

Good morning. I'm Mike Penfold from Billings, Montana, and I represent our Montana field program director. Mary Jo, in 1980 I was appointed state director for BLM in Montana and the Dakotas. It was an interesting time. You remember in the 1970s, OPEC had been playing games with the United States energy crisis. And early in the '70s too we had the federal coal leasing tax had been passed, regulations being developed. The bill SMCRA had been passed. NEPA had been passed. Regulations were developed. We established coal teams in Montana and Wyoming to plan the leasing of coal, cooperation from the federal and state agencies. We were dealing with suitability, unsuitability criteria, surface owner consent, reclamation standards, a whole lot of stuff. I felt very good about the coal program and BLM at that time. Now that's going on 40 years, almost four decades back. So looking back is a good thing. It is not a sham to be taking a look at the coal program as was stated earlier. Climate is changing. People are beginning to -- even the hard-liners are beginning to understand we've got to think about that. We're going to have less carbon burning. Major coal companies are going bankrupt. There is a glut of oil and gas, all kinds of new techniques developing there. Solar and wind energies are coming on strong. Technologies are getting better and less expensive. The big gorilla in the room that a lot don't want to recognize is the market is having an impact and it's going to have its impact. Regardless of any political administration, it's going to have its impact. So the coal industry, the carbon industry faces a reality. The community faces a reality of more is going to be less. It's going to be less. So the question is what do we do? We're in a transition period of time, and there's no question that we're going to be leasing and mining coal for a long time. So let's get the pricing right. We heard how important the price is for the schools here in Wyoming. Let's not subsidize anything. The communities need the funds. We need to have stronger bonding. We need to have reclamation. Only 14 percent of the land we lease coal for has been reclaimed that's been mined. Strengthen bonding, you just have to get that. But I tell you the sense I have is that it would really be important for federal government and state government to start looking at this as a transition. We don't have coal production like we used to have. Let's develop something like the old coal teams that we had before. This

would involve state and federal government, the private sector even, and bring all the forces that are to bear on this changing countryside that clearly has an impact on the land, the people, and the communities and our future. Thank you for your hearing.