

MR. COFIELD: Thanks for your time this afternoon. My name is Brad Cofield. I work for Wagner Equipment Company. We're the Caterpillar dealer in Colorado, New Mexico, and far west Texas. We have 1,550 employees in our business. About 160 of those employees in the Hayden-Grand Junction-Farmington areas, including the North Fork Valley, directly support coal mining in those regions. The war on coal has gone too far. The moratorium on Federal coal leases is the latest attempt to shut down a vital fuel source at a time when our worldwide energy demands continue to increase. This latest initiative ignores the economic reality of reminding communities that competitiveness of our county and further moves us towards significant increases in electricity costs. What is the economic benefit of keeping Federal coal in the ground? By not developing coal resources on Federal lands, we will create zero return to taxpayers. We will put thousands of miners out of work, as well as kill jobs for the industries that support our mines. There's no way to examine the economic reality of this initiative and not conclude that this administration could care less about the economic impacts, but simply wants to kill coal as a fuel source. Let's consider the climate impacts of the Federal Coal Lease Program. The BLM already includes consideration of potential greenhouse gas emissions in the production and use of coal when potential lease sales are analyzed under the National Environmental Policy Act. The Department of Interior successfully has defended its analysis of climate impacts in a series of legal challenges brought by coal project opponents. How would decreasing coal production on Federal lands impact our electricity costs? Coal represents 33 percent of our country's energy. And it is the backbone of our electric grid. By eliminating coal, we rely on more expensive alternative sources. Consumers, no doubt, will carry the burden of higher electricity costs. By decreasing coal production on Federal lands, we will further impact the lives of miners in our communities, like Craig and Hayden, Paonia, and Hotchkiss, and potentially decimate their economies. These communities rely on the coal industry, that we heard today, to fund their schools, support their local businesses, and provide high-paying jobs. Our country was founded on free markets, not on over regulation. Please consider the long-term impacts of the war on coal as you go through your process. And we look to our energy future and try to remain competitive in a worldwide market. Thank you.