

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2008

The Honorable Peter J. Visclosky
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
2362-B Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David L. Hobson
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Visclosky and Ranking Member Hobson,

We write to reiterate our staunch support for \$156 million in fiscal year 2009 to be appropriated towards FutureGen activities in Mattoon, Illinois.

Originally announced by President George W. Bush in 2003, FutureGen is a public-private partnership between the FutureGen Alliance, a consortium of some of the world's largest coal producers, and the Department of Energy (DOE) to build a first-of-its-kind coal-fueled power plant with near-zero emissions. Seven states competed for the right to host this vital technology and on December 18, 2007, the FutureGen Alliance selected Mattoon, Illinois as the best host site for FutureGen.

As you know, after 5 years of hard work to implement this important project, including millions of dollars raised, cooperation from international partners, the issuing of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and site selection, DOE abruptly changed the scope of FutureGen. We could not disagree more with this decision. FutureGen at Mattoon, with its original scope, is the most intelligent and necessary way to proceed.


The original FutureGen project will capture and store 90% of its carbon emissions. The research done at FutureGen will provide the framework for carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) technology that countries throughout the world, like India and China, can learn from and then utilize on their coal burning power plants. CCS technology needs to be available today, and FutureGen is the quickest way for us to get it.

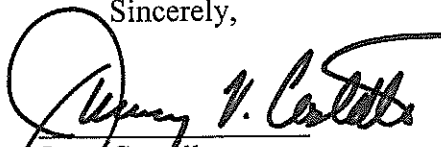
When DOE cancelled FutureGen, Howard Herzog, principal research engineer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Laboratory for Energy and the Environment said, "There is no way we will get anything before 2012 on the same type of scale and I'm not convinced that anybody's going to be able to do it cheaper than FutureGen. Either "we have to see the coal industry dwindle and disappear or sit back and see what impacts we get from climate change, both of which are not good alternatives." FutureGen could achieve full plant operations by 2012, while the restructured approach will result in a delay of three to five years or maybe even more.

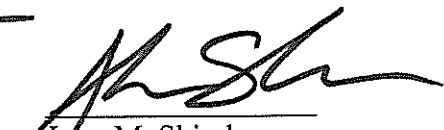
Rising costs are a fundamental concern for any project. While FutureGen started out as a \$1 billion effort, inflation and the increasing cost of the components necessary to build the plant have caused the price to increase to \$1.8 billion. During a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee hearing on May 8th, the top Energy official in the country, DOE Secretary Sam Bodman could not provide an answer when asked why the costs had risen, although he did concede that size and goals of the project had not changed.

DOE's mishandling and mismanagement of this project is the likes of which we have never seen in all of our years of government. The people who competed for this vital initiative worked hard and played by the rules that DOE helped establish. People in Mattoon raised millions of dollars and spent countless hours working to bring FutureGen to fruition. Now DOE has the gall to invite Mattoon to apply for a project under the restructured approach. Mattoon was already selected as the best site for FutureGen and this important technology cannot wait any longer. As lawmakers, we have the responsibility and the opportunity to right DOE's wrong. Earlier in the year we both made Appropriations Requests to you and Chairman Visclosky to fund FutureGen as it was originally scoped. Again, we urge you to provide \$156 million for fiscal year 2009 for the FutureGen project in Mattoon, Illinois.

Sincerely,


Timothy V. Johnson
Member of Congress


Jerry Costello
Member of Congress


John M. Shimkus
Member of Congress