

My name is Gary Leaming and I am grateful to have worked in the coal mining industry for more than 41 years. Coal mining has allowed me to raise a family and send my children to college because of the ability to make a good wage while helping provide energy that has fueled Utah and our nation and made our nation the strong, free country that it is. I have worked in the safety field for the majority of my career and have seen first hand how our federal government has regulated, beyond reason, our coal industry; an industry that should be applauded and lifted up for its contribution to our country's greatness. And coal has helped make our country great without subsidy of any kind; from any quarter of government.

I speak for many in the coal industry that are in favor of any form of energy that will continue to sustain the growth our nation is realizing. Though renewables are not viable without government subsidy, coal miners are not against them. Coal miners are for keeping the lights on, the electric cars charged and the cell phones dialing and texting. And coal miners aren't looking for hero's accolades; just the opportunity to continue providing that service and supporting their families and communities.

The real-life tragedies taking place in coal country across our nation are appalling. The industry is continually striving for improved safety in the mines. In the last three years approximately 40% of the MMUs in our country have been shut down. Displaced miners are struggling to find employment of any kind and the communities they help support are losing jobs and tax base rapidly. **For every coal mining job lost, at least six other people's jobs are affected.** This ripple affect impacts almost all aspects of their communities including tax revenue, lost jobs, lost employment hours, higher costs for goods, and so on. This coal lease moratorium along with other government sanctions are continuing the shuttering of coal mines and placing hundreds of families below the poverty level. Rather than being viable, contributing citizens, these hard-working miners and their families are now on the dependency and welfare rolls of our country. Not by their choice, but because of poor choices made by a few with special interests in mind.

Slowing the coal leasing process and preventing the use of inexpensive, clean energy just seems un-American. I can't understand why anyone who uses any product associated with fossil fuels would want to take a course such as preventing or delaying new coal leases. Regardless of the side you choose to be ON in this misunderstanding; knowing that you use electricity, cell phones, cars, planes and so many other products derived from coal and energy that comes from the earth, should cause each of us to pause and reflect.

I urge you to reconsider this coal lease moratorium and keep our mines producing, just like our country did when miners were desperately needed during WW II.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of the great men and women that serve our state and country, and simply want the chance to make all of our lives better and more secure.

I spoke with a leader from a county in southern West Virginia and he explained how their county is dying from lack of revenue that used to come from coal mines. How the people are moving away, jobs are being lost (70 teachers in one county alone), stores are closing, infrastructure is not being repaired, crime and drug abuse are rising, and families are being torn apart by many factors including suicide. This is not how to make America strong and vibrant. Just the opposite.

Just over 2 years ago our nation had 800 Mechanized Mining Units across the country. These are units capable of producing coal and many mines have more than one. Today we have fewer than 470 due to an attack, which will not save the world from climate ups and downs, but will create an irreversible slide in vital fuel for our nation's strength and freedom. Without coal, how will we remain the strongest nation on earth? That is a question each one of us here today needs to ponder and ask ourselves. Because, the regulations and moratoriums that continue to be placed in front of our nations miners is doing just that. Weakening every Americans ability to remain strong and free.