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China setting up coal reserve

China Shenhua Energy, the country's top coal producer, is looking for sites to build the nation's first strategic coal reserve with capacity of 30 mt, chairman Zhang Xiua said. The plan, first proposed in 2003, sparked heated debates. Supporters said that although China has enough coal, distribution is not efficient and shortages may surface in some regions in an emergency. Coal-fired plants produce 70% of China's electricity, but objectors said production was enough and were more concerned about the high cost of building reserves.

Qian Pingfan, an official at the State Council Development Research Centre, said at the time the reserve was meant to overcome distribution problems in an emergency. The plan has been revived after snow storms in 2008 affected production and distribution, resulting in power shortages in many provinces. Wang Shuai, analyst with Orient Securities in Shanghai, said Shenhua is likely to choose a coastal site in southeastern China. Li Chaolin, analyst with China Coal Trade and Development Association, said a reserve of 20-30 mt would be big enough to stabilise the market during a short-term coal shortage.

In an agreement signed with Fuzhou city government in Fujian province in August, Shenhua said it would build several coal berths and a storage facility at Luyuan Bay near new power plants. Industry insiders believe National Development and Reform Commission has directed Shenhua to set up ten reserve bases across China. Kaifuan Group, a big coal producer in Shanxi province, is also considering establishing a 10 mt reserve in Caozhen in Tangshan, Hebei province. China's coal production reached 1.61 bt in the first seven months of this year, up 8.9% year on year.

CCS demonstration proposed to US DOE

A grant request for The Demonstration of Advanced Carbon Capture and Storage at the Dominion Virginia City Hybrid Energy Center in Wise County, Virginia has been submitted to the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) National Energy Technology Laboratory (NETL). The grant request was filed by the Virginia Tech Foundation and is led by Virginia Tech's Virginia Center for Coal and Energy Research (VCER); Marshall Miller & Associates, Inc. (MM&A); Dominion Virginia Power; and the Southern States Energy Board.

MM&A and the VCER will lead the carbon storage aspect of this project and undertake the characterisation, design, construction, injection, and pre- and post-injection monitoring, verification, and accounting phases of the storage task. Dominion will lead the carbon capture effort in this research. In total, this is an estimated $583M project to be implemented over eleven years.

The proposed Clean Coal Power Initiative Virginia (CCPIVA) will meet the goals set by the DOE to achieve, at minimum, 80% CO2 capture efficiency and make progress towards a target goal of 90% CO2 capture efficiency. The project will demonstrate a cost-effective and energy efficient means to capture and manage CO2 for a coal-fired power plant, provide information needed to improve commercial viability for future coal-fired power plant projects and improve the potential for economic scale-up of the technology.