

Jackson Hole Center for Global Affairs takes Leadership of the Wyoming House of Representatives to three coal provinces in China to explore advanced energy solutions

Summary Report

June 2014 – In June 2014 JHCGA organized one of its most ambitious policy exchanges to date with China. The exchange followed up on previous visits of the Shanxi Provincial Peoples Congress (SPPC) hosted by JHCGA in Wyoming in 2006 and 2010 and invitations to JHCGA President David Wendt to speak at technology expositions in Shanxi in 2011 and 2012.

Impressed at these expositions with China's serious efforts to promote advanced coal combustion and conversion technology, JHCGA took a bipartisan group of Wyoming legislative leaders to Shanxi province to discuss responsible coal use with their legislative counterparts. The group included Wyoming House Speaker Tom Lubnau (R-Campbell), House Minority Leader Mary Throne (D-Laramie), House Minority Whip Tim Stubson (R-Natrona), and House member John Freeman (D-Sweetwater).

The China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (Shanxi branch) hosted JHCGA's delegation. Shanxi, like Wyoming in the U.S., is China's largest coal producing province. JHCGA's delegation met with Chair Yuan Chunqing and Vice Chair Niu Renliang of the Shanxi Provincial Peoples Congress (SPPC), and with Vice Directors Zhang Xiaoping and Cheng Zeye of the Shanxi Provincial Development and Reform Commission (Shanxi PDRC). These meetings were the first to bring together legislative leaders and other senior officials from these two largest coal-producing states/provinces in their respective countries to discuss these subjects.

The delegation also visited two adjacent coal-producing provinces: Shaanxi and Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. All together, the three provinces produce more coal than the entire U.S. In Shaanxi, meetings were held with the Chair of the Shaanxi Provincial Peoples Congress and other senior officials. At the urging of the Chinese embassy in Washington, D.C., they visited Ningxia and met with the Governor and, in a separate meeting, with officials of the Development and Reform Commission, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the Department of Science and Technology.

In addition to these discussions, the delegation toured two coal conversion facilities: the Ningdong Energy and Chemical Base, in Yinchuan; and the Yanchang Coal/petroleum Chemical Industrial Park, in Yulin. These facilities utilize the process of coal gasification to capture and utilize carbon dioxide and other waste products of coal combustion and convert them to other fuel stocks (e.g., methanol) and chemicals (e.g., acetate). Members of the delegation also met with technical experts and visited laboratory facilities at the Shanxi Coal and Chemical Research Institute of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, in Taiyuan, and at the Shaanxi Provincial Institute of Energy Resources and Chemical Engineering (SPIERCE), in Xian.

Challenges discussed included comprehensive utilization of coal and its waste products through coal gasification and coal conversion, carbon capture and storage, and emissions monitoring and trading. In the course of these ten days of discussions and site visits, the members of JHCGA's delegation became aware of the strenuous efforts that China is making to reduce carbon emissions from coal. This awareness can serve as an important counterweight to inaccurate impressions in Wyoming and elsewhere that U.S. action to reduce global carbon emissions is useless because China is not doing its part.

In response to the legislators' request, JHCGA will prepare a power point presentation summarizing this and other results of the visit, for use in sharing the experience with their constituents. JHCGA also plans to respond to other requests for a follow-up meeting by convening an Energy Summit in Jackson Hole in July 2015.