

'War on coal' may be over, but verbal bombs lobbed at listening session

- [By GREG JOHNSON NEWS RECORD MANAGING EDITOR](#)
gjohnson@gillettenewsrecord.net
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President Donald Trump may have declared an end to the “war on coal,” but there were still plenty of verbal bombs lobbed about during an EPA listening session on the administration’s effort to repeal the Clean Power Plan.

By the time the session at the Gillette College Technical Education Center had recessed for its dinner break, more than 100 people had given their testimony — 3 minutes at a time.

Many of the comments favored repealing the Obama-era plan to curtail carbon dioxide emissions from coal-fired power plants.

There were also a significant number of voices raised in favor of the Clean Power Plan.

Linda Healow of Billings, Montana, said she is “strongly opposed” to repealing the CPP.

She said she’s an advocate for the natural wonders that make states like Montana and Wyoming great and that “left unchecked, climate change will destroy these treasures.”

She also took a poke at the Trump administration, saying that “making America great again has us looking backward.”

For every Clean Power Plan advocate were two supporting the plan’s repeal.

State Rep. Roy Edwards, R-Campbell County, said that he was born on a ranch 50 miles south of Gillette. On that ranch, there was no electricity and they used wind power, something that’s not as glamorous as environmental groups would have the public believe, especially when that power’s not on the electric grid.

“If you think wind power is so great, try it,” he said to chuckles from the back of the conference room. “If you really want to (disengage) from the grid, good luck to you, because you won’t enjoy it.”

Jarick Dudley is a coal miner for Blackjewel in the Powder River Basin. He said that in an attempt to be as informed as possible, he read the Clean Air Act and the Clean Power Plan.

Having done that, he said he’s even more in favor of repealing the CPP, which he called “198 pages of crazy.”