

Coal-to-liquids plant is considered

May 21 2007

The U.S. Department of Energy has issued a feasibility study for a commercial 50,000-barrel-a-day coal-to-liquids facility in the Illinois coal basin.

The department's National Energy Technology Laboratory said the conceptual design of the CTL plant provides a performance baseline to demonstrate how the technology could capitalize on domestic energy resources, while providing a bulwark against rising petroleum and natural gas prices.

The price of coal-derived liquid fuels has traditionally been unable to compete with the price of fuels derived from crude oil. But, as oil prices rise, domestic sources of transportation fuels are becoming more affordable.

The CTL plant design is projected to use 24,533 tons of high-sulfur bituminous coal daily to produce 27,819 barrels per day of diesel fuel that, with additives, could be delivered to end-use customers.

Department of Energy scientists said such a plant could also theoretically produce 22,173 barrels per day of liquid naphtha products that could eventually become a chemical feedstock.

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Citation: Coal-to-liquids plant is considered (2007, May 21) retrieved 2 February 2023 from

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