

An Energy Policy: Our Future Depends Upon It

West Virginia and the United States must develop and implement a thoughtful, comprehensive and aggressive energy policy. Such a policy represents



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perhaps the greatest opportunity for our state and nation to remain a world leader, create prosperity, improve lives and the environment and facilitate peace and stability.

As we consider energy issues, I urge everyone to proceed with open minds and a strong sense of humility. The issues are complex. New develop-

ments in the energy field occur almost weekly. Our understanding of many issues is imperfect at best. And the evidence is simply not in on many energy questions we would like to understand.

I believe we should develop our energy policies based on the best data-driven research available. That research is available to us, thanks to **Imagine West Virginia**, a nonpartisan group of West Virginians focused on long-term issues. IWV studied the energy issue extensively during 2007 and 2008 and made the following recommendation:

West Virginia should become a globally recognized leader in technologically advanced, environmentally responsible, safe coal production and use.

IWV arrived at this recommendation through these essential premises:

■ During the time it will take to develop and deploy renewable energy sources, coal will continue to be a major source of energy both in the U.S. and internationally. Research and development aimed at producing environmentally acceptable, safer and more efficient mining and uses of coal

must continue.

■ West Virginia's coal supplies can be mined and used to help counter foreign oil dependency, meet increased long-term energy growth demands and improve national energy security.

■ The adverse environmental impacts of safe coal extraction, utilization and management must be mitigated. Coal's use in the coming decades likely will depend on how well carbon emissions can be controlled.

■ West Virginia has a natural interest in being a more prominently recognized leader in coal research and development. That represents a promising platform for innovative economic opportunities.

■ Coal's future will be influenced by greenhouse gas debate and regulations.

IWV has recommended that West Virginia do the following:

- strengthen coal-related research;
- promote expertise in mining safety and remediation;
- develop the next generation of coal leadership;
- train tomorrow's coal-related work force;
- foster new coal-related businesses;
- engage in a more strategic regional collaborative initiatives;
- build greater advanced coal technology capabilities;
- establish a coalition for global efforts in coal;
- participate in effective organizations that advance coal; and
- create an independent energy advisory body.

I heartily commend this energy policy for West Virginia, the nation and world. To read about these recommendations, visit www.imaginewestvirginia.com.

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