

A few days ago I brought your attention to a report that Senator Tom Coburn (R-OK) submitted entitled ['100 stimulus Projects: A Second Opinion.'](#) I also said that I would highlight a few of the most ridiculous, and so here is the first installment:

FutureGen

Although President Obama, and Congressional leaders said that the stimulus package would not contain any earmarks, in reality earmarks take on a variety of forms. Take for instance the FutureGen plant in Mattoon, Illinois. This program was an earmark in the past and was lobbied for by then Senator Obama. On June 12, 2009 the Department of Energy announced that FutureGen would receive \$1 billion in stimulus funds.

Samuel Bodman, former Secretary of Energy during the Bush Administration concluded that this technology was obsolete, and stated "The likelihood that it would fail, leaving the American people with hundreds of millions of dollars in sunk cost and none of the benefits, is not acceptable." Accordingly, the Department of Energy terminated funding for the project.

If that doesn't convince you that this is a poor expenditure of taxpayer dollars, then perhaps this will:

In 2007, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) published a report that showed FutureGen's approach was not the most effective way to go about such experimental new technology. In fact the report specifically states there were "concerns about this particular project" including a "lack of clarity about the project objectives." MIT concluded "It is important that the U.S. government begin thinking about such a portfolio of demonstration projects and not be singularly focused on any one project, such as FutureGen."

On top of all of this, FutureGen's website states that it is a public-private partnership. Obviously it has a public component because it is receiving tax dollars from the federal government, but can you imagine your private company receiving \$1 billion of taxpayer's money without any impetus or necessity to produce a substantive product?

I'll let you be the judge.