

Study: Size of U.S. coal reserves in doubt

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U.S. scientists are calling for increased federal support to obtain a more accurate assessment of the extent and location of the nation's coal reserves.

A congressionally mandated National Research Council report suggests coal will provide a substantial portion of U.S. energy for at least several decades. Therefore, researchers say there must be a major increase in federal research and development support to ensure coal is extracted efficiently, safely, and in an environmentally responsible manner.

The study recommended an increase of about \$144 million annually in federal funding across a variety of areas.

The research council noted more than half of U.S. electricity is generated by burning coal but future levels of coal use will be largely determined by the timing and stringency of regulations to control carbon emissions.

The researchers recommend a federal-state-industry initiative to determine the size and characteristics of the nation's recoverable coal, with the initiative led by the U.S. Geological Survey and supported by additional funding of approximately \$10 million per year.

The report is available online without charge or can be ordered in print form at

books.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=4918.

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