

Paper 49

Coal in the western Pacific Basin, an overview

E. R. LANDIS

U.S. Geological Survey, Denver, Colorado

Coal comprises about 50 percent of the conventional energy resources of the world and about 70 percent of fossil energy resources. Asia contains about 50 to 70 percent of the total estimated coal resources of the Earth. The western Pacific Basin area of the Cirum-Pacific Region contains about 20 percent of the world's total coal resources and is estimated to contain about 50 percent of the presently recoverable coal reserves of the world.

Coal supplies about 27 percent of the world's primary energy production and provides about 5 percent of the primary energy production of the western Pacific Basin area. Among the nations of the area, China, Australia, New Zealand, and Vietnam produce more coal than they consume. Japan, both Koreas, the Philippines and Thailand consume more coal than they produce. Within the area as a whole, coal production and consumption are both about 30 percent of the world totals. Between 1961 and 1990, primary

energy consumption in the area increased by about 150 percent, and coal consumption increased by almost 170 percent. Both energy and coal consumption are expected to increase over the next three decades as nations of the region expand their economics and focus on indigenous coal resources as a basic energy supply.

Within the western Pacific Basin, the amount of information concerning coal resource potential ranges widely. Some nations place all their estimated coal resources in the proven-in-place reserve category (Japan), while others place only a few percent in that category (Malaysia). While estimates vary, depending on the philosophy and practices used, it is probable that, in many cases the available coal database is inadequate for reliable resource assessment. Increased exploration and development activities are needed to permit realistic and accurate evaluation of energy-planning options in the region.