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Project Scientist discusses WV and renewable energy 

By Renata Di Gregorio | Posted: Fri 5:59 PM, Mar 03, 2017 | Updated: Fri 6:06 PM, Mar 03, 2017

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. (WDTV)- We hear a lot from politicians about springing the coal industry back with clean coal [technology](#) . But how much of this could actually be a reality and how much is just a dream?

Commercial use of clean coal technology is, as the West Virginia Coal Association president puts it, "somewhat of a figment of everyone's imagination." That's not to say there haven't been strides in reducing emissions, but as for technology that captures carbon dioxide and pumps it far underground, the price tag means it's out of sight.



But even if the technology was available, a local scientist says the process of extracting coal is being left out.

"We're washing coal and creating a toxic, slurry substance that we're then storing that continues to threaten surface water," said Joey James, Project Scientist with Downstream Strategies. "We can clean up the way that we're consuming it and it's great, but if the extraction process is what it is, it's still pretty dirty."

The WV Coal Association president says costs and regulations are the industry's biggest hurdles. But the way he sees it, they're doing pretty well with keeping coal clean and reducing emissions without the technology.

"Clean coal is literally there.," said Bill Raney. "We've done so much to clean it up for the utilities, the people who use it to make electricity, and the ones who use it at the steel mills have truly cleaned up 90 percent of the emissions."

You may have heard the words "clean coal" from many politicians, but researchers say unless they see the funds to do their work, no one will be seeing their progress in clean coal technology. The director at the National Research Center for Coal and Energy says the biggest concern is getting the funding to bring down the cost of the carbon dioxide capture.

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