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Rod R. Blagojevich – Governor

news

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## **Wyoming, Nation's Leading Coal Producer, Supports FutureGen for Illinois**

*Endorsement puts nation's coal producers solidly in Illinois camp*

SPRINGFIELD – Speaking essentially with one voice, the nation's major coal states have lined up behind Illinois' bid for the federal FutureGen clean coal project, with Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal today putting his state, the number one U.S. coal producer, in the Illinois camp.

In a letter to Governor Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor Freudenthal pointed to Illinois' geology and commitment to clean coal as key elements that will ensure FutureGen is a success if located in Illinois.

"Having Wyoming acknowledge that Illinois is the premier site is a huge plus for our bid to host FutureGen," Blagojevich said. "Governor Freudenthal recognizes, as we do, the importance of this project for any state wanting to maximize the potential for its coal reserves by advancing clean coal technology."

Indiana, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Ohio previously endorsed Illinois' bid to secure the facility. This coalition of states represents nearly two-thirds of coal produced in the United States each year and 51 percent of the total U.S. coal reserves.

The Wyoming endorsement is significant for two other reasons. First, the state is the nation's leading coal producer and among the leaders in mineable coal reserves. Second, Wyoming provides Illinois with an ally in the growing Western U.S. coal region that FutureGen intends to serve.

"The FutureGen plan is to demonstrate near-zero emissions technology using coal from the nation's three top-producing regions," said Jack Lavin, director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. "We have a solid bloc of coal

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producers in the Illinois Basin and Appalachia supporting our bid. Wyoming and its coal-rich Powder River basin provide the missing link in our efforts to build a coal-state coalition."

Governor Blagojevich, the Illinois Congressional delegation, and state and local partners across Illinois have been working for more than four years to bring the \$1.4 billion FutureGen project to Mattoon or Tuscola.

The FutureGen Industrial Alliance, which is developing the facility for the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE), is expected to announce its final selection from the four remaining sites in mid-December. The two other sites are in Texas.

"Wyoming also shares Illinois' passion and commitment to clean coal technology," Governor Freudenthal stated in his letter. "Our State Geologist was intimately involved in Wyoming's own bid for FutureGen and is one of the recognized experts on geological CO<sub>2</sub> sequestration. His team has reviewed the final four FutureGen site proposals and concluded while both Texas and Illinois offer solid sequestration plans, the edge goes to Illinois."

Safely capturing and storing CO<sub>2</sub>, a greenhouse gas, is a major part of what FutureGen seeks to demonstrate. The target for injection in Illinois is a thick sandstone formation nearly a mile deep, secured by three layers of cap rock.

"I also believe that it is extremely important to site FutureGen in a coal state. Illinois is not only a coal state, but one of great tradition and pride for its coal mining operations and its skilled workers. These are the kind of intangible qualities which lead to solid proposals," Governor Freudenthal concluded.

In 2006, Wyoming mined 446.7 million tons of coal. Coal mined in Wyoming is consumed in 36 states, including Illinois, as well as in several foreign countries.

FutureGen is designed to be the cleanest fossil fuel-fired power plant in the world. The facility will convert coal into hydrogen and electricity, while capturing and safely storing the carbon dioxide deep underground. It will lay the groundwork for developing similar plants around the country and the world, pioneering the capture, rather than release of greenhouse gases.

Illinois is a coal state whose geology will maximize the transferability of FutureGen's technology. Furthermore, the strategic location of Illinois' sites in relation to other coal-producing states will save millions of dollars a year in transportation costs to bring coal in by rail. These shorter travel distances will also greatly minimize the overall carbon footprint associated with transporting coal.

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FutureGen will produce 275 megawatts of electric power, which is enough electricity to power 150,000 homes, as well as hydrogen for fuel cell technology that will serve as the next generation “battery” to operate everything from a computer to a car.

Members of the FutureGen Alliance represent the largest energy companies in the United States, plus major energy companies in Asia, Europe and Australia.

For more information on FutureGen, please visit [www.FutureGenForIllinois.com](http://www.FutureGenForIllinois.com).

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