

**ROUGHLY EDITED TRANSCRIPT**

**Bureau of Land Management  
Coal Listening Session  
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>> Hi.

Good afternoon.

Can I ask everybody to take a seat, please.

Thank you so much for coming.

I think you're all aware this is the fifth listening session that the BLM has done and has collected a great deal of important information.

This is your meeting, your information, and you're in charge of almost everything.

There's a couple of exceptions that I'm in charge of.

I'm the only one that's allowed to interrupt.

Every speaker is going to have three minutes.

You can have 30 people at the microphone.

You can have one person at the microphone.

You still only have three minutes.

We've got a lot of people signed up that want to be heard, and we want to hear every single one of them.

So I'd appreciate -- there is going to be a big timer up here on the screen.

And there will be a bell, very polite, very nice, but I'm pretty tough.

So, there you go.

You must have signed up to speak.

You have to have your name on a list.

I have the list in front of me.

I'm going to try to do my best in the order in which you signed up.

Sometimes there are little glitches but not many.

There's two microphones.

I'm going to call five people up to one microphone, five people up to another microphone.

So these are just little details, little ground rules, but before we get started I'd like to introduce you to your panel.

So, Aiden, would you introduce your panel, please.

>> ADEN SIEIDLITZ: You bet.

My name is Aden Seidlitz, acting State Director for the New Mexico BLM office here in Santa Fe.

Also covers Texas and Oklahoma and Kansas, and I am honored to have our Director of BLM to my right here, Mr. Neil Kornze.

[ applause ]

>> NEIL KORNZE: Thank you.

We are thrilled to be here.

You will hear more from me in a minute.

>> ARDEN SIEIDLITZ: To my left is Karen more 10 sun and she is deputy Assistant Director for our Lands and Minerals program back in Washington D.C.

>> I'm happy to be here.

Thank you.

Glad to be here.

>> ADEN SIEIDLITZ: At the very end down here is Mitch Leverette and he is the division chief for our Solid Minerals Program and all three of them up here do a tremendous job in supporting us out here in the field, and it's just an honor to have them out here in New Mexico today, and also to have you guys here.

We look forward to hearing what you have to say.

>> Glad to be here.

>> NEIL KORNZE: Thank you for the warm welcome.

We are very glad to see you as well.

I would like to welcome you to the last of five Listening Sessions on the Federal Coal Program.

My colleagues and I are excited to be here with you and to hear about your views on this important issue.

The goal of today's session is the same as it was with the other forums we've held in Washington D.C., in Gillette, Wyoming, Billings, Montana, Denver Colorado, just a few days ago, and now here in Farmington, New Mexico.

This is to hear from people with a wide range of perspectives about the BLM's coal program and how we can best manage these coal resources on behalf of the American people, ensuring that as is a requirement by law that we receive a fair return with the management of these resources.

We are in the early stages of thinking about these issues, and the information you and others provide will help inform our work.

These are not simple standalone issues and we do not treat them as such.

These are much more complex because they are intertwined with larger questions that we have to grapple with to be good public land and natural Resource Managers.

We have to engage with questions like: can we adapt in a fast-changing environment?

How do we modernize energy programs to anticipate the energy future needs of this nation?

And what are we doing, are we doing enough to make sure that the U.S. is a leader in world energy issues?

These questions are at the foundation of what we do at the Bureau of Land Management, and with the nation's largest management portfolio, we manage more than 10% of the nation's surface, and about a third of the minerals and soils that are underfoot.

We continually ask ourselves these questions, and are we striking the right balance between development and conservation.

We also ask questions like do we have measures in place to protect our lands and our waters for families both today and in the future?

And how might 80 reforms that we would enact affect local communities, hard working individuals and economic opportunities, particularly in rural areas like the rural corner of Nevada that I come from, or the rural corner of New Mexico that you live in.

And where do we -- and where we authorize development, are we doing enough to make sure the American taxpayer, including here in Farmington and throughout New Mexico, that those people are getting the return that they are due from the natural resources that they own as American citizens.

This is an important open question and one that we'll hear about today relating to fair return on coal and how we manage those -- this program.

I think most Americans would be surprised to learn that you can buy a ton of coal for a dollar in many places, or that coal resources managed by the Federal government stretch across 570 million acres of land.

Now, the general accountability office and the Inspector General for the Department of the Interior and members of Congress from both sides of the aisle have raise the questions about the Federal Coal Program and whether or not reform is needed.

And so we're here today to ask you a few questions and to hear from you on them.

One is are taxpayers and local communities getting a fair return for these coal resources?

Another is, how can we make the program more transparent and more competitive?

I know that these can be hard questions to grapple with, and I'm thrilled that you're taking the time to come here and share your thoughts with us.

Thoughtful, substantive comments from you are going to help drive potential reforms on our behalf -- or on our side, and I look forward to hearing your views as you lay them out today.

We are here to listen from you, we will be taking notes.

This session is being recorded, and this is an opportunity for you to put your ideas on the table. So we've introduced the panel.

We have Aiden Seidlitz our acting Director in New Mexico, Karen more 10 sun and Mitch Leverette who do an amazing job managing our energy programs at the Bureau of Land Management and now I will introduce Mitch Leverette who is our solid minerals division chief and oversees hard rock mining and the coal program of the Bureau of Land Management and Mitch is going to run us through a short presentation to make sure that we all have some common understanding of the breadth of the program that we're talking about, some of the fundamental ways that we work, and then we will -- I think Liz will then return to the podium and lead us through the listening session.

So thank you very much for taking the time to be here.

It's the middle of the day.

I know this is a sacrifice of time, and we genuinely appreciate it.

>> MITCH LEVERETTE: Thank you, Neil.

As Neil stated, this is the fifth of the Listening Sessions that we're going to have talking about coal.

Currently BLM administers 310 coal leases.

In the last 10 years, BLM hands, we produced approximately 5.1 billion tons of coal, worth over \$72 billion.

This production generated \$7.9 billion in royalties and nearly \$4 billion in revenues from rents, bonuses and other payments.

And in these 10 years we held 39 coal lease sales.

In 2014, approximately 40% of the nation's electricity is produced from coal.

It is expected that this will be about 30% by 2040.

Approximately 40% of the coal produced is from Federal coal, and 85% of this is from the Powder River Basin.

This slide shows Federal coal leased in a given year versus how much is mined in a given year. The blue column is tons leased, and the darker column is tons mined.

As you see, the tons mined has been relatively -- fairly stable over the 10 years, and some years we have big spikes in leasing.

That is reflective of when the Environmental Analysis is completed and how they end up coming out in the final competitive process.

If you notice the past couple years, there's been very few tons leased compared to other years. This chart shows Federal coal bonuses generated in a given year and the royalties collected in a given year.

The bonus is the payment that is not the royalty, it's not the rent, but it's that piece that's competitive that the bidders bid against the -- each other to try to win the actual competitive lease.

So the light green is the bonus bid and the dark is the royalty collected.

Notice in 2012 that was a big year for bonus payments generated, \$1.5 billion.

And royalties collected, \$799 million.

This map simply shows where the coal fields are in the lower 48, and most of BLM's coal is in the West, in that circle there, the Powder River Basin and the Rocky Mountain basin, other basins, including the basin here in New Mexico.

This slide shows generally the Federal coal leasing process and I won't spend much detail on this, but basically and application and review, NEPA analysis and fair market value analysis, a lease sale is held, that sale is reviewed, a bond is posted, and the BLM issues the lease, and then it goes over to OSM, who also issues a mining permit, and this has to occur before mining can begin.

A couple of things in the coal program are by statute, and we'll talk a little bit about regulations, and the royalty and royalty rate reductions with respect to statute.

The statute, the Mineral Leasing Act, basically says lessees must pay a royalty of not less than 12.5% on sales for the price of coal.

And it also says the Secretary may determine a lesser royalty rate for underground mining to promote development.

Under the regulations, the regulations specifically state that lessees must pay a royalty rate of 8% for underground mining and not less than 12.5% for surface mining.

And the regulations also state that the lessees must pay \$3 per acre for rent.

Bonding requirements, we talked about BLM, and we also talked about another agency, OSM, Office of Surface Mining.

Basically BLM's bond is for the financial payments that are due to BLM.

We're bonding against those.

OSM holds the reclamation bond for mining coal on Federal Lands.

Neil talked about recent audits that we have encountered.

We've encounter an Office of Inspector General office and GAO audit and there were many things in those audits that we have been working on.

Two areas that are relevant to the session we're having today are lease sale valuation process and royalty rate reductions.

The lease sale valuation process is important because it establishes that presale fair market value before coal is sold.

And a high bid at a given sale must meet or exceed this fair market value estimate.

As a part of our audit, we developed -- or reintroduced a new handbook and manual that goes and reevaluates and -- and reexamine that process and put new activities in place for ensuring that that process works better.

We also implemented a third-party review process and we think that we are heading in the right direction with the lease valuation process.

With respect to royalty rate reductions, we issued guidance to streamline the application process, and we also put in a requirement for the office of natural resource revenue that they be consulted for financial hardship royalty rate reduction applications.

That ends my presentation, and I'm going to hand it back over to Liz, but these are once again the questions that we are here to take comments from today.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

I would like to begin by calling Penny Pugh to the center microphone, please.

She is from Paul A. Gosar's Congressional office, 4th district Arizona.

Thank you for coming, Penny.

>> Thank you.

Good afternoon.

I'm penny pew, Congressman Gosar's District Director and intergovernmental liaison and he represents the Arizona 4th Congressional District and Dr. Gosar sends his wishes that unfortunately his schedule prevents him from attending in person, however, he asked me to share his remarks.

We are gathered today so the BLM can hear comments on the agency's misguided proposal to raise the Federal coal tax.

I'm not going to mince words.

And I hope those of you commenting don't either.

This administration is going after your livelihood and putting our brothers and sisters out of work.

So there is no need to be polite.

The Obama administration's unnatural fixation with destroying the coal industry, killing jobs and driving up electricity prices for hard working American families continues today.

This fifth and final fictitious listening session is a sham.

The BLM claims raising the Federal coal tax is necessary to ensure that American taxpayers receive a fair return on the coal resources managed by the Federal government on their behalf.

What a bunch of baloney.

If this administration was truly concerned about receiving an increased return on Federal coal, then it would institute policies that encourage production.

Further, if the Federal government cared about ensuring a fair rate return to taxpayers, it wouldn't give loan guarantees to companies like Solendra and wouldn't prop other renewable ventures that are not economically viable.

President Obama and his agency minions are trying to put the coal industry out of business by imposing a flurry of draconian mandates not based in reality.

The EPA's new carbon regulations for coal plants are estimated to kill 226,000 jobs annually and cause a \$50 billion loss to our economy each year.

The new stream protection regulation is estimated to kill as many as 273, 227 mining related jobs and have an associated economic loss of \$25 billion annually.

In April the U.S. energy information administration reported that nearly 10,000 coal miners lost their jobs in 2013.

The war on coal is real, my friends.

Just ask the new dad who was laid off from his \$80,000 job.

Or the single mother who has to work two to three jobs now just to make ends meet.

Approximately 40% of coal production in the U.S. comes from Federal Lands.

Federal mineral royalty receipts provide important revenues for schools and highways as well as contribute hundreds of millions of dollars annually to Federal, tribal and state coffers.

An increase in the Federal coal tax will further discourage production and reduce these royalties.

I urge you all to join me in opposing this job-killing new tax.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, Penny.

I would like to get to why you all came.

I would like to hear from -- and I think the panel would like to hear from each and every person who has signed up to speak.

I'm going to call out five names, and I would like you to go to the far right speaker, and five more names to the center speaker.

For the right speaker, Robert TOWE, Rebecca So Bell, John KLIMA, Sarah Jayne White and Lila HOLSTOY.

To the center Mike Eloise Brown, Dwayne Lloyd, Daniel So, Laurie Goodman and Carole Davis. Robert?

Could you please give your name and if you have an affiliation or if you're just here representing yourself that would be great.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Robert TOWE with the national organizing campaign Department.

Work for the Sierra Club.

I'm here to address some basic concerns that we have about the new Federal coal royalty rates.

America's public lands belong to us all.

Right now that money that companies pay to coal mines on those lands is too low, allowing them to shortchange taxpayers out of fair share of profits.

A recent third party estimate that over the past 30 years the government's under valuation of coal may have cost taxpayers of upward of \$30 million a year.

These are lost revenues.

These funds could go toward funding schools, roads and other priorities.

Lease coal amounts were more than half the carbon pollution from fossil fuels extracted from Federal Lands.

The outdated Federal Coal Program represents a serious threat to reversing climate change.

The fundamental reforms must be in place to protect families and businesses from climate disruption.

The Department of Interior must update the Federal policies on coal leasing to ensure coal companies pay their fair share to American taxpayers for our shared natural resources.

The Office of Surface Mining must update bonding requirements to make sure taxpayers aren't left on the hook for expensive cleanups.

How do we make these reforms?

Here are a few ways in which to do that.

Again, like I said, increase the coal royalty rates to 18.5% to match that of other fossil fuels extracted from Federal Lands.

Close hoop holes that lead coal companies to avoid paying royalties through subsidiaries.

Again, a fair coal leasing policy will ensure that coal companies compensate taxpayers equitably for mining activities on public lands.

I have two questions for the panel that concern regional power plant, the San Juan mine.

The first question is: what is the San Juan mine royalty payment dollars per ton paid to the Federal government by the coal mining company?

The second question: what is the selling price in dollars per ton paid by San Juan generating station for this coal?

And so -- and if these reforms that I have spoken of can't be changed or adopted, and until such time that that happens, I say keep it in the ground.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Robert, can I ask you to please put your comments and your questions -- there's a box in the back.

Submit them in writing so that we make sure that we get it all.

Thank you.

Eloise.

>> Yeah, my name is Eloise Brown.

I'm a full-blooded Navajo and was born on the Navajo Nation.

For many years in my life I have fought coal and uranium exploitation.

I am now battling the fracking industry.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you.

I would appreciate your attention without any distractions.

New Mexico's long history of uranium and coal mining, coal burning and oil and gas extraction on Native American lands has caused devastating impacts to my people.

Our people have suffered long impacts from cancer, asthma, lung and heart disease, because there has been energy production at our expense.  
We live in a toxic shadow of P and M's coal plants.  
My life was taken at an early age due to uranium exposure.  
The Federal government could have prevented that and you can prevent so much now.  
I am asking you to protect our water, our land and health, our precious environment.  
Our land is dotted with contaminated tailings, hundreds of abandoned uranium and coal mines still not cleaned up, our water is polluted, our earth poisoned.  
What else could be more important than clean water, clean air and undeseccrated land?  
We are having problems breathing.  
Our children need pumps to breathe.  
When our water is spoiled, how can we grow our crops and feed our livestock?  
This is criminal.  
Navajos suffer from high cancer rates and respiratory problems.  
As indigenous peoples we have been sacrificing our lands and our way of life, our air, our water have been polluted so others can have electricity.  
This electricity has come at a price.  
It has a lasting impact, not just to our culture, our water and our health, but to all future generations.  
Some people say we should be grateful that the coal industry has given us jobs.  
We all want jobs, but these jobs at the mine mean fathers dying at age 50.  
These jobs mean black lung disease.  
The jobs mean kids without dads.  
Some people say we should -- I'm sorry -- this is no way to live.  
Yes, of course, we want jobs, but the coal industry is dying.  
Coal companies are going bankrupt.  
Coal mines are closing.  
Thank goodness.  
We need to rely on father sun to provide jobs in a different economy.  
Solar is the way of our Navajo Nation.  
We need an economic that provides life, not just work.  
We walk in beauty that is our teaching.  
That means that we don't destroy life to have life.  
Far too long the Federal government has been exploiting our people.  
Human life is more pressure than private profits.  
Far too long the Federal has been complicit in the coal industry's efforts to take our resources.  
And then we are left with the legacy of waste.  
We have a smarter -- we have smarter choices like solar and wind that are better for us and don't come with abuse or the pollution.  
Walking --  
>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Eloise.  
I will have to stop you there.  
>> One sentence left.  
Walking in beauty means respecting our sacred mother earth.



You need to end this toxic legacy on the national hoe nation and the country to help us to transition to economies that won't leave toxic waste.

Keep coal in the ground check.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Rebecca.

Excuse me, one second.

Can you hold the timer, please.

I think that one of the ground rules was that there would be no signs in this room.

So I would be really grateful if you would take the sign out into the hall.

You can put the sign on the back table if you want.

But you can't hold it there while the speaker is speaking.

Please.

And also -- in the front -- in the group in the front here, it's really distracting if everybody's talking at the same time.

So let's listen to the speakers, if we could.

Okay?

Because -- I really want to hear what they have to say.

Thanks.

Thanks for holding, Rebecca.

>> Hi.

My name is Rebecca.

We appreciate the interior Department engaging the American public in an honest conversation about how to reform the way our publicly owned coal is managed.

If we're to have an honest conversation, we have to admit that the future of coal is bleak.

Modernizing the coal program mean means getting with the times.

We can't keep mining and burning coal and have any chance of meaningfully reducing our carbon emissions.

We can't buy our way to a safer climate it's not a matter of if we can transition to new energy economies but how fast we can move to do so.

The longer we wait the bleaker and more costly our future gets.

Today I stand alongside 6500 other people, and wild earth guardians, calling for the Interior Department to ensure a fair return on our coal by keeping it in the ground.

I will read the letter that we are submitting today.

Dear Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, our world is in dire need of your help.

Fueled by unchecked emissions of greenhouse gases our climate is warming.

Leading to rising temperatures, extreme weather, drought and fires and economic uncertainty.

Now more than ever we need to be doing everything possible to reduce greenhouse gases to combat climate change.

The President realizes this as he has signed groundbreaking rules to reduce carbon emissions from coal-fired power plants but yet while the President is striving to confront climate change the Interior Department is approving more coal mining and condoning more coal burning.

We're calling on you to stop it.

As a manager of our publicly owned coal you hold leadership.

46% of all carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants can be traced back to publicly

owned coal that the Interior Department has approved for mining.  
It's a disgraceful link, but you have the power to take things in a better direction.  
It's time to come up with a plan for keeping our publicly owned coal in the ground.  
With careful planning we be assure jobs and communities will stay intact, our electricity supply will not be disrupted and carbon emissions will be meaningfully reduced.  
None of this will happen until you honestly and explicitly tell the American public it's time to end the Federal Coal Program.  
As a first step we're calling on to stop leasing more publicly owned coal and not make any more public lands available for mining.  
The reality is we have to move beyond coal if we're to have any chance of combating climate change.  
This is the honest truth and we call upon you to act upon it.  
Please lead our nation towards a future where our coal is kept in the ground.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

I'm sorry, Mr. Lloyd, your first name escapes me.

>> It's Doin, rhymes with coin.

Not a very common name.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: You're up.

>> I'm Doin Lloyd.

I have a background in epidemiology.

I'm a philosophical conservative.

I go by the number.

I here with the Sierra Club.

Regarding the -- roughly adjusted for BTU.

Other coal sources are priced two to three or more times than the BLM price.

It certainly appears BLM coal is not being sold at a market price, particularly given the low sulfur content.

Mine owners want to expand mine into the Powder River to export coal to compensate for the declining demand for coal in the U.S.

If this occurs BLM will be subsidizing energy not only in the U.S. but in Asia as well.

We don't know what the future need for coal might be.

Is it wise to give away irreplaceable resources we might need in the future.

In the bigger picture from a peer-reviewed journal article, fossil fuel emissions, mainly coal, add from 300 billion to 800 billion dollars a year to U.S. healthcare costs each year.

In 2013EPA predicted in 2016 between 17,000 and 44,000 deaths would occur from coal emissions.

In 2005 Ontario, Canada, concerned about overall cost, compared cost of the then current coal-fired plants to converting to natural gas and updating coal-fired with state-of-the-art emissions controls.

In their guest case scenario for coal-fired plants, deaths were reduced from 668 to 184.

However, the scenario of going to gas reduced deaths to 24.

Applying their predictions of the best case scenario of coal to the U.S. population of 321 million today, we would predict premature deaths in the U.S. on the high end of the EPA

estimate of 17,000 to 44,000.

Please note this is a study by the province of Ontario Canada, independent of U.S. politics. Since 40% of power comes from coal, BLM is contributing from 6800 to 19,000 debts a year. In addition to deaths emissions contribute to many other health problems.

Should these issues concern BLM and its coal policy?

Economic changes are frightening to us all, but Americans are a creative people and we can figure out how to make changes without workers or communities being hurt.

Economic future of this community and that of the power company such as PNP depend upon rational progress.

When creative people put their minds to it there are always win-win solutions.

I think it behooves the power companies and everybody to move into the future, diversify and not get stuck with what is obviously a dying industry.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, sir.

John Klima?

>> Hi.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is John Klima, a geologist of damn near 40 years' experience.

I have recently returned from long-term residence overseas.

Frankly I'm appalled at what I hear and the poor condition that I find the mining industry in this country.

Surely everybody should be aware by now that there is only miners and farmers that create new jobs.

It is bottom up.

It is not top down.

It is not from Washington.

I find in looking at the situation on coal here the long investigative science fiction, that's the only word I know, to the process that we really need to change.

We need to get the -- particularly the interior people to looking at all of these things together. The BLM has different things to other people, say, the Forest Service, as to what can go ahead and what can't.

The big thing that I see is that we as a country are in an economic war, a very serious economic war, that we're presently losing on many fronts, one of which is we see overseas countries putting money behind various organizations, many of which are not for profits to further the agenda and spread fear in the community.

Although it is not applying necessarily to the coal industry as yet, the best one is probably the money from Saudi Arabia going into the anti-fracking movement to spread fear in that system.

The same thing is starting to apply in the coal industry as we have just heard.

Information that is being made available to the public through these organizations in many cases is just not truthful.

Many of the things that come out our universities, particularly those that are using computer modeling, have failed and failed and failed again.

From some of my days back in the 1970s when we were going to go into a nice ice age to the idea we're all going to starve to death, and now as to what greenhouse gases mean.

I will point to everybody, I think it's this week's "the economist" an English publication that has

an interesting article about China.

Talks about the number of coal mines and their pollution problems.

The big thing is that they have put in a thousand stations to take readings of the air.

The most important one probably is the particles that are put in the air.

It is more interesting that they're not interested in CO2.

Neither should we.

If we really are, then you need to go back to the Department of the Interior and you got to tell them to do something about the Forest Service and its save everything and burn it down.

Thank you very much.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, sir.

Daniel?

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Daniel So, and I'm an enrolled member of the Navajo tribe of Indians now known as the Navajo Nation.

I come here without a written statement because I am ambivalent to the processes of a listening session.

My most recent experience was to participate in a listening session at Chaco with Senator Udall and Deputy Director Michael Connor.

After many of us spoke from the heart regarding the fracking operations and where we called for a moratorium on fracking, and after the Senator left, do you know what the first words out of Deputy Director Connor's mouth was?

Development will continue.

So in that aspect the listening session was of no value to the speakers, and so I hope you don't proceed in that same manner.

I hope that it's a truthful listening session where you listen to recommendations and that you take to heart some of the things that we have to say.

Number one, I'm concerned that the BLM or the Senior people at the Department of the Interior, have an ability to promulgate rules and regulations on the royalty rates of all Federal Lands.

And I hope that this listening session doesn't involve the reservation lands or the allotment lands of the eastern Navajo agencies.

I hope you're only talking about the Bureau of Land Management lands.

Remember that each of us and every one of us in this room are an owner of the coal resources that you're prospecting to set the royalty rates on.

The other aspect I see is there's split estates between the state and the BLM on these lands.

So we can talk about royalty rates but you know what, the value that comes to the state and to the Federal government is not a real true value of what you're talking about on your presentation.

In that respect, let's just leave it in the ground.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, sir.

Sarah Jayne White?

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Sarah Jayne White.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Could you -- Sarah Jayne, could you speak really right into the microphone. This is being live streamed and they won't be able to hear you unless you really speak into it.

>> Can you hear me now?

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Much better.

Thank you.

>> My name is Sarah Jayne White and I live in the Four Corners and for many years, generations, Navajo people have suffered great abuse as energy companies have pushed their way on to the Navajo reservation with toxic waste dumps, uranium mines, coal wells and two generating stations that generates some of the worst air pollution in the entire United States. Navajo people bear the burden of this environmental devastation and the health problems like asthma and heart disease that comes along with it.

But we never see our fair share of the profits these polluters make of our lands and our people.

There is coal mining happening on Navajo land through a Federal Bureau of Land Management, BLM.

Programs that subsidize the mining of publicly owned coal, but BLM doesn't charge a fair market price for the coal that's mined.

And coal companies have found loopholes that let them cheat tribes out of their fair share of profits from these public coal mines.

By using loopholes to take more than their share of profits coal companies have robbed the Navajo Nation of money that could be invested in our schools, roads and other vital local programs like housing, like health.

The Navajo people have suffered for the last hundred years.

You know, we have a lot of resources, especially coal.

There's a lot of health problems that comes from these coals, but not everybody on the Navajo Nation is getting money out of it.

We do not profit from it.

If this was priced right, if the Navajo Nation is gaining money from it, everybody else would be better off on the Navajo reservation, but it is not.

Many people have -- still have no inside plumbing.

Many people still don't have housing.

Many people still don't have power.

The power goes to Tucson.

The power goes somewhere else.

It's not used on the reservation.

And there's a lot of health problems that comes with it.

This comb mine is very, very expensive.

The medications are very expensive.

The medication for asthma is very expensive.

The medical cost is expensive.

Doctor visits are expensive.

There's a lot of people and a lot of young children in the schools that are asthmatic.

So I would say that keep this coal in the ground.

It doesn't need to be out.

We don't need no more coal.

To have our fair share, I say shut all the coal mines on the Navajo Nation.

We don't need them.

We don't want them.

So that's the better way to go.

I would say -- keep in the coal in the ground.

It's safer.

It's cleaner.

There's other ways to make electricity.

There's other ways we can survive.

We survived before coal came around.

Why are you --

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, Sarah.

>> -- and climate change.

Yes, there's a lot of effects from this coal mine.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Sarah, I have to stop you there.

Laurie Goodman.

Thank you so much.

>> My name is Laurie Goodman.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Laurie, could you speak directly into the mic.

>> Hi, my name is Laurie Goodman, and I volunteer for the citizens against ruining our environment on the Navajo Nation.

Thank you for having this session here.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: We thought you were taller.

Sorry.

>> So you're asking what's a fair return.

You're asking about BLM leasing.

And -- for a fair return on coal, coal market, for us as people that live where we're being sacrificed for everybody's comfort, a fair return for us means being healthy.

A fair return means having some of the basic needs that everybody else in America enjoys.

So right now we're not getting a fair return.

For the Navajo Nation, and for it to have a fair return, there needs to be the it will -- the full cost needs to be included, which is what Sarah Jayne White eloquently listed for us, the health impacts.

We have people, they need medication.

They need help to breathe at night.

But yet they don't have electricity. So this is the true impact of cheap coal.

Cheap coal is expensive for us.

Cheap coal leads to pollution.

Pollution that impacts our people.

So -- let's see.

BLM leasing, Bureau of Land Management does a horrible job leasing.

They need to be able to include the liabilities.

And for us here we have a situation where we have between BLM and Office of Surface

Mining, you know, they need bonding.

The Navajo Nation just recently purchased Navajo mine and yet the sign-off was that we are stuck with current -- present, past and future liabilities, and I think that's a failure on Office of Surface Mining and BLM that's a criminal act that they have allowed to happen.

So that is not -- you know, so when we talk about a fair share, we want a fair share of being able to have clean air and to breathe clean air, and so we need -- there's a need to move -- there's a better way.

We have solar.

This is an area where we get a lot of sun.

So solar is an answer here.

And our hospitals, Navajo Indian health service, is 70% funded and 20 to 25% vacancy rates for doctors and nurses.

So that is not fair.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, Laurie.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Llela is that is that correct?

>> No.

Elolita.

I wanted to thank you for coming to our community to hear about the program this mine and power plant has created.

There is history of -- the Navajo have suffered great abuse and the energy company and pushing their way throughout the Navajo Nation with like toxic waste, with the uranium mine, oil, power plant generations that create some of the worst pollution in the U.S.

Our health is suffering, our -- meaning our health is suffering, we have a lot of youth that have a lot of asthma.

They have to live on CPAP which we have to generate through electricity.

And due to this process I actually became involved because my -- at the age of 5 years old my father died by black lung from the mine and I had to grow up without knowing my father because of that, and I think that if the mine would have continued its process, how many young children would have to lose their parents.

How many of us youth will actually have to suffer with asthma living on CPAP with heart disease, with black lungs floating around due to pollution.

Above that, with EPA with polluting our water, I don't see anything really being done or having to have something done for our people who are actually suffering, not just our people, but the San Juan community as well.

I know some of the people that live in the San Juan area that need water as well.

I know some communities in the San Juan area that have children with health problems.

We could actually be using part of that money, the 30 million, for our schools, maybe to grade roads, successful things than having it be lost.

I -- I think the mine -- wait, 30 million loss in revenues over the 30 years.

We could have used that for our schools.

During the process of that I don't see any revenues from any source of mines.

Like we don't actually benefit from them.

So basically we're being ripped off.

We're being ripped off of our health, our land, and I would say no mining, no more pollution,

so that we'll have a good life and a long life than just something we'll actually be living until we're 30 years old and be dead.

I know the majority of the U.S., say Native Americans shouldn't exist.

I want to prove we should live just like everyone else.

Including with the pollution, that needs to stop so we can have a better successful community.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you so much.

Carole Davis?

>> Good afternoon.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Could you give us your name, please and affiliation.

>> My name is Carole Davis.

I'm also with Diné citizens against ruining our environment, also a member of the Navajo Nation.

I won't repeat what you some of the great speakers before me have already shared but what I wish to do is remind Bureau of Land Management the essence of their mission, which is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Coal and all other natural resources contaminate -- oops, sorry -- coal and other natural resource extraction only limits my potential to fully enjoy our public lands, which include our natural parks, Yosemite, Yellowstone, Grand Tetons, Grand Canyon.

Resource extraction only destroys the land, the air and our precious water resources.

The royalties collected are not sufficient to protect and preserve these natural wonders.

I just want to remind everybody of what BLM's mission is.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Could we have at the far right microphone Colleen Cully, Andy Dan, Anthony Sole, Heather -- sorry about the last name.

Can't get it.

And Charles Alere.

We have at the center microphone Anna Runden, Cooper Curly, Jake Toledo, Jake Romero and Louise Bentley.

Could you give us your name and your affiliation and we'll start with Colleen.

>> My name is Colleen Cool yea.

I am Diné.

I want to start off by saying what you presented, it can be confusing to the general public.

So to everybody here, forget all the numbers, the charts and what was presented earlier.

It just -- it just kind of confuses myself and other people.

Basically this session hearing is just another way of a Federal agency to say they consulted with the public, and this is the way I understand the Federal Coal Leasing Program that they're proposing, or reforming.

Our lands are being auctioned off to coal companies for pennies.

Our communities specifically have not prospered from coal from the past 50-plus years.

The governmental officials and Federal agencies continue to say that energy development is needed to help with poverty and unemployment.

But I don't see that.



We're still at 50% or more unemployment.

We're still living at poverty-like conditions on the Navajo Nation.

There's a lot of people, homes, families that still live without running water and electricity.

And as someone said, the coal mining and coal burning that happens on our land, it does not come directly to us.

It goes to Tucson, Phoenix, Las Vegas, California.

We have to buy our own tribal utility -- tribal utility authority has to buy that electricity back from those companies.

So why and how much longer will our lands and resources continue to be used and extracted for pennies.

How much longer will our lands be sacrificed for the benefit of big cities and not indigenous land.

We need to transition to cleaner energy now.

We can and should no longer put a price tag on our lands and resources.

We need a fair share of compensation for our Diné people or just leave it in the ground.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Anna?

>> Thank you, Neil -- thank you, Aiden, Karen and Mitchell.

My Nam is Anna, and I'm with the towering house clan.

I appreciate the space.

So we the people that are directly impacted by coal fly Ashe, contaminated water, poison air and the immense increase of cancer, heart rate and asthma and multitude of social ills that has damaged our natural way of life.

Your Federal Coal Leasing Program as well as your due diligence in protecting the United States people is grossly negligent in meeting your own mission statement.

Let me read it to you and remind you who you work for.

The Department of the Interior protects and manages the nation's natural resources and cultural heritage.

Provides scientific and other information about those resources, and honors the nation's trust responsibility or special commitment to American Indians, Alaskan natives and affiliated island communities.

I read your strategic plan on climate change.

You've failed there again grossly.

Not one of these statement goals have been successfully implemented.

How can you allow outdated leases to remain on your docket?

Meanwhile, our Diné people are losing to the dirty coal industry and their dirty economy.

The Department of the Interior, BLM has stolen our land.

You are on -- you are occupying stolen land, BLM.

You have not honored our cultural way of life.

In fact, you are part of the shadow government that works in complete conflict of interest by accommodating the mining companies and the Congressional leaders that also have unethical business ties to the extractive industries.

It's evident.

You're grossly failing the American people by allowing destructive and environmental

terrorism on our land, water and wildlife.

The lethal plume is the indicator of your failure to protect and manage our cultural and natural resources.

We say the true Diné people that honor our cultural ways of life say, leave it in the ground.

No more leasing of coal.

Due to the liabilities of the further poisoning of all life forms.

Are you going to be known as a Department of the Interior or Department of injustice?

You only regulate death true this leasing program and beware you all have violated our treaties and the United Nations declaration under the rights of indigenous peoples.

There will be consequences.

Our children are, our grandchildren deserve a better world.

And we won't stop.

Do your job and implement a strategic plan.

Perhaps we can tell our Congressional delegation and the public how grossly negligent your Department has come.

Honor our treaties and stop the killing fields in the Four Corners area.

And for all the coal companies watching, you're not welcome on the Diné land!

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Andy Dan?

>> Andy Dan.

[ speaking in Navajo ]

I would like to say greetings to all who are here from near and far.

My name is Andy Dan.

I'm from the black Mesa region.

I have come here to speak for the air and the land and all living beings.

You know, I grew up alongside Peabody coal company.

Now I'm 58 years old right now, and Peabody has been there since the 1960s.

So all this time I have witnessed a climate change around our homeland, natural springs where our grandfathers used to live.

There's no more.

It's been depleted by the coal companies.

Today right now as I speak through this coal company that has this reservation coal, Public Law, which imposes the Hopi and Navajo relocation program.

Today on this land it's because of the coal companies.

Right now people are having their livestock taken away.

Their way of lives are being taken away.

So today I ask you, BLM, to leave the coal and the uranium in the ground where it belongs.

I come and ask and plead with you that we as Diné people uphold our way of life because this land is very precious to us, the water is precious to us, the air is precious to us because it gave us life, and today we suffer because of the American dream, and your American dream has been our nightmare, and that's why we're here to share our stories with you.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Cooper?

>>

[ speaking Navajo ]

I'm here to speak on behalf of the families that have been impacted, my clans, my bloodline and the tribe of Diné people.

We express our as indigenous people living in areas to the impacts and root cause to climate change.

We affirm the unbreakable and sacred connection between land, ocean, air, sea ice, plants, you on human communities as material and spiritual basis of our existence.

We are deeply alarmed by the accelerating climate devastation brought about by unsustainable development and governments.

We are experiencing profound and disproportionate adverse impacts on our cultures, human, and environmental health, human rights, well-being, traditional livelihood, food system and food sovereign at the.

Local infrastructure, economic viability and now our very survival.

Our mother earth is no longer in a period of climate change, but in a climate crisis.

We, therefore, insist an immediate end to destruction and desecration of our elements of life.

Throughout knowledge and spirituality, sciences, practices, experiences and relations with our tradition A lands, territories, oceans, sea ice and other natural resources and all life indigenous people have a vital role in defending and healing our mother earth.

The future of indigenous people lies in our wisdom that our elders and restoration of our sacred position of woman and man and children.

The youth today and the generations tomorrow.

We uphold the inherent rights of indigenous people and we uphold your accountability to protect us and protect the land a and future generations.

All I have heard today, and especially from the competitiveness between these departments and industries.

This is not our competitiveness.

That itself and that type of thinking is what got us in this position we're in today.

We're not here to fight against each other.

We're not here to -- this is not a game.

This is not a sport.

We uphold each and every one of you to your oath taken into that office, and this is our right.

Through the education behind these industries and their invasion of our communities, as you hear now, they have not been benefiting us at all since time of their establishment on this land.

Department of Interior, keep that in mind that indigenous people worldwide are being affected.

Opening up coal exports and developing natural gas, you're on the most richest uranium core in the United States and this is a national sacrifice zone in your terminology of globalization and the new world order agenda.

Indigenous people are not giving up and we will stand and rise.

So this is a warning for you as well and your Department.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

I just want to remind everybody, please put your written comments in the box back there so

that we can have a copy of them so that we get everything.

Anthony?

>> My name is Anthony So coming out of HUCHIN, also known as Oakland to the colonizers.

I want to offer things up.

Before I want to let you know we're paying attention.

I have seen some of the work you're doing aiding with the Obama Administration trying to get cleaner energy initiatives and things like and I've seen what's going on with China lake in California and these different things, and so I just want to let you know we're paying attention to what you guys are doing why and what's going on.

Right now I will offer this song coming from California.

Coming from the original people of California.

I want you guys to hear these vibrations.

Don't pay attention to the words but listen to the vibrations from these songs of the original people in the land.

[ singing in native language ]

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Jake?

>>

[ speaking in Navajo ]

I'm from New Mexico, and my clans are bitter water born for two waters flow together.

I am here for my family, people and our lands.

The negative impacts of the coal on the local community is catastrophic.

Coal is not the answer.

I have seen many hardships to the hazards of coal.

The negative effects it has on my nation is vast, hideous and ever morphing like cancer.

In all the wrong ways, from the two coal powered power plants that sit north of the communities, Navajo generating stations have killed and continue to kill our families and land and sacred way of life.

Through the deadly plume of haze that poisons the atmosphere, from countless cases of cancer that impact the young and old in our communities that fall on deaf ears.

The health defects upon new and unborn children and recently through the contamination of the Animas river.

Corporate interest and extraction is modern day genocide.

We are in a constant state of survival.

Leaving behind carnage with no strings attached.

This has to stop.

The rape of our land and our people is sickening.

This must be changed immediately.

My father was a miner employed by Peabody coal who paid the ultimate price.

He paid with his life.

Like so many others I am now I'm here to tell you that we pray you hear your wicked ways.

We won't let you continue to oppress, assimilate and eventually exterminate us proud Diné people.

I ask all my people to join us in unity and prayer understanding nation to nation one love.

I'm calling owl government departments to phase out fossil fuel development and a moratorium on new fossil fuel developments on or near indigenous territories. We call for a process that works toward the eventual phase-out of fossil fuels without infringing on the right to development of indigenous nations and I also challenge states to abandon false solutions to climate change that negatively impact indigenous people's rights, land, air, forests, territories and waters.

This includes nuclear energy, large-scale dams, geoengineering techniques, so-called clean coal, agri fuels, plantations and market based mechanism such as carbon trading, and forest offsets.

The rights of indigenous people to protect our forest and forest livelihoods must be ensured. I ask you leave the coal in the ground and respect our way of life.

We have been through a lot and we stand here in unity as one people, one nation.

Keep the coal in the ground.

[ speaking in Navajo ]

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, sir.

Heather?

Sorry, you could have gone.

>> Thank you.

My name is Heather.

I'm from the [indiscernible] Pueblo.

I live in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

I am a sustainable tech engineer.

I used to go to school for [indiscernible] engineering and was focusing on sustainable infrastructure for coal plants and other extraction sites.

Until, you know, got a little knowledge and decided to switch to sustainable tech because of what's been going on with all these sites around the U.S.

The devastations that have been coming on, the catastrophes of drilling and using fossil fuels. This Federal leasing program, this program allows these devastations to keep occurring on a daily, poisoning waters, poisoning the atmosphere, and polluting our mines as consumers because we need this energy, and as -- as a sustainable tech engineer, you know, right now under our renewable resources that we need to focus on, that we need to take further, instead of going back into time.

We're still living like it's the industrial revolution still.

It's 2015.

Where are you guys at?

You're stuck back there.

You know.

So I would propose to abolish this program, the Federal Coal Leasing Program.

Because it not only pollutes our land and our mines, but it robs us of our dignities, financially, mentally.

The list can go on and on and on, and there's not a lot that anybody's doing about it.

Until we have sessions like this where you can actually see under the mist of the pollution that there are people rising up because we're tired, we're hurting, we're suffering.

This is wrong.

I grew up on the reservation, and we grew up playing in the rivers and in the mountains, and I have a 5-year-old, and what's going to happen when that's not here no more?

What happens when she can't go outside because the river is contaminated.

You know?

The water -- the air is too harsh to breathe.

You know -- so I would propose to abolish this program to save our lives, to save the people.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

>> My name is Duke Romero.

I'm here to talk about the children to remind you of your obligation to the future.

We've been traveling all over the country, and we see the destruction you leave behind, your policies equal genocide for our people.

Things really haven't changed much.

My people have been fighting first the Spanish, and now you.

We're still fighting that same war.

And you need to remember the children are the future, and everywhere you guys go you leave a mess.

You have failed the American people.

You've stole our resources, basically given them away to these foreign companies.

They don't even benefit us.

Then we're left with the aftermath, poisoned waters.

You see the news here and you just don't learn.

You just don't learn.

You know, I don't -- I don't understand it.

I'm here -- you have all the data.

You have all the data that's that shows what you're doing is wrong but you continue these policies.

When are you going to wake up?

We can't sustain this.

We have to find a different way.

And I would like you to remember the children.

They are the future, and you're taking that away from them with your policies.

That's all.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Charles?

>> My name is Charles Allen.

I'm from other upper Fruitland New Mexico.

The trauma of coal touches every aspect of our life.

Coal mining and poisons and burns our soils.

It severs us from the umbilical court cord of our mothers and grandmothers.

We're destroying the life in the sake of competition and dollars, we're disconnecting our humanity from sacred spiritual ways.

If we object if I the lands in terms of resources then we limit our responsibility to thrive and fulfill the prophecy for all of us to live as one in beauty.

Instead coal poisons water and food sources, imprisons an entire nation, divides families, perpetuates violence, exacerbates inequality between the rich and poor.

I am alarmed by the devastation brought about by coal by unsustainable development and greed.

While those in power make decisions to extract and rape our mother earth for coal, we are buying -- we are burying our children, brothers, sisters and mothers.

Nevertheless we open the window for yet another foreign in innovation to place a dollar sign over the protection of the American people.

Most of all the original people.

You're in a powerful position to stop this trauma.

The first call -- position to stop this trauma.

The first call to action is for you to do what you know is morally right, follow your heart, halt any new fossil extraction projects.

The second is for you to utilize renewable energy solutions already available and feasible.

The third action is for you to manage the legacy waste cleanup.

That means requiring companies to rehabilitate the harms already caused by these polluters.

This will show us that you are serious and are committed to the best interests of the people.

I'm here representing the only ethnic minority to have said to be declining negative 5% in 2010 according to your guys' statistics in the U.S. census Bureau.

Obviously lives are being overweighed by the decisions we are arguing in this room, and it hurts.

I just buried my brothers and sisters last year.

Today is my brother's birthday.

I'm proud to be here and represent him.

This is the cause of -- this is what we deal with, displacing us, or relocating us, because we want to find some way to extract coal or find a leasing -- it's kind of a joke.

I just hope you guys really think about what we are doing because this is all of us.

>> Louise?

>> Greetings.

I'm Louise Denali, I'm from black Mesa community and one of your victims of massive destruction of mother earth.

In my community of black Mesa in 1974 there was a Congressional legislation known as Public Law 93531 that was passed to remove 10,000 Navajos, 300 Hopis to make way for Peabody coal company.

As of today BLM is the major owner of Navajo generating station, and if we're going to talk about climate change justice for all, let's shut Navajo generating station down!

Because it is allowed to continue to pollute and to kill people.

This is ongoing as of today.

I want that you as the people of the Department of the Interior to do your activities and call the Hopi government to stop impounding people's animals.

The sheep, the goats, the horses, the cattle is what we live off of.

That's our food.

That's our economy.

That's all we have.

We don't have electricity.

We don't have running water.

Yet the power that is pumped out of black Mesa goes down to where John McCain is laid out in the sun with his shades on, and he needs to stop stealing our water.

The Colorado River, he's after again, after we told him so many times no.

The utility companies, they eat the earth up here, suck out her Beth are, so they can get electricity and, you know, we are left with nothing.

Period.

Nothing.

Except ourselves and what we have.

But yet these coal companies are polluting our air, killing our environment, killing our people through actions of flawed policies.

This needs to stop.

We're sick and tired of your greed!

Throughout the continent, the Arctic drilling needs to stop.

The pipeline for the oils in the Midwest need to stop that's coming out of Alberta.

You're sending all that to other countries.

India and China needs to be taught how to convert to renewable energies that don't pollute.

That's the only hope we have.

Now, do your job.

Make that change.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

We're going to start a new line.

Far right microphone, Annie, Todd Brown, Mark -- I am sorry -- can we go Annie, Mark, Charlotte, Suzanne and Ann Tyler, far right microphone.

I will do that again because I messed up.

Annie, Mark, Charlotte, Suzanne and Ann Tyler to the far right microphone, please.

And the middle microphone, Todd Brown, Diana Madison, Nellis Kennedy Howard, Jessica and Ed.

Middle microphone, please.

We're going to keep rolling here.

Annie?

>> My name is Annie Rushalo, I'm a filmmaker documenting the biggest energy shift in history.

In the 1980s I studied mechanical engineering to enter the solar design field.

For the love of clean U.S. skies and waters.

As a nation we understood then the inevitability of the transition to the inexhaustible energy resources of wind and solar.

But by 1985 the Reagan White House gutted tax incentives, halting those job-producing industries.

The government should be accountable to these questions.

Why as a country are we subsidizing coal when the southwest could be the renewable energy Saudi Arabia of our nation?

I get an extra few seconds.



How can we keep managing Federal coal when climate change is creating the greatest extinction in millennia.

Charles Darwin observed: It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the ones most responsive to change.

Why invest in coal when climate failure will come to haunt the nation and to each one of you on the panel if you take the wrong path?

To be or not to be on the right side of history, that is your legacy.

Why implicate public lands and coal when the coal industry by its toxic existence dismantles precious, indigenous cultures in too far familiar a pattern of genocide?

And when pollution and of extreme climate ensnares whole ecosystems.

Have you seen the dense haze in the Farmington and Chaco regions?

Have you driven around in the last few days?

Can you even see the horizon line?

Violence against earth is violence against people.

Prince Charles is uncompromisingly stating to end taxpayer subsidies enjoyed by coal in Great Britain.

As the DOI decides to lease our public lands for coal extraction and combustion, you may feel a conflict.

And the first casualty in any conflict is imagination.

You will hear much testimony perhaps from the fossil fuel industry reflecting not imagination but clinging at their own peril.

We cannot and should not lack -- lag behind the rest of the world.

If we are to be a country with moral standing, then the charge of supporting a transition for the industry is a moral solution.

Do you have the courage to choose a positive energy future?

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Annie, thank you.

>> The world is watching.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Todd?

>> I'm Todd brown, a councilmember for the town of Telluride, Colorado in the San Juan mountains a few hours north of here.

We support the Bureau of Land Management's efforts to reform and modernize the Federal Coal Program.

Public opinion generally supports raising coal royalty rates to ensure a fair return to American taxpayers and tightening up bonding requirements that put natural environments at risk.

These changes could not come at a more pivotal time.

Symptoms of climate change, including wildfires, reduced snowpack, higher temperatures are getting worse each year, and the financial cost of responding to these threats is rising.

As other speakers have said, the dense haze you see outside today is not only from the local power plant, but from fires in the Pacific Northwest, a visible effect of climate change.

Now is the time for the Federal government to ensure that a fair return on coal is collected and to invest those resources in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

We're a society that consumes energy, and we're not going to change that quickly, nor affect sudden changes in the usage of fossil fuels.

What your efforts can do is bring about longer term change in our economic balance of energy sources.

Telluride was founded as a gold and silver mining town about 120 years ago, and my undergraduate education at the Colorado school of mines was in extractive technologies. So I'm well aware of the multitude of interests involved.

Telluride today is known as one of the world's premier resort destinations.

Our main attraction was originally snow sports but the breadth of summer activities, including biking, hiking, fishing, make it a year-round hot spot for outdoor enthusiasts.

We host many competitions and festivals each year that brings spectators and participants from around the world.

We have developed a climate action plan to help mitigate the effects of climate change on our outdoor recreation economy.

The beauty and physical attributes of our natural landscape fuel our tourism and preserving is that essential to our community's future.

Our plan includes meeting emission goals as well as implementing adaptation strategies that will pay off in the long run.

We have reduced energy usage, we've made significant purchases in both solar and hydropower facilities, and participate in renewable energy credits to the tune of 5% of our annual operating budget.

These costs are steep and should not be borne only by us.

The current rate on Federal coal does not factor in its contribution to climate change.

Make those happen for all of us.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Mark?

>> My name is Mark.

I'm village Administrator for the village of Taos ski Valley.

The village commends the Bureau of Land Management for reforming the Federal Coal Program and inviting public input regarding this issue.

As recognition of this issue becomes increasingly more widespread, it is clear that current coal royalty rates are too low and bonding requirements are too relaxed.

At a time when mountain communities are faced with growing costs from climate change, the Federal government should be collecting a fair share return on coal resources.

The village of Taos ski Valley is at a base elevation of 9200 feet and surrounded by green forests and high mountains.

We are home to a world-class ski resort, Taos ski resort and our mountains provide great skiing and snowboarding and skiing in the winter and peaceful hiking in the summer along with a variety of outdoor activities.

It's home to 20-plus merchants which range of casual dining, lodging, shopping and outdoor activities.

Like many mountain communities with outdoor recreation economies, Taos ski Valley is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, reduced or inconsistent snow packs and growing risk of wildfires are a couple of the threats facing our community and our outdoor recreation economy which is fronting the growing financial cost of warmer winters and harsher summers. The current coal royalty rate collected by the Federal government is not taking into account

these costs.

The oversight shifts, the financial burden of the -- in responding to climate change onto the taxpayers who already receive a low return on Federal mineral resources.

Coal is seen as a contributors to climate change and a threat to environmental and economic stability of mountain areas.

Costs related to climate mitigations and adaptations must be incorporated in the return rate on the Federal Coal Program to provide indirect and direct relief to communities adapting to changing climates.

We understand that coal supplies 60% of New Mexico's energy and provides many new needed jobs within our state.

We understand the balancing act.

The average council commends the Department of Interior's progress on reforming an outdated program that has allowed coal companies to avoid paying share of royalty rates owed to American taxpayers.

This is an important opportunity for reform and we support closing the loopholes regarding royalty rates, tightening bond requirements to ensure coal companies are responsible for restoring landscapes where the production is located.

And invest in increased revenues into local climate resiliency strategies.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Diana?

>> Hi.

I'm Diana Madison.

I would like to reiterate from the representatives from Taos and Telluride just relayed.

I represent American communities throughout the west with outdoor based recreation economies.

Together we applaud BLM for beginning this process of modernizing the Federal Coal Program. And inviting feedback from the public on this important issue.

There is growing agreement the coal royalty rates are too low and bonding requirements too loose and this does not fairly compensate taxpayers while exposing them to millions of dollars of liabilities of cleaning up mines.

Rural mountain areas often surrounded by -- from the pine beetle epidemic to reduced snowpack, retracted droughts and increased flood risks and more severe wildfires across the West.

Our communities and outdoor recreation economies are bearing the growing costs of warming temperatures and extreme weather events.

Meanwhile the Federal government is collecting a royalty rate on coal that does not take into account these cost.

Carbon emissions are a major contributors to climate change.

In order to ensure a fair return to taxpayers the royalty rate on coal should incorporate costs related to climate impact, mitigation and adaptation.

This is an important opportunity to reform an outdated program that shortchanges the American people.

On behalf of many mountain communities who couldn't be here today on a Thursday

afternoon we urge the BLM to ensure that American taxpayers receive their fair share by closing the loopholes that allow coal companies to avoid what they owe in royalties, to tighten bonding requirements for coal to ensure companies have to restore the landscape after production is over and to invest a portion of the increased revenues into local climate resilience projects.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Charlotte?

>> Hello.

Good afternoon.

My name is Charlotte Levenson and my work is in grant making to support indigenous and grass roots environmental groups that are working here at the juncture of climate and energy and people and nature, especially in extraction hot spots like right here on the front line.

I have also spent a lot of my life outdoors in the West, organic farming and I raise my kids camping all over western public lands.

And I don't like what I see out there.

I feel like the BLM is itself in the extraction business and that it needs to get out.

Our country is being carpet bombed for energy and resources, and every feedback mechanism we have is telling us to stop.

That's our health.

That's our air.

That's our water.

That's our climate.

You know, even business indicators are saying stop.

You got 200 coal-fired plants closed over the last five years.

You got on Tuesday, Citibank, two days ago, reported that the total value of coal companies has shrunk by two-thirds since 2012 and that current market conditions are likely to persist.

Coal exporting has hit a wall of opposition and has lost its Wall Street backing.

The coal industry is in structural decline.

Why would you prop it up?

I think the only answer is that the BLM itself is a subsidy to industry.

You plan and permit and administer their business.

And then they leave behind -- they declare bankruptcy and leave behind hundreds of thousands of abandoned toxic waste sites behind.

There are alternatives.

You need to redirect the \$50 billion in annual government fossil fuel subsidies to economic transition.

Think what that could mean.

I don't know how you do economic transition but there are people who do.

You need a new mission, or maybe we need a new agency.

No one should be allowed to sell one more shovel of dirty, dangerous coal.

You need to resist anyone who is telling you to keep doing what you're doing.

Tell them the truth.

It's over.

Bring in the transition teams.

We're leaving the coal and the oil and the gas and the uranium and the copper and the tar sands in the Arctic, in Utah, in Powder River Basin, at Oak Flat.

Everywhere.

Leave it in the ground.

Just keep it in the ground.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Nellis?

You can just take it off if you want to.

>> I think I'm okay.

Thank you.

Hello.

My name is Nellis Kennedy Howard and I want to first of all thank you all for being here today to listen to us.

You've heard from some pretty powerful people and I feel like there is a consensus from those who are here calling on the BLM to reform coal leasing.

So with that I will go ahead and get started.

I have seen firsthand how this program affects the communities living near these mines.

And the coal plants that they supply.

The impacts are devastating.

But I'm here today to talk about the simple fact that this program allows coal companies to shortchange taxpayers and tribal communities out of our fair share of our profits from our own publicly owned natural resources.

A third party review estimated that over the past 30 years the government's undervaluation of coal may have cost taxpayers upward of \$30 billion in lost revenue that could have funded schools and roads and other priorities.

Both on the Navajo Nation and off local communities here could really use those lost funds.

Many coal companies don't have enough money or insurance to clean up public lands when they are done mining.

Potentially leaving taxpayers on the hook for billions of dollars.

We've seen this.

We've seen just how big of a problem that can be especially with the recent Animas River spill.

This issue also has global implications for our climate.

The outdated Federal Coal Program presents a serious threat to President Obama's climate change agenda and fundamental reforms must be put in place to protect families like mine and businesses from climate disruption.

For these reasons we must, number one, increase the coal royalty rate to 18.5% to match that of other fossil fuels extracted from federal lands.

Two, close loopholes that let coal companies paying some royalties by selling coal through subsidiaries.

Number three, update regulations to make sure that potential profits from coal exports are considered in setting fair market value.

And, four, update regulations related to bonding to protect taxpayers from being stuck with the hundreds of millions of dollars in mining clean-up fees.

By paying their fair share as taxpayers, coal companies will increase local revenues to support schools and infrastructure in the communities where they operate like this one.

The health impacts of coal mining and burning here are enormous.

Higher rates, essentially fair rates, and Royal tease, could help improve access to medical services to undo some of this damage.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Suzanne?

>> Right here.

Good afternoon.

My name is Suzanne Kennedy Howard.

As a Native American and a native New Mexican I know all too well how polluting coal companies take advantage of our communities.

For generations Native Americans have been promised great prosperity by the coal industry. In return for coal mining and burning on our lands.

But as you've heard and will hear from people living on the Navajo Nation, just exactly how little they have benefited from coal mines.

Front line communities living near coal mines and coal-fired power plants take on all the negative health impacts and yet see very little profits, essentially becoming energy sacrifice zones.

We have only one mine under the coal lease program here in New Mexico that's on tribal lapped but we are impacted by this program in many ways.

Since the BLM doesn't require coal companies to pay a fair market price for their mining, the coal they produce is artificially cheap.

Cheap coal prices means more coal burning for energy.

These coal companies are taking directly from local communities by exploiting loop homes to avoid paying fair royalties, and then using those savings to prop up outdated coal plants lie four corners and Navajo generate stage station.

These produce toxic air pollution that puts our health at risk.

As somebody living with asthma and with a chronic disease that makes me very vulnerable to illness and I can assure you that coal burning is dangerous.

Just the four corners plant alone contributes to 42 heart attacks, 26ER visits for asthma, 28 deaths each year.

I tell you what, those just aren't numbers on a report.

Those are the people sitting in here today, and that that is me.

I want you to stop unfairly subsidizing -- yes, I use the word subsidizing -- the coal mining that makes that facility profitable.

I understand you don't have the mandate to work on health.

And I understand you don't have one to work on climate change.

I understand that.

But I'm here today to ask you to at least level the playing field.

At least make these coal companies pay rates comparable to what they would to mine on private lands.

Otherwise you're just propping up a dying industry and doing that at the expense of my

community.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Jessica?

>> My name is Jessica --

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: I'm going to have to ask you to pull that mic up a little.

Thank you.

>> My name is Jessica Jalen Yahtzi.

I'm a member of the Laguna Pueblo tribe.

I'm here to share the story of what happens to our lands and our people when you open up the earth for mining and remind you the impacts of these extractive projects continue to cost the community and the public long after these mines have been closed.

At Laguna our land was opened up for uranium mining between the 1950s and 1980s.

The mining company dug open three pit mines and nine underground mines to extract 24 million tons of uranium-bearing ore.

More than 400 million tons of earth was moved to obtain the ore.

The one mine was the deepest at 625 people.

This created a giant crater in the earth.

While my grandfather worked in the jack par mine in the early '70s, as a result of daily exposure to radiation he died.

We learned our homes and -- our homes were contaminated because of the coils we used to build them had radiation.

The PUATE river and Rio MOKINO were contaminated and our people could no longer use the waters to practice our traditional ceremonies.

Many lives were lost and ruined and our very way of life was stolen.

The legacy continues today.

The mining company closed its operations, but the wounds in the earth remain.

They were not made to clean up the damage they had done.

After seven years of struggle between our offices, the BI and the EPA, it was determined the company would pay our tribe to clean up, but the reclamation project Director said there's not enough money in the world to put things back the way it was.

And monitoring showed that the contamination continues to today.

Our community's health is being still impacted.

My grandmother received payment from my grandfather's death but no amount of money could buy his life back.

The company walked away with hundreds of millions of dollars in profit and our community was left with the devastation.

My generation inherited the impacts of -- and the legacy waste.

My family's story is uranium mining, but it's also about mining in general.

The earth and -- our communities are destroyed while companies profit and the question is of who is responsible for the cleanup and how the damage will be undone or not answered.

There are over 500 million abandoned mines in the United States.

Many of these sites exist on public lands like lands you currently lease to the coal companies.

Here in New Mexico, over 15,000 abandoned mines exist.

According to your own statistics, the public pays the majority of the bill for the eventual cleanup of these sites and your office has put the estimate price tag as \$32 billion to \$72 billion.

Your own research also shows that the existing -- the existing methods of reclamation and remediation are not working and the goal of the restoring the land to the way it was before is not being reached.

Let's learn from the damage that has been done by not making the same mistakes.

We need to stop coal mining on public lands and allow our communities and earth to heal.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Ann?

>> Hello.

My name is Anna Tyler, a resident of the water flow, New Mexico area.

I currently live amidst the toxic plume of the two power plants that reside there with us.

Unfortunately I have seen so much suffering out there, myself included.

I moved here three years ago.

My husband is an engineer and he got a job here in Farmington, and we wanted to live closer to the Navajo reservation because we started an outreach program out there to help youth and children in many different areas.

I live on enough with respiratory issues.

My son stands here with me representing the children that we work with on the reservation.

He's seen my suffering.

He's seen other people's suffering.

The mothers, they don't know what to do with kids.

They take them to the hospital.

They're given inhalers, breathing treatments, and nothing seems to work.

We recruit many volunteers, and they come, and many of them start experiencing the same symptoms.

I recently went to the City of Portland, and my symptoms started going away, and lo and behold I realized this is one of the 10 healthiest cities in our country.

Why?

Because they care about their environment.

I saw hydroelectric plants.

I saw wind turbines.

I saw solar.

I did not see a single power plant out there, and people just seemed to be happy and healthy.

I also just want to express real quick what I would like to see in our area.

We would like to see that the coal be left in the ground and use of the land for other purposes.

However, if this is not your decision after completing environmental studies, which we would love to see, an environmental study as to how communities are affected, if you would please, please make them pay their way, these companies, these huge monopolies.

Make them pay their way and stop subsidizing this polluting industry with minute pull coal costs that do not reflect their market value, and it really does harm our community.

I challenge everyone here to go out to the reservation.



These are dear people.

These are dear children.

They're humans -- we're all humans.

We all experience the same hurts and suffering.

I urge you to go out to the mine sites to talk to the families to see the pain out in the reservation.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Ed?

Are you Ed?

>> Ed Besenti.

All I heard was Ed.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: I wasn't even going to try the last name.

>> Okay.

Hold on.

I'm on.

My name is Ed Besenti.

I'm Diné, Navajo, out of Window Rock, Arizona.

I've lived all my life in the four corners area, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico.

At one time I worked for El Paso natural gas company.

Later on I worked in the Utah oil fields which is on Navajo.

By working, I repaired injection wells, unloaded trucks, checked meters, laid pipelines, climbed up oil tanks and measured the oil that accumulated and repaired pup jacks.

As I was coming here yesterday evening, as I looked back west, I seen a bright red sun, real bright red sun.

To me, that's like an omen, a warning.

I am deeply concerned about the pollution that's in the air.

Our bodies have been contaminated by the dirty air, boy the poisonous rains.

I can feel it.

We can all feel it.

The animals feel it.

Our medicinal herbs that we need for traditional healing have toxins, poisons, in them.

When the snow melts and our livestock drink that water, they get sick.

Ailing animals.

Coal is a major culprit of this problem.

The Federal government has failed us, failed to protect us.

It seems to us that the Federal government is more interested in keeping the coal companies going than protect our water sources.

The Federal government has failed to come to aid when it comes to protecting our air.

When we have come to you in the past you have downplayed our concerns and dismissed them from being priorities.

We have asthma.

Breathing problems.

When our children have problems breathing, then we know you haven't done your job.

Even though you can't see particulate matter, we know it's there because our people have all these respiratory problems.

One thing you can control is the issuance of permits.

That fast?

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: That is a quick one, isn't it?

>> In conclusion, power plants that emit all this pollution causes anguish and death.

Plain and simple, with coal there is a warrant for your existence.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, sir.

I would like to take a 10-minute break right now if that's okay with everybody.

It is -- 2:55.

We'll be back at 3:05.

[ in recess ]

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>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Hi, everybody.

Welcome back.

Hello, hello.

Welcome back.

Thank you for allowing me to take a break, and we're going to get rolling right away.

Okay.

Let's get started.

I'm going to ask at the far right microphone, Chilazi, John McAndrew, Kent Salazar, Gilbert Armeda, Mike Sells and Laurence Israel.

At the middle microphone, please.

Richard Kramer, Alex Renari.

I think I just slaughtered that.

Mariel, Royal Lemmer, and Camilla.

Are we ready?

John.

You're on.

John, you're not on.

Okay.

There we go.

Thank you.

Greetings.

My name is John McAndrew.

I lead the Santa Fe chapter of citizens climate lobby.

Thank you for listening.

I would also like to say how honored I am to be here with the people who have spoken before me.

I have a friend named Steve from St. Joseph, Missouri, where we were born.

In April of last year he had a massive heart attack.

Some years ago he was diagnosed with diabetes.

He was obese and a lifelong smoker of unfiltered Camels.

His wife and I and his doctors tried everything to get him to quit.  
He had lots of warnings besides the diabetes.  
He'd had surgeries to restore circulation in his legs and respiratory problems.  
He lost his ability to do simple things without basically being on life support.  
He sometimes cut back on his smoking, but he should have quit.  
Addiction is denial raised to the level of madness.  
Of course, you know where I'm going with this.  
Fossil fuels are our cigarettes and coal is our unfiltered Camels.  
We know what greenhouse gases do, as surely as we know what cigarettes do.  
The science has been clear for a long time.  
A lot of which we've wasted with rationalizing.  
Now we simply have to quit.  
Not cut back.  
We have to quit.  
Continuing to mine and burn coal is as much a form of denial as thinking that a snowball on the Senate floor disproves climate change.  
But we're addicts.  
All these people are here either to tell you that this habit will kill you or they're here to speak on behalf of the addiction.  
One group advises breaking the habit for our good.  
And the other tells you that we're full of it.  
And, besides, you can always quit later if you really want to.  
And one group is unequivocally right, like Steve's wife and doctors were.  
There were ways to quit, and the solution, our nicotine patch, if you will, advocated by citizens climate lobby, is a revenue-neutral carbon fee and dividend.  
This is a bipartisan market-based, not regulatory proposal that would reduce emissions 50% below 1990 levels and add almost 3 million jobs to the economy in 20 years.  
I have forms which I hope you will sign to endorse that solution.  
I urge you to take the better, more difficult path for your own sake as well as that of your children, grandchildren and friends.  
Jonas sock said our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors.  
Thank you.  
>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.  
Richard?  
>> I'm a scientist educated at physics and chemistry at Harvard and M.I.T., and I'm sorry about that, but -- anyhow, I'm also involved with the citizens climate lobby and it's one of the few causes I believe deeply in.  
You've heard that -- well, there are 3% of the scientists who don't believe climate change is real.  
So let's not get serious.  
97-3, I think you know which way to bet.  
There is always uncertainty in life but the uncertainty here, the people who should know, seem to substantially agree.  
But it's a hard problem, and we are definitely stuck, as John so eloquently described, in

directions which are going to be very difficult to change.

And to do that we have to get people on board.

We have to get people understanding.

We have to get people acting.

And that's all of us.

We all pollute.

We all drive cars.

We all commute, byproducts and use products and they all pollute.

The cheapest form of energy has been to taken out of the ground and burn it.

That's a problem.

But to get people going to the same direction we have to provide the right set of incentives, the right paths and make it attractive.

So this dividend proposal, what it calls for is when the carbon comes out of the ground, pay a fee.

That fee is going to go up.

What do you do with the money?

You divide it evenly among all the people, every person gets a share.

If you play the game, if you don't consume much carbon, you'll make money on the deal.

If otherwise, that's your choice, of course.

Now, the businessmen of the world and the people who are investing in our futures, and we will have to do a lot about -- we will have to make a lot of discoveries we haven't made yet and we'll have to make that worthwhile, will understand that these are the rules.

These are rules of the game.

These are the rules of the game we're all going to play.

So with those thoughts in mind I'll stop speaking now just to say that this, to me, I hear lots of propaganda, I read it all, I study it all, this, to me, is a solution that I cannot see why it should not work and you'll have to look a long way to find an economist of any persuasion who does not agree with me.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

>> Good morning.

Thank you for being here and listening to us.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Could you give us your name.

>> I am going to now.

My name is Kent Salazar, western Vice Chair of the National Wildlife Federation, the largest wildlife conservation organization in the United States representing 6 million members, 49 affiliates in all the states, and all of our affiliate states in the West are affected by coal in what they're dealing with.

I'm here to speak for those who can't speak for nature, the habitat and the wildlife.

Much like you've heard already from so many speakers, we believe that the Federal coal royalty system must be modernized and the rates must be increased to ensure a fair public return for the public held resource.

The antiquated Federal mineral royalty system was established in 1920, and it's rarely been changed over the decades.

It is simply out of date, out of touch and inequitable.

We believe that the current rate of 12.5% serves as a below market subsidy to these industries.

And is inconsistent with the offshore mineral rate set an 18.5%.

That's something you can do right away is work on these regulations and bring equity to this.

We should not be subsidizing this dirty industry.

The underfunded needs in the Federal government can be helped by adjusting this Federal royalty.

Right now how many Federal agencies are not properly funded?

And the Federal land, you folks, are probably not funded enough to take care of the -- of your jobs.

This increase in royalty can be put toward that use.

The wildlife and the National Parks and the National Forests, the BLM, they don't have the money to police and take care of their jobs out there.

And if you increase these royalties, these funds can go toward helping that cause, your own cause.

The Federal Coal Program must also be consistent with the administrations climate action plan.

We commend and support strongly the Obama Administration's bold climate initiative aimed to aggressively reduce greenhouse gases to the level that scientists tell us we must.

The EPA is releasing the -- has released the landmark clean power plant that will aggressively reduce power plant emissions in the U.S. will assume a primary role in the upcoming global you know climate conference in Paris later this year.

We all need to work together.

Right now we all drove up here, we saw the pollution from the fires.

These are caused by climate change.

In spite of all the denials you hear from all the people going on here, it's climate change.

We know that.

Our scientists have told us that.

And we need to address it.

And you're here, and you need to address it, too, in dealing with your programs.

The other thing I wanted to talk to you about is the Federal Coal Program should examine the state of western state coal reclamation before opening up any more lands to the coal leasing.

Boy, that was quick.

Just going to say the existing law requires land and habitat be protected.

At this point, you know, we have 450 square miles of mined public lands and you have only reclaimed 40 square miles of land.

So we need to look at that before we even move forward to opening more leases.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, sir.

Alex?

>> Hello.

My name is Alex Heneri and I am of the generation being hand add broken planet.

At 23 I am overwhelmed with the images the dramatic changes our world will undergo within

my lifetime and perplexed by the decisions I will face because of it like whether I will even -- it will even be responsible to have children of my own.

Climate scientists confirm we are already well on our way to four degrees Celsius of warming but it's hard to imagine what this number would actually look like.

Author Mark Linus poured over tens of thousands of scientific papers that used advanced computer modeling to this ominous picture.

Once upon a time by mid-century earth is becoming unrecognizable with seas three to four feet higher and rising faster, parts of low lying coastal cities worldwide are periodically underwater, including Boston, New York, and the islands formerly known as the United Kingdom.

The major project in the U.S. is moving 150 million coastal dwellers inland but interior cities are balking at the strain.

Savage temperatures dominate hotter than anything our species' evolutionary history.

Food production is crashing.

The 60% of the world's population whose crops depended on the failing Asian monsoon are starving and thirsting.

The world is unraveling.

Megadroughts, new category 6 hurricanes called hypercanes, mass starvation, cascading economic collapse.

Stretched beyond adaptation it's a civilization in fast forward collapse.

Really the deal was sealed when the climate crossed the bright line of 2 degrees Celsius and self-reinforcing feedback loops triggered run-away changes.

By the time 3 triggered 4, 5, 6, earth represents the mother of all disasters that occurred 250 million years ago.

Adaptation takes time.

But with climate change, speed kills.

This is not an exaggeration and this is not the future.

Unprecedented drought in my home State of California is about to shock the nation with food shortages.

Temperatures in the Middle East were each reaching 164 degrees.

Catastrophic natural disasters are becoming commonplace.

And you hold one key to preventing this crisis today.

You have the moral imperative to shut down an already failing coal industry that is destroying us.

And the people of this land deserve a just transition to solar and wind jobs with comparable pay and benefits.

This is no longer a moral demand.

Solar energy is cheaper by every measure.

And already employs more people than coal in New Mexico.

If humans had the ingenuity to industrialize our world this far we can surely actualize a new economy that upholds the dignity and well-being of workers while assuring long-term safety for us all.

Please act so that my world and my children's world is not dictated by fear.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

>> Thank you.

I stand before you today and greet you as my relatives.

Brothers and sisters, as equal creation of our almighty creator.

As parents, as grandparents, who love our grandchildren, unconditionally, dearly.

As Native people, as indigenous peoples, we remain true to the original -- the original intent set out by our creator in that as stewards of the earth that we are to maintain a balance between all there is.

Today, the equilibrium of the earth is precariously out of balance.

What causes that is the Constance, the unrelenting digging and drilling and gouging out of the earth's insides.

We are killing the earth.

The life of the earth is ebbing.

I stand before you and ask you, if this hearing is not a sham, and if you, madam, and you gentlemen, truly have influence on this process, hear us, hear us as we stand here in defense of our dear and precious earth mother that sustains us all as children of this creator.

Government, science, the church and most definitely the corporations have little control over our future, but you and I as children of this earth collectively, together, we can make a shift to determine what our future would be.

We ask on behalf of our future generations, our children, your children, all of our children.

We know as Native people, as indigenous peoples, that our earth is hurting, and continued coal mining, the rampant exploitation, the extraction, et cetera is only contributing to the demise of our precious earth.

In defending the life of the earth we are defending our life, the life of our children.

Let us please provide a future for our children, and I ask that there be no applause.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

I'm going to just go over here once more.

Gilbert?

Gilbert Armenta here?

Okay.

Muriel?

Is Muriel?

>> I'm here.

I think you will -- I think Gilbert is here but I think he's outside.

If he could have one minute to come in.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: No, he becomes 163.

I'm kidding.

>> Thank you.

>> Good afternoon.

My name is Muriel.

I'm the Executive Director of new energy economy, a non-for profit advocacy agency based in Santa Fe.

We have more than 4500 members in the state of New Mexico.

I am a mother.

We are worried about the world we are leaving our children.  
We are all filled with anxiety because our only home is on fire.  
It's literally burning up.

2014 was the hottest year on record and it looks like 2015 will be even hotter.  
Alaska and California are on fire.

In the last five years New Mexico has seen two of the largest mega wildfires char our forests, devastate people's homes, and create wasteland where there were once thriving ecosystems causing hundreds of millions of dollars -- costing hundreds of millions of dollars.

I was standing with firefighters on the Mesa above Cochiti canyon looking at a completely ashenscape of trees.

The fire had been rolling down the canyon and consuming the forest at one acre per second with 300-foot flames blazing.

Where we were on the Mesa, the trees baked in place because the heat in the air was so hot. The only time baked trees have ever been observed walls in Russia in 2010 when the several hundred rabid wildfires that started in July and lasted until September caused crop failures, impacted wheat markets and cost \$15 billion in damage.

And home in New Mexico we have seen year after year of temperatures rising.

Our snowpack has declined dramatically.

Our reservoirs are drying up.

Other than this wet summer, we have been in extreme or severe drought for the last 10 years, and the future does not hold promise for any relief.

People are worried.

You must be worried.

Climate disruption is causing stressors and trauma.

You know that coal is the single greatest driver of climate change.

PNM San Juan generating station, the coal burning plant, less than two dozen miles from here is the single greatest carbon emitter in New Mexico, spewing 11 billion tons of carbon yearly.

The mine which feeds it is the second greatest methane emitter in New Mexico.

The San Juan generating station consumes 6.3 billion gallons of clean water per annum.

That's roughly 10,000 gallons a minute.

Toxic -- clean water in, toxic water out.

PNM San Juan plant uses two-and-a-half times the amount of water a than the City of Santa Fe.

Why are we wasting precious drinking water on the burning of coal when other cheaper, feasible, job-creating energy alternatives like our abundant solar and wind already exist.

Oh, my God.

I'm almost done.

Extreme energy exploitation, which is the only honest way to characterize what coal mining and burning is, has also helped catalyze sickening income inequality and health injustice where PMN Senior management are lavished in money.

Five of their top people makes 35 million per year with top health insurance --

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: I have to stop you to be fair to everybody else.

Thank you for coming.

Mike Sells?



>> Hi.

I'm Mike Sells.

I'm a seminarian with the Episcopal church in [indiscernible].

Let me introduce myself.

I'm yucca banana fruit and my father is red bottom and coyote canyon land.

I am reading this.

I offer the statement in eye name of my disease and address the moral justice and ethical concerns of my community.

The recent cyclical praise be in care of our common home Pope Francis addresses all people on the planet because we share a common home with the responsibility to care for the common good was we are all connected and we are all one in the web of life.

One key element of the document that makes the link between economics and environmental stewardship is dialogue.

Without true dialogue and listening, nothing may change.

Thank you for listening session.

I will continue to pray that we all continue to listen.

That listening session we are faced with dilemmas around coal extraction, some of which include reliance upon extraction for coal-fired power plants for job.

The re tale EAP selling rights to mine coal continue to spiral the greater climate change which is a climate and environmental justice issue affecting the most vulnerable and poor in our society.

Number three, coal mining -- coal mining and coal power plants continue to contribute to the growing cause of asthma, bronchial and other health concerns that cost money and lives. Coal and coal-fired power plants are economic contributors to our community and the Navajo Nation, even as they adversely affect our environment.

We are caught in a difficult place that often pits one individual against another, one group another.

Dialogue is needed that has at its foundation the common good, the few -- of our future generations.

These are moral imperatives for people of faith.

We must look at long-term actions and not short-term financial -- Fick financial decisions.

We must enter into true dialogue through to transition from fossil fuels and coal that respect the dignity of human person and the right to make a living while caring for an environment and reducing the growing environmental changes.

That's it.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you so much.

Gloria?

Gloria, we can't hear you.

>> My name is Gloria Lemer.

I'm a lifelong resident of San Juan county, since 1959.

We are waking up.

There is a movement.

I spent 24 years as a hospital and rehab speech language pathologist here in San Juan county. As an SLP I was taught that breathing and the respiratory system are primary functions of our

bodies and speech is a secondary function of being able to utilize breathing in a controlled manner.

As an SLP I saw patients from all over the region with many various upper respiratory problems... asthma, quote allergies, lung disease, congestive heart failure, COPD -- that's chronic obstructive pulmonary disease -- and various cancers.

How many people do you see walking around our area with inhalers, even children, and oxygen tanks?

As a child growing up between Aztec and Farmington I could take our snowmobile out our back door.

No longer.

I am concerned about climate change, fires, water, air quality, destruction of lands and poor turn on our taxpayer dollars for our area.

I have toured the four corners power plants.

My father was a carpenter who helped build them.

I have toured the area lands and viewed aerial photos of the San Juan mine, San Juan generating station and, of course, we have all seen the mine photos and the devastation in our Animas River from Colorado recently.

It's greatly disturbing.

Google the photos of the San Juan mine and the Colorado spill.

It's not a new problem for many in this room.

They have known it for many, many years.

But we are waking up, and there is a movement.

When I look north, south, east or west, from our area, we have land, air, water destruction and a local and state government mentality of continuing in the same direction and not moving forward on cleaner energy.

There is no such thing as clean coal.

We have experts in our community who can act on diversifying our economy, but those who hold powerful positions in the county and state, elected or appointed, are beholden to those who employ them or brought them here.

They have only one agenda, to keep dirty coal going and without reform.

They are not interested in creating jobs in other areas or in cleaner energy.

Taxpayers are getting the short end of the deal.

As usual, because of loopholes and unfair business practices.

The upper echelon of the companies who mine are reaping the benefits of our tax dollars.

Read their vision and mission statements online.

Maximum profit is always in there.

They invest elsewhere and their kids, if they're educated, always move away.

You need to act for fairer practices and cleaner energy for our earth and us all.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, Gloria.

Lawrence Israel?

>> Good afternoon, panel.

My name is Lawrence Israel.

I really appreciate that you guys came all the way out here to listen to us today and I hope it's

really going to make a difference in the form of a positive change for the people who have to live with coal.

I think the best solution at this point is, if you're in a hole, stop digging.

You know, it's that simple.

It's economically not feasible to do this anymore.

Health-wise it's destructive.

The government is in a position right now where you guys are brokering out the destruction of our future and our legacy.

We have the right to pursue life, happiness and liberty, and you're taking that away from us.

It's not fair.

There is a grave injustice being done that needs to stop.

I don't want to take up more much everybody's time.

I'm glad you're here.

I'm glad you're listening.

I hope a change happens.

I'm a he will so you are, thermal installer from Santa Fe, New Mexico.

I'm struggling.

I wish I had more work.

That's why I'm here.

I think it's a real travesty what's going on.

It's got to stop.

We know what the science says and we see the effects from the people who are affected by this.

It's horrific.

Thank you for your time.

Good afternoon.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Camilla?

>> I'm Camilla.

I'm the Director of the Rio grande chapter of the Sierra Club.

Just to help you get your blood going, stand up if you're here because you're concerned about global warming.

I want to see who you all are.

Get up, get up.

I just want to see all of you.

Okay.

Thank you.

I think it is not ironic that we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of Katrina right now.

There are still people in New York who don't have housing in the aftermath of Sandy.

I think our friends and neighbors here have said and told better than anyone about the local impacts of global climate change and the cost of extracting dirty fossil fuels.

I think we're all pretty clear that cheap coal costs all of us, and as a new step mom of a 3-year-old, I see asthma first hand in the terms of lost days at school, lost days at work.

You add to that premature lung and heart disease that can lead in extreme cases to premature

death.

So I was concerned reading that in some of the Western states where coal is extracted on public lands that it's selling for like \$13 a short ton, where on the East Coast you see it selling more at like \$60 per short ton.

It seems strange to me that there are loopholes that allow the coal companies to set up subsidiary where they can buy the coal themselves at low prices, sort of getting them out of the royalty requirement.

I'm also concerned about the exports of coal that comes off public lands, especially at such cheap prices.

Export seems to me, especially in the case of a natural resource held really in trust for all Americans that it just -- it doesn't make sense.

I'm concerned that this really is a noncompetitive single-bidder process.

I understand that the Inspector General report showed that 90% of all bids are single bidders. That leads to a concern about the cost of coal, both in a tangible sense and in a symbolic sense.

And in fact, in a letter from the Inspector General to senator Biden asking some more questions I understand there were four leases in New Mexico that were given well below fair market value.

That's not okay.

That's against the rules.

And if we're going to extract this coal at all, and I emphasize "F," you got to play by the rules.

We're in a Kodak moment.

Kodak couldn't see the future.

They wanted people to keep taking pictures on film, and people didn't want to.

Our utilities are facing the same issue.

We're over fossil fuels.

It's time to move towards a new, renewable future, but statement we need our utilities to help prepare us, to help pave the way, to look for the new jobs, get people trained.

There's no small irony that San Juan college shut down its renewable energy program at the request of the new oil and gas center at the --

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Camilla, I will have to stop you.

>> That was my last sentence.

Thank you so much.

We hope that you'll shut this program down.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

I'm going to call to the far right microphone William Beardsley, Victoria, Michael Petula, Michael, and Ryan Wilson.

To the microphone in the middle, Urita Estrada, Lauren Gomez, Charles Pacheco, Janet Reese, and Kyle Tisdale.

Would everybody stand up so I can see what we've got going?

Can you come up to the microphone because we can count?

Because some people have left.

I want to know what we're -- yes, I can do that.

William Beardsley, Urita Estrada, Victoria Padillo, Lauren Gomez, Michael Petula, Charles

Pacheco, Janet Reese, Michael Eisenfeld, Kyle Tisdale, Ryan Wilson.

Is everybody standing whose name I just called?

Thank you.

William.

>> Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

I want to thank you for being here and speaking on your behalf.

To the panel I say good afternoon.

I welcome to our area.

You heard many stories today from various people.

I have two hopes.

One, I hope you're not wasting your time, because I that decision has already been made.

Two, I hope you're not wasting our time because that would be so disrespectful.

One of you had asked the question, you're concerned about how to manage the problem.

You don't manage problems.

You eliminate problems.

You destroy problems.

You don't manage them.

Get rid of the coal.

Keep it in the ground.

New Mexico does not need more coal.

The people of New Mexico do not need more coal.

Coal is a natural product of the earth.

Maybe the earth needs coal.

Keep it in the ground.

There's no good reason that every facility in New Mexico, Arizona and neighboring states isn't powered, heated and otherwise produced from the sun.

Guess what, people?

It's free!

The sun is free.

It doesn't cost you anything.

It might cost you to install handling but the sun doesn't charge -- it doesn't pollute.

Occasionally it gives some radiation, but that's okay.

So, please, think about it.

We don't need the coal.

You're not doing us a favor by getting us more coal.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Urita?

>> So I just want to revisit the mission, BLM mission statement again.

That is best described as a small agency with a big mission to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

You guys, please, use the power that you have to protect our communities.

I'm here standing in solidarity with my brothers and sisters of these indigenous communities of

color who are deeply impacted by the burning of coal, and as far as I'm concerned the BLM is not respecting our communities, and -- as long as you continue to lease these precious minerals that need to stay put in the ground.

I even experienced disrespect today from the BLM because we had our prayer outside interrupted because someone didn't know what to do with a coffee pot.

And we weren't greeted properly as community members that came a really long way to come and speak who have been waiting here -- me personally -- a long time.

And we're not getting paid like you are selves.

So, anyway, New Mexico already has the second dirtiest coal plant in the country.

Why add more?

Environmental justice, you guys, you should be held accountable for the future of our families, communities and planet.

I'm not here to get technical.

I'm here to state the obvious.

I'm here to support my community.

I'm here to tell you that my people, indigenous communities, and communities of color, do not want any more coal.

They want more renewable energy.

And I'm -- I'm also here to tell you that we are the most sustainable people, yet we're being the most affected.

It's disproportionate.

It's environmental racism.

And I'm not going to take it anymore.

And -- yeah, leave the coal in the ground.

I have a headache.

I'm sorry.

Leave the coal in the fricking ground, please.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Victoria?

>> Thank you.

Hi.

My name is Victoria Padilla.

I am a New Mexican.

I'm coming as a community member and a community organizers.

So what do I want from my BLM lands?

Well, I want it back.

I want to visit my lands and learn about my history, my culture and my lost traditions.

I want these lands to be returned to the people that they belong to.

These lands are indigenous lands.

The land of New Mexico Cubs.

I want my human rights back.

I want clean air and clean water.

I want justice for my land.

What is justice?

What does that look like?

Well, I can only dream of it because I can't experience it.

But when I think about it and I fight for it every day, I think that justice is having unpolluted safe places live, to work, to play, to pray, to have jobs that aren't mining and making you sick.

I want my New Mexican families to be in pain-free, asthma, disease-free lives.

This dream of justice can be a reality by simply leaving coal in the ground.

New Mexico struggles as a state.

I see my people suffer every day.

I am the voice of those people.

I am the voice of my community, and I am the voice of my daughter.

I am the voice of New Mexico.

And we want you to leave the coal in the ground, and we want renewable energy for our state.

We are tired of pollution.

We want safe, renewable energy that gives us jobs and our families safe jobs.

Coal hasn't been doing anything for us.

We're still at the bottom of every list.

We're hungry.

We're poor.

We're stupid everything bad, right?

No, we're not.

We're not those things.

So we don't need pollution to arm us even more.

And to quote fanny Lou hammer, a famous activist, we are sick and tired of being sick and tired.

Please do what is right and leave coal in the ground.

Protect my land and protect my people.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Lauren?

>> Good afternoon.

Thank you all for being here.

Thanks for holding this final session.

My name is Ryan Wilson.

I was born and raised in the mining and ranching community in western Colorado where I still reside.

I'm also employed by Valley resource partners.

Coal is an abundant, practical, affordable and irreplaceable source of our nation's energy and electricity.

Federal coal makes of 40% of the annual supply.

This Federal resource currently calls for large bonus bids long for a mining company can access these resources.

Recently this bonus bid process has been reviewed and now it requires the office of valuation services to review all fair market valuations and have third party appraisal prior to lease sales.

This is important.

The series of Listening Sessions was brought about by the conclusions and findings of the GAO and Inspector General reports.

These reports called for actions to ensure the leasing process is carried out in a manner to ensure the largest benefit for the public good.

These suggestions include accounting for exports and fair market valuations, controlling of leasing procedures and control of BLM lease documentation.

These are all fair suggestions.

And the BLM accepted that these should be carried out.

However, in neither report were royalty rate increases identified as an issue.

The BLM should take this into consideration and take this time to address leasing procedures and policies.

Further deliberation of royalties should be deferred to the royalty policy committee.

The entire purpose of this committee was to review and comment on revenue management and other minute run-related policies and to provide a forum to convey representative mineral lessees, operators, revenue payers, revenue recipients, governmental agencies, and public interest groups.

The best way to ensure that coal leasing is a fair return to the taxpayer would be to utilize this committee and reinstate it as well.

In order to continue the BLM and DOI's success in ensuring that the American taxpayer is receiving the full economic benefit from coal leasing, it is important to take the advice of the GAO and IG report.

Further action should also be taken to reestablish royalty policy committee to provide true technical advice and avoid politicizing the leasing process.

And also to streamline the process for leasing, including the delays in publishing notices and events in the Federal Register.

Please carefully consider the repercussion an increased royalty rate would have on the majority of Americans.

An increase in royalty rates would result in an increase in electricity costs.

The eventual loss of thousands of great jobs created by and benefited from the coal industry, the loss of a cheap, reliable and effective electricity source and ultimately the loss of the BLM's opportunity to receive any income at all from coal leasing.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

I don't know -- what is your name?

>> I'm Janet.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Step right up, Janet.

>> I am Janet Reese and thank you for this opportunity today.

Although coal on Federal Lands belongs to us, the American people, low royalties have prevented us from getting our fair share of profits, which equates to lost revenues for our schools and for infrastructure such as roads, both of which we can think about here in New Mexico, Federal coal royalties should be increased and standardized to fairly compensate the American people and correct the great disparity in royalty payments between different states.



A 2015 Headwaters economics report shows royalty averages for fiscal years 2008 through 2012, North Dakota with the lowest royalty rate at 2.3%, Wyoming with the highest at 12.3%, and New Mexico with 5.0%.

In May this year New Mexico's legislative committee reported that only about half of new teachers stayed on the job five years later.

A committee member commented that there was still a lot of work to do on teacher pay issues.

Something that we always are dealing with here in New Mexico.

It is my understanding that coal royalties are split 5050 between the Federal government and the state where the coal is mined.

New Mexico's share of the already low royalty rate seems to be a contributors to our state's financial woes.

A coal royalty rate of 18.5% that has been proposed by some should also be given serious consideration in view of coal's role in causing the climate crisis and coal's negative impact on human health and the environment.

To address the fair compensation issue it is critical to close loopholes coal companies have used to avoid paying some royalty by selling coal through their subsidiaries.

Fair market value must be better assured by fact officering in potential profits from coal exports.

In addition there is need for agency transparency rather than the current treatment evaluation methods as proprietary information.

Bonding regulations must be updated so taxpayers will not be stuck with mining clean-up fees. The reality of the lack of competitive bidding in lease sales, the figure I found is that competition exists in only some 10% of lease sales, while there is only single bidders for the other 90%.

I also learned that 83% of the opening bids from these single bidders are accepted.

This means in reality there is seldom any competition.

Senator Ed Markey has proposals in his coal reform act that address this and I suggest his proposals become part of this conversation.

For me the biggest issue is the climate crisis and the contribution of coal to it.

Please keep that in mind when you leave today.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Could you step right up?

I'm sorry, I don't -- come on, you waited this long.

What is your name.

>> My name is Charles Pacheco and I'm here to represent the -- I worked with the laborers international union when I got out of high school.

I was a third-generation laborer.

My grandfather was the first generation.

Then my uncle was an elected business manager.

So I kind of inherited the job.

The first place I went is the coal-fired power plant, and then I worked my way throughout industries throughout New Mexico and western Texas, which my local covered.

I worked under ground at the WIC project and that's the first place I seen that was a fatality.

Then that pushed me off and I went to college in New Mexico state.  
While I was trying to earn money for tuition and then I went to work in the smelter and I permanently witnessed a fatality at work.  
I witness add late lady get crushed in front of me.  
After that I was picked to do the training for the use onion.  
I taught for OSHA.  
I taught for Department of Energy.  
And I taught for American Red Cross.  
That's where this all came into play.  
I taught 80-hour hazardous waste worker -- we were the ones, the laborers, that had to go clean these contaminated sites up.  
And then I taught the radiation.  
But after that I made it to training Director.  
So when I was training Director I was in charge of 200 contractors at one time.  
In other words, we were in charge of all of New Mexico and western Texas, including the laboratories.  
When that job ended in 2000, I went back to the power plant, and I worked as a laborer.  
So after I was trained by the -- after the union trained me in hazardous waste and radiation, when I went back to work as a laborer, then I saw the real story.  
So when the politics changed, when Obama got elected, I handed my qualifications in, my teaching certifications and I made it to safety observer, and I kept telling them -- all I did was walk around the plant and report to them once a week what wasn't in compliance.  
They wouldn't comply.  
I kept telling them that the respirator program was out of compliance.  
And they wouldn't comply.  
So they got rid of me.  
They laid me off.  
A week later I called OSHA.  
Think went and cited the maintenance contractor, which was time and material.  
It wasn't hard dollar.  
And the citations are right here.  
This is the proof, ladies and gentlemen, of what they did to the people.  
This was for arsenic for the fly Ashe.  
They gave out respirators the whole time that they ran San Juan power plant, they gave respirators that were not for arsenic use.  
Yeah, if you were the big money guy, you got the good respirator.  
You got the fit test.  
But if you were a laborer and said anything about it, they got rid of you.  
They laid you off.  
So -- we got to look back and remember that money comes from labor.  
Labor doesn't come from money.  
>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.  
>> My name is Lauren Gomez here with the Juntos grew.  
>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Can you up that?

>> How is this?  
>> That's better.  
>> I come as a New Mexican native, lifelong resident.  
Seven years ago I had a life changing moment.  
I was in a car accident.  
I started farming in New Mexico, in the south Valley region of New Mexico.  
This past year I had the privilege of being able to farm on a 300-year-old farm with an 8th generation farmer.  
So 37 years of farming, doing community farming, I've come to realize the struggles that we have in these communities and we've always had.  
We've had since I was a child.  
This isn't first time the BLM has sold us out.  
They continually use our brown brothers and sisters, who I come here to stand in union with today, and you've heard the statistics.  
People have thrown numbers at you.  
They've talked about San Juan generation power plant.  
We know these things aren't good for our communities.  
The message is clear.  
These communities don't want coal.  
Let's be innovators.  
Be the new BLM.  
Show us what you can really do for these communities.  
It's destroying us.  
It's destroying our health.  
It's destroying our bodies.  
It's destroying our food.  
And it destroys our water and our air.  
I need clean air to breathe so I can farm my lands.  
I need clean water to water my crops.  
And I need that soil to be rich.  
I need all those combined.  
I don't need them tearing down and continuing to dig and dig for more fuels.  
Let's be innovators.  
Let's step outside the box for once in America, not go with the status quo.  
Let's say the time is now to change.  
You guys can do that.  
The community has spoken out.  
Yes, we know coal, it's -- it's going to be a transition.  
Change is a process.  
We know it's not an occurrence.  
Well, let's start that process.  
Let's start that change.  
Be the change for this community.  
New Mexico somebody the invisible state.

We have a rich culture here.

We've been here for generations, and we're not going to stop fighting these wrongs in our community.

So with that I'll step away and say thank you very much.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

I did call.

What is your name, please?

I called your name twice.

Went down the list twice.

What is your name, sir?

>> [inaudible]

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Michael, you're next, please.

>> Get my notes here.

>> Michael, can you speak into the microphone?

>> Is this better?

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Much better.

>> I'm Michael Petula.

I live in Albuquerque.

I work with Juntos New Mexico.

Today is my little niece's birthday.

She's 2 today.

I wish I could be with my family in New York to celebrate but I'm here.

Sense I'm here I feel that the best birthday present I could give her is to speak on her behalf to you today.

See, we must do everything that we can on behalf of ourselves and the younger generations to halt harmful carbon pollution that is driving us toward catastrophic climate change.

The extraction for burning of public coal on public land is a major source of this carbon pollution.

A year before my niece was born Superstorm Sandy hit New York and for a while we didn't know what was going on with our family.

That's a really scary thing.

Fortunately they were safe.

But when my niece is my age it will be too late to leave the coal in the ground unburnt.

And when her children are my age, her home -- New York City is said to be under water if we continue burning coal as we have.

Washington D.C. will also be under water.

It might be a good thing.

But her father and mother want to move out to Colorado.

They want to move to the Rockies to avoid all this.

I am trying to tell them, this is not something we run away that from out here we have to deal with drought, wildfires, lack of water.

Three firefighters just died today and they don't have enough personnel.

So where are they going to go?

I want a stable future for my family and my country.

But coming to Farmington I see the struggle is more urgent than that, that the front line, indigenous and Latino populations are already assaulted by the health and social impacts of coal mining and burning.

I stand in solidarity with indigenous and rural residents who oppose extraction of minerals like coal from stolen native land and the mine spills left to travel downstream poisoning the water and land they have left.

The burning of the coal is environmental racism.

I would just like to point out that the DOI like the BLM and EPA are not doing enough to comply with environmental justice Executive Order 12-898.

I haven't seen anything in your presentation about environmental justice.

I haven't seen -- you came to a multi-lingual, multi-cultural community and you don't have these meetings eyes advertised in other languages.

And I know Latinos are one of the ethnic and racial groups most affected by air pollution such as that from burning coal.

So to conclude, BLM needs to cooperate or get out of the way of a just transition for the families and communities who have been dependent on coal mining and burning toward a clean renewable economy that can deliver sustainable equitable social and economic development.

We want system change, not climate change.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

>> Sorry I was all emotional.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Michael?

>> My name is Mike.

I work for San Juan citizens alliance.

I'm a resident of Farmington, New Mexico for the past 18 years.

Almost all of the four corners area has been already leased for coal, oil and gas and uranium with severe resulting issues including methane and carbon dioxide emissions.

As you probably know and have heard, we are the methane hot spot of the United States, the four corners.

We also have been identified as having the single largest point source of pollution in the country in the form of San Juan generating station and four corner power plant and that doesn't even bring in impacts from the coal mines.

We know that the coal mines equal methane and the burning of the coal equals carbon dioxide and it's a disaster for climate change, disaster for the four corners.

It's a vulnerable region.

In New Mexico the BLM basically lacks the skill set to oversee the regulatory compliance of coal lease sales, including an inability to -- documents that evaluate coal mine methane, resulting climate change, impacts to our economy and our public health.

This area deserves better.

DOI, the Department of the Interior, including BLM, OSM, BIA should be working to transition this region off the addiction to coal and setting up an investment zone that accounts for job transition, renewable energy opportunities and protection of our lives.

Climate policy demands action here, now.

Coal companies that have had a presence in northwest New Mexico, including BH bill ton and

Navajo mine and San Juan mine are leaving or nearing bankruptcy such as Peabody and El Segundo mine.

We know that there is inappropriate bonding.

Public taxpayers will be left holding the bag for reclamation, low bonds, severe pollution.

BLM's complicity in this coal folly is unconscionable given the knowledge that we have that the coal companies are no longer profitable, once the externalities are brought into the equation.

We have an opportunity here in northwestern New Mexico to make a real change in people's lives and stop being the national energy sacrifice zone.

I would really implore and welcome our involvement in trying to make this dream a reality.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, sir.

What is your name?

>> Hi, I'm Kyle Tisdale attorney with the western environmental law center.

I live in Taos, New Mexico.

I want to bring up a couple points today.

First being is that the current coal program is fundamentally flawed and requires a complete overhaul.

There are a variety of market failures in the current system for coal leasing and royalty programs that fail to properly value our public coal resources.

This essentially subsidizes the coal industry while acting as a tax on the public.

It is a system that currently prioritizes the maximum extraction of coal regardless of these market conditions, and a fair return to the public is secondary.

Examples of this in leasing is that every -- nearly every lease sale is a single bidder, and there are undervalued bonus bids and payment for all of these Federal leases.

The coal royalty side of things, the valuation point is currently determined when the coal leaves the mine.

Often in captive transactions which ensures the lowest possible valuation for public coal.

This results in an effective royalty rate at about 4.9% for all Federal coal comparative, of course, to the statutory rate of 12.5%.

There are several reforms that I think we need in the system.

There needs to be a change in the point evaluation that values the gross market value for the price of coal.

This needs to be reflective of the true market price for coal.

And there also needs to be greater transparency in the coal royalty and leasing programs.

There needs to be an elimination of subsidies, including royalty rate reductions.

And there needs to be a close the in the affiliate broker loophole.

The coal program is also inconsistent with Federal climate change policy.

There's a disconnect right now at the administration.

The impacts of climate change must be included in how we value the extraction of public fossil fuel resources, including coal.

The American public is paying dearly in terms of our public health and climate change impacts.

Social cost of carbon is one tool that can be used to put a value on this pollution to society.

Currently the central value under the social cost of carbon is \$42 for a metric ton of carbon pollution.

With the 3.5 billion tons of coal, that equals -- that is produced between 2008 and 2012, that's over \$384 billion in harm to our public.

It does not make sense to sell coal for a few dollars a ton when harm that coal creates to our community far surpasses that.

There needs to be a carbon adder to include upstream charge with existing coal royalties on new and renewed leases.

Finally, I'm asking that the agency perform a programmatic Environmental Impact Statement to review the coal royalty and leasing programs.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, Kyle.

>> While that EIS is being prepared there be a moratorium on all additional leasing.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

To be respectful of everybody's time, this meeting was meant to go until 4:00.

It's now about 10 after 4:00, and we still have on the list about 17 speakers.

So I need to ask the panel how you would like to proceed.

Just keep going?

Keep going.

Hey, this is great.

To the right microphone.

I need you to at least stand up until I do a head count to see -- some people have left.

Cory Heaps.

Matt DOD sun.

Benton howl.

R.J. Hunt.

Tod Lihie.

Bell Wrangler.

Lester.

-- I can't read this one.

I'm sorry.

It's CHAN, I think.

CHAN.

Anaya?

Thank you.

Paul Davis.

Stevie Shupman.

Donna house at this central one.

Please start by giving us your name and affiliation and we'll start -- Mr. Lester, why don't you start here.

>>

[ speaking in Navajo ]

I said hello in and my name is [indiscernible].

By Federal they told me I have to have an English name saw so they call me Lester Begay.

I really appreciate you guys are still here, and I don't think I will work for BLM.

What I heard today, it just amazes me.

My elders, most of them are not here, they're gone, and they talked about this.

They already knew it.  
When they talk about it, you just think at that age, what are they talking about?  
One example they would say is they're here.  
Who is here?  
The white people are here.  
You watch them.  
They pick up a rock.  
They talk about it all day.  
They're going to sell it tomorrow.  
And one of the things they used to say to me is we got to have respect for mother nature.  
We got to take care of it.  
It takes care of us.  
That was -- we're not conquerors.  
That's how -- the principle that got in our head.  
But as today I just see what they were talking about.  
They talked about it that what they bring us out of the earth mostly is dangerous.  
It's going to kill us.  
In the long run.  
And they knew it.  
They weren't scientist eyes, but I don't know how they had this thing all figured out.  
As I grew from the '70s at the time when Clean Air Act was established -- but the only people that abide by those laws was the drivers, consumers.  
Power plant, they were in for the big money.  
So the government failed at that point to -- somewhere in '93.  
Finally they realized they were a little bit too late.  
So what we ask today is, are we getting our money back?  
And I didn't even know I was a shareholder until today.  
And this is really a deficit.  
This coal plant brought nothing but pollution, air climate change, all the heat, and it's affecting everybody, health issue.  
It's costing more money than anything else.  
It really brought us nothing but deficit.  
>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you very much.  
>> My name is Cory Heaps.  
I reside in central Utah.  
Employed bee Valley resources.  
I appreciate this opportunity to speak and also to extend this time to include the rest of these comments.  
There are claims being made the public is not receiving their fair share of returns on Federal coal leases, or, in other words, that royalty rates should be increased.  
I find it ironic certain groups are concerned about the public getting their fair share from the coal industry but at the same time pursuing a path that will increase the public's cost of electricity by attempting to drive the coal industry out of business.  
Let us not forget that comb provides approximately 40% of the nation's electricity, and is the



most affordable source of electricity today.

Increasing royalty rates will increase costs and decrease revenues to the Federal government, thus jeopardizing the economic viability of a mining operation, which in turn will discourage future investments in coal or cause existing operations to close.

As a result, less coal will be mined on Federal Lands and, therefore, fewer royalties will be paid to the Federal government.

The Federal government must realize the enormous time and capital required to go through the leasing process and then design, permit and construct a coal mining operation.

This investment will exceed hundreds of millions of dollars and take over -- and could take over 10 years before an ounce of coal is mined.

The risks are huge.

The current leasing regulations not only require royalties and rent fees be paid on every ounce of coal sold but in addition to that requires a bonus bid on every ton of coal contained in the lease area, of which about 75 to 90% will be recoverable.

The leasing process alone can take upwards of five to seven years, thus costing millions of dollars even before the lease sale is approved.

Then an additional four years or more is required to permit the operation.

I believe the Federal government needs to seriously consider impacts of increased royalty rates.

What is most beneficial to the public is to have reliable, affordable energy today.

Increasing royalty rates will only deter any first investments in the coal industry.

This will certainly not be in the best interest of the public.

Thanks for your time.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

>> Thank you, sir.

I am Matt Dodson.

I own interests in oil and gas wells and leases, and when I got into the oil and gas industry 25 years ago the royalty interest rate was 12.5%.

Apparently it's gone up on oil and gas but I have absolutely no knowledge of that because the royalty rate does not go up on already sold leases.

So my recommendation is that you do something like increase the royalty rate 1% a year on already sold minerals until it comes up to the current rate.

And then if any prior leases are resold, it instantly goes up to the new rate.

And then I recommend that a percentage of the royalty goes to communities and individuals that are negatively impacted by the mining and the burning of fossil fuels.

And I promote increasing the royalty rate on foreigners that own our minerals in foreign corporations to a rate even higher than that 18% because they're clearly only in the United States for one reason and that is to make profits.

They absolutely don't give a damn about anybody in any of the communities that they -- they're extracting and burning in.

All of the loopholes need to be closed such as one person actually buys the lease and then they sell it somehow -- or sell the production to somebody else, and then that affects the royalties that will all loopholes need to be closed and anybody that tries to do those loopholes just needs to have their corporate charter removed.

I like how you strategically chose the four cities other than Washington D.C. to have these meetings.

Billings, Montana, Gillette, Wyoming, Farmington, New Mexico, we all are definitely right in the middle of the mining and extractive and burning industries, and, yes, even Denver is -- or was -- started as a mining town.

It still is an oil and gas town.

Yet to this point today, it has been 50 to 3 to make the extractive industries pay their fair share of what they're doing.

Bonding.

It appears as though bonding in the coal industry is solely to make sure that the royalties are paid.

If that is the case, then they definitely need to come up with bonds that cover the cost of cleaning up their messes when they leave.

I won't even get into oil and gas bonding because it will just piss off everybody here.

Snow summation, in fairness, close the loopholes, increase the royalties, even on those leases that are sold, up to the new rate, and then let's come up with a royalty rate that's even high for foreigners.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Let's go over here.

Way down.

>> My name is reverend Chan Osborn.

My title is canon missionary for justice and spiritual development with the Episcopal church in Navajo land.

And a really --

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Do you have an acronym for that?

The government has an acronym for everything.

>> I just moved here from the core of the Navajo Nation having been there for five years at an ancient old mission.

I feel like there's really nothing left to say except to pray.

One of my greatest inspirations in life growing up during desegregation in Alabama was Martin Luther King Jr., and he read from scripture, and I read this day what we read on Ashe Wednesday, and Ashe Wednesday is when the church puts ashes on your forehead and says, remember, you are dust, and to dust you will return.

This is a dusty place that we live in, and we are on a holy ground.

And I want to read, if you extend your sole to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted then your light shall dawn in the darkness and your darkness shall be as noonday.

The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your soul in drought.

He will strengthen your bones and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters do not fail.

Those from among us shall rebuild this old wasteland we have created.

And we will go hand in hand with our brothers and sisters raising up the foundations for many generations to come.

We shall be called, all of us, hand in hand together Diné, all of the wonderful tribes that were

represented today.

We shall be called hand in hand repaired of the breach, restorers of the streets to dwell in.

Let us pray.

Creator God, we ask for your mercy for those of us who have scarred mother earth, who have desecrated father sky.

We ask that as we join hands this day as great minds, as great hearts, as great spirits we can be the repairer of the breach and the restorer of these streets to live in.

Amen.

Amen.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Back over here.

>> My name is Denton Howell.

I live in Bernalillo, New Mexico and I'm a member of the Sierra Club.

The big picture is about carbon emissions causing climate change.

The big picture is that fossil fuels need to be left in the ground.

This means as a society we need to discontinue using coal.

But for the short term, we are generating much of our electricity by coal, natural gas or nuclear.

Your agency oversees a longstanding program which encompasses both surface and underground coal mining activities on these Federal Lands.

For years there has been a continuing loss of revenues to the taxpayers of this country, which has been caused by undervaluation of Federal coal.

The Inspector General of the Department of the Interior in the GAO -- and the GAO have issued reports saying the lease sale process is largely noncompetitive and potentially open to industry manipulation.

In addition to the loss of adequate compensation for the coal leasing, these cheap coal prices mean more coal burning per generation of electricity.

Consequently, more emissions of carbon dioxide.

The planning process for leasing Federal coal is supposed to be structured so as to maximize both competition and financial return to the Federal government, but because of the decertification since 1990, roughly 90% of all Federal coal sales have had only one bidder.

Unfortunately, the lease by application method does not take into account cumulative impacts of other coal mining operations in the area.

The lease by application process only requires your agency to analyze the environmental impacts of leasing on a parcel by parcel basis and not on a regional level.

The BLM's current methodology does not account for externalities such as the emission of significant pollutants with significant social cost.

Principally carbon pollution, smog-forming pollutants and heavy metals.

It would be a good outcome for your improved process to be consistent with the climate action plan of the President.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Let's come over here.

What's your name.

>> My name is Stevie Shookman.

I am a high school student in Santa Fe.

I stand here today to implore you to require the Bureau of Land Management to stop selling land at drastically reduced prices to coal companies.

The main reasons why I maintain this belief are the coal is uneconomical and unhealthy and the Bureau of Land Management is there therefore acting in contradiction to their stated mission.

Clearly coal is not only expensive but awful for the environment.

As green America says, quote, Coal is the absolute dirtiest of all energy sources and the greatest contributors to global warming.

Coal-fired power plants are responsible for over 80% of the CO2 pollution since 1990.

And of the highest ratio of CO2 out per unit of electricity out of all the fossil fuels, end quote.

It seems transparent it would be a terrible mistake to allow this practice to continue.

Coal ruins the atmosphere of New Mexico, a place consistently regarded well for its fresh air.

The reason why BLM must not perpetuate this goes beyond its detrimental environmental effects.

Coal is actually against BLM's stated mission which is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of America's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

BLM clearly considers the health and productivity of land important for the future.

Coal pollutes this land and clearly therefore does not keep it healthy.

In terms of the issue of productivity, which I assume relates to economic development, Mario Parker of Bloomberg explained, some 90% of the U.S. coal was uneconomical as a power plant fuel after natural gas dropped a near 3% low this year as said Mark Levin at B&B capital.

Coal's share of the electricity market will fall to 36% in 2015 from about 50% in 2007 government estimates show.

Coal is not considered to be economically popular in the future and benefits are proving to be frugal.

In conclusion, there is no benefit to using coal.

New Mexico is a beautiful state with some of the most renowned natural beauty and clean air in the United States.

We should not give the advantages up for something as unbeneficial as coal.

It should be the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to preserve our state's beauty and its economic development, but continuing to sell land cheaply to coal companies would not be promoting industry, rather only harming the beautiful surrounding environment and harming the residents of the state and indeed the world.

Thank you for listening.

I urge you to take this into account.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thanks for coming.

What is your name?

>> My name is R.J. Hunt.

I live downstream of the San Juan generating station.

You people just getting pennies for your dam royalties and they're going out there and doing thousands of dollars' worth of damage because I live downstream.

They dang near killed my family in 1982.  
I had a boy who turned around and had a stroke, 37 years old.  
Was that caused because that, because he was five year old?  
I got a picture of him and his son.  
We damn near lost that boy.  
Now you guys sold all the royalties out there and now you guys should be responsible for the damn pollution.  
Why don't you guys all come down and have a good big drink of it down there.  
You will see the reason why my sheep got mum if I'd.  
They killed over 400 head of sheep for me.  
That's \$280,000.  
What did the government people do?  
Pat themselves on the back and said I need a promotion.  
I need a pay raise.  
Everybody is -- what a shame.  
And to see you people stand there looking at a man like me who has been through what I've been through.  
For 10 years of my life I had to drink distilled water.  
And eat steamed chicken, steamed potatoes and steamed squash.  
And the sad part about this whole dang mess is the government ignored us and listen to these people here talk today.  
There is absolutely no due process.  
There is no equal protection under the law.  
And you people, if I was you, I would be totally embarrassed to be sitting up there looking at a man like me.  
Just like to say the Sierra Club went down there.  
You go up there to the power plant right now.  
All the galvanized, all the paint off the T posts, the galvanize off the barbed wire.  
It has been ate off that the Barb wire is ate half in two.  
And to hear that stuff coming down, that will ruin you and it's totally polluted.  
And you know, I got up and testified for a Senate subcommittee in Washington D.C., and it was on December 10, 2009.  
Ed Markey invited me up.  
I got up there and I felt I had finally been saved.  
I went in there with my creator and I broke down before them.  
And somebody had to get up and read my speech to them.  
And I hope that that had a lot to do with a dirty coal-fired rotten power plant and the cowardliness that they got going for them.  
Just like I say, go down there and take a look.  
You can see it.  
And just like I say, please have a drink of that water.  
You expect my sheep to drink pit you expect my family to drink pit they're even dumbing untreated human waste down there.  
You guys sold it, you're responsible for it.

Go down there and enjoy it.

It should make you proud.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you, sir.

>> My name is Alesandro Fernandez.

I'm a high school student in Santa Fe New Mexico.

First I would like to thank the Bureau of Land Management for continuing the session to hear all the comments and I'm here on behalf of -- or as a young person, as a student and someone who more than most people in this room will have to deal with these issues and the decisions that are influenced here today along with the future.

Now, the Bureau of Land Management began at the begin of this nation as the office of land management, and their purpose, I quote, to manage the public lands and their variable resource values so they are utilized in a combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people.

Now, in 1920 the Mineral Leasing Act was signed.

And this was thought of as a win-win.

The public gets -- sorry, the Federal government and the public gets the money and industry can be driven by these below-market leases to these coal companies.

That may have been the case in the past but it's no longer the case today.

Retire an old horse, I would like to say.

There is no future in the coal industry.

26 coal companies have gone bankrupt in the last 10 years.

In that same period the Dow Jones total market coal sector fell by 76%, the overall Dow Jones index rose by 69%.

Average coal -- the average of coal mines shut down in the past five years was one every 10 days.

BHB, the largest coal company in the United States is pulling out of San Juan mine.

Everybody is getting out coal.

China, for a long time the world's largest consumer of coal, is also pulling out.

Coal node employs less people than the solar industry which did not even exist 10 years ago.

Why prop up this failing industry.

What are the resources and -- wouldn't the resources and land the BLM manages be better used for new energy or, hell, solar which Bloomberg energy predicts will be the leading source of energy in 20 years.

That's enough of economics and facts.

I will give you a real life example.

Where I live, we maintain an irrigation maintained by the community and twice a year we get together and clean it out.

Now, for the past two years there has been no ditch cleaning.

Because there is no water.

This last year the water ran, but how much longer will that continue?

Will children have a ditch to clean out?

I sincerely doubt it.

Something that's burned into my memory was from the caldera fire several years ago.

I remember walking out one day, the sky hazy with smoke, looking at the sun, blood red, and seeing little pieces of Ashe fall from the sky.

Now, you here in front of me are perhaps indirectly responsible for that.

The cause of that is climate change.

Although some say it's the man who sells the gun does not commit the murder, I believe when the decision is this clear in front of you that you are.

Thank you.

>> I am I Todd lay he, conservation Director for the New Mexico wildlife federation and I represent 20,000 hunters and anglers dedicated to preserving wildlife habitat.

I believe it's essential the Federal Coal Program help move the nation toward a clean energy future, that it's based on sustainable conservation, and managed in the general public's long term interests but today I would like to focus on two points.

First, we ask that you please examine the state of western coal before you open new land.

For years the Federal Coal Program has opened an ever growing section of the American West to mining.

Fundamental to existing law was the promise to protect land, water and habitat when siting and operating mines.

Additionally full recommend reclamation to demonstration standards is a legal requirement.

We recognize the primary function of the Office of Surface Mining and states is to regulate how mining and reclamation occurs on the Federal land but we recommend you examine the state of current projects before you agree to open more land.

In a recent analysis of coal reclamation projects in the West the National Wildlife Federation and

Us other organizations determined coal companies were not fully reclaiming mines to really required standards.

Failure to reclaim projects leaves the public with a long-term liability for ever-mounting reclamation costs, totaling over \$2 billion.

And irreparable damage to landscape, wild life and watershed.

While protecting has been to the pre-mining condition is the goal, lands cited as reclaimed are aesthetically unpleasing and vegetation being non-native and non-diverse.

If left in the current state reclamation in this arid region could take decades of natural development to reestablish native characteristics comparable to pre-mining conditions.

Finally, unfunded means could be met by increasing the Federal coal royalty rate.

Numerous Federal and state programs remain woefully underfunded.

An adjusted fair royalty rate could help address these other needs.

Royalty money could be used to increase hunting, fishing and recreation opportunities on the very public lands on in which resources are found.

There are nearly 40 million hunters and anglers in the United States who contribute \$50 billion a year to the national economy.

Outdoor recreation according to the outdoor industry of America is a more than \$6 billion a year industry and supports 6 million jobs.

Public lands are a treasured national resource and deeply rooted in American values.

So is hunting and fishing.

Giving the importance of public lands to our national identity and to the American West

specifically, they deserve adequate management, maintenance and funding. Just as it's important to rework the Federal Coal Program so that it's consistent with other administration programs it is also important that mineral development proposals consider the realities of reclamation and public trust.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Paul?

Paul Davis here?

>> Can you let her go first and let me rearrange this microphone?

>> Donna House.

I'm a member of the Navajo Nation and a citizen of the United States.

And a practicing botanist and have been following the mineral act for most of my life.

My work has been involved in protecting biodiversity, cultural plants in the area.

I have roamed and walked in this area for a very long time.

First of all, I wanted to absolutely thank Secretary Sally Jewell for having these Listening Sessions.

Unfortunately, five is not enough.

I was very much shocked about this because there was a report done by NAACP that actually did an analysis of all the power plants and the mines.

There are nearly 6 million Americans that live within 3 miles of a coal power plant and mines, and within these power plants and mines tend to be disproportionately located in low-income communities and people of color.

And so to my dismay to have it just in this area is not enough.

On the Colorado plateau we have more than 45 -- more than 43 different languages and dialects.

The diversity of people that live on this plateau that call this land their homeland is very important.

Not only to the people, the five-finger people, but also to the species that are here.

There are species that I recall that were abundant that are no longer.

There are rare cacti that have been identified in this area and always trumped by the minerals act.

Always trumped by oil and gas.

Always trumped by coal.

Coal power plants and coal mines.

The people have lived here for more than generations and generations, more than 50 years of watching this power plant, watching it go through a series of pollution, watching -- people have watched the species decline.

Not only rare and endangered, but native species.

The habitat has been totally fragmented in this area by the checkerboard type of design that BLM has in this area.

That design has destroyed the culture, it has destroyed the habitat for species.

It is not good for the people.

This mineral -- gosh -- well, I have details about tech -- technical details I'll send you later.

I just wanted to get into other parts.

Thank you.



One last bit, three minutes is definitely not enough.

And I think it's a very important to come back to the people to let them know what is going to happen next, because there's no process of -- in your Web site that says this is what's going to happen next.

And I think it needs to be also advertised on the radio in different languages.

As I said in this whole area there's such diversity of people and languages.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

Paul?

>> Can you hear me?

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Yes.

>> My name is Paul Davis.

I really wish I could give an impassioned speech like the ones I've heard but I'm a scientist and I would fail dismally.

I am a hydrologist.

I was' worked for the U.S. geological laboratory, worked for Sandia Laboratories.

Right now I work for Envirologic incorporated.

I was appointed by the British House of Lords to the United Kingdom committee on radioactive waste management.

I've also worked on pollution problem from the San Juan mine and generate station and I want to use that site to demonstrate the fact that once you the BLM give away our public lands that the agencies responsible for assuring our health and safety and environment's health and safety are not doing their job but much more important once the land is given away they can't do their job and don't expect them to.

So the mine -- this power plant has essentially turned a dry arroyo into a perennial polluted stream.

Finally a law is going to stop the pollution from reaching the San Juan river but it won't clean up the sources of pollution.

But what was the process supposed to be?

The process is supposed to be you give away the land, then NEPA ensures there is minimal environmental impacts and then a number of agencies involved, Federal and state, basically try to protect the environment while the mine operates, and finally the land is reclaimed.

It's not what happened.

Let me look at just a few examples over the last 20 years.

First of all, PMN has an NPDS permit from the EP and it's a zero discharge permit.

And you heard me heard me say the pollution is leaving the plant 24 hour eyes a day, 7 days a week.

The groundwater concentration of selenium are 12.5 -- they gave PNM three years to stop the pollution.

They haven't.

However, EPA is did allow them to call themselves a zero discharge plant.

Next the surface mining control reclamation act SMCRA is shows to do protect the environment.

It requires know off-site damage from the mine.

SMCRA was very useful in this case.

It was used by the Sierra Club against PNM and BHP in the successful lawsuit.

But from the start of the operation SMCRA was never used by the regulator to address off-site pollution.

What was NEPA supposed to do when it started?

I'm going to talk about a number of issues in a hurry.

First the use of this amount of water in the desert.

They concluded that the use of this much water would not cause any noticeable impact on man's health of the environment and we're talking about twice the amount of water that the City of Farmington uses.

Then they said there wouldn't be any impact to the San Juan river.

They said there would be no release to the San Juan river.

Beyond that they went further they said, if they were allowed to develop three new power units and expand the mine that would actually improve the river's quality.

So in conclusion, I just want to say that that these agencies -- it's not a story ear here of evil people doing evil things.

That would be a great movie.

If you talk to all these people they all believe they acted professionally and they all believe they were not biased in their actions but it was biased that.

And once you give away the land, once you have jobs in the area, once you have electricity in the flowing, that bias is unrecognizable and it's a downhill slide from the time you give the land up to the time it's polluted and the time they walk away, and it will be polluted, this mine, for hundreds of years.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you I have two names left on the list.

So would those two people come forward, please, Ken Robinson and Etta arbusa.

Ken Robinson here?

Okay.

Etta?

>>

[ speaking in Navajo ]

I'm sorry --

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Etta they can't hear in the back.

>> Can you hear me now?

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Way better.

>> Thank you for being here on the behalf of BLM and, yes, we would like to have notice in the paper, in the radio and, you know, publicized a little better.

I am a member and also a board member under Diné medicine association.

I want to speak on behalf of the [indiscernible] which is all people [indiscernible] which is the holy people, which we all are.

We are experiencing a lot of issues and the power plant that's being talked about here within our area, my brother worked for the coal company, power plant, and he is no longer here with us because of health issues.

And I've seen on the paper that there's asbestos and there's warning now.

So to families -- that was publicized here in the Farmington paper, the daily times.  
So how our story is as indigenous people, tribe throughout United States, is that we don't have anything on document paper and we are very sacred as we are, our medicine people are still here with us, and our herbalists, and we're still practicing our ways of life and our traditional ways, and that we -- we speak on the behalf of living a good life and being responsible for the water, the land, the air, all that we have to live a good life and to enjoy life.  
So we all have a responsibility and duty to look after these -- this land that we have, and that's the reason why our language

[ Navajo ]

Was used in World War II, and you are aware of the Navajo code talkers.

Those are our fathers and our grandfathers.

So on that behalf, you all need to change.

I'm not going to repeat what everybody said, but you pretty much have a lot of these things documented.

So I want to say we still have traditional practitioners and all.

So I live in the area where there's all drilling and wells.

But we have a lot, a lot that needs to be corrected and straightened out.

So all the surrounding, all four directions, the father, son, and then the mother earth.

So you have to be careful how you distract mother earth.

That's all I got to say.

So it's just like saying -- like they say, don't play with fire.

So we have to respect our universe that way.

Thank you.

>> LIZ O'BRIEN: Thank you.

I want to just thank everybody for your patience.

It's been a really long day.

You've hung in there.

That's pretty wonderful.

Thank you so much.

Neil?

>> NEIL KORNZE: All right.

This was an excellent session, and I think -- I'm going to give Lester my favorite comment of the day.

He said -- I just found out today that I'm a shareholder.

I think what he meant was I found out today that I'm one of the owners of these amazing resources that our nation has.

And he's right.

That's why we're here to listen to you and to engage and to talk about these incredibly complex issues related to land management, energy resources and the landscapes that matter to you and have mattered to your families for generations and will continue to be very significant to our nation.

So just to recap a little bit of what I heard today, we will be taking in more comments.

So if you want to revise and extend, please feel free to do that.

There is a Web site where you can submit that information.

There is also the box in the back.

But we got a lot of good feedback today.

We asked some specific questions but folks ranged quite broadly and that was useful to hear as well.

We heard a lot of discussion of coal mines and power plants, particularly on the Navajo reservation.

We heard about uranium mines, many of which are abandoned, and that is a very important issue that needs more attention.

We heard about specific and broad issues of pollution.

This gentleman right here had some very important things to say on that.

We heard about the pollution in the Animas River, which is something of concern to all of us. We even heard about Arctic drilling.

There was a well-spoken woman sitting up here in front that did walk through a number of North American and global issues that was helpful to have that discussed.

We also heard a number of people reference that last year was the hottest year on record and that we're waiting to see how this year turns out, in addition to the incredible fires that are burning in places around the west.

So I think a very well rounded discussion in terms of the range of issues.

And a number of calls.

People called for more attention to social justice, environmental justice, many of our speakers were focused on that.

A number of people wanted to -- coal to be kept in the ground, a very clear message.

A number of people asked for a higher royalty rate.

A number of people asked for matching the cost of how coal is sold on private land should be a similar cost or a similar royalty on public lands.

And a great number of people talked about reclamation and bonding and making sure that what has been leased already is properly overseen, properly regulated, and that when the mining is done that it's brought back to a useful state.

We also heard a number of folks talk about the importance of the industry, about the fact that there's the potential that raising royalty rates could lead to more expensive electricity, which could have economic consequences.

So all of these things are in the mix in terms of the feedback we're getting.

We appreciate the honest and passionate and very personal discussion today.

And I will note on the personal front we -- I saw and felt that a number of people discussed family members who had experienced black lung or cancer or asthma or lost family members that they were representing at today's discussion.

We had some very well-spoken young people.

I think they may have left just a few minutes ago.

We're glad to see people of all ages engaging in these public discussions.

We had ranchers, we had parents, we had Navajo, we had scientists.

My feeling today was a very productive dialogue.

In terms of next steps, we had some folks toward the end ask what happens next.

I don't have an answer because we're actually listening.

We're here to take your input.

We're here to make sure that the diversity of thought in the country is represented as we begin this discussion.

So I want to thank you personally, and on behalf of all the folks that play a hand, your fantastic local managers that work with you on a daily basis, this is a significant contribution that you've made to us and to your neighbors by participating in this conversation, and I thank you for your time.