

My name is Richard Reavey. I work for Cloud Peak Energy, a coal producer here in Wyoming and Montana. First, I object to these hearings, the moratorium on federal coal leasing, and the sham of the programmatic environmental impact study on federal coal leasing. The majority of comments from the so-called listening sessions on coal leasing last summer made it clear that the program works, that there's no justification for increasing royalty and leasing rates. Neither the Government Accountability Office nor the Inspector General or Department of the Interior reports on federal coal leasing make any recommendations that merit a leasing moratorium or the witch hunt of a programmatic EIS, despite misleading claims to the contrary by the Secretary. This is a politically motivated sham pandering to the political allies of the Secretary and the administration at the cost of jobs, communities, and people in this room today. I want to make it extremely clear that this effort by the Secretary to justify leasing and royalty rate increases through this witch hunt EIS is illegal. The Mineral Leasing Act, which is a very good data source for you, should you care to read it, is the law under which the federal coal leasing program operates. It directs and requires the Secretary to develop guidelines and regulations for the program that -- and I quote -- "ensure the maximum economic recovery of coal." The coal leasing moratorium violates that requirement. Furthermore, with federal coal selling at historic lows, miners being forced out of their jobs, coal producers in bankruptcy, and PRB coal delivering 40 percent of the selling price in taxes, fees, and royalties, there is no economic justification for an increase in royalty or leasing rates. Instead Secretary Jewell has repeatedly stated that royalty and leasing rates should reflect the administration's climate objectives. If so, she should seek amendment of the Mineral Leasing Act in Congress because Congress has the authority to impose new taxes, not the Secretary. There's no economic justification for royalty and leasing rate increases. So any attempt to impose new increases on the basis of the administration's climate objectives is a social cost, a carbon tax, a climate tax, or whatever else she would like to call it, is illegal. Attempting to keep it in the ground by imposing taxes and fees that discourage the maximum economic recovery of coal is illegal. Finally, I want to make it clear that the Secretary's efforts to destroy mining in the West, to destroy communities across the West, and to destroy the livelihoods of people in this room is a despicable act of political pandering. I

request that the Secretary remove the moratorium immediately and cease the sham of this EIS.