

US Senate Majority Leader says coal is 'ruining the world'

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US Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid on Monday accused the coal industry of lying about the effect the fuel is having on the environment and climate change, adding that coal is "ruining the world."

"I think the coal companies should be upfront with the American people that coal is one of the things that is ruining our world," the Nevada Democrat said in a teleconference with reporters in advance of President Bush's State of the Union address Monday evening. It has been rumored that Bush will say something about clean coal technologies as a follow-up to last year's speech when he mentioned climate change for the first time in a State of the Union speech.

"The coal industry around the country is spending tens of millions of dollars to give false and misleading information to people around the country saying 'all we want to do is have clean coal. Why won't they let us do the clean coal,'" Reid said. "My answer to that is it doesn't exist. There is no clean coal technology. There's cleaner coal, but there's no clean coal technology."

Reid said that until zero-emissions coal fired power generation is available, something he said won't likely happen for another 20 years, "we should just back off" and look to cleaner energy like natural gas and renewables. These produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions, he said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi struck a more conciliatory tone than Reid, but agreed that coal poses tremendous problems. "I don't think that the industry is a monolith," she said. Pelosi, a California Democrat, said she has had talks with coal industry officials and members of Congress from coal-mining districts about developing technologies to capture and store carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.

Pelosi said it would take "several billion dollars" to research carbon capture and storage and that existing efforts are not enough. "Coal exists. It will be

there a century at least. It is cheap," she said.

Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius, a Democrat who is giving her party's State of the Union rebuttal this evening, said a national greenhouse gas cap is needed because states are moving on their own already. She spoke of "engaging a national discussion on global warming" and that on this issue "Americans and the majority of Congress are ready to go."

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REID: If I -- I know this isn't my business, but if I could just make this comment.

The coal industry around the country is spending tens of millions of dollars to give false and misleading information to people around the country saying, "All we want to do is have clean coal. Why won't they let us do the clean coal?"

REID: **And my answer to that, it doesn't exist. There is no clean coal technology. There's cleaner coal, but there's no clean coal technology.**

And I think the coal companies should be upfront with the American people that coal is one of the things that is ruining our world. And I just -- I think until we have clean coal, that technology which even the most avid supporter of coal recognizes won't be for another 20 years, we should just back off and stick with natural gas and look to renewables.

You don't have to live in the desert southwest to produce a lot of energy with renewables.

“The coal industry ... is spending tens of millions of dollars to give false and misleading information to people around the country”. [Clean Coal] “doesn't exist”.