

Responsible Carbon Management Plan:

15 CCUS Policy Proposals that Community Members and Advocates can Demand for Public Health, Safety, and Accountability

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Due to recent federal investments in Carbon Capture, Use and Storage (CCUS) infrastructure, state oil and gas agencies like the Railroad Commission of Texas are in need of strong regulatory guidance to ensure the safe and reliable implementation of CCUS programs, as well as to measure the collective efficacy of these taxpayer-funded investments.

With this in mind, community members should be aware of their rights when carbon capture initiatives and related projects – including hydrogen, ammonia, liquefied natural gas, methanol, ethanol, and bioenergy – are proposed to be built near residential areas. It's important to demand information, safety, and accountability from companies and oversight agencies.

By advocating for these 15 points, you can help ensure that carbon storage projects are managed responsibly and safely for your community:

- **Primacy:** The US Environmental Protection Agency must retain primary permitting authority for carbon dioxide (CO₂) sequestration wells due to the interconnected and interjurisdictional nature of regional geologic storage systems — the Gulf Coast saline formation, which extends across the Texas-Louisiana border, is a prime example.
- **Accounting Methodology:** Federal and state government agencies must work together to create robust and consistent carbon accounting methodologies in an effort to prevent CO₂ leaks and ensure prudent oversight of the taxpayer-funded subsidies for CCUS projects.
- **Environmental Improvements:** All new project infrastructure budgets must include site-specific environmental investments to offset environmental harm, such as industrial hazard remediation and ecosystems restoration. Any orphaned and abandoned wells within the vicinity of the new project must also be inspected, plugged, and monitored.
- **Capture Co-pollutants:** Air pollutants co-generated with CO₂ emissions are responsible for adverse physical, mental, and behavioral health impacts, as well as lost wages, reduced productivity, and other economic costs. All CO₂ removal projects must include industrial co-pollutant extraction, including but not limited to: ultrafine particulate matter, ozone, nitrous oxides, sulfur oxides, volatile organic compounds, and other hazardous air pollutants.
- **Restrict Utilization:** No federally subsidized carbon capture projects may use CO₂ for enhanced oil recovery, as this is counter-productive to meeting our nation's climate goals.
- **Ensure Permanence:** Stored CO₂ must remain permanently sequestered and not be extracted at a later date for industrial use.

- **Long-term Monitoring:** Monitoring technology must be perpetually employed and annually updated to ensure long-term safety and to verify 99% CO₂ sequestration over a 1,000-year period in alignment with guidelines from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.
- **Sufficient Financial Liability:** Self-sustaining financial structures must be used during project design and approval to ensure that CCUS companies, not the public, retain long-term (100+ years) liability to cover the costs of disaster prevention, mitigation, and full remediation when leaks, ruptures, or unintended migrations occur.
- **Emergency Response:** Local emergency response programs near CO₂ pipelines and storage facilities must be adequately funded to support equipment, personnel, and training for disaster response, as well as inter-agency coordination and community outreach about preparedness.
- **Pipeline Safety:** Federal agencies must halt approval of new projects and rescind current awards for carbon capture, transport, and storage infrastructure until the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration adopts and implements comprehensive CO₂ pipeline safety rules.
- **Repurposing Old Infrastructure:** Existing oil and gas pipelines must not be converted to CO₂ pipelines per the recommendation of industry safety leaders. Class II oil and gas waste injection wells must not be converted to Class VI carbon injection wells due to more stringent construction and siting requirements for Class VI wells.
- **Environmental Justice:** Projects must not be built in communities which have faced historically high rates of environmental pollution and harm as determined by state and federal EJScreen indices. Adding more dangerous infrastructure in already overburdened communities will only perpetuate and further entrench environmental injustice.
- **Language Access:** Translation and interpretation services must be provided for communities with Limited English Proficiency residents. Many U.S. state oil and gas regulatory agencies, including the Railroad Commission of Texas, fail to engage with communities and lack translated materials for Spanish-speaking residents, resulting in low levels of public engagement and poor understanding of the issues.
- **Free, Prior, and Informed Consent:** In alignment with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, informed consent must be obtained before new projects are initiated. Community members must be provided with accurate information about the historic efficacy of CCUS to achieve atmospheric carbon reduction goals; CO₂ infrastructure failures and disaster rates; and the public health and safety risks posed to communities.
- **Community Benefits Agreements:** All new project budgets must include a minimum 10% investment in community-designed projects to enhance quality of life for nearby residents. Community leaders and organizations — exclusive of industry and chambers of commerce — must be engaged early and often throughout the planning process to co-create transparent community benefits agreements (CBAs) which meet the needs identified by the community. CBAs should not be used as a reason to increase pollution levels in the community.