

MS. EATON: Good afternoon. My name is Pam Eaton. And I'm a Senior Director at The Wilderness Society. And I live here in Colorado. First, I want to thank the BLM staff [indiscernible]. People from across the country and across the State talk about improving the way coal is managed on our shared public land. I admire you. You have the patience of Job. This is an issue that matters to many people. And on behalf of our, over 700,000 members and supporters across the country, including more than 8,000 here in Colorado, I'm here to offer strong support for reviewing and reforming our Federal Coal Program. I have a 17-year-old son, who's born and raised here in Colorado. And I use his years to mark time. And over his young life, we have seen Colorado's coal production peak and, and decline. The year he was born, Colorado produced 30 million tons of coal. Production peaked in 2004, when my son was six years old. And it's been going down nearly steadily ever since. This year, Colorado is on track to produce 12 million tons of coal. So, in my son's short life, coal production in our State has peaked and declined. And our communities have seen jobs come and sadly seen them leave again. And during that time, our State [indiscernible] on millions of dollars of revenue that should have -- it should have had for schools and roads, hospitals and communities across the State. It has been almost twice my son's lifetime since we've taken a hard look at the outdated policies that govern the coal program. And in that time, the coal companies have taken advantage of, of us as owners of the public lands. Studies have illustrated time and again, the Federal Coal Program's weaknesses. And we've already, and we've already hear about this today -- low [indiscernible], lack of competition, et cetera. So, we need to review the Federal Coal Program to make smart choices about where and how we invest in energy in our communities. We need to adjust the way we manage our public lands, not only to adapt to the changing energy landscape -- and it is changing. And it's not going back. But, also to reflect the uses of our land that the American people value. A report released just last week by the Department of Interior found that our parks, wildlife refuges and other public land supported 443 million recreational visits last year and generated \$45 billion dollars in economic output. Our public lands have a very important role to play in the -- in our economy. Our public lands and the resources they provide

belong to all of us. And they should be managed for our benefit now and for future generations. And the BLM should begin by making -- taking steps to raise the royalty rate for coal. Royalties aren't taxes. They're the share of the revenue sale of the public's coal that we all own. And that's our share, and we should be making sure we're getting it. We need to reduce the harmful pollution from poor mining on public lands, including our climate emissions. Ensure mind lands are restored so they provide benefits like water and wildlife habitat into the future. So, on behalf of the Wilderness Society and our members, thank you so much for reviewing this program and taking action to make it better. Thank you.