

I'd like to take advantage of my temporary handicap here so I can turn and face the congregation. My name is the Reverend Sandra Voelker. I am an Episcopal priest, used to preaching to the congregation although I know that, in many cases today, I'm certainly not preaching to the choir. Now, there's a great deal of passion on both sides of this argument, but arguments are seldom won by passion alone. You've heard a lot of statistics and a lot of economic rationale. Please bear with me if I add a few more for you. You're all familiar with severance taxes, and Wyoming collects them on energy production, and they have fallen from nearly 960 million in fiscal year 2014 to an estimated 625 million in the current fiscal year. That's a decline of about 35 percent in one year. One year. From December 2014 to December 2015, Wyoming lost 5,400 jobs in the mining and natural resource sector. This is all according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Now, I'm going to talk about externalities. For those of you who don't speak "economicalese," that means any costs that are not incorporated into the fixed and variable costs of any business enterprise. It's obvious. A lot of the externalities that come from the coal companies, but one thing that I haven't heard mentioned so much is the impact on the tourism industry. Tourism is the second greatest income producer in Wyoming. People do not come to Wyoming to see coal mines. They come to see the beauty of our natural resources, which I think sometimes we have become so used to we don't even see them. So we don't care to protect them. Another externality that I want to mention comes from an article by Bloomberg Press which headed its article on coal mining as "Doomsday Finally Comes to the Wyoming High-Flying Coal Country." Last month, just last month, Arch Coal -- Arch Coal let go of 200 miners. Peabody let go of about 235. And perhaps the troubling practice of Peabody and most other bankrupted or bankrupting coal companies is self-bonding. You've heard that mentioned before. That is promising, only promising to reclaim the land destroyed by the mining operations rather than posting bonds up front. I'll be done in just a minute. Okay. To summarize, the industry of fossil fuel extraction itself is rapidly becoming a fossil. Any economic argument that advocates economic benefit from such activities is therefore necessarily short-term. We're used to thinking of fossils as benign and sometimes beautiful relics of the past. Coal mining is a

fossil that is not benign and certainly is not beautiful.
Thank you for this opportunity.