BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION



STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE TREVOR PRATT, presiding



FILED 05/12/25 12:11 PM A2501003

In the Matter of the Application of)	PREHEARING
Crimson California Pipeline L.P.)	CONFERENCE
(PLC-26) for Authority to Withdraw a)	
Segment of its Seal Beach Pipeline from)	Application
Public Utility Service.)	25-01-003
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REPORTER'S TRANSCRIPT Virtual Proceeding March 14, 2025 Pages 1 - 25 Volume 1

Reported by: Doris Huaman, CSR No. 10538

1	VIRTUAL PROCEEDING
2	MARCH 14, 2025 - 1:31 P.M.
3	* * * *
4	ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE PRATT: Let's go on
5	the record.
6	This is the virtual prehearing conference for
7	Application 25-01-003 filed on January 13th, 2025, by
8	Crimson California LLP to withdraw the southern portion
9	of the Seal Beach Pipeline from public utility service
10	with the intention to close it.
11	I'm Trevor Pratt, the administrative law judge
12	assigned to this proceeding. The assigned commissioner
13	Matthew Baker is not available to join us today, but his
14	advisor Kyle Navas is here at this prehearing
15	conference.
16	The purpose of this prehearing conference is to
17	discuss the issues and the scope and schedule and
18	procedural matters for this proceeding. As such, my
19	agenda for today is to:
20	One, go over the service list;
21	Two, discuss the categorization of this
22	proceeding;
23	Three, discuss the scope of issues;
24	Four, discuss the need for hearings;
25	And five, discuss the schedule for the
23	And live, discuss the senedule for the

remainder of this proceeding.

Nothing will be decided today as these matters will be determined by the assigned commissioner in an upcoming scoping memo. Since this prehearing conference is being held virtually, I will remind parties and all attendees to refrain from speaking and mute your lines until I direct you to speak.

First, let's turn to the service list. In Commission proceedings, the applicant and those who have filed protests or responses are automatically added to the service list. For each company organization, there will be one representative listed as the party. All others will be listed as information only.

One formal protest to the application was filed and served. However, I will give members of the public an opportunity to request party status momentarily.

First, I will ask the applicant's primary representative to state their name and spell their last name for the record.

MR. SQUERI: Thank you, your Honor. My name is James Squeri, S-q-u-e-r-i, appearing on behalf of Crimson California Pipeline.

ALJ PRATT: Thank you.

Next I will ask the second representative for the applicant to please state their name and spell their

1	last name for the record.
2	MS. KROETSCH: (No audible response.)
3	ALJ PRATT: Ms. Kroetsch.
4	MR. SQUERI: Oh. I'm sorry. Did you ask for
5	whoever is appearing upon behalf of Crimson California?
6	ALJ PRATT: Yes.
7	MR. SQUERI: Ms. Kroetsch was available. I'm
8	not sure where she is.
9	ALJ PRATT: It appears that Ms. Kroetsch has
10	fallen off of the panelists has lost internet
11	connection.
12	Going off the record.
13	(Off the record.)
14	ALJ PRATT: Going back on the record.
15	Ms. Kroetsch has fallen offline. Hopefully, she will be
16	back, but Mr. Squeri will proceed forward without her.
17	Next I will ask the representative for DCOR to
18	please state their name and spell their last name for
19	the record.
20	MR. HILTON: Good afternoon, your Honor. Seth
21	Hilton, H-i-l-t-o-n, on behalf of Protestant DCOR LLC.
22	ALJ PRATT: Thank you.
23	Does anyone present seek to become a party to
24	this proceeding?
25	(No response.)

1	Going off the record.
2	(Off the record.)
3	ALJ PRATT: Going back on the record.
4	While off the record, I was checking if any
5	member of the public sought to make a motion. Hearing
6	none, the service list is complete, and we will continue
7	with the prehearing conference.
8	As you may know, the Commission encourages
9	electronic service and requires all documents served
10	electronically to go to everyone on the service list.
11	That includes those who are listed as information only.
12	Next we'll turn to categorization. In its
13	application, Crimson California proposed to categorize
14	this proceeding as ratesetting. In its protest, DCOR
15	concurred that the proceeding should be categorized as
16	ratesetting.
17	On January 30th, 2025, in Resolution ALJ
18	176-3558, the Commission preliminarily determined that
19	the category of this proceeding is ratesetting.
20	Does any party have any concerns about the
21	categorization of ratesetting?
22	MR. SQUERI: No concerns on Crimson's part,
23	your Honor.
24	MR. HILTON: Not on DCOR's part either.
25	(Reporter clarification.)

1	MR. SQUERI: I'm sorry. James Squeri,
2	S-q-u-e-r-i, appearing on behalf of Crimson.
3	Yes. We do not object to ratesetting as the
4	categorization.
5	MR. HILTON: Seth Hilton on behalf of DCOR LLC.
6	We also do not object to having this set as
7	ratesetting.
8	ALJ PRATT: All right. Hearing no objections,
9	I agree. And we'll recommend to the assigned
_0	commissioner that the ratesetting categorization is
.1	appropriate for this case.
.2	Please note that the ratesetting categorization
_3	triggers ex parte rules described in Article 8 of the
_4	Commission's Rules and Practice and Procedure. Parties
.5	that communicate procedural issues with me should do so
-6	by email and copy the entire service list. Parties
_7	should not communicate with me about nonprocedural
8_8	issues outside of a public forum that has been noticed
_9	to the official service list of this proceeding.
20	Before we discuss the scope and schedule of
21	this proceeding, I have a few questions to both parties
22	about circumstances related to this application.
23	Mr. Squeri, what is the underlying property
24	ownership type of the portion of Seal Beach Pipeline,
25	such as fee ownership or easements?

1	MR. SQUERI: Well, to the extent I understand
2	your question, your Honor, the pipeline is owned by
3	the by Crimson California. The property rights, the
4	easements are various and are property rights between
5	Crimson and whatever particular entity that they have
6	arranged for ability to construct a pipeline in that
7	easement.
8	I've had indication from Ms. Kroetsch she's
9	lost her the internet connection. She's trying to
10	get back on. And I assume if you have any more specific
11	questions about the property ownership or the underlying
12	easement holders, she might be able to elucidate, but as
13	I said to there are a variety of easements under
14	which the 5.8 mile segment of pipeline crosses.
15	ALJ PRATT: Thank you. So to the best of your
16	understanding, is all on easement and Crimson California
17	does not own any of the underlying property and fee
18	status.
19	MR. SQUERI: That is Jim Squeri here.
20	That is correct, your Honor.
21	ALJ PRATT: Okay. Thank you.
22	Mr. Hilton, did you have any comment about
23	that?
24	MR. HILTON: Thank you, your Honor. Seth
25	Hilton on behalf of DCOR.

1	No additional comment.
2	ALJ PRATT: Great.
3	Mr. Squeri, where is the Caltrans San Gabriel
4	Bridge widening project in its development process?
5	When does Caltrans expect to begin
6	construction, and when does Caltrans require the
7	pipeline relocation to be completed?
8	MR. SQUERI: Jim Squeri on behalf of Crimson.
9	We have not received any specific construction
10	start date from Caltrans. It's it's not always easy
11	dealing with the Caltrans bureaucracy. Our
12	understanding and the assumption that we've been
13	operating on was that the construction start date would
14	be sometime in the 3rd quarter of October, but that's
15	relatively old information.
16	Perhaps when Ms. Kroetsch manages to reconnect
17	and get back on this call she might be able to elucidate
18	further. Ah. There she is.
19	MS. KROETSCH: My apologies. I'm in a new
20	construction area, and my internet goes out sometimes.
21	Of course it was during this moment. So my apologies.
22	So I hear we're talking about timing for the
23	Caltrans construction project. Did I get that correct?
24	ALJ PRATT: Yes.
25	MS. KROETSCH: Okay. So last we had heard was

1	we had been asked to complete a front-end engineering
2	design package for Caltrans by the end of Q1 2025. So
3	essentially, that was to keep them on track to start
4	breaking ground at the beginning of Q3 of this year,
5	2025. We have not received an updated date. We have
6	requested that information, but we have
7	unfortunately, we haven't heard anything beyond that at
8	this time.
9	ALJ PRATT: Thank you.
_0	Mr. Hilton, do you have anything to add about
.1	that?
2	MR. HILTON: Thank you, your Honor. Seth
_3	Hilton on behalf of DCOR.
_4	I do not have anything to add.
.5	ALJ PRATT: Thank you. Mr. Hilton, has DCOR
-6	been able to secure an alternative route for transfers
_7	from Platform Esther?
8	MR. HILTON: DCOR has not been able to secure
_9	an alternative route. They are in the process of
20	exploring or pursuing, really, an option that would
21	consist of starting production from another offshore
22	platform, Eva, in conjunction with a settlement with the
23	State Lands Commission. This settlement involves
24	allowing DCOR to use a natural gas pipeline, I believe,
25	that runs between Eva and yet another offshore platform,

Edith, so that the production would be transferred to Edith and then onshore.

And under the settlement agreement with the State Lands Commission, once Eva is producing for 30 days, we would shut down the Esther Platform, which is the platform involved here. So that scenario would eventually lead to an option where we would not need the Seal Beach Pipeline.

Unfortunately, the timing of when that might occur is unclear. The settlement with the State Lands Commission is final, but there's some additional permits that are needed to restart Eva. So we are waiting for those particular permits.

The hope would be that we'd complete all that process and begin production from Eva before the end of this year, but it's somewhat uncertain at this point.

ALJ PRATT: So, for my clarification, you have a pipeline that interconnects Platform Esther to Platform Eva, and so you would be transferring production -- the product that's being produced at Platform Esther to Platform Eva and then on from there?

MR. HILTON: No. Slightly different. I apologize. It's -- at least it's confusing to me that all these platforms start with an "E" and we couldn't have chosen a different letter. But it wouldn't involve

1	a direct connection from the platform that connects to
2	the Seal Beach plat Pipeline Esther to another
3	platform. It would be restarting Eva, that is, the
4	separate offshore platform. And Eva would to do
5	that, it needs to connect to yet a third offshore
6	platform, Edith. So that that's the connection.
7	There's no dinect direct connection to Esther.
8	ALJ PRATT: And how does that affect the
9	(Crosstalk.)
10	MR. HILTON: It affects because as part of
11	the agreement with the State Lands Commission,
12	restarting Eva would involve shutting down Esther. So
13	it's so as a result of putting all those pieces
14	together, once Eva starts production, we would
15	within after 30 days, we would no longer be utilizing
16	the Seal Beach Pipeline.
17	ALJ PRATT: And what is driving that settlement
18	agreement with the State Lands Commission?
19	MR. HILTON: In terms of timing or the
20	ALJ PRATT: For that negotiation of where you
21	are reaching a settlement. Is this
22	MR. HILTON: Yes.
23	ALJ PRATT: related directly to the
24	closure to the proposed closure of the Seal Beach
25	Pipeline, or was this settlement

MR. HILTON: I can't yeah. I can't speak to the there was some litigation with the State Lands Commission that resulted in the settlement. It does the settlement does directly involve Platform Esther, which is the platform we are concerned about here. The settlement, I believe, was entered into and approved, you know, the beginning of this year. So the timing is consistent with dealing with the Seal Beach Pipeline issues. ALJ PRATT: All right. Mr. Squeri, do you have any comments regarding that? MR. SQUERI: No, your Honor. ALJ PRATT: Thank you. So, Mr. Hilton, is DCOR still interested in purchasing the southern portion of the Seal Beach Pipeline? MR. HILTON: That is something I have to explore further with my client. ALJ PRATT: Could negotiations regarding the purchase that had previously occurred resume? MR. HILTON: I think it sorry. Seth Hilton on behalf of DCOR. I would say from DCOR's position, we are happy	1	(Crosstalk.)
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	25	I would say from DCOR's position, we are happy

to continue discussions with Crimson about a resolution of what we're going to do with the Seal Beach Pipeline considering Crimson's concerns. So it would be a -- kind of a broader topic of working out a resolution, whether that involves sale of the pipeline or something different. We are willing to continue to try and seek a resolution with Crimson at this point.

ALJ PRATT: Mr. Squeri, could Crimson resume negotiations with DCOR?

MR. SQUERI: Your Honor, I don't think it's very fruitful to discuss the sale of the pipeline to -- to DCOR or anyone else. I think that the problem, no matter what level of indemnification we could have, that anything regarding the continued operation of that pipeline would still impose some potential consequential very significant economic risks for Seal -- for Crimson.

And it just doesn't seem like a very viable option, and it doesn't seem to sort of meet the time constraints that we appear to be facing, whether with Caltrans or with other development projects that involve the location of the existing pipeline.

We've undertook -- we tried to negotiate for a year and a half, and nothing came it of, your Honor.

And I frankly don't see it as a viable option for resolving this matter. I think it's pretty clear from

the facts on the ground that the Seal Beach Pipeline 1 needs to come out of service, that -- the notion that it 2 3 continuing in service is too problematic, both from an environmental perspective and also from the consequences 4 5 of how it would affect the Caltrans project and other development projects. 6 So, realistically, we don't believe that it's a 8 useful expenditure of our time to sort of negotiate a 9 potential sale of the pipeline to DCOR. ALJ PRATT: All right. 10 Have either/or the both of you considered 11 12 and/or would be interested in the Commission's 13 Alternative Dispute Resolution Program to try to 14 establish settlement? Not necessarily --15 MR. SQUERI: Your Honor, Jim Squeri. 16 (Crosstalk.) 17 MR. SQUERI: If I -- if I might be heard. I'm very much interested in a settlement. And I'm more 18 19 interested in the best process for us to accomplish 20 that, and I'm reasonably familiar with the ADR process. 21 And that is an option. 22 But, actually, I'm -- and I'll make this overture to Mr. Hilton. I think this maybe best a 23 negotiation that appear -- that takes place between the 24 25 parties.

1	I'm hopeful that both of us operating in good
2	faith could reach a resolution. We've got, I think, a
3	recognition that that it's most realistic for the
4	pipeline to come out of service. We have a recognition
5	that DCOR has a legitimate interest in getting its
6	product to market and having a viable alternative. And
7	somewhere we're hopeful that we have a middle ground
8	that we can get sufficient assurance that we can manage
9	this so that we don't necessarily disrupt the Caltrans
10	project or other significant development projects that
11	are ongoing in the location.
12	So I'm in favor of negotiations. I'm not sure
13	at this time that it's best to go to the ADR process. I
14	would tend to recommend a two-party negotiation between
15	the parties, but I am certainly open to ADR.
16	ALJ PRATT: Mr. Hilton, your thoughts.
17	MR. HILTON: Yes. Seth Hilton on behalf of
18	DCOR.
19	DCOR would be willing to engage in the ADR
20	process but perfectly happy to engage in kind of
21	two-party negotiations along with what Mr. Squeri
22	suggested and maybe see if that process could lead to a
23	resolution of this without having to invoke the ADR
24	procedures.

ALJ PRATT: Great. Thank you.

25

1	Now let's turn to the scope of issues in this
2	proceeding. Based upon my prior review of the
3	application, protest and reply, I'm inclined to
4	recommend the following issues to the assigned
5	commissioner for the scope of the proceeding:
6	One, whether the public interest is served by
7	withdrawing a portion of the Seal Beach Pipeline from
8	public utility service;
9	(a) does the continued operation of the portion
_0	of the Seal Beach Pipeline represent a risk to public
.1	health and/or the environment greater than other similar
2	pipelines including the rest of the Seal Beach Pipeline?
_3	If so, how can those risks be mitigated to a level
_4	typical of operating oil pipelines;
.5	(b) would the continued operation of the
-6	portion of Seal Beach Pipeline harm Crimson California?
_7	If so, what is the nature of that harm;
8_8	(c) what would be the expected rate impacts on
_9	Crimson California's customers to continue safe
20	operation of the portion of the Seal Beach Pipeline;
21	(d) are there any service alternatives
22	available to DCOR to transfer product from DCOR's
23	Platform Esther to DCOR's refining facility;
24	Two, if approved for a withdrawal of service,
25	what is the appropriate final disposition of the portion

1	of Seal Beach Pipeline;
2	(a) can the pipeline be sold and safely
3	operated by another entity such as DCOR;
4	(b) what is an acceptable level of elimination
5	of potential pollutants for the closure of the pipeline;
6	(c) will the proposed closure method ensure
7	elimination of potential pollutants prior to abandonment
8	of a to an acceptable level;
9	(d) do any of the franchise agreements,
10	licenses, permits or other applicable statutes or
11	regulations require specific cleanup and closure
12	methods;
13	(e) what is the reasonable cost of the closure
14	of the pipeline segment;
15	Three, is the proposed pipeline withdrawal of
16	service, closure and abandonment exempt from the
17	California Environmental Quality Act;
18	Four, does the withdrawal and disposal of the
19	portion of Seal Beach Pipeline comply with the
20	Commission's tribal lands transfer policy?
21	Do you have any comments on the potential
22	issues as I have outlined them?
23	Mr. Squeri.
24	MR. SQUERI: No, your Honor. It's a very
25	comprehensive list.

1	ALJ PRATT: Mr. Hilton.
2	MR. HILTON: Thank you, your Honor. Seth
3	Hilton on behalf of DCOR.
4	The one slight addition I would make is
5	there's I think one of the key issues is timing, and
6	that may fit under category one. So it's the timing of
7	any potential withdrawal, the timing associated with the
8	potential risks that Crimson is facing and then, of
9	course, the timing associated with the alternative that
10	DCOR is pursuing at this time.
11	ALJ PRATT: Thank you.
12	Are there any additional issues that either of
13	the parties wishes to add? I'm especially interested in
14	knowing if there are any safety issues or environmental
15	and social justice issues that should be considered by
16	the Commission while evaluating the application.
17	Mr. Squeri.
18	MR. SQUERI: Your Honor, I'm not aware of any
19	issues relating to environmental and social justice that
20	this application raises.
21	ALJ PRATT: Mr. Hilton.
22	MR. HILTON: Nothing from me either. Thank
23	you.
24	ALJ PRATT: Thank you.
25	So now we will move to the schedule and the

1	need for hearings. The applicant in both its
2	application and reply proposed a schedule that includes
3	hearings. DCOR has identified in its protest several
4	material facts that it seeks evidentiary hearing on.
5	Mr. Hilton, do you have any additional comment
6	on material facts in dispute or changes from what you
7	discussed in the protest?
8	MR. HILTON: Seth Hilton on behalf of DCOR.
9	No, I do not, other than to say I agree there
_0	are material issues that would warrant hearings in this
.1	case.
2	ALJ PRATT: All right.
_3	Mr. Squeri, do you have any comments on the
4	material facts that Mr. Hilton identified, and are there
_5	any additional material facts that should be subject to
-6	evidentiary hearings?
_7	MR. SQUERI: Thank you, your Honor. No, I have
8_	no further comments regarding the issues to be addressed
9	at hearing.
20	ALJ PRATT: Thank you.
21	I may ask you both for further statements
22	regarding material facts in dispute prior to the
23	scheduling of evidentiary hearings.
24	The applicant has proposed approximately 15
25	days between each round of testimony in the beginning of

1	evidentiary hearings, whereas DCOR has proposed
2	approximately 30 days between each event.
3	Is that still the case, Mr. Squeri?
4	MR. SQUERI: Yes, your Honor. We're interested
5	in moving forward as expeditiously as possible.
6	ALJ PRATT: And Mr. Hilton.
7	MR. HILTON: Yes. That's still DCOR's
8	position. We believe we need some additional time.
9	ALJ PRATT: All right. The applicant has
10	proposed a timeline for this application to result in a
11	decision to be presented to the Commission for a vote in
12	August 2025.
13	Mr. Squeri, are there any specific factors
14	driving the urgency of this application and the
15	aggressiveness of your proposed schedule?
16	Are there any specific consequences tied to a
17	specific date?
18	MR. SQUERI: Thank you, your Honor. In
19	general and we lack specificity with the exact sort
20	of start date with the Caltrans project, but obviously
21	that is a specific consequence that we're looking to
22	make sure that we're we're not in a position where
23	failure to act on the subject application causes
24	trans a delay in Caltrans' project.

project that there are consequences to delay in getting approval in this -- in this application, that if

Ms. Kroetsch is still on the line that maybe I'd ask her to elaborate on the circumstances of that development and how it is a consequence of any delay in getting -- it's a negative consequence of any delay in getting timely approval of this request to withdraw service.

MS. KROETSCH: Mandy Kroetsch, Crimson.

I would just like to add that we have been receiving several requests from a developer who is looking to develop a condominium-type development close to the -- in Long Beach close to the corner of 2nd and PCH. It is a large development which would add significant amount of housing to the area. And it is such that they are getting a little nervous because they expressed, in the last meeting with them, which was just a few weeks ago -- two weeks ago, that they are in completion of a previous project and have 100 employees who are looking to transition to the next project, which is this project.

We have been in discussions with them about us relocating our pipeline or removing it completely from the property because it is in conflict with their development location, the footprint.

In the last meeting we had with them, they had

very detailed drawings that we went through together, and it was very clear to me in that meeting that their groundwork and laying of piles and formwork would come within three feet our pipeline. So this is an active pipeline currently carrying crude oil, and that is of extreme concern to me as the president at Crimson.

We talked through various options for them to be able to work away and from proximity to our pipeline, but I recognize that in development you have to do groundwork to level the ground before you can really do any sequential phases of the project. So there was very minimal opportunity for changes in that sense.

So my biggest concern is that we've been delaying them for far too long because of this situation that has been in negotiation for two years. And I'm of concern that they are going to stop asking for a resolution from Crimson and could potentially cause a impact to our pipeline, right? There's only so much work that they can do before we are out of their way, and that's of extreme concern for me. So that's the only addition I have. Thank you.

ALJ PRATT: Ms. Kroetsch, can you clarify the nature of the land rights for that development, whether you have superior rights?

MS. KROETSCH: I don't have the detail that of

which I would have to look into. What I do know is that 1 2 we have an easement which is allowing our pipeline in 3 the segment where it exists today, but I don't know what the details of that easement are, whether it's superior 4 5 or not. So, unfortunately, I'm unable to answer your question in the moment. ALJ PRATT: Thank you. I may follow-up with 8 you about that --9 MS. KROETSCH: Yes. Thank you. ALJ PRATT: -- as to who would be paying for 10 11 that relocation. 12 Mr. Hilton, do you have any comment? 13 MR. HILTON: Thank you, your Honor. Yeah. Just a brief comment. First of all, none these concerns 14 15 were laid out in any particular detail in the 16 application itself and haven't been submitted as 17 evidence to the Commission yet. And while I certainly appreciate the concerns around the development, I'm not 18 19 sure we should assume that there's a risk that the 20 development would cause injury to the pipeline or the 21 developer would be hasty or negligent in that way that 22 they would request injury to the pipeline. 23 And although there may be significant economic 24 consequences to the developer, there is also significant economic consequences to DCOR associated with that line 25

1	as well.
2	ALJ PRATT: Thank you. As I previously
3	mentioned, I may issue rulings requesting additional
4	information as the proceeding progresses.
5	Are there any other procedural matters that
6	should be addressed today?
7	(No response.)
8	ALJ PRATT: Hearing none, Mr. Squeri, I did
9	want to give you an opportunity. Was there anything you
10	wanted to circle back to talk about, what we had spoken
11	while Ms. Kroetsch was off the line?
12	MR. SQUERI: No thank you, your Honor.
13	ALJ PRATT: Well, in that case, thank you all
14	for your participation today.
15	We are adjourned and off the record.
16	(At the hour of 2:05 p.m., the Commission
17	then adjourned.)
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1	BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
2	OF THE
3	STATE OF CALIFORNIA
4	
5	
6	CERTIFICATION OF TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDING
7	I, DORIS HUAMAN, CERTIFIED SHORTHAND REPORTER
8	NO. 10538, IN AND FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DO
9	HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THE PAGES OF THIS TRANSCRIPT
10	PREPARED BY ME COMPRISE A FULL, TRUE, AND CORRECT
11	TRANSCRIPT OF THE TESTIMONY AND PROCEEDINGS HELD IN
12	THIS MATTER ON MARCH 14, 2025.
13	I FURTHER CERTIFY THAT I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THE
14	EVENTS OF THE MATTER OR THE OUTCOME OF THE PROCEEDING.
15	EXECUTED THIS MAY 09, 2025.
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20	() pain (the amon)
21	DORIS HUAMAN CSR NO. 10538
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