

WY Considering Incentives for Fuel Plant Studies

the Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Wyoming lawmakers are moving toward spending \$10 million to try to entice companies to build mineral-to-liquid fuel plants.

The Wyoming Tribune Eagle reports (<http://goo.gl/EtYP3> [1]) that the Legislature's Joint Minerals, Business and Economic Development Interim Committee voted Friday to sponsor a bill to use the money as matching funds to help pay for feasibility studies for potential projects.

The money would be used to help pay for engineering and design studies companies must conduct to determine if a plant can be successful. Wyoming officials have said the state needs to attract refineries and production plants because much of the state's energy resources are taken out of state to be turned into liquid fuel such as gasoline.

A mineral-to-liquid fuel plant can cost upward of \$2 billion, so companies considering one need extensive feasibility studies first.

Rob Hurless, a policy adviser to Gov. Matt Mead and deputy director of the Carbon Management Institute at the University of Wyoming's School of Energy Resources, said the study could be an incentive for one of the companies to build a plant in the state.

He said another benefit is the information that the state would gain from the work.

Hurless said much of the "real world" data of what would be needed for a minerals-to-liquid fuel plant to locate here is unknown.

But once a feasibility study is completed, he said, Wyoming would own the intellectual property from the report, with the exception of the proprietary information that the state and company would agree to keep secret.

The legislators on the committee voted unanimously to sponsor the bill. Several lawmakers said taking the proactive step is an important move to protect and strengthen the state's energy economy.

"I think this really makes a difference," said Sen. Eli Bebout, R-Riverton, who is co-chairman of the committee. "And I think (it shows) that we are trying to do something on the front end."

The lawmakers said they would vote later in the year on an amendment to the bill that would shape how companies can apply for the funds.

One proposal includes requiring companies to seek a recommendation through the

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county where they would want to locate.

A formal proposal also would be vetted by Wyoming officials to determine if moving forward would be a benefit to the state.

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<http://www.wyomingnews.com> [2]

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