

Colo, Utah, Wyo seek clean coal funding

By The Associated Press

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DENVER -- The governors of Colorado, Utah and Wyoming are asking President Barack Obama to fund the development of clean-coal technologies in the West.

Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter and Wyoming Gov. Dave Freudenthal, both Democrats, and Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman, a Republican, said in a letter Sunday to Obama that finding a cleaner way to use coal is vital for reducing emissions, promoting national security and create jobs.

They say clean-coal technologies also could be used in rapidly industrializing nations such as China and India.

The governors, whose states are coal-rich, say the Energy Policy Act of 2005 provided for federal cost sharing for a clean-coal demonstration project from coal mined in the West but that it was never funded.

Clean-coal technologies include converting coal, the dirtiest-burning fossil fuel, into a synthetic natural gas and other methods aimed at reducing carbon dioxide emissions, the primary gas responsible for the warming climate, and other pollutants.

The governors say their three states and an informal consortium of other stakeholders are prepared to quickly develop demonstration projects and retrofit coal plants to capture and contain carbon dioxide.

"However, it is clear to us that taking technology from the laboratory bench to commercial-scale demonstration plants simply will not occur without a significant federal commitment of resources," they wrote. "Therefore, we are writing to urge you to thoroughly consider significant funding for federal-state-private efforts to construct new and retrofit demonstration clean coal facilities that use western coals and are capable of operating at altitude."

General Electric Co. and the University of Wyoming are cooperating on a proposed clean coal research facility.