

Before I start, I want to say I was so optimistic when showed up here this morning. I started my written comments, "Good morning." So I'm now going to good afternoon. My name is Brenda Schladweiler. I'm president of BTS Environmental Associates in Gillette, Wyoming. We work reclamation all throughout the State of Wyoming. I'm very proud of the coal reclamation we have throughout this state. If you want any information, I am more than glad to share that with you. I attended college in the mid to late '70s at a time when the federal Surface Coal Reclamation Act was in its infancy. Wyoming's Environmental Quality Act was ahead of the federal legislation. It served the state well in being progressive and protecting the environment during resource development. I have been an environmental consultant based in Gillette, Wyoming, for over 30 years. My work primarily involves gathering natural resource data for energy-related projects including lease-buy applications and environmental impact statements. This data is used by the State of Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality and Land Quality divisions to grant and modify mining permits for both coal and non-coal projects in addition to the BLM uses. My intent this morning is to voice my concern on three areas. I'm not here to talk numbers. There are others that can address and have addressed that more eloquently than I can. As a scientist, I prefer to be logical and concise in my thinking and will limit the extent of my comments to these three points. Number one, after 30-plus years of interpreting natural resources data or collecting that data for purposes of submittal to federal and state regulators, I have felt that the leasing process for coal as well as the state's permitting process is a slow methodical process that takes, quote, time, unquote. That time frame has increased significantly since I began work in this area, a testimony to the complexity of the issues and the regulators' attempts to address those issues. Because of these safeguards, I do not see the need to revamp the coal leasing process. Number two, the natural resource information gained by the citizens of this state during energy development is a valuable asset. These studies are funded by the energy developers and provide insights into soils, vegetation, wetlands, wildlife, hydrology, archaeology, et cetera, that we otherwise would not have. The knowledge base including the understanding of how these resources interact in our own landscape has been useful

in applications and projects other than energy development. Number three, energy development and environmental protection are not mutually exclusive. Over the course of my professional career, I have chosen to be involved in several controversial issues and have tried to provide that same logical thinking mentioned earlier. I choose to be moved by facts, not emotions. While I can appreciate the passion on both sides of any given issue, the best way, I think, that makes sense in the bigger picture. While I've witnessed some train wrecks in policy with its implementation, the coal leasing program is not one of them. Again, I do not see the need to revamp this process. As a postscript, I want say I was part of the coal layoffs in 1982. My life was turned upside down. Back then it was market. Today, much of it is federal policies. Please do not revamp the coal leasing program and release the moratorium as soon as possible.