

7. POLICY POSITION

CLEAN COAL TECHNOLOGY

Background

Coal is a vast national resource of major importance to our southern energy producing and consuming states. Over 90 percent of our nation's coal exports embark from southern ports. More than 47 percent of United States coal production occurs in the South. As a net supplier of coal, the South provides this key energy resource to a large number of states outside the region.

On April 3, the U.S. Senate passed S1630, the Clean Air Act Amendments. This was followed by passage of the House version, HR3030, on May 23. Although there are significant differences between the House and Senate measures, both bills establish new programs to reduce smog in the cities, cut motor vehicle pollution, reduce acid rain and minimize emissions of toxic air pollutants. The Southern Legislative Conference supports the overall concepts espoused by Congress in its efforts to provide cleaner air for our region and the nation.

Recommendation

The opportunity for southern industries to participate in Doe's Clean Coal Technology Demonstration Program on an equal basis with other regions could be seriously hampered by House amendments. These provisions permit funding only to utilities with plants affected by Phase 1 acid rain controls. This provision penalizes the South and provides what amounts to a regional subsidy for Midwestern plants. We reject this approach and urge that the conferees adopt a national program rather than one which promotes regional disparities.

We acknowledge the role of Congress in establishing time constraints for acceptable emission standard levels. Congress must ensure that time deadlines for compliance are consistent with clean coal technology development in order to provide for proper implementation of the program.

Further, Congress must remove the regulatory disincentives, existing in current laws, which can prohibit the introduction of clean coal technologies.

The Energy Committee of the Southern Legislative Conference strongly supports a national Clean Coal Technology program which permits the development and use of coal in an environmentally sound manner.

Adopted by the Southern Legislative Conference
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