

State approves \$1 billion coal-fired
power plant near Morgantown

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The state Public Service Commission has granted Longview Power permission to build a \$1 billion coal-fired power plant near Morgantown.

A 135-page order approving a siting certificate for the plant and authorizing the construction of a transmission line to serve the plant was issued by the commission late Monday.

Longview has said the plant will create up to 1,600 construction jobs and have about 60 permanent employees. The plant is expected to use more than 2 million tons of coal a year.

"It's great news for West Virginia construction workers," said Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation Director Steve White. "They've committed to hire local union workers. We estimate a payroll of over \$100 million during the four-year construction phase, which is a tremendous shot in the arm for the local economy as well.

"The project itself is well over a billion-dollar investment in West Virginia," White said. "It's value added — taking coal and making electricity. There are positives on many levels."

Longview has a property tax agreement with Monongalia County in which the company has agreed to pay the county \$105 million over 30 years, according to the plant's Web site. White said the deal makes Longview the No. 1 property tax payer in Monongalia County.

The 600-megawatt Longview plant is on track to be the first coal-fired plant built in West Virginia since the 80-megawatt Grant Town power plant went online in 1993. It will be the first big coal-fired plant since Appalachian Power's 1,300-megawatt Mountaineer Plant in Mason County and Allegheny Energies Unit Two in Pleasants County went online in 1980.

Longview is a subsidiary of Needham, Mass.-based GenPower LLC. Approval of the company's application includes numerous conditions.

Before it can begin construction of the plant, Longview must show that it has complied with all wetlands rules and regulations. Also, the company must install four noise monitors and develop a noise complaint-handling plan.

In addition, Longview must file a confidential report that shows the commission its plant financing details, and place \$3 million into an account to be used to dismantle and remove the plant if such a need were to arise in the future. The account can be dissolved after five years of continuous plant operation.

During construction, noise must be limited, most work must be done during daylight hours, and the company is prohibited from creating a noise impact at the Fort Martin Church during normally scheduled weekend church activities and services.

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