

Veto blocks Kansas coal plants — for now

The governor of Kansas, Kathleen Sebelius, vetoed legislation last week that would have allowed two new coal-fired power plants, citing concerns about global warming.

The bill was a response to an earlier block by the state secretary of health and environment, Roderick Bremby. In

October, he rejected an air-quality permit sought by Sunflower Electric Power Corporation for the pair of 700-megawatt plants, the first time a power plant has been blocked strictly to protect the climate (see *Nature* 449, 953; 2007).

Backers of the bill do not have enough votes to override the veto, but the legislative battle is expected to continue. Sunflower has filed lawsuits challenging the state's decision.

Sebelius says she would be willing to sign legislation authorizing one power plant, as long as it is capable of capturing carbon emissions for future storage. It should also address renewable energy and energy efficiency, she says.

Valuable bacterial archive destroyed

Researchers are demanding an investigation into the destruction of a large collection of bacterial samples, some irreplaceable, from a lab at the Pittsburgh Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Pennsylvania. The archive, of nearly 10,000 samples of infectious bacteria, was the result of more than 20 years' work and included some very rare strains.

The samples were destroyed after the medical centre closed down its special pathogens laboratory, headed by Vincent Yu, in July 2006. Yu and his colleagues were planning to move the samples elsewhere, but did not get the chance.

David Snyderman of the Tufts–New England Medical Center in Boston and 242 other researchers have signed a petition, published in the April issue of *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, asking an independent review committee to investigate what led to the repository's destruction.

Science debate looking less likely in Philadelphia

Organizers of a potential science debate between leading US presidential candidates have not given up on hopes for it to take place in Philadelphia on 18 April — even though Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton (pictured) have agreed to participate in another, non-science debate in the city two days earlier.

With the Democratic primary race so tight, the stakes are high for the 22 April Pennsylvania primary. Obama has also agreed to a debate in North Carolina on 19 April, before the 6 May primary there.

Organizer Shawn Otto says that supporters still hope to hold a science debate to raise the profile of science and technology issues in the campaign. They hope to hold the debate in Philadelphia's Franklin Institute.

