



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 3, 2008

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Governor Blagojevich urges Department of Energy to reconsider FutureGen restructuring

Alternative would be more costly and delay critical solutions on global climate change

CHICAGO – As the U.S Department of Energy (DOE) prepares to close the comment period on its proposal to restructure the FutureGen project, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich is urging the department to stand by the original FutureGen project and proceed with plans to bring FutureGen to Mattoon, Illinois.

The Department of Energy's Request for Information on a restructured FutureGen comment period closes tonight at midnight. In an 8-page statement, Illinois urges DOE to recognize the inherent shortcomings of its post-FutureGen plan and abandon it. The statement also outlines the numerous reasons for continuing with FutureGen at Mattoon as originally planned.

"FutureGen is the only clean coal project ready to allow us to tap America's vast coal reserves while dramatically reducing the greenhouse gas emissions that cause global warming," Gov. Blagojevich said. "The Department of Energy's proposal to restructure the project is a tremendous setback on two issues of great importance to our nation: our quest for energy independence and our fight against climate change."

Shortcomings of the restructured plan include substantial time delays, questions about commercial viability, lack of international participation and government credibility. Using reasonable scenarios, the counterproposal would delay Carbon Capture Sequestration by as much as five years. In addition, DOE is unrealistic that Integrated Gasification Combined Cycle technology has reached a level of maturity needed for this project, and that a multi-site carbon capture initiative can be launched for DOE's estimated \$1.3 billion price tag.

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“Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is a global concern, and needs solutions without borders,” Blagojevich said. “FutureGen in Mattoon has the backing of a 13-member international consortium of private sector partners with representation on six continents. DOE’s counterproposal fails to take international considerations into account. Shifting the project to a US-only approach is a disservice to our country and our global partners.”

Illinois is calling on DOE to proceed without further delay to develop the original FutureGen project, at the highly qualified site chosen at Mattoon, Illinois. By moving swiftly back to its original vision for FutureGen, the U.S. Department of Energy can have a facility operational in four years. Scrapping costly and detailed FutureGen design and environmental work would waste time and money, setting the initiative back by as much as five years.

“FutureGen, as it was originally designed, is the only project that can proceed with urgency to help address global climate change. We urge President Bush, who initiated FutureGen, to reject DOE’s counterproposal and move forward with FutureGen in Mattoon as originally planned – a public-private international partnership to address one of the most important global issues of our time,” said Jack Lavin, director of the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

FutureGen is a coal gasification facility, which will convert coal into hydrogen and electricity, while pioneering the capture and safe storage of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide deep underground. It is intended to lay the groundwork for developing similar plants around the country and the world. Proceeding with FutureGen as planned also will pave the way for America’s continued use of coal and enabling coal to be an engine for job creation and economic growth.

President Bush initiated FutureGen in 2003, and as recently as his State of the Union Address, reiterated that environmentally responsible energy is essential to keeping our economy growing. On November 30, 2007, DOE reaffirmed that the project was moving forward as planned. In December, 2007 Mattoon, Illinois was chosen as the site of the FutureGen project. After it became clear that an Illinois site would be chosen over a Texas site, the Department suggested the project be dismantled. Department of Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman is under intense questioning on Capitol Hill for this decision.

The FutureGen Alliance, the project’s developer, has vowed to continue working with the State of Illinois and the Illinois Congressional Delegation to ensure the project moves forward and succeeds in Mattoon.

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