

Good afternoon. My name is Heather Ross. I'm the executive director of the Children's Advocacy Project right here in Casper. It sounds like I have a lot of feedback. Is that just me? LINDA LANCE: It's fine up here. MICROPHONE NUMBER ONE: I'm a second-generation American and a second-generation Wyomingite, proud to have called Wyoming my home ever since I was born and raised here. Today I came to talk about coal and how coal affects my community right here in Wyoming. Coal affects the families who mine coal. It provides fair wages for blue collar workers which create healthier children who my program serves. It ensures less of a financial burden on young families who have a lot of other burdens they have to sustain while they're raising their children. But coal also affects those people who don't mine in Wyoming. You guys know the numbers. Everyone has talked about them. 40 cents on the dollar, coal educates our children and maintains our highways and sustains our communities. It directly supports nonprofit programs, nonprofit programs just like mine and many of the other programs that you've heard talked about here today. So really I want to talk about our environment because that's what a lot of people have come here to talk about today. And guess what, coal does affect our environment. It provides the land. Here in Wyoming we all love our lands. We are the fishermen. We are hunters. We are the campers. Whether you go out and bird-watch or whether you float the rivers, we all love our land here in Wyoming. Our outdoor lands are not something we read about in books that are away in far-away countries that we have to visit from afar. They're right up the hill right here by Casper Mountain, the Big Horn Mountains, the Tetons. Anywhere you drive, you're going to find incredible views and incredible wildlife. And we want those companies who are responsible and who follow the rules. That's what we have right here in Wyoming. We're proud of the Big Horns and Powder River Basin and how they have mined those areas and still sustained the incredible wildlife that we have there. Our lands are some of the most healthy land in all of the country. The Wyoming and federal lands are the most well-taken-care-of lands right here in Wyoming. We know how hard it is to work on environmentalism, and we believe in it right here in Wyoming, and we're willing to do that. But we also know that we have to sustain our families. We have to sustain our children and provide valuable jobs to our families that

live right here. Unlike many that came here today, my family has never worked coal, not even aunts, my uncles, not even my cousins. But I don't deny it for a second coal affects me, it affects my community, it affects our state, it affects our nation right here, through the families who live here, pay taxes here, and take care of our environment right here. Thank you for your listening.