June 23, 2016

Coal Programmatic EIS Scoping
Bureau of Land Management
20 M Street Southeast, 2134 LM
Washington, D.C. 20003

To Whom it May Concern,

It concerns me that the DOI is modifying the current coal leasing program, including increasing the royalty rates on federal coal. While, on the surface, this may seem like a plan to increase revenue, it is obvious that it will in fact have the opposite effect and be harmful to our economy.

As royalties increase, so will the price of coal. An industry such as this is very dependent on the price of the product, so as the prices increase, the amount of coal being sold will decrease due to market factors. Eventually this will trickle down to less coal being mined and less revenue going to the taxpayers and back into our communities. Not only will this damage local economies, but the increased energy prices will stress the lower and middle class nationwide.

It is obvious to me that the ultimate goal of raising royalty rates on federal coal is not to increase revenue, but to instead put more stress on the already burdened coal industry. It is time to realize that coal is so much more than carbon; it provides us with low cost energy and is the livelihood of many communities across the nation. The impacts of these attacks on coal stretch much farther than just to coal mines and their employees. In our communities in Northwest Colorado, it is difficult to find somebody that is not directly impacted. Communities such as ours are dependent on the industry. Not only does the coal industry provide energy, but it is the backbone to economies like ours and it provides benefits to families and businesses throughout our state and nation.

I urge you to reconsider your plan to increase royalty rates and to consider the significant adverse impact that it will have on small communities like my own and all electric rate-payers.

Respectfully,

Hillary Rice

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