

Sharon St Joan
3 minute statement

Thank you to the Department of the Interior for this hearing and for the three-year moratorium on new coal on public lands.

There is a workable solution that can work for all of us.

There are two ways to move forward to the future – one is to close our eyes– and if we do that we risk falling off a cliff.

The other way is to go forward with our eyes open, so that we can be sure-footed and clear about where we are going.

We need to move to a world beyond coal.

Planning for the future means creating good jobs in the clean energy sector.

All of us drive cars. We heat and cool our houses. We fly in airplanes. And we elect the leaders responsible for our current energy policies.

A clean energy future must include a just transition for workers who have worked hard to provide the energy that has sustained our way of life.

How can we afford to invest in clean energy?

By cutting out subsidies to the fossil fuel industry – estimated at \$20 billion a year – we can invest instead in a just transition on two fronts.

First - programs for new, clean, healthy, good-paying jobs, for re-training and assistance for workers and their families.

Secondly, we need to invest in clean energy – solar and geo-thermal energy.

Clean energy is all ready here and is working well. This is the energy of the future and these are the jobs of the future.

Coal is the energy of the past. We are now seeing the largest coal companies go bankrupt. Alpha Natural Resources, Arch Coal, and just last month, in April, the largest U.S. coal company, Peabody, filed for bankruptcy.

According to a Blumberg news story, “The value of U.S. coal shares declined 83% in the four years from 2011 to 2015. That’s a decline of 83%!

A coal future is a mirage, shimmering in the distance, and soon to vanish.

We need to be ready for the future -- or the end of fossil fuels will come suddenly, and we will not be ready. This would be a big blow to our lives, to the jobs of coal workers, and to our economy.

Investing in clean energy, along with re-building America's crumbling bridges and roads will lift our economy out of the doldrums. It may even bring about an economic boom.

I live in Kane County where I am with the organization, Wild Kane County.

Utah has some of the most beautiful wild lands in the entire world. Kane County is surrounded by national parks.

Our economy in Kane County depends on tourism. Jobs depend on attracting tourists to the beauty of our wild lands. Three million tourists visit Zion's National Park every year. No tourists will travel to visit coal mines.

The Alton Coal mine lies just ten miles south of Bryce Canyon. For twenty years, we have watched the Alton Coal Mine – spew coal dust into the air that we breathe, pollute streams, destroy trees and plants and the homes of wild animals. Kanab Creek, which provides our drinking water, has been heavily impacted.

The Alton Coal Mine must not be allowed to expand onto three thousand acres of our public lands – to wreak havoc on some of the last remaining, most beautiful wild lands on earth.

We all belong to the natural world, and we cannot live without it. We must stop destroying it.

We ask for a permanent, total end to all new coal on to public lands, for a full and just transition to clean energy now, for good jobs for all coal workers, and for a way forward that will be life-giving for all Americans and for everyone on the planet.

Thank you.