

Good afternoon. I am Wyoming Senator Jim Anderson from Senate District 28 right here in Casper, Wyoming. I am a third generation Wyoming native. I got out of the army in 1970, came back to Wyoming and went to work for a large heavy equipment dealer in Wyoming. So I saw the start of every mine that we're talking about today in the coal mines, starting with Belle Ayr was the first one that had some issues, and they overcame those. The DOE was formed in that time by the current president at that time to make us energy independent. One of the things that they did and worked on was producing federal coal. So there was massive, massive investments by the energy companies, by the railroads to produce that product so we could become energy independent. And now today, we're standing here talking about eliminating one of our energy sources. It seems kind of funny. Those mines were built to be world-class mines which are 20 billion tons per year production. All of these were built that way because we knew there was more need for coal in the U.S. and the world. One other speaker mentioned the service ratio, the service-to-miner ratio that's three to one. So those 600 miners that were laid off now affect the suppliers of which I worked for for 40 years. That's three to one, so that's 1,800 that are going to be laid off in the service sector to those mines. So it is not just the miners that are being affected. It's everybody in the State of Wyoming. Currently, royalty rates are above market, and an increase will only result in decreased production, decreased return on investment for taxpayers. That hurts schools, roads, infrastructure, hurts everybody in this state and the nation. For the Powder River Basin in Wyoming, which produces over 80 percent of coal reserves on federal lands, the government receives almost 40 cents on every dollar of coal sold. That's almost as high as the highest taxation rate in Norway which is 50 percent in the most socialist country in the world. That is a huge tax percentage, and it should be looked at as a good return to the government. The current federal administration has put a moratorium on coal leasing, relying on arguments from groups that want no return to the taxpayer by keeping it in the ground. This strategy returns zero dollars to the federal and state governments. If this objective is to maximize the return on this asset, then a "keep it in the ground" strategy is absolutely wrong.