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I want to state my objection to this hearing and to Secretarial Order Number 3338 establishing the Programmatic EIS for federal coal leasing as violations of the Mineral Leasing Act, the sole authority to the Secretary of Interior in operating the federal coal leasing program. The Mineral Leasing Act requires that any regulations developed by the Secretary for the federal coal leasing program ensure, and I quote, "the maximum economic recovery of coal".

Comprehensive reviews of the federal coal leasing program have been undertaken in recent years by the Inspector General of the Department of the Interior and by the Government Accountability Office. Neither of these comprehensive reviews called for or recommended a Programmatic EIS. Neither of these comprehensive reviews called for or recommended increasing royalty rates or leasing rates. Further, the Secretary of the Interior has failed to conclusively report on progress, or lack thereof, made against the reforms that these reports did recommend. Secretarial Order Number 3338 deceives the American public by stating that the federal coal leasing program has not undergone comprehensive review since the mid 1980s. If Secretary Jewell wants an "honest and open conversation" about the federal coal leasing program, she should start by being honest and open.

Further, Order 3338 violates the Mineral Leasing Act by stating that the royalty rate of coal should be established to "take the Administration's climate objectives into consideration". The Act does not authorize her to impose ANY new taxes on federal coal and unequivocally states that any guidelines and regulations developed for federal coal leasing must ensure the maximum economic recovery

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of coal. The illegal regulations of this administration that exceed its authority, or that impose burdensome and costly regulations out of all proportion to their alleged benefits, have been repeatedly overturned in the courts. With this Secretarial Order and proposed PEIS, Secretary Jewell is yet again pandering to the administration's donors and seeking to develop illegal regulations that will be overturned.

If the administration wants to impose new taxes on coal mined on federal lands, it must seek legislation authorizing such new taxes from Congress. The Secretary has no statutory authority to impose a "social cost of carbon" via royalty or leasing rates. She cannot impose a climate change tax. If she wishes the federal coal program to "reflect the administration's climate objectives", she must obtain Congress' authorization to do so.

These hearings are nothing more than Soviet style show trials in which the verdict has already been reached and the sentence already determined. The administration has found coal guilty of providing reliable affordable energy to the American people that undercuts the renewables investments of its Green Billionaire donors like Tom Steyer, Mike Bloomberg, Nathaniel Simons, David Gelbaum and others. The sentence is imposing illegal taxes, fees, and royalty increases designed specifically to diminish coal production to the detriment of the American people and in violation of the Mineral Leasing Act. While in the end, this verdict will be overturned by the real courts like so many of this administration's illegal regulations, I urge you today to save the taxpayers money, save America's energy advantage, and save the jobs and communities

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that these hearings are designed to destroy by putting an end this illogical and  
illegal process now.