

AXEL RINGE: My name is Axel Ringe. I'm a resident of Jefferson County, which is bordering Knox County. I'm also a citizen of this country and, as such, I chair in the ownership of our national public lands. The United States has made a commitment at the Paris Climate Talks to address climate change. Public lands coal leasing produces forty percent of this country's coal output. That coal, a significant proportion of which comes east to be burned, contributes, I think, thirteen percent of this country's carbon emissions contributing to climate change. I do not believe that it is a province of government to promote or to subsidize industries, whatever those industries may be. This government has been subsidizing the coal industry for many years, and part of that subsidization has been on federal public lands, which are owned by all the citizens of this country. Those lands should be managed for the benefit of not only the living citizens of this country, but for all the creatures and organisms that we hold stewardship over. The mining of coal on our public lands as well as on private lands that we have seen here in Appalachia, has a long, and I will say, sordid history of ravaging the land and not even making a good faith effort to try to return that land to its original condition, a productive condition and a sustainable condition. So, I'm not here to tell you what those -- what the impacts are or what the conditions are that you need to be concerned with, but I am here to tell you that you need to take a broad view. This is a programmatic environmental impact statement. You need to take a broad view of what the impacts are, not just for the coal industry but for the citizens, for the country, and for the organisms that live on this country. Thank you.