

1 electricity across the country are all losing.

2 As you consider changes to the coal lease program I
3 ask you to keep these people in mind.

4 Thank you so much for today and your consideration.

5 MR. BATTIS: Okay.

6 MR. LANDEN: First of all I want to
7 thank the Bureau of Land Management for providing this
8 opportunity to testify.

9 My name is Bill Landen. I am from Casper, Wyoming
10 where I serve as a state senator for a community that's
11 been hard hit by the loss of jobs and the downturn of the
12 domestic energy market.

13 Since one of the goals of your review is to -- of
14 the Federal Coal Program is to evaluate the return on
15 investment, I wanted to focus my comments today on some
16 of what my state, Wyoming, has done with coal lease
17 payments.

18 We have chosen to invest those funds in our future,
19 specifically the future of our kids. Payments -- coal
20 lease bonus payments and all the subsequent tax revenues
21 generated by the coal program are used almost exclusively
22 in my state to help us fund the K through 12 education
23 system.

24 Over the past 15 years Wyoming has invested more
25 than \$3.5 billion in school facilities. As chairman of

1 our school facilities committee, I am proud to say that
2 coal lease bonuses have paid for more than 70 new schools
3 across our state and have assisted in modernizing an
4 additional 35 while maintaining the rest.

5 More than \$815 million in coal lease money has been
6 spent on major maintenance alone over that same time
7 period. Beyond those lease payments the coal industry
8 provides mineral royalty payments and severance and ad
9 valorem taxes, much of which goes to pay the teachers in
10 the operation of those schools. Roughly 16 percent of
11 our K through 12 funding in Wyoming can be attributed to
12 tax revenue derived from the coal program.

13 And of course, the industry provides jobs for moms
14 and dads of the kids who are in those schools. Not just
15 jobs in the mines, but in all the support industries
16 throughout the four-state region. I'm not certain how
17 the federal government spends the revenue derived from
18 coal, but I do know that in Wyoming we have used that
19 money to invest in our future.

20 The school facilities we put on the ground will last
21 for generations to come. I would argue today that we are
22 receiving a fair return for this resource as evidenced by
23 the state of Wyoming. We hope you will reinstate the
24 leasing program.

25 Finally, there is legislation pending before

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1 Congress currently that we believe is collaborative and
2 balanced and we would urge your support as it moves
3 through the process.

4 I want to thank you for the opportunity today.
5 Thanks.

6 MR. BATTIS: Thank you.

7 MR. PETERSON: Thank you. Good
8 morning. My name is Representative Strom Peterson
9 representing the 21st District here in the great state of
10 Washington in South Snohomish County.

11 I would like to give a thanks to all of the elected
12 officials that traveled from Wyoming and other places.
13 While we may disagree on this issue, I do have a great
14 respect for your willingness to serve the people of
15 Wyoming and other states.

16 And thanks to the crowd for showing respect to
17 fellow elected officials. It's a tough job.

18 With the EIS issue, one of the issues that I would
19 like for you all to look at are the transportation
20 effects kind of across from Powder River to the ultimate
21 coal terminals and beyond. But what especially affects
22 my district here in the 21st is we have an at-grade train
23 crossing with the ferry system, which for those of you
24 not from the state of Washington, that would be an
25 at-grade crossing to a major state highway.