



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

# NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

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**CONTACTS:**

Abby Ottenhoff	312/814.3158
Rebecca Rausch	217/782.7355
David Rudduck	312/814.3158
Marcelyn Love (DCEO)	217/558.1542
Ashley Cross (DCEO)	312/814.8193

## **Governor Blagojevich urges Congress to advance landmark clean-coal project after two-day meeting with FutureGen Alliance Board**

***Sends letter to Chair of House Energy and Commerce Committee ahead of tomorrow's hearing with USDOE Sec. Bodman***

***Alliance Board concludes two-day board meeting in Mattoon; vows to continue moving project forward***

CHICAGO – As Blagojevich Administration officials wrap up a two-day meeting with members of the FutureGen Alliance Board of Directors regarding plans to advance the landmark FutureGen clean-coal project, Governor Blagojevich sent a letter to Congressman John Dingell, chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, urging him to stand by the FutureGen project and proceed with the original plans to bring FutureGen to Illinois. The Committee is scheduled to hear testimony tomorrow from U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Samuel Bodman on the Department's 2009 budget proposal. Last week Bodman announced his intention to try to dismantle the \$1.5 billion FutureGen clean coal project.

“FutureGen is the only clean coal project nationwide ready to demonstrate how coal gasification – integrated with carbon capture and sequestration technology – can allow us to tap America's vast coal reserves while dramatically reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming,” the Governor wrote to Rep. Dingell. “The withdrawal of support by USDOE for the FutureGen project creates a tremendous setback to our progress in addressing two issues of great importance to our nation: our quest for energy independence and our fight against climate change. That is why I ask that you use all the powers of the legislative branch to reverse USDOE's decision and uphold the federal government's commitment to build FutureGen, the world's cleanest fossil fuel-fired power plant.”

FutureGen is a coal gasification facility, which will convert coal into hydrogen and electricity, while capturing and safely storing the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide deep underground. It is intended to lay the groundwork for developing similar plants around the country and the world, pioneering the capture and storage of greenhouse gases.

Before attempts by DOE to restructure FutureGen could move forward, Congress would have to approve reprogramming the project.

President Bush initiated FutureGen in 2003, and as recently as his State of the Union Address last week, reiterated that environmentally responsible energy is essential to keeping our economy growing. As recently as November 30th, 2007, DOE reaffirmed that the project was moving forward as planned. After an almost three-year, rigorous site review process, the FutureGen Alliance announced on December 18th that Mattoon, Illinois will be home to the landmark project. Only after it became clear that an Illinois site would be chosen over a Texas site, did the Department suggested the project be delayed and last Wednesday that it be dismantled.

Today members of the FutureGen Alliance vowed to continue working with the State of Illinois to do what they can to move the project forward and reassured residents of their commitment to the city of Mattoon. Representatives from all 10 of the 13 companies comprising membership on the Alliance board, which involves participation of companies and governments from six continents and the United States, attended the meeting this week. The Alliance vowed to continue working with Illinois to ensure the project moves forward and succeeds in Mattoon.

“The board meeting this week indicates that the Alliance is still very much committed to seeing FutureGen advance and be built in Mattoon. We will continue to do all we can to see that Illinois plays an active role in helping to address global climate change- FutureGen is the only project in the world that can proceed with urgency to make that happen. We urge President Bush, who initiated FutureGen in 2003, to stand by the project and move it forward,” said Jack Lavin, director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

"The Board of Directors thought that it was not only appropriate to hold our meeting at the selected site of the FutureGen facility, but it also was necessary so that we could demonstrate to the citizens our commitment to moving FutureGen forward in Mattoon," said Mike Mudd, CEO of the FutureGen Alliance. "I want to thank the citizens of Mattoon and all of Illinois for their support and hard work during the site selection process."

Text of the Governor's letter follows:

*The Honorable John Dingell  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515*

*Dear Mr. Chairman,*

*As you begin to examine the fiscal year 2009 Department of Energy (USDOE) budget request, I would like to thank you for holding the upcoming hearing with Secretary Bodman and share with you my concern about an issue that is fundamental to the energy efforts in my state of Illinois as well as the nation: FutureGen.*

*FutureGen is the only clean coal project nationwide ready to demonstrate how coal gasification – integrated with carbon capture and sequestration technology – can allow us to tap America’s vast coal reserves while dramatically reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming.*

*In December, 2007 Mattoon, Illinois was chosen for the site of the FutureGen project after tireless efforts of my administration and the FutureGen Alliance. Over the past 5 years, the State of Illinois has committed millions of dollars to the future success of this critical clean coal initiative that has the potential to provide the clean, secure, energy independence we seek. Last week, Secretary Bodman announced that the DOE was abandoning the five years of investment made by the federal government in the FutureGen project and that they will start over with a new process.*

*This raises many serious questions about USDOE, among them: How can business and international partners rely on the word the U.S. government if the UDOE abandons a process that it started and to which it has been committed for almost five years?*

*How can the Secretary sign a letter to a Member of Congress on November 30, 2007, asserting that the project was on track for completion of site selection and publication in the Record of Decision by the end of 2007, and then within six weeks declare that he has no intention of publishing the Record of Decision and walk away from all of the work that had been put into the project?*

*The withdrawal of support by USDOE for the FutureGen project creates a tremendous setback to our progress in addressing two issues of great importance to our nation: our quest for energy independence and our fight against climate change. That is why I ask that you use all the powers of the legislative branch to reverse USDOE’s decision and uphold the federal government’s commitment to build FutureGen, the world’s cleanest fossil fuel-fired power plant.*

*Proceeding with FutureGen as planned will demonstrate that we can capture and safely store greenhouse gases deep underground, paving the way for America’s continued use of coal and enabling coal to be an engine for job creation and economic growth. With the current energy crisis world-wide and the economic instability here at home, implementing sound policy that addresses these issues is of utmost importance. FutureGen enjoys strong support from the*

*scientific and business energy community and had the potential to offer great success and reward to the Illinois and our Nation.*

*The coal industry, mine workers, environmental groups and the international consortium of thirteen power companies that comprise the FutureGen Alliance, all recognize the great importance of FutureGen to our nation.*

*I urge you to stand by FutureGen as originally envisioned and to resist the Administration's proposals to abandon this landmark project. Thank you for your continued commitment to successful energy policy for our country.*

*Sincerely,*

*Rod R. Blagojevich  
Governor*

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