



## **Barbara Fox - Economy leaves climate legislation in limbo**

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Since Congress cannot aid one of the most prominent efforts to follow through with helping to reduce global warming, one of our major American utilities, American Electric Power, (AEP) is tabling their plans to build a full-scale carbon-capture plant at Mountaineer, a 31 year old coal fired plant in West Virginia.

American Electric Power has already buried carbon dioxide in a pilot program for a two-year period. This type of technology used in this pilot program is being called the "quickest solution to aid the coal industry deal with more difficult federal limits on green house gas emissions."

Our Congress has remained silent on climate change and also diminished the incentives that encouraged American Electric Power to decide to "go" with this plan.

Company officials have said that the larger project would cost \$668 million. They said that they believed that the state regulators would not let the company recover the costs by charging customers. This, of course, left them no reason, regulatory or business, to continue the program.

The Federal Department of Energy had pledged to cover half the cost, but AEP maintained that it was not willing to spend the remainder in a political climate that had changed so strikingly since the project had begun.

Michael Morris, chairman of American Electric Power based in Columbus, Ohio, said, " We are placing the project on hold until economic and policy conditions create a viable path forward." AEP is one of the largest operators of coal-fired electricity generating plants in the U.S.

Morris went on to state that his company and other coal-burning utilities were caught in a quandary: they need to develop carbon-capture technology to meet any future greenhouse -gas emissions rules, but they cannot afford the projects without federal standards that will require them to act and will persuade the state governments to allow reimbursement.

How disappointing is this for the rest of us? This decision could set back for years, what is the best way to capture carbon emissions that result from burning fossil fuels and then inject them deep underground. This would keep greenhouse gases from accumulating in the atmosphere and further heating the planet.

Personally, I would feel much better if we could be certain of leaving a better atmosphere on this earth for our children and grandchildren.

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