

MS. BOUNOUS: Hi, my name is Ayja Bounous, and I'm a Utah native with roots in the agriculture and coal industries. Those of us with connections to coal know that it's not so much an industry as it is a culture, deeply interwoven with our state's history, but both culture and industry are suffering heavily from global energy trends. Countries all over the world have pledged to be coal free in the upcoming years, some even by 2025. Just last week, the United Kingdom hit zero coal generations multiple times and is one of those pledged to be coal free by 2025. And Germany -- actually, the gentleman who brought up Germany, they actually produce so much energy that they were paying their customers to buy their energy, essentially. So I would call that affordable. We can agree to disagree there. Portugal powered its entire country from renewable energy for four days straight a few days ago. And since May 8, tens of thousands of climate activists have shut down coal ports all over the world. The movement away from coal is only gaining momentum. And trying to hold on to this industry by continuing to allow mining on public lands is like trying to keep a small portion of a hillside from eroding while the entire mountain is collapsing around us. But do we want to keep dealing with crazy environmentalists chaining themselves to equipment? I know some of the BLM employees and law enforcement officers in the back are sick of it. I apologize, I probably -- I promise I won't start singing this time, but I can guarantee you, it's only going to get worse. The people in this room are hurting, as has become very apparent in the last few hours. They feel betrayed by their Federal Government, but it's the global movement away from coal that's the true source of their pain. So if we do want to point fingers at a government, our local one just threw \$53 million of taxpayers' money at a controversial coal port in California when that money could have gone to diversifying the economies of Helper and Price. When discussing the future of coal, our main concern could be the families dependent on it. For every miner who loses his or her job, a family loses their means of living. When the big coal companies declare bankruptcy, families suffer and communities suffer. And they'll continue to suffer unless we start transitioning to healthier, more diverse economies. We all know that the shift to alternate economies can't happen by tomorrow and it doesn't need to. According to the National Mining Association, we've got about 20 years worth of coal production already leased on public lands. That gives us time to shift our economies. We don't need any new leases to make sure our

economies stay afloat. What we do need is a transitional strategy sensitive to our coal culture. The BLM can help us with this healthy transition by ending coal leasing and opening up leasing to renewable energies like solar energy zones. Already, the solar industry provides three times as many jobs as the coal industry does. And the average solar array worker made \$78,000 a year, plus benefits. And here in Utah, as the lady up front noted, you're looking at some of the sunniest landscapes in the US, which should provide plenty of incentives to the BLM profit-wise. We, the people in this room, and the BLM have a choice. We can keep trying to hold on to this dying industry and allow our communities to keep suffering or we can begin to transition to healthier economies and healthier communities, starting by ending coal leasing on public lands for good. Thank you.