

Chris Golden, Operations Manager
Equinor USA
2107 City West Boulevard, Suite 100
Houston, Texas 77042

September 27, 2022

Dear Mr. Golden,

This is to serve as a request that Equinor USA cease plans to invest in CCS, CCUS, and hydrogen development in the United States. Research has shown that hydrogen and CCUS implementation would lock economically suffering regions such as the Ohio River Valley into a fossil fuel economy that has fostered declines in jobs, quality of life and population for decades. Carbon capture and blue hydrogen development means [more drilling, more compressor stations, more trucking, and more fracking waste](#). These technologies would subject communities to increased water and air pollution and increased fracking operations, which have already proven disastrous for our environment and public health.

Carbon pipelines are leak-prone and dangerous. An entire community was poisoned after the February 2022 explosion of Denbury Resources's CO2 pipeline in Satartia, Mississippi. This rupture released a noxious, green fog that poisoned dozens in their cars and homes, leaving many hospitalized and some with permanent injuries. Existing natural gas pipelines [cannot safely transport](#) carbon dioxide. New pipelines will have to be constructed to carry captured CO2 emissions to storage caverns. These pipelines are volatile and unsafe: condensed CO2 can corrode steel, particularly if exposed to water, increasing the risk of dangerous leaks, ruptures, and explosions. Furthermore, the CO2 and natural gas permitting and public comment process is far from transparent, whether it is intrastate Public Utility Commission (PUC) pipelines or interstate transmission lines permitted by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). A recent report by Maryland Congressman Jamie Raskin found that FERC permits pipelines at an astounding 99% rate, calling into question the notion that pipelines are "proposals" with a reasonable probability of being rejected.

Also, carbon capture [likely won't address](#) other hazardous air pollutants from carbon-emitting facilities. Depending on the type of carbon capture technology that is used, power plants and industrial facilities could continue to spew nitrogen oxide, volatile organic compounds, and other health-endangering pollutants into the air. The demand for methane that new blue hydrogen facilities would create would also mean more air and water pollution from fracking operations.

That's why carbon capture and blue hydrogen technologies are an affront to environmental justice. Communities [already burdened](#) by pollution from the oil and gas industry are finding themselves in the crosshairs for hydrogen and carbon capture development, which would exacerbate existing risks and introduce new threats, ironically in the name of environmental justice. Such a buildout would impose new pollution and safety hazards on Black, Brown, and

Indigenous communities already suffering the disproportionate and deadly impacts of environmental racism.

Ultimately, the hydrogen hub would do a [poor job of capturing climate-warming carbon](#). For one, carbon capture does nothing to reduce the “upstream” emissions that are produced when natural gas is extracted and transported. Frack pads and compressor stations release huge amounts of methane into the atmosphere. And, carbon capture technologies are only expected to capture a maximum of 90% of plant and factory emissions. Existing pilot projects often capture far less than that. Exxon’s Shute Creek project in Southwest Wyoming is perhaps the best example of over-promising and under-delivering. This project has only captured 34% of the CO₂ it was designed for and only 3% of that has actually been sequestered underground.

The majority of captured carbon is used to pump more oil out of the ground. Almost all existing CCS projects are tied to “enhanced oil recovery,” or EOR, the process of injecting captured carbon emissions into nearly empty oil wells to stimulate additional production. Currently, EOR is the primary market driver for captured CO₂ and the impetus behind expansion of the [45Q tax credit](#) for carbon capture. EOR actually increases net carbon emissions by making oil extraction and combustion more efficient.

Lastly, hydrogen and carbon capture technologies are wildly expensive, and the cost would fall largely on the public. Developing these technologies would raise prices for ratepayers and taxpayers. According to [federal estimates](#), hydrogen hubs could cost as much as \$230 billion just to construct. And retrofitting just the nation’s coal and gas-fired power plants with carbon capture and storage technology would add about \$100 billion per year—\$1 trillion over 10 years—to Americans’ electric bills, an increase of 25%. Efforts to expand the [45Q tax credit](#) for carbon capture and storage would worsen the burden on taxpayers.

Hydrogen and carbon capture development would also [fail to stimulate major job growth or prosperity](#). Except for a temporary blip in construction jobs, which if the gas transmission pipeline development is any indicator would not employ Appalachians, the hub would do nothing to create new permanent and livable wage jobs.

Transitioning to renewable energy is a far cheaper and more effective way of decarbonizing our region’s economy, and would create thousands of well-paying jobs in the process.

Ultimately, blue hydrogen and carbon capture technologies are false climate solutions. Research shows that these technologies are the [worst way to decarbonize](#). Carbon capture and the blue hydrogen production it would support have not been proven effective at scale. In fact, carbon capture hasn’t worked for 40 years, and it may not ever. The technology has been in development for more than four decades and has received over 15 years of government subsidies for research and development. Yet, today, it’s still not used in any large American power plant.

Fossil fuel companies like Equinor are pitching carbon capture and blue hydrogen to the public as effective means of curbing carbon emissions. In reality, it's a scheme to sway the public in favor of climate-harming technologies whose real purpose is to maintain the industry's bottom line. We can't afford to kick the can down the road by investing in dirty technologies greenwashed by industry and investors—the time for investment in truly clean, cost-effective technologies is now.

We are confident that investment by Equinor in carbon capture and hydrogen will continue to bring harm to our environment and our communities. Therefore, please do not move forward with this type of development in the Ohio River Valley and beyond.

Respectfully,

Jill A. Hunkler
Ohio Valley Allies, Executive Director

Leatra Harper
FreshWater Accountability Project, Executive Director

Teresa Mills
Buckeye Environmental Network, Executive Director

Anais Peterson
Earthworks, Petrochemicals Campaigner

Gillian Graber
Protect PT (Penn-Trafford, PA), Executive Director

Matthew Mahelik, Ph. D.
Breathe Project, Executive Director

Anne Caruso
Cleveland Environmental Action Network

Linda New
West Shore FACT

Bill Lyons, Co-Organizer
Columbus Community Bill of Rights, Co-Organizer

Shannon Smith,
FracTracker Alliance, Executive Director