

From: <gary.hoover@srs.gov>
To: <Paul.Carroll@srs.gov>
Date: 10/19/2007 7:52:10 AM
Subject: FYI: "Kansas cites carbon emissions in blocking coal plants"
cc: <arthurb.gould@srs.gov>,<brenda.hays@srs.gov>,<David.Hoel@srs.gov>,<drew.graing
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Paul,

FYI.

Gary

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Kansas cites carbon emissions in blocking coal plants

By Steven Mufson

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON

— The Kansas Department of Health and Environment on Thursday became the first government agency in the United States to cite carbon-dioxide emissions as the reason for rejecting an air permit for a proposed coal-fired plant.

The decision marks a victory for environmental groups that are fighting proposals for new coal-fired plants across the country. It may be the first of a series of similar state actions inspired by a Supreme Court decision in April that asserted that greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, should be considered pollutants under the Clean Air Act.

Air permits, required before combustion facilities can be constructed, have been denied over emissions such as sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and mercury. But Roderick Bremby, secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, said Thursday that "I believe it would be irresponsible to ignore emerging information about the contribution of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to climate change and the potential harm to our environment and health if we do nothing."

The Kansas agency's decision caps a controversy over a proposal by Sunflower Electric Power, a rural electrical cooperative, to build a pair of big, 700-megawatt coal-fired plants in Holcomb, a town in the western part of the state, at a cost of about \$3.6 billion. One unit would have supplied power to parts of Kansas; the other, to be owned by another rural co-op, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, would have provided electricity to fast-growing eastern Colorado.

Together, the plants would have produced 11 million tons of carbon dioxide annually, nearly as much as a group of eight Northeastern states hopes to

save by 2020 through a mandatory cap-and-trade program they plan to impose. The attorneys general from those states had written a letter opposing the permit.

Kansas, long a conservative Republican stronghold, is not generally considered to be on the leading edge of environmental causes. The GOP leadership in the state Senate and House endorsed the project. Although the regional United Steelworkers union opposed the plant, the state AFL-CIO supported it.

Kansas Gov. Kathleen Sebelius, a Democrat believed to harbor aspirations for federal office, has been promoting the expanded use of renewable energy, especially wind. But she said she was leaving the decision on the Holcomb plants to Bremby, her close political ally.

Tri-State and Sunflower spokesmen sharply criticized the air-permit decision and said they were examining legal options.

Bremby's decision "has no basis in law or regulation," said Steve Miller, a Sunflower spokesman. Holcomb's previous claim to fame had been the murders Truman Capote described in his book "In Cold Blood."

Senate proposal would cut emissions

U.S. greenhouse-gas emissions could be cut by 19 percent from 2005 levels in 2020 and by 63 percent in 2050 under a proposal introduced Thursday in the Senate.

The legislation would accelerate mandated emissions cuts, encourage investment in climate technology and create a multibillion-dollar emissions cap-and-trade system, bill sponsors said.

The bill was introduced by Sens. Joe Lieberman, I-Conn., and John Warner, R-Va., chairman and senior Republican, respectively, on the Senate subcommittee that will consider it. The panel is expected to take up the bill next week.

Hearing Identifier: Vogtle_Public
Email Number: 687

Mail Envelope Properties (47299E71.HQGWDO01.TWGWPO04.200.200000F.1.AC92C.1)

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Created By: gary.hoover@srs.gov

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Priority: Standard
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