

1 precious natural heritage.

2       And so we call on the BLM to modernize the federal  
3 coal program to take powerful and effective measures to  
4 protect the lands and waters upon which all life depends,  
5 to provide taxpayer equity, to support economic  
6 diversification in coal communities and to lead a  
7 transition to a clean energy economy which will provide a  
8 brighter and better future for us all. Thank you.

9                   MR. FIX: I'm Mark Fix. I'm a rancher  
10 and irrigator on the Tongue River near Miles City,  
11 Montana. I'm also a chair to the coal task force for the  
12 Northern Plains Resource Council.

13       I have come over a thousand miles to testify in the  
14 Programmatic and Environmental Impact Statement. I know  
15 the coal program well. The water I irrigate with is  
16 impaired by upstream coal mining and discharge, and for  
17 decades my ranch faced condemnation by proposed coal  
18 infrastructure.

19       It is important that the PEIS is conducted so that  
20 the taxpayers are not shortchanged. The method of  
21 leasing coal is flawed. There are almost no competitive  
22 bids and often the leases are given for pennies on the  
23 dollar. Part of this revenue goes to coal areas to cover  
24 important costs associated with extraction in regions  
25 like mine.

1       The main topic I want to talk about are reclamation  
2 and climate change. There are serious concerns with  
3 reclamation, including self-bonding in Wyoming. Several  
4 coal companies are going bankrupt calling into question  
5 whether there will be the necessary funds to clean up  
6 these massive strip mines.

7       A couple of weekends ago my wife and I drove to  
8 Denver and saw the huge pits near Gillette, Wyoming. I  
9 realized that those holes may never be reclaimed. Good  
10 reclamation will create jobs as well as helping to  
11 sequester carbon.

12       Montana is experiencing disturbing patterns  
13 symptomatic of catastrophic climate change, including  
14 over a million acres of land burned in forest fires in  
15 2012.

16       In 2013 I had an EF1 tornado that took off a quarter  
17 of my roof and half of my barn roof, toppled a new circle  
18 pivot and uprooted hundreds of cottonwood trees on the  
19 river. Many electrical poles were blown over it.

20       In 2014 we had the worst ice jam flooding that I'd  
21 ever seen since I bought my ranch in 1991. It trapped 50  
22 head of heifers that were going to have their first calf  
23 and I was afraid they had floated down the river.  
24 Luckily, they found a small patch of higher ground and  
25 survived. I had to rebuild the fences taken out by the

1 ice jam and most of those had been rebuilt the year  
2 before from the tornado.

3 In 2015 and the second highest acres burned in  
4 Montana history. Now just a few days ago an EF3 tornado  
5 hit Baker, Montana and destroyed six homes and damaged 50  
6 more. If we cannot reverse climate change, it will make  
7 it very difficult to continue to operate as a farmer or  
8 rancher.

9 In this PEIS the Department must account for the  
10 costs of putting more carbon in the atmosphere for the  
11 coal leases.

12 Thank you for allowing me to comment.

13 MS. LINET: Hello. My name is Cynthia  
14 Linet. I'm an artist and a political activist and I used  
15 to be a lawyer.

16 I'm here to tell you that we the people are opposed  
17 to all extraction of fossil fuels from our public lands.  
18 I don't -- thank you. I don't have to tell you that  
19 climate change is real, do I? The science is in.

20 Climate change is the existential threat of our  
21 time. You know what that means, existential threat, it  
22 will be the end of us if we don't do something about it.

23 We must stop all use and extraction of fossil fuels  
24 now before it's too late. We are already seeing the  
25 ravages of climate change and those in the poor South who