

We need carbon fees

For the Monitor

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Virendra Mathur suggests carbon capture and sequestration is needed for coal to be used for electricity production, and explains why CCS won't save the U.S. coal industry. Nonetheless, Mathur urges that we develop CCS so India and China can use it to produce electricity.

When climate scientist and physicist James Hansen spoke at Citizens' Climate Lobby's Nashua conference, Hansen said the idea that India and China will use CCS is "pure, unadulterated (expletive deleted)." Hansen insisted "there's no chance that India and China are going to capture the carbon dioxide and bury it."

It's difficult, expensive and dangerous to have carbon dioxide gas buried under you, if it leaks out. Hansen affirmed: China and India have the right to use coal to bring their people out of poverty, therefore "we have an obligation to help them find alternatives which are carbon-free."

Hansen believes that next-generation nuclear is their best alternative. Bill Gates is building a miniature next-generation plant in China. Mathur and Hansen agree on one thing: national carbon fees will make research and investment in emissions-free energies economically feasible. Without carbon fees, there's little investment incentive.

Economic studies of U.S. carbon fees suggest by 2040 the United States will produce only emissions-free electricity; half will be from nuclear and natural gas with CCS, and half from renewables. Sen. Kelly Ayotte should explore with the Energy and Environment Working Group how enactment of carbon fees will impact our nation's investments in essential, new emissions-free energy technologies.

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