

Benefits Spark Interest In New Coal Plants

(NAPSA)—Despite the hype, coal remains the U.S.'s ace in the hole for affordable, reliable electricity.

Many believe coal-based energy offers substantial benefits, including economic and environmental returns, that may result from the construction of several new plants.

Currently, there are more than 120 coal-fueled power plants under or near construction, permitted or in the early stages of development. This contradicts claims by critics that coal-fueled power plant construction has died.

“According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration [EIA], electricity demand nationwide will nearly double in the next 20 years. With a 250-year supply of coal, the United States is in a position to leverage its most abundant domestic resource to provide secure, affordable energy,” said Joe Lucas, ABEC executive director. The U.S. EIA projects the need for an average of 6,000 megawatts (MW) per year through 2030.

“Construction of these new coal-fueled plants will not only make it possible to meet this growing electricity demand, but help further the development and deployment of technology that increases plant efficiencies and reduces emissions. During the past 35 years, the use of coal in the U.S. has nearly tripled; at the same time, air quality improved and emissions from coal-based electricity are 33 percent lower despite this increased use,” Lucas added.

In addition, coal can play an important role in other areas of a

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state's economy. For example, U.S. coal-fueled electricity is projected to contribute \$1.05 trillion in gross economic output, \$362 billion in annual household incomes and 6.8 million jobs in 2015. As a result, halted or deferred plant development may result in insufficient electricity capacity growth, which could affect a state's economic output, household income and job growth.

Said Lucas, “Not only does coal provide a constant, reliable flow of base load power, but its transmission capabilities can help further diversify a state's energy portfolio. Many wind-generating power sites lack transmission lines needed to send the power to its customers. The construction of new coal-fueled plants can help further advance wind power by providing much-needed transmission capabilities wind power-generating sites currently lack.”

Americans for Balanced Energy Choices (ABEC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan group that promotes balancing America's growing demand for electricity with the need to protect the environment. For more information, go to www.americaspower.org.