

Att tillverka syntetisk bensin av kol

Under apartheidregimen i Sydafrika blockerades landet och man var tvungen att försöka tillverka bensin av kol. Företaget Sasol har utvecklat denna teknik och förser Sydafrika med en betydande andel av drivmedlen. Med en stundande oljekris bakom hörnet försöker man i USA med alla medel hitta utvägar och Sasol etablerar sig nu i kolrika områden i USA:

Sasol set for big US coal-to-oil strike PROJECT BACKING

By JACKIE DAVIES

WASHINGTON - SA petroleum giant Sasol could build America's first commercial coal-to-gasoline plant in the coal-rich state of Pennsylvania. US state legislators gave the multi-million dollar scheme the go-ahead this week and Sasol is already working closely with US-based energy firm, Waste Management Processors Inc, on a feasibility study for the project.

The project will look at converting synthetic gas derived from coal reserves and mountains of anthracite waste in Pennsylvania into high-quality, environment-friendly transportation fuels.

US politicians and the local business sector are also promoting the project as a job-creator that will employ about 1 000 people, and as a way to lessen dependence on foreign oil.

"We've been looking for good paying jobs and this project certainly does that," said state Republican David Argall.

John Rich, president of Waste Managers Processors, said Americans were being taken for a ride by foreign oil producers.

"The taxpayer has to foot the bill for a \$70-billion military presence in the Persian Gulf in order to keep oil supply lines from the Mid-East open. This cost skews the price of gas at pumps here," he explained.

As a significant show of support for the project, the Pennsylvania state legislature this month passed a \$45-million coal-to-oil tax incentive plan, which gives a 15% tax credit for gasification and/or liquefaction.

In Congress similar tax incentive legislation is being proposed, but there may be opposition from oil-rich US states.

States like Texas view the potential production of cheap fuel from coal waste as a threat. Others express concern that the low US oil prices will render the venture unfeasible.

But supporters believe the question of cost will not derail plans for the plant because the move to alternative forms of energy production is essential.

If the feasibility study goes well, construction will begin in 18 months' time. An estimated 5 000 barrels of a zero-percent sulphur diesel fuel will be produced each day from anthracite waste feedstocks. The plant will be located in Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania, which has coal reserves of 4.9-billion tons.

- African Eye News Service