

Energy Independence Begins in Virginia

EDITOR, TIMES-DISPATCH:

I represent Russell County in the Virginia House of Delegates and I read with interest the news article, "Coal Test Begins in Southwest Virginia." I am very pleased that the testing of carbon-sequestration techniques is beginning here in Russell. Specifically, researchers are injecting carbon dioxide emissions from a coal plant into an existing coal bed methane well. With Sen. Jim Webb, Rep. Rick Boucher, and other leaders in Washington often talking about the possibility of legislation that would limit emission levels, this kind of research has become a necessity.

There can be no denying that economic prosperity and cheap, abundant energy go hand in hand. So with energy prices rising and the economy in a slump, the issue of energy policy has been thrust into the national spotlight. While the issue of energy is undoubtedly complex, it seems the future lies in pursuing energy independence and phasing in new, alternative technologies. Energy independence means pursuing domestic energy resources so that America is free from the potentially high costs of energy purchased on the global market. This means utilizing coal. We have the largest reserves of any nation on Earth. But achieving this goal in the face of potential emission-limiting legislation requires the development of new technologies now.

The current testing of carbon sequestration is an important start. Our leaders in Washington need to ensure that this type of testing continues to be supported financially. Further development and implementation of other solar, nuclear, clean coal, and wind-powered technologies is also needed if we as Americans want to achieve energy independence.

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