

MS. WELT: Thank you. My name is Kathy Welt. I work at Mount Coal Company. But, I've lived in the North Fork Valley for over 30 years. I've worked in and around all three of the operations, only one of which survive right now. But, I'm here representing not only myself and my family, but over 500 families that took the time to sign letters and petitions to voice their concern about our community being directly impacted by what's going on starting today with the scoping of the Programmatic EIS on the Federal Coal Leasing Program. I also ask that you include in the record the 600 signatures that we provided last year in the listening session that also show the concern. This impacts us directly. This is a Federal programmatic, if you will, upward level review of the Federal program. But, the impacts are absolutely in our community right now. To say that there will be no leasing, that there cannot be any leasing adjacent to what already exists -- the operations -- the one operation that is struggling and still surviving in that community, to say that they cannot continue to mine the best coal in the nation because of allegations that are, in fact, very misinformed. I ask the BLM get factual, actual information -- not allegation. Make sure that you're getting the information on economics from the mining communities, from the mines; not from propaganda. Here's what our people are saying. The push by NGOs to keep it in the ground -- which doesn't make sense. They're saying that we should have more revenue, but keep it in the ground. You know that equals zero revenue. Now, they've switched to reform coal. I like that, as a matter of fact. Reform it. We reform it into [indiscernible] coal, [indiscernible] coal, and [indiscernible]. I'm for reforming coal -- more market out there. Okay. But, this, again, has called -- caused this huge waste of taxpayer dollars by forcing the BLM -- you're doing your job -- to conduct a multi-year programmatic EIS process and to support the effort as partner with Interior to increase the cost of coal leasing and royalties. Please consider the facts and consider that the impacts are on real people, real families, and real communities right here. a former Executive Board Member of the Colorado Municipal League, and a former President of the Colorado Association of Ski Towns, I [indiscernible] of climate change in my community and communities throughout Colorado. I'll be speaking today focusing on the Telluride region. Decreased snow pack, longer

and harsher wildfires, and tree mortality caused by the mountain pine beetle epidemic are all symptoms of the consistently warmer temperatures we have seen in Telluride. Coal production is a direct contributor to climate change. I commend the Interior Department for conducting the PEIS and urge you to incorporate an evaluation of those costs. I also want to thank you for allowing us to speak. Originally founded as a mining town, Telluride is now known as one of the world's premier resort destinations. Telluride ski resorts sees on average a half million visitors each winter, significantly contributing to the 18.6 million in tax revenue spent by outdoor recreation tourists in Colorado each year. In addition to winter snow sports, Telluride is also a year-round destination for hiking, biking, rafting, and fishing. We host many endurance competitions and festivals each year that bring spectators and participants from around the world. Two and a half million people ride our free green gondola each year. This allows us to decrease auto pollutants into our air that come from sources outside of our topic today. Telluride relies heavily on these opportunities to support livelihoods of people who live and work in the area. Preserving the beauty and physical attributes of our natural landscapes fuels our tourism-based economy and is essential to the community. We have developed a comprehensive climate action plan to help mitigate the effects of climate change on our outdoor recreation economy. Our plan includes meeting our missions goals, as well as implementing adaptation strategies that will pay off in the long run. With judicious reductions in energy usage, significant purchase of both solar and hydro power facilities and participation in renewable energy credits, we are exceeding our goals for reduced greenhouse gas production for the entire community. But, the immediate and long-term costs are steep. As a major contributor to climate change, coal pollution threatens the way of life of local economies of places like Telluride. It is time for the Federal Coal Program to accurately account for the environmental, economic, and social burden of climate change. Moreover, we need to ensure that our coal companies are paying their fair share. The American taxpayer and the Federal government must take steps now to support coal communities' transition to new economies, independent of the antiquated fuel source. I ask you to ensure that taxpayers collect a fair return on coal and reflect the

cost of climate change in the pricing of the Federal Coal Program. It is time to modernize Western economies and increase their resiliency to climate change. Thank you so much.