

Good afternoon. My name is Lecia Craft. I'm an environmental supervisor for a Wyoming coal company at the Black Thunder Mine. I am very proud to be a member of the team that produces the coal that keeps the lights on and provides an abundant resource for electricity. My group obtains the permits required to mine the coal, oversees compliance and reclamation activities. Black Thunder Mine has been operated for now almost seven years with a perfect environmental compliance record, something we're very proud of. The statement that the mines are not completing the required reclamation is completely false. Black Thunder has approximately half of all their disturbed land in permanent reclamation. The reclaimed land is being grazed by local ranchers and are more productive than native lands. Wildlife is abundant including a herd of elk frequently seen grazing on the reclamation. Black Thunder and many other mines have been recognized for outstanding reclamation achievements by a number of agencies including the Office of Surface Mining and the State of Wyoming. The need to reevaluate the current coal leasing process is unfounded. Prior to BLM leasing any coal, an extensive NEPA evaluation is already required including the evaluation of greenhouse gases. Even once this is completed, additional state and federal permits must be acquired before the first shovel of dirt can be moved. The entire permitting process extends well beyond ten years and needs to be streamlined, not lengthened. Implementation of the coal leasing moratorium only adds further uncertainty to an already cumbersome permitting process. My husband and I also have a retail business. To believe that the impact from restricting additional coal production will only have impacts on the immediate coal mining communities is extremely short-sighted. Our business is located in South Dakota, and it has been directly impacted and will continue to be impacted as long as the war on coal is not stopped. Increasing the coal royalties has one consequence, and that would be keeping the coal in the ground. If the coal remains in the ground, there will be no revenue for the American public. The assault on coal that is masked as environmental protection should be exposed for the political agenda that it truly is. The American public deserves an affordable and reliable source of electricity, and coal can provide that. Thank you.