOME task force to talk about
13 the program and the issues regarding the program. And
14 they are going to be seeking public comments. And that's
15 an opportunity because we also heard it in the
16 far [phonetic] hearing about the HOME program and the four
17 percent. That the HUD allows ten percent of the funds to
18 be used for admin and the state keeps six, and so that
19 maybe you need to switch them backwards.

20 MS. CHAVEZ: That would be good.

21 MR. CABELLO: The task force, when we
22 release the public comments, I will make sure that I
23 inform you about that. And then there might be other
24 avenues for you to also use and I'll get that information
25 to you also.

1 MR. GARCIA: And I wouldn't shortchange the
2 fact that your legislators -- you mentioned legislation.
3 I don't know whether that's something that can be changed
4 by legislation, but they would be the ones that need to
5 know about that and I would say the next few months would
6 probably be the time to let your local legislators know.
7 So when they come into session, they can file a bill that
8 does that, or whatever, administrative fees, or an
9 application formula change. Whether they can or cannot do
10 that, it would be good to keep in the loop as well because
11 they can file those bills to whoever your state rep is, or
12 senator.

13 MR. CABELLO: State senator, state rep.

14 MR. GARCIA: This (inaudible) is faster as
15 well, and they can file something or draft something now.

16 MR. CABELLO: Because I think the loan
17 program is going to be -- it's going to be a topic that is
18 talked about in the next session due to recent changes
19 that are -- it's an opportunity to voice your opinions
20 about some of these changes and I highly recommend you
21 voice your opinions.

22 MS. CHAVEZ: I will.

23 MR. CABELLO: Thank you.

24 Maria Ortiz?

25 MS. ORTIZ: *Good morning, my name is Maria*

1 Ortiz and I am a resident of San Elizario. And what I
2 would like to propose here is that we need more funds to
3 be able to convert more titles, yes? Because right now we
4 are facing -- we are facing the sellers of land and I know
5 that funds have already been given to this program, but
6 also, once the sellers of these properties realize this --
7 well, now, what they're doing is that they're selling the
8 properties with warranty deeds. And here they also came
9 to hurt us and I say came to hurt us because I am one of
10 them. Right now they are giving the contracts these
11 warranty deeds, but they are at the same high interest
12 rate of 12.5 percent, yes? Payable at 20 or 30 years. On
13 a piece of property of 23,000, one-fourth of an acre,
14 we're going to pay, I think, 50 or \$60,000 for that piece
15 of property, yes? So besides the funds for
16 (inaudible) it would be good if maybe a fund could be
17 opened for this type of transactions with warranty deeds
18 because if the interest rate is so high. Like I'm saying,
19 they are giving us a warranty deed, but, still, we have to
20 pay this very high interest rate. And, besides, there are
21 some sellers that all of the payments that we make, they
22 go directly to interest.

23 And let me give you an example, when I am
24 paying for my property I have to pay today and I go and
25 pay tomorrow so everything goes to interest and the

1 principle is at 00. So I'm never going to be able to pay
2 for that piece of property and I am going to continue
3 having the same balance. And there are many, many
4 families that are in the same situation. So then it would
5 be ideal for me if the state could allocate funds so that
6 we could work with. And, of course, yes, to keep
7 (inaudible) because, yes, we do need it, but to be able to
8 deal with these type of contracts like the warranty deed.

9 MR. CABELLO: So the problem is that you
10 need some type of financing?

11 MS. ORTIZ: Yes, that it is financed. In
12 other words, this warranty deed, that it is financed at a
13 low interest rate where more money goes to the principle
14 than to the interest. When I bought -- I bought three and
15 a half -- my land at \$22,000 and I have paid 21,809. So
16 how much money has gone to the principle? Nothing. I
17 have been paying for three years purely the interest. In
18 other words, I am renting even though I have a warranty
19 deed. I am renting because the amount doesn't decrease.
20 And so like that -- like me, there are many families. We
21 are still with the problem of (inaudible). And so we
22 would like that there would be some program where the
23 warranty deed could be refinanced as well as the
24 broadening of the (inaudible) deeds because we have both.
25

1 MR. CABELLO: *Also the contract for deeds*
2 *are forfeited each year. In other words, they could have*
3 *some refinancing which could reduce the principle each*
4 *year.*

5 MS. ORTIZ: *Well, yes. Well, thank you very*
6 *much.*

7 MR. CABELLO: *Martha Alaniz?*

8 *Judge Walker, you want to make some comments*
9 *now?*

10 JUDGE WALKER: *I'm Becky Dean Walker, I'm*
11 *the Hudspeth County Judge. And I'm -- we have our fair*
12 *share of illegal subdivisions and I'm in the last year of*
13 *my first term. When I first took office, we had a huge*
14 *problem in Fort Hancock. My county is approximately 4000*
15 *square feet -- square miles. And the census, they said it*
16 *was about 5000 -- the population was about 5000. There*
17 *was 1500 registered voters. The sheriff told me the other*
18 *day that our population is now about 7500 and there's*
19 *still 1500, mas o menos, registered voters.*

20 *The illegal subdivision that we've had*
21 *there -- it was just a lot of things that were*
22 *overwhelming to me and I didn't know what to do. Well,*
23 *locally, I met with Alianza, they have helped me a lot.*
24 *And because of Alianza, I can finally see daylight at the*
25 *end of the tunnel. Our main thing, however, is to stop*

1 the progression. I mean, you can clean up something and
2 you can't clean up in three years what it takes 30 or 40
3 years to make. But you can start working on cleaning it
4 up, but you have to stop the progression of it happening
5 as you're cleaning it up or you're just losing ground.
6 And I heard mentioned about the enforcement. The illegal
7 subdivision sales in Fort Hancock, I think, are ceased at
8 this point. That particular work that was -- but the
9 other huge, huge problem I have -- I met with Najera, he
10 even came to see me. I went and showed him and then, you
11 know, he got beat, and then he resigned, and now I'm kind
12 of without, you know. And I'm waiting. I have no choice
13 but to wait until after November to start in trying to get
14 attention again.

15 MR. GARCIA: Who is your state rep?

16 JUDGE WALKER: Pete Gallego.

17 MR. GARCIA: Pete Gallego.

18 JUDGE WALKER: And I have spoke with Pete,
19 but he hasn't responded to me like Manny did.

20 MR. GARCIA: Okay.

21 JUDGE WALKER: I haven't gotten a response.

22 MR. GARCIA: Because that's a real odd
23 situation for a senator to resign like he did and leave
24 you all in the middle of a situation here. So you do have
25 Pete Gallego. Whether he responded or not, I think

1 that's -- at least you know you have somebody there, but
2 anyway, go ahead, I'm sorry to interrupt.

3 JUDGE WALKER: The -- in the last -- just
4 since I took office, it's suddenly become a fad, I think,
5 to own a piece of land in West Texas. Now, there have
6 been land developers for some time that had a ranch here.
7 I know there was the O'Mary [phonetic] family and there
8 was different families who had a ranch and they subdivided
9 it. The sales were slow, and it's been going on for
10 years. There's a land developer from Florida by the name
11 of Jim Colonie [phonetic] who has a ranch between Fort
12 Hancock and El Paso. And he has cut that up in 20 acre
13 lots and has sold it. And that's been going on for years.
14 There's a huge problem out there now because there's many
15 people have moved out there and, as you all know, if it's
16 sold over 10 acres, he sells 22 acres --

17 MR. GARCIA: And you're okay.

18 JUDGE WALKER: -- and he's safe. But we
19 have many people living out there. They're living in
20 shacks. There's many people who've gone up there and
21 built, you know. Their houses are falling down when they
22 realize they can't live out there. Some of them, you
23 know, are 35 miles from any kind of water source. They
24 have no electricity source. The roads are sand hills.
25 They wash out. They can't get up there. They can't get

1 back. Many, many, of the people who have come are
2 disabled or Social Security and they sell everything they
3 have because, you know, they come from places where you
4 can dig a hole and get water. And they think -- they see
5 these land prices, Oh, boy, we can do this, we can live on
6 it and we can make a living on this ranch. And they sell
7 everything they have and they come. Then they get here
8 and they realize that their ranch is not livable. I mean,
9 it's miles and miles from anywhere. It's greasewood
10 bushes and sand hills. There's nothing there. And they
11 starve out and they leave. And, you know, I am sorry, but
12 they leave lots and lots of trash behind.

13 MR. GARCIA: I'm sure.

14 JUDGE WALKER: This has been a major
15 headache and going on for quite a while, but in the last
16 three years just since I took office, there has been like
17 seven -- six or seven working ranches that have sold to
18 this particular land developer. He's not -- I don't think
19 he's a land developer. He argued that fact with me and he
20 even showed me where the definition and stuff. He is a
21 subdivider, because a developer develops the land, they
22 don't just subdivide the land. He subdivides the land.
23 No, he's not doing anything illegal, as the law stands
24 today, that I can find.

25 He threatened to sue me because I said the

1 people didn't understand what they were getting into. So
2 he said that it was defamation of character and he wrote
3 me a letter and he threatened me, he was going to sue me
4 for bad-mouthing him and all that.

5 Well, I still stand on that. The people
6 don't understand because his contracts do say, We don't
7 provide water. And his contracts, when I first took
8 office, say there's three ways to obtain water. You can
9 haul it, you can dig a well, or you can pay a certified
10 water hauler. Now he tells me that it's illegal for him
11 to haul the water. That they have to pay a certified
12 water hauler or they have to dig a well. But he doesn't
13 mention anywhere in his contracts that the nearest water
14 may be 30 miles away, and how deep is it, and is it even
15 drinkable. He doesn't mention any of that in his
16 contracts. He doesn't mention how far it is to a school,
17 what condition the roads are in. His contract says that
18 he will furnish -- he will maintain the road up to two or
19 three years and then after that he will maintain it to his
20 discretion.

21 And people just jump at it, you know. And
22 now the price of the land -- he was selling, you know,
23 this, the old \$99 down, \$99 a month. Well, that's not
24 happening anymore. The price of land has just shot up.
25 And he's advertising \$500 an acre. He was buying it, you

1 know, for 45 or \$85 an acre. Now he's having to pay more
2 for it. He's having to pay, you know. I'm not sure
3 exactly what he's paid, but I think he's paid 85 to 125,
4 maybe even \$200 an acre for it.

5 He has the internal help here in my
6 government now, because, we as the Commissioners Court
7 were working on trying to slow this down, or, you know,
8 contact him and he came and met with some of the
9 officials. And now some of the officials are on his side,
10 which puts me in another situation. He's making huge
11 donations to the -- or he tried to make a huge donation to
12 the Sheriff's Department for bulletproof vests, you know,
13 just one man. I have no problem with certain kinds of
14 donations, but, I mean, in this situation I did because it
15 was one person making the whole donation and he was doing
16 it for one purpose. And when that many people -- when one
17 person donates that much money, he can sign all that he
18 wants to saying there's no obligation back, or there's
19 nothing tied to the money, but you take that much of one
20 man's money and you owe him favors.

21 And luckily, you know, it happened while I
22 was gone and then I got back and I told him you can't do
23 this without it going through a Commissioners Court.
24 Luckily, in Commissioners Court I was able to get enough
25 votes to stop that particular donation. But now, you

1 know, it's like, well, if some of our officers get killed,
2 it's your fault. Not that -- I mean, because we had got
3 them grants for bulletproof vests and they bought what
4 they wanted a couple of years ago, but now they want these
5 others, you know.

6 So this is the type of thing that I'm very
7 worried about because, guys, this is your future colonias.

8 MR. GARCIA: Let me ask you, Judge. You
9 mentioned he's working well within the law. Do you think
10 the law needs to be changed --

11 JUDGE WALKER: Yes.

12 MR. GARCIA: -- that threshold needs to be
13 broadened as far as how much can be subdivided, acreage
14 sizes, things of that nature?

15 JUDGE WALKER: Yes. And I -- he came to see
16 me. He tried to sway me. He came and met with me and he
17 kind of offered things, you know, and not just blatantly,
18 but -- and he said, What can I do to work with you? And I
19 told him, I want you to make a full disclosure on your
20 contracts. I want you to tell each piece of land, Okay,
21 this is greasewood bushes, this is sand hills, this is
22 mountains, whatever it is. Tell the people what they're
23 buying. Tell them how far it is from the nearest school,
24 from the nearest post office, from the nearest water. How
25 deep the nearest water is. If the nearest water is

1 drinkable.

2 I have no problem with development if it's
3 development and something that is good. And our county --
4 I spoke with the tax appraiser and he said in a county our
5 size that -- and, you know, taking the fact a lot of our
6 people -- a lot of our population migrate back and forth
7 across the border, but he says a county our size we should
8 have about maybe 5, 6000 tax accounts. We now have 45,000
9 tax accounts in our county and it's growing. It's growing
10 every day. And, in essence, what happens is when you go
11 to collect the taxes, there's so much paperwork and stuff
12 you have to do to collect, where before you were
13 collecting taxes on this one ranch. Even though they had
14 to have a bad exemption, it was still one account and they
15 would pay their taxes.

16 And this is another thing, he is paying his
17 taxes. He is paying his taxes. We took away the ag
18 exemption and that caused a huge problem, but the way they
19 did it was in no way damaging to the subdivider. They did
20 it so that what happens -- when he buys it, it's still --
21 even though we all know what he's buying it for, it still
22 adds land. Until he starts selling it, that's when the
23 land changes. And so the buyer is the one that the tax
24 burden, you know, falls back on.

25 So what we did, when we took away that ag

1 exemption is -- made a lot of the people who had been
2 there 10, 15 years sitting on a little piece of land
3 paying ag exemptions, their taxes doubled, you know,
4 because -- and because the appraisals went up.

5 So, yes, I want some attention. I am not a
6 person who is -- knows how to play the game. I got a bill
7 -- NAVDA took a bill and it went through the senate last
8 time. It was -- anyway, I showed it to the County
9 Attorney, and I showed it to some of the -- I showed it to
10 everybody, and said, This is what I'm trying to do, help
11 me, help me, help me. And everybody just sort of, you
12 know, brushed me off. And then when it goes through
13 the -- I think it was -- I was trying to remember the
14 number of the bill. But, anyway, MAGNA sponsored it and
15 then the County Attorney -- and I took all of my
16 e-mails -- there was a landowner out there that had bought
17 a big ranch. When they started buying the ranches around
18 him and subdividing them in these little -- he was a man
19 with money. He paid an attorney and they got this bill
20 together and MAGNA sponsored it. And as it progressed,
21 all my e-mails, I sent them to the County Attorney.

22 I was not doing it secretively. I was
23 trying to include everybody. And some of the judges down
24 the river -- well, in the end what happens is it gets
25 pushed through and then they discover it. You would have

1 thought that I had killed their grandma or something.
2 They came after me and said that I had snuck it through
3 and, you know, and all these kinds of things and MAGNA
4 dropped it. They said that what that bill did was make it
5 where if I had a piece of land I could not pass it to my
6 daughter or to my family, you know. That -- that's what
7 they said the bill -- MAGNA said making the bill does not
8 say that.

9 So, you know, in those kind of ways, I don't
10 know how to play their game because as soon as I found out
11 they were unhappy, I said, Let's have a meeting. Let's
12 address this and let's change it, what you don't like.
13 They didn't want to change.

14 MR. GARCIA: Well here's --

15 JUDGE WALKER: They wanted to squash it and
16 they did.

17 MR. GARCIA: Well, here's the deal, Judge.
18 In my opinion, my humble opinion, for many generations it
19 was pretty acceptable if you lived out in the county
20 instead of the city and you own the land, pretty much,
21 Let's keep taxes down. You pretty much are given the
22 ability to do what you want with your land with less
23 regulatory problems. And it wasn't until the health care
24 issues came about, especially with the colonias along the
25 border, the concentrated populations in areas and the

1 waterborne diseases and a number of other things. Albeit,
2 you raise some very good points about predatory
3 subdividers or maybe even folks who are looking for that
4 dream land. It is still a situation where, for the most
5 part with the exception of the Texas/Mexico border, if you
6 own land out in the county you can pretty much do a lot of
7 things within certain regulatory laws that you can't do in
8 the city. And I think you're hitting on some things that
9 really require some, not only major change, but major
10 discussion, as predatory practices are becoming profitable
11 and more interesting for people especially coming from out
12 of state.

13 How we approach this so it doesn't have that
14 effect of affecting someone who just simply wants to drop
15 their ranch onto their kids and find a way to craft that
16 language. It could be done. I don't think that you are a
17 novice at the game. I think that there shouldn't have to
18 be a game. You're an elected official and you're making
19 some valid points to the people you represent. There
20 should be a system, which, hopefully, we'll take your
21 recommendations where you don't have to deal with so many
22 political entities going after you, but that you get to
23 the facts here regarding this size of the lot. What is
24 safe? What isn't? What do they leave behind if they
25 can't make ends meet? You mentioned schools, water, a

1 number of other things. A lot of times it's just been up
2 to the consumer to make these decisions. And you make a
3 bad choice, you're taken -- whether it be contract for
4 deed or some other -- you're left holding the bag.

5 And you raise some very good points that
6 maybe state law has yet to address, whether it be the
7 domestic violence issues and the safety in the county or
8 maybe what you're talking about. Maybe we need to come up
9 with some full disclosure. Some ways of doing this. I
10 think you can find a way to do it, and the legislature,
11 obviously, is the one who has to pass the new laws. I
12 think there's ways we can do it so those people's concerns
13 are not addressed. Granted, they may have just said that
14 because they weren't interested in what you were doing.
15 And there is a very real side to the fact that if you own
16 some land, a lot of people still believe in this state
17 that you should be allowed to do what you want with it.
18 But your points are very well taken when you talk about
19 predatory practices and maybe the idea of people selling
20 these pie-in-the-sky ideas and people are left with their
21 dreams, all their money that they have in the world buying
22 this land that they can't even get water on.

23 So I would be happy to work with you on
24 developing further your -- not only what you're trying to
25 do, but regarding the people who can help you do that.

1 Pete Gallego is a good guy to do that. He's not only a
2 veteran and well-known, it may not take a visit out there,
3 but someone who you can make take that old legislation
4 battle hat and say, Hey, we need to change this so it's
5 not going to affect some of these other issues and see if
6 we can't find a way to -- regarding the problems your
7 county is experiencing, address them. There's ways of
8 doing that.

9 MR. CABELLO: There's also some senate
10 interim hearings that they're doing throughout the state
11 and she can probably testify.

12 MR. GARCIA: But I'd be happy to help you do
13 that as far as making sure that you are in contact with us
14 as well as the points that you're concerned with and you
15 feel that you're left only by yourself and there's others
16 out there that can help you with that. I think it's a
17 matter of just how you word it and then you -- figuring on
18 the fact that a lot of the colonia laws were passed
19 because of health concerns and maybe you're raising other
20 concerns that need to be added to that list of things that
21 maybe we should be addressing.

22 But notwithstanding the issues along the
23 border with health and tuberculosis, some of these issues
24 you're raising are statewide. And this that's going on is
25 the oldest trick in the book, I guess. If you're going to

1 buy land and sell it is figure out a way to make it look
2 like it's the Garden of Eden.

3 JUDGE WALKER: The Internet has been a
4 real -- I think that's why it's just in the last three
5 years, because they'll buy a ranch and then, I mean, they
6 sell it immediately.

7 MR. CABELLO: It's on Ebay, right?

8 JUDGE WALKER: I don't know -- he says he's
9 not doing it on Ebay, but many of them are. But he told
10 me that all of his customers are satisfied. Nobody is
11 upset. I have people calling the office every day. They
12 want us to cure the problem that he has created. And so
13 he says, Give me their names. And I said, No, I'm not
14 doing that to them.

15 MR. GARCIA: No.

16 JUDGE WALKER: But what he's doing with
17 these ranches that he's splitting up we'll never be able
18 to put them back together. There's too many owners,
19 there's too many -- and another thing Hudspeth County is
20 an agricultural county. I mean, that's about all that
21 we've had from this point. And now that is being wiped
22 out. And because of the lack of water, you know, coming
23 down the river and stuff, the farmers are hurting and the
24 ranches are now being done away with and all that kind of
25 thing.

1 But let me talk to you about enforcement
2 because there are illegal ones out there and there's
3 people buying these 22 acres, and then they go on Ebay,
4 they split them up in one-acre plots. They're illegal.
5 And I got ahold of some of the stuff that came into the
6 clerk's office and I called the Attorney General's Office.
7 And they said, That is your problem. And I said, You're
8 not getting rid of me. I'm going to stay here until I
9 talk to somebody.

10 So they put me to somebody else. They said,
11 That is an internal problem. That's something you have to
12 take care of locally. I said, you're not getting rid of
13 me.

14 Five people I talked to there in Austin on
15 the phone. I would not hang up. And they finally
16 addressed me to Jim DeRoss here in El Paso. I called him
17 and he said, You know, Judge, I am understaffed and
18 overworked and I just don't see how I can get to it.

19 And I said, I'm not going away.

20 And I kept on with him and then I finally
21 got my County Attorney's attention. And so finally he
22 says, Okay, I'll pay some attention to this one.

23 This one was advertising one acre lots,
24 (inaudible), trash pickup, a clubhouse, a swimming pool, I
25 mean, I have the papers on it. And about three months

1 later I contacted Jim DeRoss -- and I've never met him, I
2 just talked to him on the phone -- What has happened?
3 Well, he said, I needed these papers and I never got them
4 from your County Attorney.

5 I said, What do you need? So he told me. I
6 got them, I faxed them to him. Nothing happened. Well,
7 like three or four months later, or six months later, it's
8 been a long time, I finally get a letter from him and he
9 says, This company is now out of business.

10 So there's nothing we can do. That is what
11 I run into because nothing is done while they're there and
12 selling. Once they get their 22 acres, or whatever it is,
13 then they change names, they move, they, whatever, and
14 we're left holding the bag.

15 MR. GARCIA: So the timing of the
16 transaction maybe needs to be addressed?

17 JUDGE WALKER: Yeah. Because what they told
18 me in Austin was that it was a local problem and that we
19 just needed to prosecute it ourselves.

20 MR. GARCIA: What the legislature has been
21 pushing, what I've heard from others, is to give the
22 county more authority to enforce a lot of this and you
23 don't have the resources to do -- or the manpower or the
24 money to do a lot of that. So it kind of goes back and
25 forth. The State Attorney General, yes, I think that that

1 would probably be, if there is violation of current laws,
2 that they are the enforcement arm of this. And I'd be
3 happy to try to look into that as well, but I'm not
4 suggesting they aren't understaffed. I'm suggesting that
5 this problem is probably very big and --

6 JUDGE WALKER: Well, believe me, I
7 understand being understaffed. I mean, I wasn't --

8 MR. GARCIA: Would you --

9 JUDGE WALKER: -- I wasn't upset with him
10 for being understaffed, but I feel very -- like I can't do
11 anything.

12 MR. GARCIA: Maybe there needs to be more
13 money for that enforcement at the state level or the
14 county level, whatever. But just giving the county the
15 enforcement authority doesn't give them resources. And by
16 giving the job to some agency, doesn't give them any more
17 bodies or money either. So that's, you know, something
18 that maybe we need to look into as well when we're talking
19 about this legislation.

20 MR. CABELLO: Some of the county -- some of
21 the -- the agency had two attorneys that were doing these
22 type of reports for the grant right now.

23 MR. GARCIA: Well, thank you, though. I do
24 think that we can work together on this, Judge. Let me
25 give you my card as well because I'd be happy to

1 facilitate what we need to do next, but you have my e-mail
2 there as well as my staff's.

3 JUDGE WALKER: Okay, thank you.

4 MR. GARCIA: Thank you, Judge.

5 MR. CABELLO: Commissioner Teran?

6 COMMISSIONER TERAN: Thank you very much for
7 the opportunity to address you in a formal way, I guess.
8 I'm going to bring to your attention a couple of things
9 that I believe we need to focus on. One, water needs.
10 Legislation governing lines of water districts needs to be
11 looked at because we presently have certain corners in
12 this county that don't belong to anybody. And as a
13 result, we end up with not being able to supply water to
14 those people because they happen to be on the wrong side
15 of the track. For example, the Lower Valley Water
16 District has a (inaudible) but yet they skip certain parts
17 that don't belong to the Lower Valley Water District.
18 They may belong to Horizon Water District, but then if it
19 belongs to the Lower Valley Water District, but Horizon
20 Water District is right here, for example, they should be
21 able to supply water to -- the most closest water district
22 should supply the water. The same thing happens in
23 Fabens. It's the Fabens Water District, but the area
24 belongs to the Lower Valley Water District, so
25 consequently we cannot secure additional water grants to

1 help them get water to that area because it doesn't belong
2 to them. You see what I'm saying? So the area governing
3 water district needs to be looked at to ensure that we
4 don't skip out on these people simply because --

5 MR. GARCIA: And the Lower Valley Water
6 District doesn't have any interest in serving other areas
7 that are outside their area?

8 COMMISSIONER TERAN: They may have the
9 interest, but the distance, you know, is impossible. For
10 example, we barely got a grant to get water to the Colonia
11 De El Paso through the Lower Valley Water District. Well,
12 to jump the freeway, for example, is a very expensive
13 process. Instead, we decided to go ahead and build
14 another unit to supply water to that area through a
15 development grant. But even that's going to be very
16 limited. But yet there are colonias in other areas that
17 are closer to other districts that have water. So I'm
18 saying, we need to look at the boundaries covering water
19 districts to ensure that nobody's left out. And up in the
20 Hueco Tanks area, doesn't belong to anybody. So nobody
21 has the responsibility of looking forward to addressing
22 the water needs of that entire area. So that's one.

23 The lady spoke to 1001. That legislation,
24 while it stopped the proliferation of colonias, left a lot
25 of problems. A lot of problems, because people that

1 inherit land and ultimately build their homes in land that
2 does not have water are highly impacted. And we have many
3 properties now land-locked that are not legal, in the
4 sense of the word, because we can't get to them. So the
5 law governing the eminent domain needs to be looked at.
6 Because, for example, we have a problem associated with
7 getting water, for example, from that street. There might
8 be a water line right there, but these two people who
9 happen to be fronting on that lot that have water will not
10 allow the line to cross to the properties in the rear
11 simply because, you know, they just don't want to give any
12 part of their land.

13 MR. CABELLO: Is that because of the old
14 colonias that were properly platted and who platted them?

15 COMMISSIONER TERAN: Properties that were
16 deeded generation to generation, especially in the San
17 Elizario area, Fabens area, Tornillo area. The areas
18 where there were farming communities and the lines were
19 really just farmland. And that land has now been given to
20 the sons, daughters, grandkids of those farmers. And
21 here, again, another problem. A lot of the colonia
22 legislation addresses colonias as defined by whatever it
23 is and excludes these people who have been here 2, 300
24 years simply because they don't meet the qualifications.
25 First thing that I went to Homer when I first got elected

1 12 years ago trying to figure out what colonia was all
2 about. And I said, How can we get water -- how can we get
3 services to these people if they don't qualify because
4 they don't have water? Well, so we couldn't get a
5 deconversion, a HOME program or any of those things
6 because they didn't have water.

7 Then the question of water tanks. Well,
8 water tanks are a source of water. And while everybody
9 would love to have waterlines, and I think it would be the
10 greatest thing in the world, we would all like to put
11 water lines, it's just simply not affordable. We just
12 don't have the money at the county level or any other
13 level and people need to be able to use their land. If
14 they already own the land -- I've -- there are certain
15 beautiful homes out in the desert right now that got built
16 that don't have water, don't have sewer. You know,
17 something needs to be done there. The area governing
18 certificates of compliance has to be looked at because
19 there again our hands are tied. We are required to do
20 certain things for -- to convert these deeds of trusts, or
21 whatever it is, certificates of compliance, so that people
22 can get electricity, you know.

23 So those are just some areas that I think we
24 need to look at. Along with that, we have a whole range
25 of other things that have to really -- I won't take up too

1 much of your time, to really expound on, but I would look
2 forward to maybe --

3 MR. GARCIA: The water tanks, is that just a
4 rule that they can't be -- certain funds can't be used
5 for --

6 MR. CABELLO: The program that may have been
7 discussed are some HUD funds called the HOME program. And
8 that's been an issue we've been facing. We cannot utilize
9 a lot of our housing dollars if water isn't available.
10 So, like, we have several programs that we want to go into
11 particular colonias, but we can't go in there until the
12 water comes in.

13 MR. GARCIA: And that's not going to happen
14 anytime soon.

15 MR. CABELLO: Well, unless we can get a
16 waiver or an exemption from HUD saying, you know, you're
17 allowing it with these other HUD programs, why can't we do
18 it with this program so we can help those colonia
19 residents that have water tanks.

20 COMMISSIONER TERAN: I guess we need to --
21 we don't want to proliferate it to the extent that it's
22 going to go on forever, but at least under certain ways we
23 could be able to grandfather in some of these things for
24 the use of water storage. Because some of these houses,
25 they are not going to go away and the water is just too

1 far away.

2 JUDGE WALKER: They also have to have a
3 certain type of septic system, because now the office has
4 to do the certificate of compliance history.

5 COMMISSIONER TERAN: But if you have a
6 certificate of compliance -- but the person could
7 actually, technically, go build a septic system being
8 compliant and go build -- and go live there, even without
9 water.

10 JUDGE WALKER: Right.

11 COMMISSIONER TERAN: But the problem is --
12 what I'm trying to do is make it livable and make them be
13 able to afford to live there in a nice home as opposed to
14 just a predatory loaning to also -- that's true, the deed
15 of trust as opposed to the contract of the sale. Now
16 they're selling the deeds, but at a very high interest
17 rate. So it would be predatory lending. But that
18 predatory lending, you see it all over the place. They're
19 really ripping off a lot of people. So to that extent, I
20 guess they want to get everybody from insurance companies
21 all the way down. You see, everybody is playing the same
22 game.

23 MR. CABELLO: Yeah, they are. It's all
24 about money. Thank you sir.

25 Olga Varela? Olga? Oh, she left.

1 Becky -- oh, that's you, Judge.

2 Guillermo Garcia?

3 MR. GUILLERMO GARCIA: *Good morning, my name*
4 *is Guillermo Garcia. Thank you very much for coming to*
5 *this colonia today and for coming to this Self-Help*
6 *Center. Well, the population of our colonia has not grown*
7 *much. Right now we have approximately 2000 people. The*
8 *request we made to the Secretary of State last year was to*
9 *see if they could help us with sewage. This colony does*
10 *have water, but the problem that we have is that the*
11 *subsoil is very contaminated with the septic tanks. And*
12 *talking to people from the colonia with the people from*
13 *the community they have mentioned that before we didn't*
14 *use to have mosquitos and now we have a great*
15 *contamination of mosquitos. And that was one of the*
16 *requests that we made to the Secretary of State and they*
17 *said they were going to resolve this issue and it hasn't*
18 *been resolved to date.*

19 And then, also, another one of the things
20 that we had requested was if they would help us build a
21 park in the colonias. We have everything. We have the
22 land so that they can help us build it. The population of
23 this colonia is 80 percent children. As this colonia has
24 grown the majority of the people that have come are young
25 and they have children. And we have said that wave a lot

1 of children that are playing out on the streets and we
2 don't want to remedy something after the fact. We don't
3 want to have an accident and then that after the fact we
4 will want to resolve this issue. And that is one of the
5 main requests that we have. And this is not the first
6 time we request this.

7 MR. CABELLO: So who have you requested this
8 from?

9 MR. GUILLERMO GARCIA: Yes, the
10 representative of the state was here in El Paso and he
11 came here.

12 MR. CABELLO: So who was that?

13 MR. GUILLERMO GARCIA: A Richy Hernandez.

14 MR. CABELLO: Richy Hernandez, okay?

15 MR. GUILLERMO GARCIA: At that time we made
16 the request for the sewage and for the park, also. And
17 these are the main and most basic requests that we have
18 from this colonia. And, yes, those are my comments. And
19 for the future we would like a clinic because the clinic
20 that we have here we get people from all around and so we
21 need -- would need a bigger one. And it doesn't
22 necessarily have to be a clinic here in this colonia. It
23 could be in a colonia which is nearby. It doesn't
24 necessarily have to be here.

25 So these are the requests for the Secretary

1 of State. And, thank you.

2 MR. CABELLO: Daniel, are you ready to
3 speak, sir?

4 MR. SOLIS: As we have seen, I think that in
5 a very short time we have been able to hear testimony of
6 all of the different problems that exist in our colonias,
7 going from health and all the way to the environment and
8 predatory lending. But I think that there are two or
9 three important outstanding things.

10 Regarding health, it is true that we have
11 some small clinics spread out in this area. In some areas
12 the health centers are more concentrated than in other
13 areas. For example, in San Elizario there are four
14 community center health clinics and there are 15,000
15 people that live in that area. Generally, the clinics are
16 small and they're saturated with patients and the service
17 that they provide is very limited. And what is
18 outstanding about these is that none of them is giving
19 full services. And even this being the case, we have
20 spoken to people from San Vicente, La Fe, to see if we can
21 form a consolidated health center which would be more
22 ample and would provide more services. And, well, due to
23 their internal problems, lets put it that way, one being
24 territorial, they have not been able to consolidate. So
25 one of the proposals is for the state to be able to get

1 the smaller clinics to consolidate into one larger health
2 center that could provide more services instead of having
3 all of these small, limited clinics which don't give the
4 adequate services that are needed.

5 MR. CABELLO: Daniel, what about the Texas
6 A&M Center?

7 Don't you have Texas A&M centers?

8 MR. SOLIS: The Texas A&M centers were
9 designed to be clinics, but since there have been problems
10 with the funding, the Texas A&M centers are out of Texas
11 A&M. The county has them now. And, for example, the one
12 in Sparks and the Montana Vista is in the hands of La Fe
13 and so on. But they are not developing as health centers
14 as was foreseen in the original plan. Everything goes
15 back to funding. There is not enough money to be able to
16 establish that.

17 So what we are proposing is that we need the
18 state's effort to try and consolidate these different
19 fundings to see whether we can at least establish one
20 medical center that would provide all of the services.
21 Not in every colonia, because that would be impossible,
22 rather in a central area that would be more accessible to
23 the different colonias in terms of distance and all of
24 that kind of thing.

25 The other thing is the matter of the

1 environment. In this area, particularly, and in Hudspeth
2 County there are a lot of illegal dumping, yes? What we
3 call clandestine dumps. And, for example, one of the
4 problems that we have now, as Mr. Sanchez was saying, was
5 the thing about the landfill in El Paso. A concern that
6 we have now is that on the 14th of June we were finally
7 able to obtain a grant for \$3.8 million to the (inaudible)
8 district to be able to bring water to colonias which is
9 only part of an \$8 million project to be able to bring
10 water to 368 families that live in this area by the year
11 2008.

12 The thing is that one of our concerns is one
13 that we have with the city landfill. And right now we are
14 looking this over with some attorneys to see how we can
15 renegotiate an agreement that we have with them. And one
16 of the concerns that we have is since there are going to
17 be water lines through there, if there is a line rupture
18 we are going to have contamination of potable water if it
19 is near the landfill.

20 The other thing is that there are very many
21 respiratory diseases in that area. We have had cases
22 where people have had to leave the area because they have
23 had health problems that are directly a consequence of the
24 city landfill. The other one was the dairy that was
25 abandoned and the problem there is the manure. And the

1 only thing that they are doing is that they are moving
2 that manure from that area to another one which is two
3 miles away from where the dairy used to be. And we have a
4 community which is basically Ascencion and Dairyland that
5 are right in between two piles of manure. And the
6 situation is not a healthy one for the community. And the
7 other one is that we want to be sure that this dairy is
8 not going to be a landfill also and what steps are going
9 to be taken to decontaminate the area. Because only a
10 mile way from there we are going to have the main well for
11 the water project that is going to be here. They are so
12 close to the dairy that there are very serious problems
13 that we have to look into regarding the contamination of
14 the water.

15 All of this we are working with the EPA and
16 all of these kinds of things, but, anyway, we fear that in
17 one way or another that area has to be cleaned up.

18 One thing that worries me a lot -- one thing
19 that worries me a lot is the contract for deed. The
20 contract for deed, as we all know, is the principle way.
21 85 percent of the colonias here in El Paso have contract
22 for deed. And the TDHCA had a very good project which was
23 (inaudible). And what they did is that they would train
24 nonprofits and the nonprofits would come and bring us
25 consumer education. Unfortunately that money was

1 finished. We want to see if it is possible if some money
2 appropriation could be established so that we could have
3 that program again, so that this consumer education could
4 be taken to the colonias. But more of that has to happen
5 because of what is happening to Hudspeth County where we
6 have the lots, 20 acre lots, and there are commercials on
7 the radio, on Que Buena, where they are saying that if you
8 come to Tierra West you get a \$2000 discount. And here we
9 are talking about people that are making minimum wage
10 which are moving there and they are going to find
11 themselves in a situation that is horrible, as the judge
12 from Hudspeth County has already stated.

13 Well, besides the consumer education program
14 that we had we need a public campaign with paid airtime
15 and that they don't be PSAs because PSAs are aired at 2:00
16 or 3:00 in the morning. So what we need is a campaign
17 that is addressed to people that are going to buy -- that
18 are going to buy land with a contract for deed in Hudspeth
19 County, that being with a warranty deed or whichever way
20 it is, so that the people know what they are getting into.
21 I think that if we can use a strategy where the media is
22 used to educate the public in general and also to use the
23 nonprofits using flyers and that kind of thing, I think we
24 can make an impact while we work on some type of
25 legislation to stop the selling as it was done with the

1 contracts for deed in this area. And that the same type
2 of legislation be carried out for plots of land that are
3 20 and 50 acres in size. Because that's the size of lots
4 that are being sold toward Cornudas. And, yes. Yes, it
5 is a big problem. But I think that a consumer education
6 program could have an impact. Simply we had 1000 families
7 getting to know this program and we were able to file 150
8 complaints and we handed them over to the State Attorney
9 General here in El Paso. And to this day we haven't heard
10 what they have done with them. We never heard from them.
11 There wasn't any follow-through on them and we are
12 willing to do all of the network to provide them with the
13 information. And we never, ever got a response and this
14 happened three or four years ago when we started this
15 work.

16 And in regards with the contract for deed
17 and what Delia said, the House Bill 1001, I think has been
18 very effective because it has stopped the proliferation of
19 the colonias. It has been tremendously effective because
20 the illegal colonias here in El Paso is extremely
21 difficult to find, it has to be an old colonia. But now
22 the problem that Delia has mentioned is a very serious one
23 because as the House Bill 1001 has been effective then I
24 think we could explore the possibility of leading the
25 people that have the water tanks and that have the

1 registered septic tanks and that they would allow us to
2 come in and convert and rehabilitate their homes in these
3 conditions. And what I'm saying is that we might have to
4 amend House Bill 1001 or maybe a rider or I don't know
5 what would have to be done, but a lot of people that are
6 abiding by the law who have their certificates of
7 compliance and that have the water tanks already and that
8 have legal septic tanks, I don't see why we couldn't
9 extend to those people the help by the state. And if they
10 maintain the same rules that are in the bill, House Bill
11 1001, why don't we make an exception for those people that
12 are abiding by health rules and we could reenact another
13 law or make amendments to House Bill 1001 so that these
14 people could start to qualify for assistance for housing
15 and for the conversion of deeds.

16 MR. CABELLO: But for the water meter, the
17 water wells, don't you have to have a permit?

18 MR. SOLIS: I don't think that we would have
19 to change the rules to House Bill 1001 totally.

20 MR. CABELLO: I think what we need to do is
21 have them change the definition of potable water. If
22 wells are allowed as potable water, what's the difference
23 with these tanks where they throw in chlorine tablets so
24 they can drink the water?

25 MR. SOLIS: We have a program where we make

1 chlorinated water. So if we can make some kind of process
2 that would be a requirement, okay, so that we could
3 chlorinate the water in the tanks and we could help
4 plenty, plenty of people.

5 MR. CABELLO: That's a top priority, but
6 like I told Delia, while we wait for this HUD waiver, or
7 get an exception, that money is ticking, we've got to --

8 MR. SOLIS: No, we're using it.

9 The other day -- and now to stop talking,
10 okay? Right now, as I was saying, they are going to bring
11 water to this area and right now we have been looking for
12 funds because some of the septic tank that we have are
13 homemade and they don't fit within the wall at times. So
14 we are trying to redo new septic tanks, but the problem is
15 that there is no funding aid here in El Paso. And at the
16 same time the CPLP had the council of governments and it
17 was given to the (inaudible) water district and then it
18 went on to El Paso Water Utilities and then now nobody has
19 that funding now. The only funding that exists is USDA,
20 but the problem with USDA is they were installing the
21 septic tanks even if the people didn't even have the
22 water. Well, now they're saying, Well, if the people
23 don't have septic tanks, I mean, if they don't have water,
24 we can't give them a loan to install a septic tank. And
25 the people from the water say, If you don't have a septic

1 number of other things. A lot of times it's just been up
2 to the consumer to make these decisions. And you make a
3 bad choice, you're taken -- whether it be contract for
4 deed or some other -- you're left holding the bag.

5 And you raise some very good points that
6 maybe state law has yet to address, whether it be the
7 domestic violence issues and the safety in the county or
8 maybe what you're talking about. Maybe we need to come up
9 with some full disclosure. Some ways of doing this. I
10 think you can find a way to do it, and the legislature,
11 obviously, is the one who has to pass the new laws. I
12 think there's ways we can do it so those people's concerns
13 are not addressed. Granted, they may have just said that
14 because they weren't interested in what you were doing.
15 And there is a very real side to the fact that if you own
16 some land, a lot of people still believe in this state
17 that you should be allowed to do what you want with it.
18 But your points are very well taken when you talk about
19 predatory practices and maybe the idea of people selling
20 these pie-in-the-sky ideas and people are left with their
21 dreams, all their money that they have in the world buying
22 this land that they can't even get water on.

23 So I would be happy to work with you on
24 developing further your -- not only what you're trying to
25 do, but regarding the people who can help you do that.

1 MR. SOLIS: We haven't seen him. He does
2 not present himself anywhere.

3 MR. GARCIA: Well, you have to call him.

4 MR. SOLIS: Well, you know, when he doesn't
5 answer the phone calls.

6 MR. GARCIA: Oh, he doesn't answer at all?

7 MR. SOLIS: And everybody here can attest to
8 that.

9 MR. GARCIA: Everyone's called Richy and he
10 doesn't call? He doesn't answer the phone? I know Delia
11 said she doesn't know him, but --

12 MR. SOLIS: *Because he doesn't present*
13 *himself.*

14 MR. GARCIA: Well, thank you for telling me
15 that. What they're supposed to be doing is helping you
16 connect the dots to where you need to be. We don't solve
17 it, but we're supposed to find -- so that's one of the
18 reasons why I'm here. That's interesting to hear.

19 MR. SOLIS: *But, yes, we do -- we do need*
20 *that assistance because in October they are going to start*
21 *to excavate and there are going to be a lot of people that*
22 *don't have the resources. These are \$2800 that it costs*
23 *to install a septic tank and the people don't have it.*

24 MR. CABELLO: *But there is still money from*
25 *the CPLP?*

1 MR. SOLIS: Yes, yes there is. But the
2 problem with CPLP is that it takes a lot of paperwork,
3 see? A lot of paperwork. And that is why agencies don't
4 want to deal with it. But it's a good program because
5 when it existed the majority of the people were able to
6 get funds to be able to install their septic tanks and
7 their water lines that they obtained from CPLP.

8 So that is all. Thank you.

9 MR. CABELLO: Okay. The CPLP, they need --I
10 mean, I could find you the contact. We need to
11 reestablish that contact through the water development
12 board.

13 MR. SOLIS: Yes.

14 MR. GARCIA: Well, between either of us we
15 can contact the water development board. That would be
16 fine. I mean, the paperwork may not go away, but they
17 need to follow-up too. So, again, that's a very good
18 recommendation.

19 MR. SOLIS: That's all.

20 MR. CABELLO: Maria Castillo?

21 MS. CASTILLO: Well, thank you very much.
22 My name is Maria Castillo (inaudible). My presentation
23 right now is that you take these six hundred requests and
24 these are dreams that you're taking with you and we hope
25 that one of them will become a reality. We live in need

1 and right now my request is a park. I am somewhat older,
2 but my children need it. Right now my children are
3 outside -- outside playing and there's nowhere they can
4 play.

5 And then another one of my requests is
6 public lights. Our children in the morning don't go out
7 because there's no place to play and in the evening it's
8 too dark and they don't go out because it's nighttime. So
9 the only source of entertainment that our people have is
10 to be locked inside just thinking and inventing things.
11 And for that reason a lot of our adolescents are involved
12 in things that are not good. And if you realize it, our
13 adolescents are the future of tomorrow. And what we are
14 doing with them is that we are showing them that in the
15 future they will not be productive people. We're showing
16 them to be people that are going to be locked up. Why?
17 Well, because they have no possibility of being able to
18 find healthy entertainment. We as parents give them as
19 little or as much as we can. Not as much as we would like
20 to give them because we have very scarce income.

21 So then what we want is -- and we realize
22 that you are taking very many requests from us, that you
23 may be tired of listening and listening, but please when
24 you go out just go around and take a look so you can see
25 what is our basic need. I have lived with this because

1 every day I have the same needs. And we have been
2 forgotten by the people who do not even have the funds and
3 we can make requests, but they cannot be granted. I am
4 one of these persons. I need to express my need and that
5 of my family because I live with need and I want to ask
6 you to please, if you have a moment and have been able to
7 listen to us, that you too are -- you be conscious and to
8 take our problems over there where they can possibly find
9 a solution for them, please.

10 I also want to make you aware of the
11 clinics. The personnel in the clinics are not that apt,
12 per say, because there are a large number of people that
13 they have to look into and we are not benefiting from
14 that. And so they pay very little attention to us. They
15 see us come with a certain pain and then they already know
16 where the pain is and that is not really what we want. So
17 what we need is good attention, right? This clinic
18 services a lot of communities and it is a very small
19 clinic with only two small rooms. It is not adequate and
20 they only have three or four doctors. So the attention
21 isn't good.

22 And another thing I would like to add is
23 that the requests that the center makes are very good
24 because we are the ones who benefit from these requests.
25 And here as people we are learning the GED in order to be

1 able to move on in life and not necessarily with all of
2 the education that we would like, but at least we become
3 progressive people who are going to benefit. And so we
4 study the GED or some other type of education, but in some
5 instances we can't come and study because we don't have
6 the adequate day care centers that we need. And this is
7 the reason why we remain stagnant at our homes. Then we
8 go out and we don't have means of transportation, see? So
9 I ask that and I really hope that you pay attention to all
10 of our requests.

11 We have a lot of poverty and we have a lot
12 of young people who have a need of some type of
13 entertainment. And this is part of the need of this
14 community. And these colonias are paying college funds
15 and others and to have -- we are already 2000 people and
16 just to keep them inside and locked up it's just -- no.

17 Well, anyway, I want to thank you for all of
18 the enormous time that you have given us. And I know you
19 are taking many requests, but take them with you. And
20 even if only one is taken care of, well, we're going to
21 appreciate it. And, also, take a walk outside so that you
22 can see what our needs really are.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. CABELLO: Guadalupe with the county.

25 Maria Alvaro, with the county?

1 MR. CABELLO: Okay. County Judge Walker?
2 Hi, welcome. Do you want to make some comments?

3 JUDGE WALKER: Not right now.

4 MR. CABELLO: Not right now. Okay. Thank
5 you, Judge.

6 MR. GARCIA: Hey, Judge, just as a recap for
7 your -- the only thing we've covered so far is just a
8 brief introduction. I'm Buddy Garcia, I'm the Deputy
9 Secretary of State, and Homero Cabello. We came in from
10 Austin. Part of our mandate from legislature that passed
11 last session was to meet with citizens -- citizen
12 residents, advisory folks, among other agencies, to
13 develop their recommendations, you-all's recommendations
14 for the legislature. So we're making our way up and down
15 the border to do that. And so far what we're doing is
16 just taking input for colonia-related advice and/or
17 recommendations that we will take directly back to the
18 legislature for our report due in December. So that's why
19 we're here and thank you for being here.

20 JUDGE WALKER: Okay, thank you.

21 MR. GARCIA: *Who's next?*

22 MR. CABELLO: *Raul Sanchez, do you want to*
23 *speak?*

24 MR. SANCHEZ: *Now I can, huh? As I was*
25 *saying before --*

1 administrative funds are kept at the state. And one
2 example is the HOME program and many of these other new
3 construction or redev- -- (inaudible) programs where the
4 state gives up mostly -- and a very small percentage, four
5 percent, goes to the agency to implement the full program.
6 That puts a barrier into our agencies in order to provide
7 or meet the demand of affordable housing. So we need to
8 look into alternatives to be able to provide that. When
9 I'm talking about capacity building, we need to have our
10 nonprofits have a support to be able to apply for funding,
11 to communicate, to be able to apply for grants. We had
12 mentioned -- besides the State of Texas, there's other
13 agencies or other private entities that have funding, but
14 we do need that communication.

15 I really agree with Jack that we need to
16 have better communication between agencies. And I'd like
17 to thank your offer of your colonia ombudsman because I
18 think that we should be using that office to really
19 communicate. And although he doesn't have the
20 responsibility over private entities or other federal
21 agencies, but communication is a -- I think, it's a key.
22 And we need to start with a dialogue and be able to work
23 with your office in providing these types of solutions.
24 And also make ourselves accountable once we make those
25 solutions, and also be able to evaluate and see what

1 *instead of trusting them. And instead of having that*
2 *trust when they see the police they even hide. I have a*
3 *lot of friends that have problems with their husbands and*
4 *they keep it to themselves and they put up with abuse.*
5 *They have to withstand a lot of abuse because if the*
6 *police comes they check to see if they have papers, and,*
7 *as a matter of fact, they have taken some. So then a lot*
8 *of people are afraid of the police instead of having this*
9 *feeling of protection.*

10 MR. GARCIA: *The Sheriff can't do that.*

11 MS. AVILA: *No, not anymore. They can't do*
12 *that anymore. You see that this person said that they are*
13 *-- they were going to stop that. So what we want is for*
14 *the police to commit themselves to what they're supposed*
15 *to do, which is to take care of the community. And, as a*
16 *matter of fact, they stopped my husband just because his*
17 *color is brown. They went ahead and they stopped him over*
18 *there in Sunland. They stopped him and they didn't give*
19 *him a ticket or anything and my husband asked, Well, don't*
20 *you have the photograph of the person that you're looking*
21 *for? And the policeman was just quiet.*

22 *So they just stopped him because of that.*
23 *They didn't give him a ticket or anything. I told him,*
24 *You should have gotten the number of the policeman so that*
25 *we could have reported him.*

1 And what I would like for them to do is what
2 this man said that they were going to stop for a moment.
3 I would like that they wouldn't do that. That they would
4 protect us so that the same people are not afraid of them.

5 And that is all, thank you.

6 MR. GARCIA: That is a big problem.

7 MS. AVILA: Thank you.

8 MR. GARCIA: Was somebody missing? Anybody
9 who would like to make a comment? Would you please come
10 forward, sir. What is your name, please?

11 MR. JACOBO: Carlos Jacobo

12 MR. CABELLO: Carlos?

13 MR. JACOBO: Jacobo. Carlos Jacobo, I come
14 from (inaudible). From the Colonia Villa Alegre. I have
15 lived there for 15 years and I do not have water or light
16 and they keep telling us -- and I thank God because
17 Alliance has been the one that has been helping us to be
18 able to put the water in, although I don't know when. And
19 the light, well, I really need it because I have a sick
20 wife. She had an embolism last year and I need the light
21 for my home and so I have her in a hospice and I can't
22 take her home because I don't have light.

23 And like Mr. Solis was saying, what is the
24 problem that you're just passing the buck from one to the
25 other? One because they don't have water, the other one

1 because he doesn't pay the septic tank. The people of the
2 water say, No, you can't have water because you don't have
3 a septic tank. And the people from the electric company,
4 the same thing. And the light is something that is
5 necessary. We can't buy food because it will spoil. And
6 so I have my home there. I built it myself, but as we're
7 saying, we need your help to see if you can help us with
8 all of that. Imagine 15 years living without light and
9 without water. I pay 20 or \$30 a month to be able to
10 carry water or take water to my house. And so now, I have
11 been able to acquire some five-gallon tanks to be able to
12 haul water. Imagine that, imagine the impression that we
13 are giving to everybody.

14 And then, well, the money that I -- I'm
15 disabled, also, so it is not much (inaudible). It's
16 not -- we're not able to make ends meet and it's a
17 tremendous problem and we want to know whether our
18 requests are going to be heard and that our words fall
19 into ears of people that will help us because we are
20 abandoned. And Alianza is helping us because this land
21 was -- was for housing and we didn't see whether it was
22 good or bad. What we need is a piece of land to be able
23 to build a home on. And then the (inaudible) program came
24 in with Mr. Solis and that has helped us (inaudible). And
25 that's why we're doing all of this work, but you have to

1 realize that we have no benefit there and that's what we
2 need. We need for you to listen to us and for you to help
3 us with all of that right now. We're two neighbors --
4 we're two. And to be able to bring electricity in we have
5 to pay 11 or \$12,000. And so we don't have light. And
6 the people from the electric company say that we don't
7 have electricity because we don't have water. And the
8 people from the water company say that we can't have water
9 because we don't have the septic tanks. So you have to
10 give us something so that we can start to be able to
11 continue our struggle. And there are a lot of people in
12 that situation, it's not just myself.

13 MR. CABELLO: So you don't have electricity
14 because you don't have water?

15 MR. JACOBO: Right, we don't have the septic
16 tanks.

17 MS. CABALLERO: Excuse me. Here we have an
18 opportunity to speak on behalf of the families. In
19 Ascencion there's also two families that are also on the
20 streets. And those two families don't have electricity
21 because they don't have the light poles. And we have gone
22 there to make the request and they tell us that the owners
23 of the land are the ones who have to put in the posts.
24 And where are we going to find the owner's of that land so
25 that they can do what they're supposed to? They don't

1 appear while those two families live in the land owned by
2 those people. So what is happening, that the wires, the
3 electricity wires are a mile or a mile and a half away.
4 So they can't have refrigerators or they can't have a big
5 cooling unit because by the time they get home the circuit
6 breaker has tripped.

7 MR. GARCIA: Of course, we don't make the
8 law. We're just trying to (inaudible). So any ideas you
9 have.

10 MR. SOLIS: I think that there are various
11 areas like that. For example, where Mr. Jacobo lives, the
12 problem is that there are not enough users in that area
13 and they charge \$11,000 to put in all of the installation
14 that is necessary. And then we have been able, through
15 the Hudspeth County Judge, to be able to obtain variances
16 because that colonia is agricultural. So then they gave
17 us these variances and the electricity can now be
18 connected. So what we need is some type of help and I
19 don't know from where or what type and we're hoping that
20 one of your agencies will be able to help us to negotiate
21 with the light company. We don't expect it for free, but
22 what we do need is for them to be able to give us some
23 kind of help to be able to make payments so that in the
24 meantime more families can move in and then the line can
25 start paying itself.

1 I don't think this is something that is
2 impossible, I think it's just something that we have to
3 look into because with the sole presence of somebody from
4 the department of state, the position rapidly changes to
5 be able to bring in the utilities. And we also understand
6 that their job is to keep a business going. And, again,
7 I'd want to emphasize that we don't want anything for
8 free, but we do need that little help so that they are a
9 little flexible.

10 MS. CABALLERO: And the way the population
11 is coming, as soon as the water comes to some of these
12 areas, and by this I mean Ascencion and Las Colonias where
13 they are going to have water those pieces of land are
14 going to be inhabited. So, then, is it fair that these
15 families have to wait one and a half or two years to have
16 running water? It isn't fair. So where are we going to
17 get ahold of the owners of the land?

18 MR. SOLIS: But they are -- but if we can
19 find the money and install the lines, as these places get
20 populated, they are willing to work something out. As a
21 matter of fact, they are willing to lower the price.
22 Isn't that right, Maria?

23 MR. CABELLO: Daniel, you were saying that
24 the utility companies don't want to take the lines out
25 there because it's not cost effective for them.

1 MR. SOLIS: That's right.

2 MR. GARCIA: Plus the law doesn't allow any
3 variance or exceptions like this. You need to get a
4 flexibility to where the legislature, or something, makes
5 a law saying, All right, certain subdivisions don't apply.
6 Because there's only one house out here, we should be able
7 to make arrangements. That's why, I'm thinking, in terms
8 of the water tanks, or maybe even electricity, come up
9 with some kind of variance that allows us to get around
10 the obvious -- the law is just the law, they can't do
11 anything about it, but if we can do things to encourage
12 the electric company to want to do it.

13 MR. SOLIS: And that's what we say, see.

14 Yes, that's what we say. How can we work to
15 put together a type of a (inaudible) to help us to
16 negotiate in these instances and that they can see that
17 there is a solution. For example, the water here in -- in
18 Horizon City, the problem there is the water district.

19 They don't want to give the folks any type
20 of payment schedule to pay for their services. This is
21 another instance where we need the CPLP that provides that
22 loan to that family and then you pay the water district
23 and the folks can pay one percent, you know, interest.

24 MR. CABELLO: We're going to get you a
25 contact on that colonia water development program.

1 MR. GARCIA: I'll go straight to the record.
2 I -- we'll get that fixed for you this week.

3 MR. SOLIS: Thank you.

4 (A break taken)

5 MR. CEJAS: *My name is Juan Cejas and I am*
6 *here representing Acala, Texas. There are about 20*
7 *families there that have the same problems that you people*
8 *have here. Some people don't have light, others don't*
9 *have water. And so the thing here is that we would like*
10 *to know how you can help us resolve these issues, maybe*
11 *through Alianza, so that you can help us.*

12 MR. CABELLO: Where -- what community are
13 you representing?

14 MR. CEJAS: Acala, Texas. Five miles before
15 getting to (inaudible).

16 MR. CABELLO: And do you have septic tanks?

17 MR. CEJAS: Yes, some families do. There
18 are about, approximately, five or six families that do
19 have septic tanks. And there are about another 15
20 families who do not have water and do not have light. And
21 we have tremendous need. I, for example, don't have water
22 and it's a tremendous necessity that we have.

23 In that subdivision they have sold 1000
24 lots. 15 years ago those 1000 lots were sold at \$1000 a
25 piece, but at that time it wasn't mandatory that we had to

1 have the utilities. And now, to be complaint, you do have
2 to have a septic tank. Before we would make our own hole
3 and so that's what we had, but now that we have this new
4 law, we can't do that. And right now there are only 30
5 families of the 1000 lots that were sold because a lot of
6 people can't do that. And, of course, for the same
7 reason, because people can't afford the septic tanks. The
8 streets need to be finished, and, of course, the county
9 comes and helps us. They come in once a month and they
10 help just -- the very, very, few families, but regarding
11 the rest, is not taken care of because that is the desert,
12 it is totally the desert. And that is the problem that we
13 have. Just that we really need a hand from the state to
14 help us maybe with the water system and see if they can
15 extend, like the city of El Paso did, they extended their
16 line all the way over to the county line. And so now we
17 want the Hudspeth that pertains to Sierra Blanca, see if
18 they can install the line seven miles, which is where the
19 county joins.

20 That is my request and that is the reason
21 why I am here. And at the same time to thank you and that
22 you realize that there are people that are much, much
23 poorer than you are. Thank you, and thank you to all.

24 MR. CABELLO: Thank you. Someone else?

25 MS. IBARRA: My name is Guadalupe Ibarra.

1 I'm the housing coordinator here for the Self-Help Center.
2 I work with Martha and Tony.

3 I just want to reiterate on the need that we
4 need to have some sort of meeting for you guy to mediate
5 with the utility companies because we're doing a great job
6 with the funds, like you just heard here. I announced the
7 funds for the water connections that we're having through
8 the Self-Help Center program funds. And it's limited
9 amount of money. And the neighborhood knows that -- the
10 community knows that it's limited amount of money. And
11 there's some that want to do their own water connections.
12 They all want to do their own investment, but it's too
13 much. \$950 is too much for them at one time. So they're
14 saying, Is there any way that you can talk to someone so,
15 you know, we can make sure that they give us payments?
16 Gas company does that. They even use some funds and then
17 they connect -- they do their gas connections, and then
18 they're able to go ahead and set up a payment plan, a
19 monthly payment plan.

20 MR. GARCIA: And you all want a payment plan
21 for the water --

22 MS. IBARRA: We want the help for the sewer
23 systems. We want the help for the water connections. We
24 need more of those, definitely. And, yes, indeed, we do
25 need to -- we need to have a various use of water tanks

1 with chlorinated water and all that so that we can use
2 some of the programs that -- we have just folks right here
3 behind us that we cannot help them with any of our
4 programs because, you know, we have that issue that we
5 need to have them to have water.

6 But after that, you know, meanwhile, while
7 we're getting that done, I think this one will be just a
8 matter of sitting down and somebody from your office, you
9 know, sitting down with the utility companies and maybe
10 coming to an agreement of getting those payments for
11 residents.

12 That one, and then thank you very much, you
13 know, for coming here and hearing the residents.

14 MR. GARCIA: Do you have any business cards?
15 I'm trying to get all the information so I can make sure
16 the right person gets hooked up with you and we can work
17 that. Not only -- everybody's recommendations are going
18 to be included in the report, but rather than wait for the
19 report, some of these things we can move on right now. As
20 well as coordinate with -- I think it's very interesting
21 the variances or the idea of having some type of
22 addressing the -- these odd situations. The tanks, I
23 hadn't heard this before, the tanks not -- being
24 acceptable with one group, and another government group
25 not accepting them, and then the money isn't available.

1 realize that we have no benefit there and that's what we
2 need. We need for you to listen to us and for you to help
3 us with all of that right now. We're two neighbors --
4 we're two. And to be able to bring electricity in we have
5 to pay 11 or \$12,000. And so we don't have light. And
6 the people from the electric company say that we don't
7 have electricity because we don't have water. And the
8 people from the water company say that we can't have water
9 because we don't have the septic tanks. So you have to
10 give us something so that we can start to be able to
11 continue our struggle. And there are a lot of people in
12 that situation, it's not just myself.

13 MR. CABELLO: So you don't have electricity
14 because you don't have water?

15 MR. JACOBO: Right, we don't have the septic
16 tanks.

17 MS. CABALLERO: Excuse me. Here we have an
18 opportunity to speak on behalf of the families. In
19 Ascencion there's also two families that are also on the
20 streets. And those two families don't have electricity
21 because they don't have the light poles. And we have gone
22 there to make the request and they tell us that the owners
23 of the land are the ones who have to put in the posts.
24 And where are we going to find the owner's of that land so
25 that they can do what they're supposed to? They don't

1 But you do have elected officials here, state reps,
2 senators, that would love to hear from you. That these
3 are things that they could, again, the same
4 recommendations that they could help you here as well.
5 That they have the political pull, you know, to maybe put
6 the right people together. If they don't hear from you,
7 then they're going to go under the assumption that House
8 Bill 1001 was great and they just don't always have the
9 ammunition that -- because they want to file bills, they
10 want to pass laws if they can help.

11 MS. IBARRA: Right. And, also, I don't mean
12 to be facetious, but, you know, elections are over. So,
13 it's harder for different nonprofits to be calling all
14 these different elected officials and to set up a
15 round-table, and that's why we're very appreciative that
16 you're here, because you can make it happen.

17 MR. GARCIA: And I appreciate that, too, but
18 we cannot change the law.

19 MS. IBARRA: Oh, no, no, no.

20 MR. GARCIA: So now that the elections are
21 over it's even better because now they need to get their
22 mind ready on January when they go back to Austin to pass
23 laws. We can -- and we're going to recommend everything
24 you say, but we're not legislators.

25 MS. IBARRA: Oh, no, no. I know that.

1 MR. GARCIA: So, what I'm saying is if they
2 are included, not so much because they're not going to
3 respond because they're politicians, I think because
4 that's what their job -- if they're included, they can get
5 to writing these laws and change these laws now, before we
6 get to January and then May when they realize, Oh, it
7 never passed. You know, they can write this stuff now, in
8 fact, whether it be Norma Chavez or Shapleigh or --

9 MR. CABELLO: Pickett.

10 MR. GARCIA: Or -- Representative Pickett --
11 no, I'm trying to think of the other one.

12 Who is the representative for this area?

13 MS. IBARRA: Chente Quintanilla.

14 MR. GARCIA: Chente. They'll write the
15 bill, they just don't have the ideas. And, so, yes. I
16 make myself available.

17 MS. IBARRA: I understand. And when you
18 speak all this, that person, that ombudsman comes to my
19 mind, because that's the person that should be putting all
20 this together for us, you know, coordination. We need a
21 coordinator to do exactly what you just said. You just
22 hit it right on the head.

23 MR. GARCIA: I'll work on that. My
24 office -- and you've got my card, I will work on it.

25 MS. IBARRA: So thank you very much.

1 MR. GARCIA: My pleasure.

2 MR. CABELLO: Thank you.

3 Thank you so much to everybody.

4 MR. JACOBO: May I make one more request?

5 Well, I want to touch on the subject of the water. It's
6 that in Fort Hancock every month they raise the prices of
7 water and that water is not good for drinking. It's only
8 to bathe and to wash the clothes. And so every month
9 they're raising and raising the price of water for one or
10 another reason and they just keep giving us excuses.

11 There is a couple in one of the houses there
12 and they charge them 80 or \$90 for the water and they're
13 charging us more than here in the city and it's a little
14 town of about 3000 people. And they're just giving us
15 excuses and it is a tremendous problem. And it's even
16 better to go and buy the water elsewhere. So it is \$30
17 that we pay to drink water per month. So imagine that.

18 MS. CABALLERO: Excuse me, Mr. Jacobo, for
19 interrupting. Do you have your little water tank and do
20 you fill it with a pump or to be able to water your plants
21 because you don't even have that opportunity.

22 MR. JACOBO: It is a problem and I would
23 very much like for you to come by to see this town. It is
24 abandoned.

25 MR. CABELLO: And what town is this?

1 MR. JACOBO: Fort Hancock. And, so,
2 finally, they were sanctioned by now. What they want to
3 do is to get the money from us. And they say, no, it's
4 that we have been penalized by the state and so now we
5 have to get the money to pay for that. So that town needs
6 a lot and the people that have money are people that work
7 out in the field. And people just make enough money to be
8 able to eat and the people there are tired. And just not
9 to get into problems, people do go to the meetings. And
10 so they say, Oh, well you must have some type of a leak
11 somewhere. And that is the only excuse that they give us.
12 And I would like, if you have time, that you would come
13 over so that you could see all of that. And then the --
14 the trucks that take water, they have -- what do you call
15 that? That the man was talking about that is very bad for
16 the water. It's something that is -- what is it called?
17 That it has asbestos. Well, the case is that there are
18 some parts where I would like for you to come over and
19 visit because you can't imagine the size of the problem.
20 So I would like for you to take this town into
21 consideration because imagine if we have the problem now,
22 if we're paying this amount of money now, imagine what
23 it's going to be in a while.

24 So I would like for one of you to be able to
25 communicate with the people from the water so that we pay

1 I'm the housing coordinator here for the Self-Help Center.
2 I work with Martha and Tony.

3 I just want to reiterate on the need that we
4 need to have some sort of meeting for you guy to mediate
5 with the utility companies because we're doing a great job
6 with the funds, like you just heard here. I announced the
7 funds for the water connections that we're having through
8 the Self-Help Center program funds. And it's limited
9 amount of money. And the neighborhood knows that -- the
10 community knows that it's limited amount of money. And
11 there's some that want to do their own water connections.
12 They all want to do their own investment, but it's too
13 much. \$950 is too much for them at one time. So they're
14 saying, Is there any way that you can talk to someone so,
15 you know, we can make sure that they give us payments?
16 Gas company does that. They even use some funds and then
17 they connect -- they do their gas connections, and then
18 they're able to go ahead and set up a payment plan, a
19 monthly payment plan.

20 MR. GARCIA: And you all want a payment plan
21 for the water --

22 MS. IBARRA: We want the help for the sewer
23 systems. We want the help for the water connections. We
24 need more of those, definitely. And, yes, indeed, we do
25 need to -- we need to have a various use of water tanks

1 Albert.

2 Thank you for coming.

3 MR. CABELLO: Thank you, Jack.

4 (The proceedings concluded at 12:19 p.m.)

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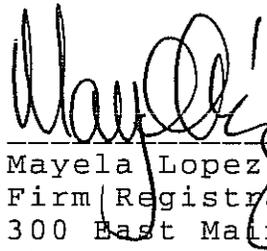
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CERTIFICATE

THE STATE OF TEXAS)
)
COUNTY OF EL PASO)

I, Mayela Lopez, a Certified Shorthand Reporter in and for the State of Texas, do hereby certify that this transcript is a true record of the testimony given in said proceedings, and that said transcription is done to the best of my ability.

Given under my hand and seal of office on this 10th day of August, 2006.



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