

Testimony for Public Hearing
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
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RE: The American Energy Initiative

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and Committee Members. My name is Joe Gary Street and I am a small business owner in Buchanan County, Virginia. I am also the son of a Buchanan County coal miner. My children, grandchildren and friends all have ties to coal. We are a coal mining family with our county's best interest at heart. Having lived here in Buchanan County my entire life, I am passionate about the county's current prosperity and the prosperity for future generations. Buchanan County is the largest producer of coal in the state of Virginia, producing more than 9.1 million tons in 2011. With the amount of coal produced here, coal jobs (directly and indirectly) make up a significant portion of our work force. With a population of only 23,000 in Buchanan County, coal mining jobs, directly and indirectly, total more than 50% of the workforce. I am here today to ask you to reject the U.S. EPA's proposed Greenhouse Gas New Source Performance Standards (NSPS) for utilities and explain to you the impact this regulation will have on jobs in Buchanan County, Virginia and beyond.

The EPA's latest proposal for controlling greenhouse gas emissions will force more coal fired power plants to close when 25% of them have already announced closure over the next few years, reducing the amount of coal that will be produced and used in the United States. With the forced closure of power plants comes major repercussions for the coal industry. Already this year, thousands of coal miners have been laid off across Kentucky, Southwest Virginia and Southern West Virginia. The EPA's continued war on coal makes the lay-offs the tip of the iceberg for the impact these regulations will begin to have on our communities. This past Monday, one of the largest US-coal producers filed for bankruptcy. With this significant bankruptcy filing and the volatility of fossil fuels, newspaper headlines

are rampant and employees are scared. I've been asked in my own business about lay-offs. Although our business has never laid off a single person, emotions are high even for the employees of businesses indirectly affected by the coal market. Our people are worried about their jobs and how they will pay their bills and mortgages.

It was 4 years ago that President Obama told an interviewer in San Francisco that if he was elected, he would "bankrupt" any companies attempting to build coal-fired power plants and he would see to it that electricity costs would "necessarily skyrocket". The EPA's proposed NSPS will drastically drive up the cost of electricity. In addition to people losing their jobs, they will also be faced with higher electricity/utility bills. NSPS will deliberately push Americans to abandon coal, our most cost efficient and reliable source of energy. In Buchanan County, we simply cannot afford to abandon coal. Although we've tried to diversify our economy with manufacturing jobs, etc., the geographic location (too far from the Interstate) and lack of flat land makes it nearly impossible. The population is so dependent on coal that if we were to abandon it, the only word to describe Buchanan County will be devastation.

Buchanan County receives approximately \$46 million per year in severance tax from coal, natural gas and other related coal taxes (per 2013 budget). The county only receives a total of \$60 million from ALL county sources (this \$60 million figure includes the severance tax) including property taxes, local sales and use tax, revenue from waste removal, etc. The major county expenses per year total \$55-60 million dollars. In order to survive, if fossil fuels are abandoned, major cuts would have to be made. Those cuts will come from a large majority of people who do not have jobs! President Obama allegedly supports an "all of the above" energy policy as he stated in his address to the American people in January, however, fossil fuels were left out of that policy. Currently, there is no energy policy from the executive branch that includes fossil fuels. I feel that it is my responsibility to speak on behalf of the citizens of Buchanan County so that everyone understands what is at stake if the EPA continues on the

"convoy of regulatory train wrecks that are rolling across America" (John Ruberry, blogger, Marathon Pundit). We are only one of thousands of communities across our country that will suffer. Counties in Kentucky and Southern West Virginia will suffer even worse than Buchanan County because they have even higher populations of coal and coal related jobs.

If President Obama's energy policy is "all of the above", shouldn't he be putting taxpayer dollars into things like carbon storage research and ways to continue to cut down on CO2 emissions rather than pumping taxpayer dollars into unprofitable solar energy? Coal is the most economical, abundant, and reliable source of energy that we have in this country. Why are we not focusing on making this affordable resource better? NSPS's impact on our country is beyond describable. The facts presented in this statement do not begin to summarize the devastating affects NSPS will have. As a business owner, how do you explain to your employees why they are losing their job? Do you tell them it is because we have a government who forgot about the people of Appalachia and their livelihood? I am telling you all of this because I see and read every single day firsthand what EPA regulations are doing to the communities throughout Appalachia, and particularly Buchanan County. I am here to ask you to say NO to the proposed NSPS.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Joe G. Street