

ART ETTER: Hello, my name is Art Etter, and until recently I worked for an underground coal mine located in the North Fork Valley of Delta County, a small rural county located in western Colorado. The company I worked for is Bowie Resource. Bowie operates coal mines in both Colorado and Utah, and I'm here today to present the positive impacts coal mines have historically brought to our local communities. I'll start by describing the impact the coal mines have had in Delta County specifically, and historically there has been three underground coal mines that for years successfully operated in the county. One of the three mines closed two years ago due to poor market conditions and just recently the mine I've been employed at, the Bowie No. 2 mine, went to idle status for similar reasons. According to the Denver Post as reported on May 14, due to these two mine closures, Delta County has lost approximately a thousand well-paying jobs that paid an average of 80,000 a year, not including health or retirement benefits. This equates to an economic hit to the county of \$80 million in salaries alone. There are roughly 30,000 people that live in Delta County. With a thousand jobs lost, that equates to 3 and 1/3 percent of the county's population is suddenly out of work. The economic impact to the county and tax revenue paints a similarly bleak picture. The Denver Post also reported in the same article that with the idling of the Bowie No. 2 mine, the county will face a 12 percent budget shortfall. Delta County has estimated with the idling of the Bowie 2 mine it will lose \$1.2 million of its 2016 tax base. These are dollars that directly fund our school district, road maintenance, social services, libraries, hospitals, and water conservation districts. As you've heard from some of the prior speakers, the Bowie Resource mining operations have established a precedence of significant economic benefit. They have produced significant economic benefits while at the same time setting industry standards for mine safety and environmental compliance. If changes must be made to the federal leasing process, let's make these positive changes by simplifying and streamlining the leasing process. A detailed list of my recommendations will be submitted as written comments in the following weeks. And it's important that the Department of Interior not succumb to the political pressures which prefer to only keep the coal in the ground indefinitely. Allow national, state, local economies to prosper with clean, low-cost, reliable coal-fired power. Thank you.