

January 30, 2009

LETTER

How Clean Is Coal?

To the Editor:

Some of the myths perpetuated in your Jan. 23 editorial “Collapse of the Clean Coal Myth” need some collapsing of their own.

Coal is America’s most affordable and abundant domestic energy resource and provides half the electricity used to light our homes and run our factories. More important, today’s coal-based electricity generation is 70 to 90 percent cleaner than the plants that are being replaced — close to eliminating historical contributions to acid rain and smog. Just on the horizon is FutureGen in Mattoon, Ill., a coal-based power plant that will be virtually emissions free, including virtually free of carbon emissions.

The investments made thus far in “clean coal technologies,” a term coined by Congress more than 20 years ago and not the recent creation of advertising as you suggest, have produced nearly \$100 billion in economic and environmental benefits to the nation, according to government analysis.

Further, coal producers have restored nearly three million acres of mined land, and we and other customers safely recycle 43 percent of utility-generated coal ash into other beneficial uses and products. Finally, mining achieved its safest year on record in 2008.

Affordable, secure and increasingly clean coal can help rebuild America’s economy. Now is not the time to discount the important progress we have made and will continue to pursue.

Hal Quinn

President and Chief Executive

National Mining Association

Washington, Jan. 23, 2009