

Top Stories

Coal make sense for nation's energy

To the editor:

Why would anyone build a new coal power plant in the 21st century? Sure, coal fueled the industrial revolution in the 19th century and was the primary source of energy for heating, cooking, generating electricity, powering railroads and boats and providing energy for manufacturing facilities for the past 100 years.

But that was "back then." Back then we weren't as concerned about the environment. Back then we didn't have any of the alternative energy sources. Back then we had "coal to burn." After all, coal doesn't grow on trees.

Today, we need cleaner-burning, more efficient ways to meet our ever-growing demand for energy. We need abundant, affordable, safe and secure energy sources. We need today's coal.

That's right. Today, coal burns cleaner and is safer for the environment than it was 100 - or even 10 - years ago. Today, coal can be crushed and washed before it is burned and new scrubbing technologies can remove pollutants while it is burning. Additional new technologies can capture coal dust particles and reduce emissions.

Thanks to advances in technology, about 99 percent of the chemicals that pollute the air and 95 percent of the chemicals that cause acid rain are removed. These technological advances are part of an effort called the Clean Coal Technology Program, which began in 1985. Since that time, the coal industry has invested more than \$4 billion and the federal government has invested more than \$2 billion in this program to make coal burning cleaner and safer. These efforts make today's - and tomorrow's - coal safer for the environment.

Why would anyone build a new coal power plant in the 21st century? First, energy demand continues to grow and a variety of energy sources will be needed to meet our requirements. Second, coal is less vulnerable to disruption due to geopolitical instability than oil and the price volatility of natural gas. Finally, coal is widely available, easy and safe to transport, and affordable.

As Kansas City evaluates how its future energy needs are going to be met, coal must be judged by today's reality, not yesterday's perception. Today's coal is an abundant, affordable, safe and secure fuel to help meet the area's energy needs into the 24th century.

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