



Hi, my name is Sarah Flath, and I'm representing the Hazen Chamber of Commerce Board. I am here to testify on the Clean Power Plan. The Hazen Chamber of Commerce represents ¹²⁵ ~~(insert)~~ businesses, ~~(insert economic info/stats)~~ Hazen is proud of their business community, thriving Main Street, and the quality of life our town offers its residents. While many other small towns in our state find their schools consolidating, their population dwindling, and limited opportunities for well-paying jobs, towns in coal country, including Hazen, have been the shining exception. Mercer County's per capita income is consistently amongst the highest in the state. Our residents consist both of locals that were able to find high paying jobs and stay living in their hometowns, and people from outside of our community, such as myself, that were drawn by the same jobs. The primary difference between our rural community and those that are struggling is coal. Our high school superintendent estimates half of our student body has at least one parent directly employed by the lignite industry. Of the \$4.2 million in Mercer County's 2014 general fund, less than \$1 million came from non-coal sources. Coal is critical to our vibrant community's economy, demographics, tax base, and future.

We hear from our member businesses that they have a long history of working with the North Dakota Department of Health. We thank you for your past efforts and for coming to Mercer County tonight to receive our community's input. Although the Hazen Chamber may disagree with the Clean Power Plan and its contents, simply fighting the plan is not enough. Instead, we feel strongly that the State must control its own destiny and formulate a State Implementation Plan.

Any harm to the lignite industry would be unwelcome. We need a State Implementation Plan that does not include the degradation of the coal industry in North Dakota. We need a State Implementation Plan that is not harmful to the businesses that rely on the lignite industry, those businesses' bottom line, and their employees. We need a Plan that does not pick winners and losers amongst power generators, mines, and the businesses that support them. We are blessed in our state with reliable, affordable energy and we need a plan that won't put the reliability of our power grid at risk.

Thank you.