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## Barcia leads push for clean-energy bills in Lansing

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Power companies would be encouraged to use cutting-edge clean energy technology under legislation to be unveiled today in Lansing.

Sen. Jim Barcia, D-Bay City, was set to help introduce the package of bills, designed to simplify the regulatory process and provide technical support for the development of new clean energy facilities, including integrated gasification combined cycle, or IGCC.

The IGCC technology is to be employed in a planned \$2 billion, 700-megawatt Great Lakes Energy Research Park in Alma, according to a draft of the legislation.

IGCC can reduce harmful emissions, and makes it easier for plants to capture their output of greenhouse gases.

"By building clean energy facilities, Michigan can be a center for new investments, innovation and energy independence," Barcia said in a prepared statement.

The legislation includes the creation of renaissance energy zones, tax credits to encourage development of clean and renewable energy plants and incentives for utilities to purchase electricity from clean sources.

Barcia was to be joined by legislators including Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop, R-Rochester; Sen. Roger Kahn, R-Saginaw Township; and developers of the Alma plant, from M&M Energy.

Mitch Irwin, former state agriculture director, is helping push for the legislation. Irwin said the plant would take 2-3 years to build, start with coal and eventually convert to biomass.

"We can hopefully use many agricultural products down the road, particularly some of the waste products," he said.

It would be the first IGCC plant in Michigan, Irwin said.

Barcia said he believes the Senate will adopt the legislation in the next month or two and he hopes it will be well-received in the House.

Consumers Energy is planning a new 800-megawatt, coal-fired power plant at the existing Karn-Weadock complex in Bay County's Hampton Township.

The plant will use pulverized coal to generate electricity.

Consumers officials have said gasification is too experimental and expensive for the new plant.

Barcia said the intention of the package isn't to oppose the Karn-Weadock plans, just to encourage more projects like the Alma plant.

"I think you need both" to meet future energy needs, he said, adding that the Alma plant will be able to sell its energy to Consumers and DTE Energy.

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