

MR. POULOS: Good morning. My name is John Poulos. I'm a lifelong resident of North Fork Valley. I'm also a professional mining engineer. I'm here today to represent my family, my kids, and my grandkids. My comments will be brief and to the point. How much is enough? The Powder River Basin coal, which represents over 80 percent of Federally leased coal, is already taxed directly six times -- 12.5 percent Federal royalty tax. Lease accusation fees added \$1 per ton. Abandon mine land tax -- 28 cents a ton. Black lung excise tax -- 55 cents a ton. State severance tax at 5.3 percent. And County severance tax at 4.5 percent. Go that against the average sale price of a ton of Powder River Basin coal -- \$11. It comes up to 39 percent tax. Okay. Thirty-nine percent. Now, apply -- this does not consider the secondary taxes, such as income tax paid or levied against the industry, nor the taxes generated by the people that work there. How much is enough? With that said, I believe the coal industry is providing more than their fair share to the return to the American public. Leave the coal lease system alone. We all know that lower taxes would help bring production up; and, therefore, increase the dollars flowing into the government coffers. That's what we're here to talk about. Right? The current system includes consideration for the, for the environment. NEPA is used to evaluate the climate change issues. This has been decided in several court cases. See Wild Earth Guardians v. Salizar [phonetic], Wild Earth Guardians v. Forest Service, Western Organization of Resource Council v. Jewell [phonetic]. And if you believe that the war on coal is a good thing, remember this. The public will be punished with higher prices for energy and, thus, diminish our quality of life. The coal miner and their children will be punished with loss of their means to support their families. And don't forget the three to five other jobs generated by every one coal mining job that would be punished by increasing leasing fees. Thank you for your time to comment.