

Good morning. My name is Ryan Alexander. I'm the president of Taxpayers For Common Sense, an independent nonpartisan budget watchdog. Our mission is to achieve a responsible federal government that operates within its means. Ensuring a fair return for taxpayer-owned natural resources and other assets has been a guiding principle since we were founded 20 years ago. We work to ensure the taxpayers receive appropriate compensation for all resources developed on federal lands including hard rock minerals, oil, gas, wind, and solar. We track subsidies to each of these industries and emphasize the need for a transparent leasing and royalty collection process. Everyone in this room knows the coal industry is in a period of change, and those changes are cause for concern for many particularly here in Wyoming. But despite this anxiety, the current review of the federal coal program is both warranted and well-timed. Demand for coal is slowing. The industry is in flux, and there's a 20-year supply in the pipeline already under federal lease. Meanwhile, recent investigations show continuing problems with the federal coal program. The system bears no resemblance to the one envisioned by Congress and fails to meet the goals set by the last major review of the program conducted during the Reagan administration. Today's coal leasing program suffers from a lack of competition, problems of valuation, and lack of transparency. For the last 25 years coal companies have proposed tracts of land put up for sale by BLM through a lease-application process. Close to 90 percent of these sales have only a single bidder. The lack of competition for federal coal leases makes the process of determining fair market value for coal controversial. There are legitimate problems in continuing to value lease tracts that lack competitive appeal because it's to maximize profits for the bidder and not the taxpayer. Because of the lack of competition, comparisons for the purpose of appraisal are difficult. Interior also undervalues federal coal when it is sold. The coal companies often sell coal to assist (unintelligible) and then turns around and sells it for a much higher price. Interior collects royalties on the lower price. According to the Energy Information Administration, these captive sales accounted for more than 30 percent of coal sales in Wyoming and Montana in 2013. Then there's the shroud of secrecy that surrounds BLM's work. BLM does not disclose how it estimates fair market value and defines it by its own

rules. The bids for leases are sealed. BLM cannot provide an accounting of the number of leases with reduced royalty rates. The process BLM uses to make sure taxpayers get fairly compensated is wiped out, also important to federal taxpayers especially those who live in states with significant coal production from federal land. As we've seen in Inspector General and Government Accountability Office reports have documented, even an undervaluation by a single penny per ton would result in a multi-million-dollar revenue loss. Undervaluation and problems with the coal program have already cost taxpayers billions of dollars. Thank you for conducting this review of the coal program. Interior has a fiduciary responsibility that taxpayers are fairly compensated for the access we all own. Coal is an important part of our energy mix and will remain so for decades to come. The coal industry and the federal coal program can emerge from this review better prepared to meet today's energy market. With a \$19 trillion debt, we cannot afford to wait any longer to fix this broken system.