Good Afternoon, my name is William Midcap. I live in Fort Morgan Colorado, about 80 miles northeast of Denver. I am a consumer of electricity and serve on a rural electric board of directors. Currently I am the president of Colorado Rural Electric Association. CREA represents the interests of a very diverse set of folks, and the coops in Colorado serve over 1.3m people. I work for Rocky Mountain Farmers Union in Denver; Rocky has 18,000 members in Colorado. Rocky Mountain Farmers Union represents family farms and ranches. Fort Morgan is like many communities in Colorado, communities that rely on agriculture. Agriculture depends on many resources including electricity made from coal, all of us in this room eat because of agriculture. Agriculture and the rural businesses that depend on agriculture cannot survive the rate increases that this proposed rule will need to initiate. The idea that we could be forced to shut down viable power plants that now supply much of our electricity and build combined cycle gas plants is just not economically sound. Some utility experts have said the rule forces Colorado to respond to a 30% reduction starting in 2018 and the 30% reduction taking place before 2020. The remaining 5% reduction would then happen over the next 10 years. I don’t see this as a feasible option.

Coops in Colorado have initiated many energy efficiency projects. My home coop has recently developed a program in cooperation with our state energy office, to reduce the loads at many of the dairies that we serve. Remember I said that agriculture was the backbone of my community. Leprino makes cheese in my hometown and that factory employs over 400 people. Morgan County is home to over 40,000 cows milking. I don’t know how many maids a milking are employed but I know it takes a lot of electricity to keep those cows productive and that plant going. We also process some 3500 head of cattle daily in Fort Morgan and we have a 100 year old tradition of making sugar from sugar beets. Like I said my community, like many others in Colorado, depend on agriculture. If you close the plants that supply our electricity prematurely and make us pay for those stranded resources and build additional plants to provide us with the electricity we need costs will go up. Food costs to feed this nation will go up. Family farmers will see very little return on investment and we will see more people moving off the land and into the cities.

Recently White House advisor, John Podesta, was quoted saying additional actions will be added to make the agriculture sector to make the U.S. food supply more resilient to climate change.

It has been reported that Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz will soon unveil a series of actions to reduce methane emissions.

While all these measures to reduce greenhouse gases may be at the top of the list for the administration let’s make sure this does not over burden America’s most important sector—Agriculture. Thank You