

The Direct Use of Coal

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PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS OF PRODUCTION AND COMBUSTION

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Foreword

Coal production in the United States will more than double by the year 2000, to as much as 2 billion tons per year. The investments in facilities, manpower, and technologies for the mining, transportation, and use of such vast quantities of coal will be immense.

This report assesses the benefits and risks of such a massive shift to coal and away from other fuels. It deals with the social, economic, physical, and biological impacts of such a shift. It examines the complete coal system, from extraction to combustion, including the key steps and institutions that policy can influence. The environmental impacts and possible effects on the public health are documented. Occupational and community impacts are examined. Technologies under development that might reduce costs, increase convenience of use, or mitigate negative impacts are reviewed.

This assessment was requested by the House Committee on Science and Technology. It is another in a series of assessments that are being provided to Congress to assist in the development of national energy policy.

The Project Director for this assessment was Mr. Alan T. Crane, who was supported by the Energy Group staff and Dr. Richard E. Rowberg, Group Manager. We are grateful for the assistance provided in this assessment by the Coal Advisory Panel, chaired by Mr. Harry Perry, and the overall guidance provided by OTA's Energy Advisory Committee, chaired by Professor Milton Katz.



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*Died January 1979. The OTA Coal Project staff expresses their sincere appreciation for the assistance and support that David Comey had contributed throughout this assessment.