

Williams Offers FutureGen Alternatives 1/30

Bill Warren
CBS 7 News
January 30, 2008

On Monday, President Bush in his State of the Union address called for continued government funding support to research clean burning coal.

On Tuesday, his Energy Department said FutureGen was costing too much, and pulled the plug.

Insiders repeated Wednesday that DOE was seriously complaining months ago about the price tag, which has doubled in the last five years.

The party faithful are defending the president's decision, though some say two billion dollars doesn't seem like too much to start reversing man-made global warming.

Texas Railroad Commissioner Michael Williams of Midland is also Chairman of the FutureGen Texas Committee.

On the phone with CBS 7 he admitted his disappointment, but the Republican said we should accept that the DOE is trying to act as good stewards of taxpayer money.

Asked who will act as stewards of the atmosphere, Williams described a three lane highway.

"I've already been approached by half a dozen companies who want to build low emission coal burning plants. Not no-emission, but low emission. That's the first lane.

"The second lane is for the state to develop research initiatives for Texas lignite and petcoke (petcoke is a high-carbon, solid product from the refining of crude oil. Its uses include making anodes used in chemical and metals processes and as a fuel in power stations, cement kilns and domestic heating).

"The third piece is that the federal government does seem to be suggesting they are going to reconstruct a different kind of FutureGen project." Williams said the bottom line is that there is real increased interest in carbon capture technology, and that all the work thousands of volunteers did across the country for FutureGen will not go to waste.

* * *