

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

January 30, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President, United States of America
The White House
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. President:

Yesterday, we were informed by your Secretary of Energy that he was radically restructuring the FutureGen project -- effectively killing the program in Central Illinois. As you may recall, FutureGen is the cornerstone of your clean coal initiative and a project that your Administration has been pushing for more than five years. This project will design and construct a commercial scale coal-fueled power plant with a large-scale carbon capture and storage capacity.

Many have argued that this abrupt about face by Secretary Bodman was the direct result of the FutureGen Alliance choosing Mattoon, Illinois as the site, over Texas applicants. While we'd like not to believe this theory, there is no other plausible explanation. As recently as November 30, 2007, Secretary Bodman assured Members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation that FutureGen was on track for final approval from the Department by the end of the calendar year, including a Record of Decision (ROD). After careful scientific vetting and a comprehensive environmental review, the FutureGen Alliance chose Mattoon as the site on December 18, 2007.

Yesterday, the Secretary informed a bipartisan, bicameral gathering of the Illinois Congressional Delegation that he would not release a ROD on FutureGen. Further, he stated that he was going to scrap your signature clean coal initiative, redesign it, and recompute it. And he refused to delay his announcement in order for us to help address outstanding issues with the Department and the Alliance. This after the community, the State of Illinois, private industry, and international partners spent years successfully working together to site FutureGen in Mattoon, Illinois and to provide much needed funding.

Last night, the Secretary released a statement which indicated that his reluctance to move forward with the project was due to cost increases in the past five years. Yet when the Secretary was assured that we were prepared to provide adequate funding and to resolve any other outstanding issues between the Administration and the FutureGen Alliance if he would take steps to move FutureGen forward, he unequivocally refused. Given that, it is hard to believe that cost concerns constitute his real objection to this project.

Mr. President, we have lost confidence in Secretary Bodman. From moving the Rare Isotope Accelerator project to the back burner (a spirited competition between Illinois and Michigan) to short-changing our national laboratories to his troubling comments about ethanol and alternative fuels to this recent FutureGen debacle, he has proven to be no ally in our efforts to promote scientific research, address new technology for clean energy development and to boost our struggling economy.

We feel that the Secretary misled us and the people of Illinois, creating false hope in a FutureGen project which he had no intention of funding or supporting. We are writing today to urge you to keep FutureGen on track, so that this project can begin construction and become a reality.

Mr. President, we, the State of Illinois, and the FutureGen Alliance stand ready to move this important project forward. It would be unfortunate to wait for the next Administration to complete the project that you announced and have promoted for more than five years.

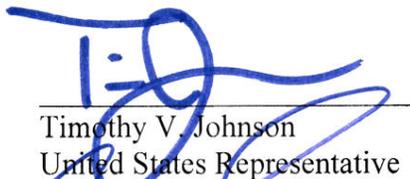
Sincerely,



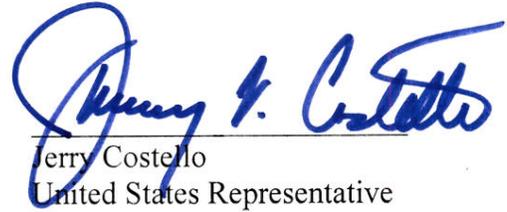
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



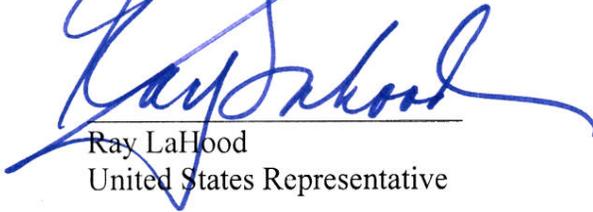
Barack Obama
United States Senator



Timothy V. Johnson
United States Representative



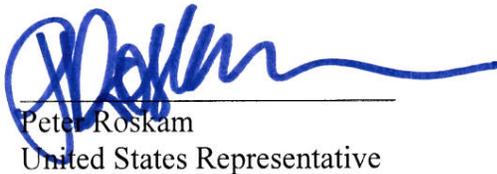
Jerry Costello
United States Representative



Ray LaHood
United States Representative



Rahm Emanuel
United States Representative



Peter Roskam
United States Representative



Jan Schakowsky
United States Representative



Danny K. Davis
United States Representative



Phil Hare
United States Representative

From: Neimeyer, Sarah (Durbin) [mailto:Sarah_Neimeyer@durbin.senate.gov]

Sent: Wednesday, January 30, 2008 2:05 PM

To: Tennille, Alan; Moshi, Aysha; christa fonarotto; daniel penchina; Penchina, Daniel; Hart, Elizabeth; Bergquist, Janna; Hunter-Williams, Jill; Levy, Jonathan; patrick manguson; paul doucetter; Eskeland, Phil; Quinn, Ryan; Tracy, Ryan; Sanville, Victoria

Subject: Letter on FutureGen to the White House

All-- Please let me know ASAP if your boss would like to sign on to this letter following up on yesterday's meeting with DOE. We will be running over to the house side in the next half hour. I apologize for doing this last minute.

We've gotten sign off from Congressmen LaHood and Johnson.

Sarah

Sarah C. Neimeyer
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Energy and Environmental Policy
Office of Senator Richard J. Durbin
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☞ contact person