

Opposition to Carbon Capture Utilization Parity Act

March 6, 2023

Dear Senator Whitehouse, Senator Cassidy, Representative Schweikert, and Representative Sewell:

The undersigned organizations write to oppose your recently-introduced bill, the Carbon Capture and Utilization Parity Act. This bill does not advance climate solutions, but is rather a giveaway to fossil fuel companies and other corporate polluters under the guise of climate action. Promoting the utilization of captured CO₂ in petrochemicals, plastics and fuels, as your legislation would encourage, will perpetuate environmental justice harms and subsidize the oil and gas industry to do it. Rather than perpetuating these climate scams, we encourage you to support the elimination of subsidies for the fossil fuel industry instead of enriching them through carbon capture schemes.

Carbon utilization is a distraction that will not benefit the climate and will further entrench the polluting sources that create carbon dioxide pollution. Regardless of its eventual use, promoting CCU will tether downstream industries to emission sources, making them harder to eliminate. If used for fuels, such carbon dioxide will end up in the atmosphere anyway; if used for plastics or other petrochemical production, it will contribute to the myriad harms of plastic and petrochemical pollution. In the case of many plastics which are burned, and nitrogen fertilizer which decomposes upon field application, that carbon dioxide will again end up in the atmosphere.

Carbon capture has a long history of overpromising and under delivering, failing to deliver any meaningful climate benefit. By its nature, carbon capture will entrench the sources of pollution we need to collectively eliminate if we are to truly confront the climate crisis. Because of its enormous energy requirements, capturing carbon increases demand for, and emissions from, fossil fuel production. The limited number of ostensibly successful carbon capture projects are connected to fossil gas processing plants, and the overwhelming majority of captured carbon to date has been used to increase oil production via enhanced oil recovery (EOR). Ultimately, carbon capture benefits the fossil fuel industry first and foremost, not the climate.

In addition to failing as a climate solution, carbon capture poses additional dangers to the communities in which capture equipment will operate and through which CO₂ pipelines will run. Due to its energy consumption, carbon capture increases criteria pollution at the source of capture as well as creates its own emissions of toxic ammonia. The process also consumes significant water and produces chemical waste. Pipelines threaten communities surrounding them with the sudden and dangerous release of carbon dioxide, with impact radii far wider than those of traditional hydrocarbon pipelines. Environmental justice, frontline, and BIPOC communities are already burdened with the brunt of pollution and climate change, and this will continue to exacerbate threats in their communities.

At present, the only market of any significant scale for captured carbon dioxide is EOR. The myth of a massive carbon management paradigm that uses and re-uses carbon dioxide on any large scale serves only to greenwash the reality of how carbon dioxide is used: for oil production. This appears to be reflected in the Joint Committee on Taxation's estimate that, despite the increasing credit, this

bill would only cost \$16 million over ten years. This is an obvious underestimate, but if true would mean that this legislation would result in a paltry amount of CO2 utilization and a waste of time even proposing such a mechanism.

All of this must be considered against the backdrop of the history of the 45Q tax credit and recently-revealed documents from the oil industry indicating their internal views on the technology. As laid bare in an investigation from the U.S. Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration, the 45Q tax credit is rife with abuse as credits are improperly claimed. Moreover, documents uncovered by the House Oversight Committee's investigation into major oil companies and climate disinformation revealed that the biggest proponents of CCS also understand the technology to be costly, ineffective, and requiring continued and increasing government subsidization.

As noted by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in its Sixth Assessment Report, in contrast to things like solar power and batteries, carbon capture is not the kind of technology that gets significantly cheaper over time, and increasing public subsidies to spark a carbon management industry will not result in a self-sustaining system. Rather, increasing the 45Q tax credit will just be increasing subsidies for the fossil fuel industry. Moreover, carbon removal using direct air capture is projected to have essentially no significant impact on climate change through 2050, while its wide-scale deployment would require massive quantities of energy, land, and chemicals. The carbon utilization fantasy should be abandoned, with focus restored on the solutions we know will help combat the climate crisis, like renewable energy and storage, electrification, energy efficiency, real zero-waste materials systems, agroecology, and more.

Signed,

350 Bay Area Action

350 New Orleans

350.org

350NJ-Rockland

350NYC

5 Gyres Institute

7 Directions of Service

A Community Voice

Action for the Climate Emergency

Alliance for Affordable Energy

Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

Berks Gas Truth

Better Path Coalition

Between the Waters

Beyond Extreme Energy

Beyond Plastics

Bike North Bergen

Biofuelwatch

Bold Alliance

Breast Cancer Action

Breathe Project

Carrizo Comecrudo Tribe of Texas

Catalyst Miami

Catskill Mountainkeeper

Center for Biological Diversity

Center for International Environmental Law

Central Jersey Environmental Defenders

Clean Air Action Network of Glens Falls (NY)

Clean Air Coalition of Greater Ravena-

Coeymans

Climate Investigations Center

Climate Reality Project: Susquehanna Valley

PA chapter

Coalition Against Death Alley

Coalition to Ban Unsafe Oil Trains

Coalition to Protect New York

Common Ground Rising
Concerned Citizens of St. John
Congress of Communities
CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)
CWA Local 1081
Dakota Rural Action
Divest NJ
Don't Gas the Meadowlands Coalition
Earth Ethics, Inc.
Eco-Justice Collaborative
Ecology Center
Energy Justice Network
Environment Texas
Food & Water Watch
For a Better Bayou
Franciscan Response to Fossil Fuels
FreshWater Accountability Project
Friends of the Earth
Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives
(GAIA)
Grand Rapids C4 (Community Collaboration
on Climate Change)
Great Plains Action Society
Greater New Orleans Interfaith Climate
Coalition
Green Education and Legal Fund
Health Professionals for a Healthy Climate
Healthy Gulf
Inclusive Louisiana
Indigenous Environmental Network
Inland Ocean Coalition
Iowa CCI
Ironbound community corporation
JFK Democratic Club - Franklin Twp.
Los Jardines Institute
Louisiana Just Recovery Network
Louisiana League of Conscious Voters

Louisiana Organization for Refugees and
Immigrants
Lower Raritan Watershed Partnership
M-W & Associates
MDC
Micah Six Eight Mission
Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition
Michigan Student Power Alliance
Mid-Ohio Valley Climate Action
MN350
MoveOn.org Hoboken RESIST
Native Sun Community Power Development
New Energy Economy
New Jersey Highlands Coalition
NJ Association Environmental Communion
Northern NJ NOW. And North Jersey Sierra
Group
Occidental Arts and Ecology Center
One Sotheby's International Realty
Orange RAPP
Our Revolution Ocean County, NJ
PASUP (Pittsburghers Against Single Use
Plastic0
People for a Healthy Environment
People's Organization for Progress
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Plastic Pollution Coalition
Presente.org/Alianza Americas
Princeton Student Climate Initiative
Progressive Democrats of America
Property Rights and Pipeline Center
Public Goods Institute
Ramapo Munsee Nation
Research and Development Resources
ReThink Energy Action Fund
Retiree/Community Volunteer
RGISC Inc dba Rio Grande International
Study Center

San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper
San Francisco Bay Physicians for Social
Responsibility
SanDiego350
Save Our Illinois Land
Science and Environmental Health Network
Seeding Sovereignty
Skylands Group-Sierra Club NJ Chapter
Society of native nations
Solar Bear
Stand.earth
Stepping Stones Resources Inc.
Stone Crab Alliance
Taproot Earth
Texas Campaign for the Environment
Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility
The Last Plastic Straw
The Vessel Project of Louisiana
Thrive at Life: Working Solutions
Toxic Free NC
Turtle Island Restoration Network
Waterspirit
We Want Green Too
Zero Waste Ithaca