

Thousands of Miles of Pipeline Trying to Push CO2 Underground

Analysis by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#)

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- › Thousands of miles of pipeline are currently in use, and more are planned to transport highly acidic liquified carbon dioxide (CO₂) from ethanol plants to deep well injection sites where CO₂ is currently used to increase oil production
- › A 2020 leak in a CO₂ pipeline in Biloxi, Mississippi, hospitalized 49 people, some of whom have permanent brain damage. The National Forest Service (NFS) proposed an amendment that would make it legal to run the pipelines through NFS land
- › Data show most capture facilities are over budget and ineffective with underperformance ranging from 36% to 50% in the U.S., Canada and Western Australia. The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis calls the plan "wildly unrealistic"
- › Additionally, the oil industry is slated to receive \$173 billion in taxpayer subsidies over the next 12 years for accepting delivery of CO₂ deep well injection they use to extract more oil

According to the globalists, climate change is the No. 1 threat to humanity. They propose radical quality-of-life sacrifices, and the total relinquishment of privacy and freedom is necessary to offset climate change and save humankind. For example, in December 2020,¹ Germany's Health Minister Karl Lauterbach proclaimed that addressing climate change will require restrictions on personal freedom, like those that were implemented to "flatten the curve" of COVID-19.

At roughly the same time, Energy Now reports “In December 2020, then President-Elect Joe Biden said, “We’re in a crisis. Just like we need to be a unified nation to respond to COVID-19, we need a unified national response to climate change.”²

Climate change is being used to explain food shortages, justify the need for people to move from the countryside and suburbs into smart cities, and promote the replacement of beef with fake meat and insects. Whether it makes sense or not, carbon restrictions, dietary controls, energy control and climate change are increasingly being tied together.

At the heart of climate change is carbon dioxide (CO₂). According to NASA,³ the carbon dioxide content in the atmosphere has gone up by 50% in less than 200 years, which climate change activists say caused atmospheric warming and climate change. NASA also states that “the data illustrate both natural factors and human actions of CO₂.”

Big Green Answer to CO₂ Sequestration

The big green answer to reducing carbon emissions is to sequester it in pipelines that traverse the U.S. through small towns and farmlands and then inject it into the earth. Unlike natural CO₂ sequestration into the soil that occurs with regenerative farming practices, globalists plan for these pipelines to carry liquified CO₂ that is supposedly captured and stored from ethanol plants.⁴

Where the new pipelines will travel is still a question. The National Forest Service (NFS) has proposed amending regulations that prohibit exclusive and perpetual use and occupancy of national forest lands with an exemption for carbon capture and storage.⁵ They identified possible sources as “emissions from industrial facilities, energy production, and direct air capture from the atmosphere.” The proposed amendment includes:⁶

“Authorizing carbon capture and storage on NFS lands would support the Administration's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent below the 2005 levels by 2030.”

To build the underground storage, June Sekera, a research fellow with Boston University, believes a lot of trees would need to be cleared from the national forest land. Bruce Robertson, independent energy finance analyst, told NPR⁷ that the capture-and-storage process doesn't always work. "They are not capturing at the rates they said they would capture, and they don't store at the rate they were supposed to store," he said.

The Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis undertook a study⁸ of 13 carbon capture projects that are active worldwide. This reportedly amounts to 55% of the current global operational capacity. The report found that most of them did not reach their emission reduction targets and were over budget.

Underperformance ranged from 36% to 50% in facilities in the U.S., Canada, and Western Australia. Only two gas processing projects in Norway "demonstrated what could be called success, which was mostly due to the country's unique regulatory environment for oil and gas companies."⁹

Fierce local opposition caused one company to cancel a proposed pipeline that would have traveled through parts of Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska and South Dakota. Sekera questions the proposed NFS amendment to allow storage in NFS-protected land, saying that it may be "an end run around local towns and counties. And it's a much simpler and way less expensive route."¹⁰

The proposed amendment is open for public comments until January 2, 2024.¹¹ In an effort to offer a positive perspective, the press officer for the NFS told NPR in an email that the rule change would allow the NFS to consider proposals and that any proposal would still pass through a secondary screening. At least, that is what is in the current proposed amended regulation.

Dangers Related to Carbon Dioxide Pipelines

The Biden administration gave the industry billions in tax incentives and has directly invested in the plan to trap carbon dioxide from smokestacks and transport it to areas where it could be stored underground. However, the CO₂ would need to be shipped

thousands of miles in newly installed pipelines through many communities that are pushing back against the project.

The argument is that the pipelines would carry pollution and there are concerns about safety.¹² Presidential candidate Robert Kennedy Jr. described some of those dangers in a presentation sponsored by the Des Moines Register.¹³

Kennedy described that when CO₂ is liquified for transport through the pipeline it becomes highly acidic, which can corrode the pipe. These pipelines must be coated with expensive chrome to reduce the potential for leakage. However, as has been demonstrated in current CO₂ pipelines, they do leak.

When these pipelines leak, it creates a dangerous area for people and wildlife. In 2020, a leak in Biloxi, Mississippi, caused 49 people to be hospitalized, some of whom now have permanent brain damage. Victoria Bogdan Tejeda, attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity, told NPR that pipeline ruptures pose a threat to humans and wildlife. "The thing about CO₂ is it's a deadly asphyxiant, whether it leaks near a town or whether it leaks near a forest," she said.¹⁴

Because cell service in the national forests is notoriously bad, it can make it more difficult for people to get help if they find themselves in trouble. CO₂ is an odorless gas that can travel for miles. Kennedy described the scene in Biloxi, Mississippi, when the engines on the ambulances died because there was no oxygen at ground level to support the internal combustion engines.¹⁵

The Question Is – Who Benefits?

The report from the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis noted:¹⁶

"In addition to being wildly unrealistic as a climate solution, based on historical trajectories, much of this captured carbon will be used for enhanced oil recovery ... carbon capture technology is not new and is not a climate solution. CCS has been around for decades, mostly serving the oil industry through enhanced oil recovery."

Three-quarters of all the CO₂ captured each year is currently reinjected in oil fields to help push more oil out of the ground. Although national governments are relying on carbon capture to get to Net Zero, “This is unfortunate because, at this stage of the game, it simply won’t work.”¹⁷

As in most situations, to find the reason behind decisions, it helps to follow the money. Kennedy described how 45 out of 56 counties through which one pipeline flows protested to the Iowa Utility Board.¹⁸ However, the Iowa Utility Board is appointed by the governor of the state, who took \$163,000 from Bruce Rastetter, co-founder of Summit Carbon Solutions.¹⁹

The governor appointed the two controlling members of the Utility Board who then fast-tracked the project. But that’s just a drop in the proverbial bucket to the \$173 billion in taxpayer subsidies the oil industry will receive over 12 years for accepting the deep well injection of CO₂ they use to ramp up oil production.

Kennedy notes that taxpayers pay \$5.2 trillion each year in subsidies to the carbon industry.²⁰ In other words, this administration is subsidizing the fossil fuel industry to extract more oil from the ground in their green effort to lower CO₂ emissions. If it weren’t so convoluted, it might be funny.

Kennedy also notes²¹ two things that are wrong with what’s happening in Iowa. The pipeline system is supposed to be isolating CO₂ to reduce climate change. Yet, the Republicans in Iowa who have taken money from Rastetter to support the pipeline don’t believe in climate change.

Additionally, as the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis noted, the pipelines don’t work. There are 3,000 miles of CO₂ pipelines that already exist. ADM has a pipeline built in 2017 in Illinois that Kennedy states has only captured 3% of the carbon the company is emitting into the environment.

Ethanol Is Not the Answer

While the fossil fuel industry lobbies for subsidies to transport CO₂ to oil fields where it can be used to drive out more oil, the ethanol industry argues for CO₂ pipelines needed to capture the gas and ensure the industry's survival.²² Some believe that ethanol may be the answer to sustainable aviation fuel as burning it could cut greenhouse gas emissions, but producing it is another matter.

The current administration has committed to producing 3 billion gallons of sustainable aviation fuel each year by 2030 and 35 billion gallons by 2050.²³ Burning the fuel could help reduce carbon emissions from the airline industry while supporting corn farmers that supply the raw material. The sticking point is that producing ethanol increases emissions.

When it's used as fuel, ethanol burns cleaner than gasoline. However, producing it is more environmentally costly. A report published by Reuters in September 2022 showed that ethanol production more than doubles CO₂ emissions per gallon of fuel than oil refineries.²⁴ However, Reuters retracted the article, saying their interpretation of the data was flawed.²⁵

Ethanol proponents responded that Reuters was misinterpreting how the true carbon benefits of ethanol are interpreted, saying, "Like other erroneous attacks on ethanol's carbon benefits, the Reuters article failed to look at the full carbon lifecycle for ethanol, while also failing to make appropriate comparisons amongst different fuel types."²⁶

But a five-year study²⁷ published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Science (PNAS) in February 2022 came down hard on corn-based ethanol, concluding that CO₂ emissions are at least 24% greater than gasoline. They wrote:²⁸

"These changes increased annual nationwide fertilizer use by 3 to 8%, increased water quality degradants by 3 to 5%, and caused enough domestic land use change emissions such that the carbon intensity of corn ethanol produced under the RFS is no less than gasoline and likely at least 24% higher."

In other words, despite the ethanol lobby's strong protestations, it is far from carbon neutral. In 2014,²⁹ the Environmental Working Group (EWG) released a report that

concluded ethanol is worse for the environment than gasoline. One of the primary reasons is that the industry has failed to consider how land use changes carbon dioxide sequestration and emissions.

According to the EWG, more than 8 million acres of grassland and wetlands were converted to corn between 2008 and 2011. This change resulted in annual emissions of 85 million to 236 million metric tonnes of CO₂. Additionally, when experts estimated ethanol's influence on the environment, they failed to consider the water required to grow corn.

“Moreover, both the GREET and EPA calculations ignore water constraints. A 2013 analysis by agricultural economists Farzad Taheripour, Thomas Hertel and Jing Liu ... at Purdue University also found that ignoring water constraints underestimates emissions from land-use change by 28 percent.”

Capture May Not Just Be Ineffective – It May Worsen the Situation

As Kennedy noted, fertile farmland may be sacrificed for carbon capture and sequestration projects that are being implemented in South Dakota, North Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota and Nebraska. The proponents want to guarantee that no problems will occur with underground water sources or other potentially hazardous leaks, even though one was detected in Biloxi. Kennedy describes how the government is acquiring the land for the pipeline:³⁰

“They are endangering the people of Iowa, and they are making billions of dollars for the oil industry and Big Ag. They are doing this by changing the law to allow themselves the power of eminent domain. These farmers do not want the line going through their fields.

The Fifth Amendment of the Constitution says that the government cannot take your property without due process and just compensation. They can only take it for a public purpose. But this is not a public purpose. This is a private profit-

making purpose. The only way they're getting away with this is by using a campaign finance system that is just a system of legalized bribery.”

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