

BARRY THACKER: Thank you. My name is Barry Thacker. And contrary to what a lot of the previous speakers say, there are people that still work in the mining business, and I'm one of them. And you know something? TVA gets half of its electricity from coal, so it's pretty cheap. You think you might be able to turn the lights up a little bit so we can read what we're writing? But, anyway, I'll do the best I can. You know, coal has been the life-blood for my family for generations. My past generations were coal miners, but my daughter and I are mining engineers. And she would be here today, but one of us had to work, so we drew lots and she said I had to come -- had to come do this. And, you know, so, you know, this moratorium is personal to us. And you are going to have to excuse me a minute. Since you can't afford to buy cheap -- TVA's cheap power, I'm going to have to look here close. Anyway, you say this moratorium is needed and that you give -- the original speaker this morning with a slide show explained why you think that it is needed, but, you know, you must think that people that work in the mining communities are stupid, stupid, stupid, because we know that the moratorium is the objective to keep coal in the ground so you can appease your political base. And many of that political base has already spoken here today, so I rest my case. What is my basis for that conclusion? Well, as the previous speaker said, we had a moratorium in Tennessee for the lands unsuitable for mining petition. It was supposed to last eighteen months. It lasted six years, and it is still ongoing. So, if you are going to have a three-year moratorium, you can expect that it is going to last for twelve years. And during that twelve years, people that work in that business are going to be without a job. You know, instead of the department's plan, I like the plan offered by your new prospective boss. He says that he is going to eliminate government bureaucracy so people can get back to work. In fact, he has already advised miners to get ready because after he is elected, we are going to be working our asses off.