

**Statement of Robert Baugh, Executive Director
AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council
February 11, 2009**

One year ago the AFL-CIO Executive Council adopted a statement on the Greening of the Economy. It recognized the bold steps our nation must take to meet the 21st century challenges related to climate change and that the world is looking to us for leadership. The statement closed with the words that bring us here today:

“The nation stands at the crossroads of opportunity for domestic investments in innovation, new technology and energy efficiency that will save jobs, create new jobs and new industries and revitalize American manufacturing. There is no guarantee that these will be good jobs or that the investments will be made here unless we fight to make it so.”

When the AFL-CIO adopted the statement we knew we faced a climate change crisis that the United Kingdom’s Stern Commission said, “represented the greatest and widest-ranging market failure ever seen.” We also knew that our nation was on the verge of an economic meltdown.

Today we face dual market failures: climate change and the greatest economic crisis of our lifetimes. It is time for environmental economic development policies and investments that will help address both. One of the critical steps is the adoption of advanced coal technology.

The AFL-CIO recognizes that coal powered plants are the primary source of base load power and that they provide major employment opportunities. This nation is blessed with the largest known coal deposits in the world, a resource that provides over half of the electrical energy in the U.S. We cannot achieve energy independence nor meet carbon reduction goals without utilizing this resource. But, we must use our coal cleanly and more efficiently. To do so we must accelerate development of carbon sequestration technologies and the deployment of more efficient coal burning technology.

This is also critical to the rest of the world. China, now the leading emitter of green house gases, depends upon coal for eighty percent of its electrical energy. They and many other coal dependent nations also need this advanced technology to achieve carbon emission reductions.

The BBC study of the “Employment and Other Economic Benefits from Advanced Coal Electric Generation with Carbon Capture and Storage” makes an important contribution to a new environmental economic development policy for the U.S. The employment impact of moving to a new generation of advanced coal technology is well documented and impressive.

We know these are good jobs from a long track record of employment in the related construction, manufacturing, maintenance and operational aspects of power generating facilities. But, time is of the essence if we are to answer some critical questions about advanced coal technology. The United States, other nations and industry need to quit talking about carbon capture technology and build full scale models now.

The AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council believes in good jobs and a cleaner planet and we are proud to join our affiliated unions in support of this report. The Council urges members of Congress to read the report and to take action in support of a new generation of advanced coal technology.