

Freudenthal OKs clean coal

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CHEYENNE -- Wyoming became a leader in clean-coal technology with the passage of landmark legislation, the governor said Tuesday as he signed two bills dealing with underground sequestration of greenhouse gases.

"It is clear that these two pieces of legislation are the most comprehensive, most thorough pieces passed by any legislature in the country," Gov. Dave Freudenthal said.

One states that surface landowners control the underground areas where carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas and byproduct of burning coal to make electricity, could be stored.

The other sets up a regulatory regime for the practice of carbon sequestration under the supervision of the Department of Environmental Quality with assistance from the Wyoming Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.

It also contains \$250,000 to develop a panel of world-class experts on the technology to advise the state.

Legislators began working on the bills nine months ago, said Rep. Tom Lubnau, R-Gillette, a sponsor, author and chief proponent of the legislation.

The governor wrote a letter to legislative leadership requesting the issue be addressed.

"This is an example of what makes Wyoming great," Lubnau said.

Legislators from both political parties were able to work through difficult issues with lobbyists and the public and produce laws in a short period of time, he said.

Lawmakers did set aside some of the most difficult issues, such as the ability of the state to condemn private property and to take land or the subsurface for carbon storage.

Senate President John Schiffer, R-Kaycee, said they will work on those unresolved issues before next year's general session.

"When you are leading in a horse race, don't weaken," he said.

Speaker of the House Roy Cohee, R-Casper, said the nation and world may not think what Wyoming residents think about global warming issues.

"Wyoming coal does matter," Cohee said, because the world and the nation need and will continue to need the electricity it produces.

But the customers for coal-produced energy will demand that electricity be produced without greenhouse gas emissions.

The bills position Wyoming, he said, to be able to deliver green energy and protect the state's largest economic contributor.

The strength of the state's economy depends on the ability to make electricity from coal, Cohee said.



MICHAEL SMITH/WTE Rep. Tom Lubnau, R-Gillette, speaks before Gov. Dave Freudenthal signs landmark carbon sequestration bills in the Capitol rotunda Tuesday. Also in attendance was Sen. John Schiffer, R-Kaycee (far left); Rep. Mary Throne, D-Cheyenne; Freudenthal; Sen. Tony Ross, R-Cheyenne; and Rep. Roy Cohee, R-Casper.