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# NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

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## **Gov. Blagojevich signs important legislation as part of Illinois' strong bipartisan push to bring FutureGen to Illinois**

*Part of coordinated campaign to bring world's cleanest coal plant to Illinois*

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich took another important step today in demonstrating why Illinois is the natural location for FutureGen, a \$1.4 billion, coal-to-energy, state-of-the-art facility. By signing Senate Bill 1704, the Governor is giving Illinois an even greater chance of landing FutureGen. Mattoon and Tuscola are two of only four remaining sites for this public-private project, which would have a major economic impact statewide, in addition to demonstrating breakthroughs in clean coal technology. The Governor, the Illinois Congressional delegation, and state and local partners across Illinois have been working for more than four years to bring FutureGen to Illinois. 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 this fall. State Senators Gary Forby (D-Benton) and Dale Righter (R-Mattoon) and State Representatives Kurt Granberg (D-Centralia) and Chapin Rose (R-Charleston) sponsored SB 1704.

“We’ve been making the investments that have made Illinois a national leader in clean coal technology, which are opening up new markets for our coal, creating new jobs and making us more energy independent, and that is what FutureGen is all about and why it belongs here. This is the right decision for Illinois and our country because the science is on our side to make this project a tremendous success. After more than four years of planning and strong bipartisan support, this is the final piece of the puzzle as we are approaching FutureGen’s finish line,” Gov. Blagojevich said.

A recent study by Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) showed FutureGen would have a significant statewide and local economic impact. The study found that it would have a

much larger economic impact than the 1,300 construction jobs and 150 permanent jobs USDOE estimates would be created. During the four-year construction period, there would also be more than \$1 billion in economic impact statewide and 1,225 indirect and induced spin-off jobs will be created as a result of the ripple effect generated by FutureGen. Once FutureGen is operational, the study shows it will generate \$135 million annually in total statewide economic output, with an \$85 million annual increase in Coles and Douglas counties if either Mattoon or Tuscola is selected. It will also create an additional 360 indirect and induced full-time jobs statewide, according to the report.

FutureGen will be 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 storing the carbon dioxide deep underground. This effort will lay the groundwork for developing similar power plants around the country and the world, providing a framework for new energy projects that capture, rather than release greenhouse gases. The facility 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.

Senate Bill 1704 provides liability protection and establishes monitoring responsibility, which are important advances in Illinois’ efforts to bring FutureGen to Illinois. The legislation would protect the FutureGen Alliance from facing liability for unanticipated release of carbon dioxide, which is highly unlikely. Texas, which has the other two remaining sites, Odessa and near Jewett, has already passed a version of indemnification legislation.

“This proposal is a fine example of all levels of government working together to make great things happen for our state. Moving towards more clean coal technology is only part of what this legislation can bring to Illinois,” said Sen. Forby, the bill’s chief sponsor in the Senate. “If Illinois lands the project, our coal industry is going to be revived, thousands of jobs will be created as a result, and communities in Southern Illinois are going to benefit.”

“FutureGen is an effort to revolutionize power production. It would protect our environment, make us less dependent on foreign oil and provide an important economic boost. We are going to continue doing everything we can to bring it to Central Illinois where it belongs,” Sen. Righter said.

“We must invest in the types of innovative, environmentally-friendly technologies that rely on our homegrown resources. FutureGen will prove that Illinois coal must continue playing a vital role in our energy portfolio. This will make our country safer and more secure, in addition to creating good jobs and significant investment. We will continue to make our persuasive case about why this must happen in Illinois, and, just as importantly, it will focus national and global attention on Central and Southern Illinois,” Rep. Granberg said.

“This bill will help bring the FutureGen Alliance and 1,300 construction jobs to my area and hundreds of permanent jobs once it is up and running. The bill was crafted in a bipartisan, cooperative manner, and I look forward to continuing to work cooperatively with the Governor, local officials and our Congressional delegation to bring FutureGen to Illinois,” Rep. Rose said.

The Governor has previously committed a \$17 million direct grant that tops off what is believed to be the nation's most aggressive investment package to bring FutureGen to Illinois. Local sponsors are providing additional assistance to the Alliance that ranges from property tax abatements to site donations and/or land options for the facility and potential FutureGen-related businesses. Additional state support includes a sales tax exemption on building materials and selected equipment through local Enterprise Zones or the High Impact Business program. And, the Illinois Finance Authority will pursue the issuance of \$50 million of below-market-rate loans to the Alliance.

In order for Illinois to remain a national leader in developing clean coal technology, the Governor also called on the House of Representatives to pass House Bill 3388, which would help build the \$1.4 billion Taylorville Energy Center. This cutting-edge project would use 1.8 million tons of Illinois coal annually and be converted through clean coal technology to a synthetic gas that can be sold or burned to generate electric power. This would also create an estimated 1,900 construction and permanent jobs. The Governor has already invested \$2.5 million in the project. HB 3388 passed out of the Senate on Friday.