

**BLM Federal Coal Leasing Program
Programmatic EIS Scoping Meeting
Knoxville, TN**

May 26, 2016: Comments from Sandra Kurtz

"Hello. Thank you for holding these hearings allowing the public to weigh in on your process. I am an environmental education consultant and activist. I live in Chattanooga, TN. I have two children and 5 grandchildren. My father died of COPD.

For a long time now, in our hearts, we have all known that an energy transition is coming. As alternative energies such as solar and wind become more and more possible and affordable, we are inevitably moving away from fossil fuels and nuclear to these cleaner and healthier energy sources. Scientists have told us for some time that we are poisoning our planet by changing the climate that sustains all Life as we know it and that burning fossil fuels is most of the problem.

Now comes the Paris Agreement with nearly 200 countries agreeing to take action to slow the rate of climate disruption by reducing emission from those fossil fuels. Yet we are addicted to burning fossil fuels. It's the way we know. We are dependent on electricity from gas, oil, and nuclear fission. It's hard to change. How can we break this addiction?

One of the ways is to close the door on the old way of producing electricity while opening doors to the future. Mind you we are not giving up on having electricity, only changing the way in which is it produced. Your proposition to consider stopping leasing public lands for coal mining --OUR public lands-- is a most important step in closing that door. In essence the present, outdated way of leasing is a subsidy for coal companies as they pass the health buck to the public while we lose any other use of the land. Combined with other U.S. steps curbing climate change as we move into an alternative energy economy, your stopping this present leasing arrangement will not

only get us more quickly to breaking the addiction, but also preserve ecosystems so vital to quality of life for future generations.

Those are the reasons I urge you to include in your study of PEIS requirements climate change considerations, an in-depth study of the cumulative impacts of mining on water, soil, and vegetation along with an existing species inventory, plus risk of environmental disturbance and the related ecosystem as it affects any immediate or future use of the land. Mining companies should pay the full cost of any mining on public land including the cost of adverse impacts to human health.

Thank you,

Sandra Kurtz
3701 Skylark Trail
Chattanooga, TN 37416

sandykurtz@comcast.net

423-892-5237