

Source : **BANGKOK POST****60380478**

Date : 4 NOV 2017 Page :

b

No :

US to promote fossil fuels at climate talks

WASHINGTON: The Trump administration will promote coal, natural gas and nuclear energy as an answer to climate change at a presentation during a UN global warming conference this month, the White House confirmed on Thursday.

The program is billed as a discussion of how US energy resources, particularly fossil fuels, can help poor countries meet electricity needs and drive down greenhouse gas emissions. Titled *The Role of Cleaner and More Efficient Fossil Fuels and Nuclear Power in Climate Mitigation*, it will feature speakers from Peabody Energy, a coal company; NuScale Power, a nuclear engineering firm; and Tellurian, a liquefied natural gas exporter.

"As the world seeks to reduce emissions while promoting economic prosperity, fossil fuels will continue to play a central role in the energy mix," a preview of the Nov 13 presentation claims.

The programme is likely to provoke strong reactions at the conference, which will begin on Monday in Bonn, Germany, and include two weeks of negotiations on ways to keep rising global temperatures from reaching catastrophic levels. Most climate experts contend the world must shift from fossil fuels to cleaner alternatives to meet emissions targets. Nuclear power, which does not produce earth-warming emissions, is viewed with skepticism by many environmental activists, who say its dangers outweigh its benefits.

No major funding announcements are expected during the event. Delegates from 195 countries will work on a "rule book" for implementation of the Paris agreement.

According to new figures put out by the US Energy Information Administration, coal production has risen since US President Donald Trump took office — a fact Mr Trump highlighted late Tuesday in a tweet.

"It is finally happening for our great clean coal miners!" Mr Trump wrote on Twitter.

He has vowed to withdraw from the Paris agreement, calling it "a deal that punishes the United States". But under the rules of the deal, the United States cannot actually withdraw until 2020. Until then, the administration has said, it will continue to work toward bringing the Paris agreement into force.

Barry K Worthington, executive director of the US Energy Association, who will speak on the panel, said he hoped to deliver a dose of reality about the future of fossil fuels at a forum dominated by activists demanding the end of coal, oil and gas. He argued that "no credible projection" shows fossil fuels meeting less than 40% of global energy demand by midcentury.

Mr Worthington said he expected that delivering that message before climate change activists would be a "horrible

experience" but it is important to hear. "The reality of it is the world is going to continue to use fossil fuels," he said, "and if I can throw myself on the hand grenade to help people realise that, I'm willing to do it".

George David Banks, special assistant to Mr Trump for international energy and environment, will speak, and Francis Brooke, an aide to US Vice President Mike Pence, will moderate among industry executives.

"This discussion is a follow-up to the administration's success at the G20, where the United States expressed its support for helping countries meet their climate objectives through the use of cleaner and more efficient fossil fuels and other clean energy sources and technologies," said White House spokesman Raj Shah. "Fossil fuels will be used for the foreseeable future, and it is in everyone's interest they be efficient and clean." NYT