



Cynthia M. Lummis
Congress of the United States
Wyoming

Statement for BLM Coal Program Public Scoping Meeting

Casper, Wyoming May 17, 2016

While Wyoming's business in Washington, DC prevents my attendance at today's meeting, I want to thank Wyoming's senior Senator Mike Enzi for passing on my remarks and for his tremendous leadership on behalf of Wyoming coal.

Last August the BLM held a public meeting in Gillette, WY, a so-called "listening session" on the federal coal program. My message to Secretary Sally Jewell, and the message of hundreds of Wyoming citizens, was clear – let Wyoming keep its jobs, produce its energy, and keep America's lights on.

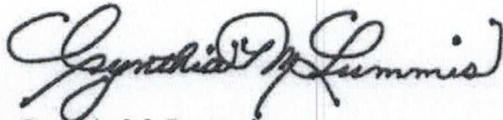
Secretary Jewell didn't listen. Since that time, the Administration has imposed a coal lease sale moratorium designed to keep coal in the ground. In the meantime, the stated goal of Secretary Jewell's coal program review is to "*foster the orderly development of BLM administered coal on Federal lands in a manner that gives proper consideration to the impact of that development on important stewardship values, while also ensuring a fair return to the American public.*" It is difficult to understand how attacking future coal production will ensure any return to the taxpayer, much less a fair return.

Coal, America's most abundant and affordable energy source, is a vital component of America's electrical generation and energy security. Coal lease sales provide revenue to both the federal and state governments through per acre fees as well as bonus bids on the coal reserve tonnage. Coal production in Wyoming creates good paying jobs and helps fund our education system and other vital community services.

Despite the self-inflicted economic wounds that are the Administration's Clean Power Plan and this coal lease moratorium, coal demand will continue to skyrocket in developing nations. The U.S. leads the world in its environmental protections in mining, and possesses the entrepreneurial spirit necessary to solve our energy problems without harming our economy. America should take a global leadership role on coal, producing American energy and the means to use it cleanly and safely, not pretending that global demand for coal doesn't exist. If we forfeit global leadership towards clean coal, we will hamstring our economy while other nations meet their coal needs elsewhere and without the same level of environmental stewardship.

At a minimum, any serious review of the federal coal program should involve far more meaningful consultation with states, tribes, and industry. This was the purpose of the Royalty Policy Committee, on which I previously served. Secretary Jewell and President Obama allowed the Royalty Policy Committee to lapse. I have joined with Representative Ryan Zinke of Montana to introduce the Certainty for States and Tribes Act. This legislation would reconstitute the Royalty Policy Committee, require the committee's input on any proposed changes to royalty policy rates and place a 3 year deadline on the completion of the review of the federal coal program. The legislation would also take steps to ensure coal production continues during the course of the coal program review, instead of Secretary Jewell's indefinite moratorium under which lease sales may never be allowed again.

So once again, I ask Secretary Jewell to let Wyoming keep its jobs, produce its energy, and keep America's lights on.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cynthia M. Lummis". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "C".

Cynthia M. Lummis
Member of Congress