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 is the fiduciary responsibility of the Department of Interior (DOI) under the Mineral Leasing Act to maximize the return on federal coal, and to do so, we need to find policies that keep federal coal competitive in the market place.

We have already seen a series of policies over the past several years designed to increase electricity prices and degrade the reliability of the nation's electricity supply by inducting the closure of coal baseload power plants—the backbone of our electric grid. But given these constant attacks on coal from this administration and its allies, we can only conclude that royalty rate increases and expensive leasing reforms have nothing to do with determining a fair share for taxpayers and everything to do with a political agenda.

If the DOI wants to find additional tax revenue, then it should look at its own spending habits first, prior to considering whether to increase punitive taxes on federal coal.

If the President wants to raise power costs on the poor and middle class and make our grid less reliable, he doesn't need royalties and taxes to do it. If the administration wants to get a greater return on federal coal, it should reverse course immediately, it should scrap its new regulations on production and consumption of coal.

To get more money from coal, you should find ways to keep coal competitive. Coal production is the backbone of my community, and it is the means in which I have chosen to support my family – and I expect the leaders of this country to support me in doing so.

Respectfully,

Opie Smith