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Alberta puts $285M toward coal gasification project

By CBC News
CBC News

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Alberta has signed a letter of intent with Swan Hills Synfuels to put $285 million over 15 years towards a carbon-capture and storage project northwest of Edmonton.

The project will be located near Swan Hills, Alta. and will tap into coal seams deep into the ground and turn coal that can't be mined into a synthetic gas for a generating plant that will provide "300 MW [megawatts] of clean power generation capacity," according to a news release.

The project will also capture carbon dioxide produced during that process and use it to help recover conventional oil in the area.

Construction is scheduled to start in 2011. The carbon capture phase of the project is proposed to start in 2015.

"This will position Alberta as a leader in adapting and integrating proven technologies that greatly reduce emissions and minimize environmental impacts on land, air and water, while generating reliable baseload electricity," Swan Hills Synfuels president Douglas Shaigec said in the province's news release.

The synfuels project is the fourth to get money from Alberta's $2 billion Carbon Capture and Storage Fund.

Last week, Alberta announced it had signed a letter of intent to help fund construction of a 240-kilometre pipeline that companies can hook into for

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collecting and storing CO2, it was announced Tuesday.

The pipeline is proposed by Enhance Energy Inc., which is partnering with North West Upgrading. It would connect the so-called industrial heartland northeast of Edmonton to oilfields near Clive, in central Alberta.

Captured CO2 would then be brought to mature oilfields where it will be injected into the ground and help bring oil to the surface. Construction on the pipeline is scheduled to start in 2011, with operation commencing in 2012.

In early October, the province and Ottawa announced funding for the Shell Quest project, east of Edmonton, and Project Pioneer at TransAlta's Keephills plant in Wabumun, Alta. In those two projects, CO2 emitted from the plants will be captured and injected more than 2,000 metres underground.

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