



INDUSTRIAL COMMISSION OF NORTH DAKOTA

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North Dakota Industrial Commission approves funding for two Lignite Research & Development proposals

The North Dakota Industrial Commission (Commission) today approved \$1 million in grant funding for a small-scale lignite research and development (R&D) project and continuation of an ongoing carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) project. The two projects had been evaluated and recommended by the Lignite Research Council earlier in the week.

The lignite R&D project will be led by the University of North Dakota Energy & Environmental Research Center (EERC) and North American Coal and will develop an approach to make high-grade graphite from North Dakota lignite materials. The target market is fast charging electric vehicle batteries and other rapidly growing lithium-ion battery applications, with other graphite markets also being considered. The economic impact is to provide additional markets for lignite-based resources. The project is to be completed over a three-year time frame. The total budget is \$1,545,000 with \$500,000 provided from the Commission's Lignite Research & Development Program.

The second grant is for the continuation of work under the Plains CO₂ Research (PCOR) partnership project. The EERC leads PCOR, teamed with partners in industry, research, and funding agencies, to accelerate and facilitate the buildout of CCUS infrastructure in North Dakota and neighboring states. The PCOR Partnership includes the primary players in North Dakota's lignite industry who have been working with the EERC over the last 18 years to validate the technical and economic viability of CCUS technology. This phase of the project – which is largely funded by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) – is planned for a five-year time frame. The current request is for the third increment of \$500,000 to bring the Commission funding to \$1.5 million of the previously approved \$2 million. The total project budget is more than \$18 million.

In a joint statement, the three members of the Commission stated, "Management of CO₂ and adding to our suite of coal-related products are important areas to sustaining and diversifying the uses for our state's abundant lignite resources as well as utilizing our energy infrastructure to its maximum potential."

The Commission is a partner with the regional lignite industry in the Lignite Research Program. State dollars are leveraged with industry investments for research and demonstration projects. Since 1987 when the partnership began, the state has invested more than \$90 million in lignite research funds. Total investment in more than 200-plus projects is in excess of \$750 million.

Besides state dollars, R&D funding also comes from industry sources such as mines and utilities, research entities such as the EERC and DOE.

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