



# **Bourne's bill to promote Illinois coal passes House, awaits action in Senate**

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LITCHFIELD -State Representative Avery Bourne (R-Raymond) is the Chief Sponsor of House Bill 3656 that seeks to increase the use of Illinois coal. The bill creates a taskforce to study the costs and benefits of using the latest scrubber technology to allow Illinois coal mined in our home state to be burned here as well. This legislation recently passed out of the Illinois House and is now before the Senate for consideration. “Coal is one of Illinois’ most abundant resources. We should be able to utilize that resource here. This bill has bipartisan support and is something I’ve been working on since taking office,” said Representative Bourne. “Because of Obama-era regulations, Illinois’ coal industry has been attacked and our area has lost many jobs as a result. I am working to take a different approach that promotes clean coal and good-paying jobs.”

The vast majority of Illinois coal is being sold and burned out of state because of the sulfur content, which burns off at a higher rate than federal and state air quality standards allow. A way to prevent, or reduce, sulfur escaping into the air when the coal is being burned is to install costly “scrubbers” that help remove sulfur before leaving the stack.

HB 3656 creates the Flue Gas Desulfurization (FGD) Task Force Act. This bipartisan task force’s members’ primary responsibility is to study the costs and benefits of the construction of new stacks or conversion of existing stacks at coal-fired power plants with flue gas desulfurization scrubber technology.

Bourne’s bill requires the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly by December 31, 2017. If passed out of the Senate and signed into law the task force’s work would begin immediately.