

Why not have plants in Holcomb set a standard for the rest of the country?

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The fate of two 700-megawatt coal-burning power plants near Holcomb, Kansas, remains in limbo.

Gov. Kathleen Sebelius has successfully vetoed three previous efforts to build the plants. On Friday, Kansas Legislators gave final approval to House Bill 2014, which would allow construction of the giant power plants, but the 79 to 44 vote was short of the two-thirds, or 84 votes, necessary in the 125-member House to override an expected veto by the governor.

Most everyone realizes coal is this nation's most abundant source of energy, but it also is a dirty fuel. President Obama, in various messages to Americans, has focused on the need to lessen the need on foreign oil and for the United States to become energy independent in 10 years.

He has called for research to come up with a means to have "clean coal" power plants and to increase the use of wind and solar power.

It's puzzling why nothing was said about nuclear power in Obama's latest comments about the energy situation as nuclear power is clean and could play a tremendous role in lessening this nation's need for foreign oil.

It would seem Kansas is in a favorable and unique position to be a national leader in the coal-fired power plant issue. Why not have the Holcomb plants set a standard and example for the rest of the country? Why couldn't engineers and environmental experts design the Holcomb plants to meet the most stringent environment requirements?

If Obama is committed to the development of clean coal operations, why not make the Kansas plants be the model? As has been pointed out before, Kansas could be the site for the nation's foremost facility for the study of energy. We sit on large amounts of coal. We have natural gas, oil, a nuclear-powered power plant, ample solar and one of the nation's best sites for wind power.

It would seem far better for our governor to be talking about how to develop and host a clean coal-fired power plant, as well as developing and taking advantage of our other sources of power, than to be so fixed in her opposition to the Holcomb plant. Why not use the Holcomb initiative as a stepping stone for development of a coal plant to serve the 21st century?

Let's have Kansas be a leader, not a follower.