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Greenie Opinion: “Big Oil’s carbon capture tax credit betrayal”... Mostly betrays the opinion contributor’s ignorance.

David Middleton / August 2, 2018

Guest commentary by David Middleton

“

[Big Oil’s carbon capture tax credit betrayal](#)

BY JOHN NOEL, OPINION CONTRIBUTOR — 07/30/18 09:30 AM EDT

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED BY CONTRIBUTORS ARE THEIR OWN AND NOT THE VIEW OF THE HILL

Instead of finding ways to responsibly reduce production, the fossil fuel industry has decided carbon capture is the preferred way to tackle their climate pollution.

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International Energy Agency, upwards of 90 percent of these projects will simply sell the captured carbon back to oil companies to be injected underground to coax more oil to the surface.

Over time this process, buoyed by a consistent supply of subsidized CO2, could unlock 81 billion barrels of oil. No wonder the fossil fuel industry is so enthusiastic and its allies in Congress are finally willing to acknowledge carbon emissions are a thing we have to deal with.

[...]

Congress should conduct an investigation into the integrity of the Section 45Q tax credit, including which companies claimed what, when and why the regulations were ignored. This is basic corporate accountability and oversight necessary to ensure the credit doesn't continue to favor enhanced oil recovery companies and that the public maintains trust in the process of storing captured carbon safely underground at scale.

John Noel is the National Oil & Gas Program director for advocacy organization Clean Water Action.

The Hill

"Instead of finding ways to responsibly reduce production, the fossil fuel industry has decided carbon capture is the preferred way to tackle their climate pollution."...

Note #1 to Mr. Noël:

The fossil fuel industry is composed of "businesses." Businesses exist for one reason: to generate profits for their owners. Many fossil fuel industry businesses are "oil companies." Oil companies produce crude oil, natural gas, natural gas liquids, etc. This is called "production." Generally speaking, oil companies have to spend a lot of money to establish production. Oil companies then exchange their "production" for "money." If oil companies receive more money than what they spent on finding and producing their "production," they can generate something called "a net profit." Are you still

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of finding ways to responsibly reduce production."

There is no way for an oil company to "responsibly reduce production." Even in times of falling oil & gas prices, there is no responsible way to reduce production. Oil companies, particularly publicly traded oil companies, have a fiduciary responsibility to maximize production, to the extent they have the resources to do so. During price collapses, oil companies have less money to spend on new drilling and this ultimately leads to declining production. However, during periods of low prices, oil companies attempt to maximize existing production, while spending as little money as possible. This is to ensure that they maintain a positive operating cash flow. While unprofitable companies can remain in business for long periods of time; companies with negative operating cash flows tend to have very short lifespans.

[Note #2 to Mr. Noël:](#)

There's no such thing as "climate pollution."

[Note #3 to Mr. Noël: "SACROC"](#)

"

SACROC

Discovered in 1948, the SACROC unit is one of the largest and oldest oil fields in the United States using carbon dioxide flooding technology. The field is comprised of approximately 50,000 acres located in the Permian Basin in Scurry County, Texas. Kinder Morgan owns an approximate 97 percent working interest in SACROC and has expanded the development of the carbon dioxide project initiated by previous owners and increased production over the last several years.

In 2016, SACROC produced approximately 29,300 barrels of oil per day, and NGL production averaged approximately 20,900 barrels per day. Kinder Morgan continues to effectively develop this mature field through innovative use of seismic data, lateral drilling and advanced conformance techniques.

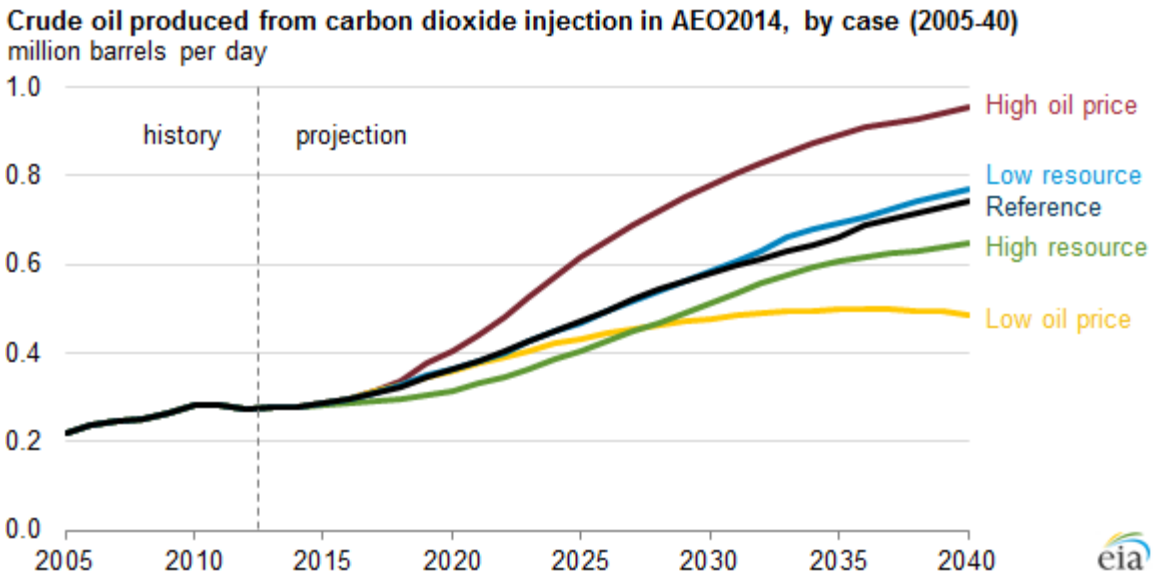
[Kinder Morgan](#)

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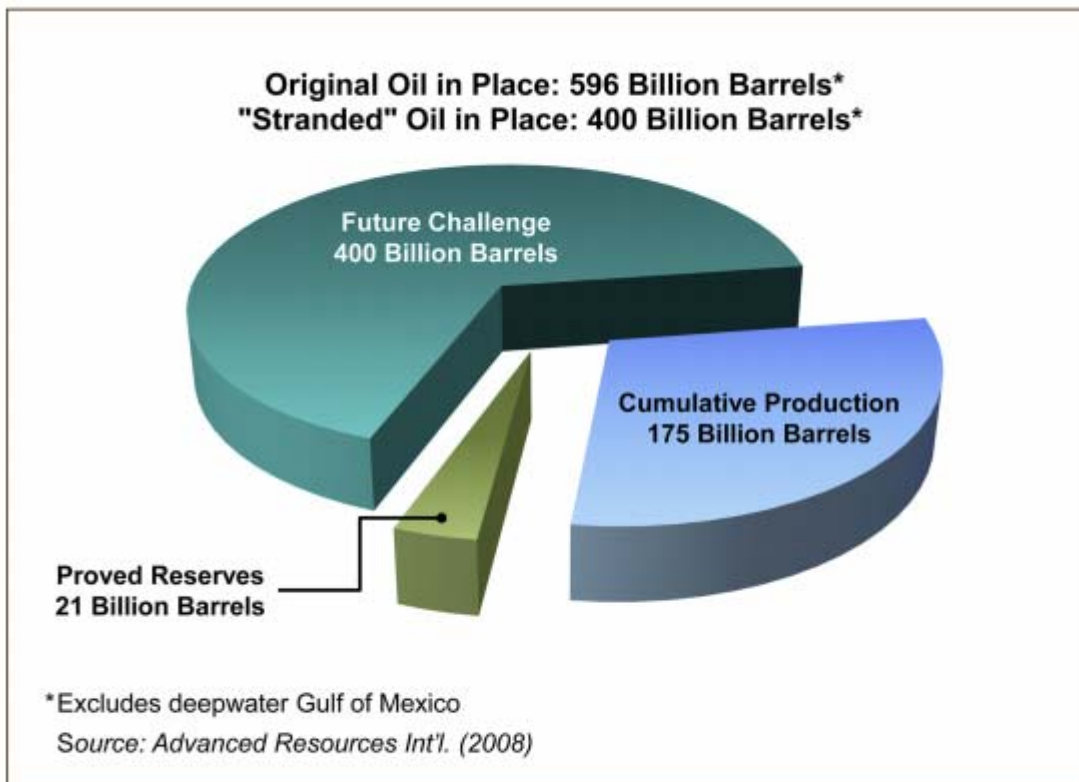
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US EIA

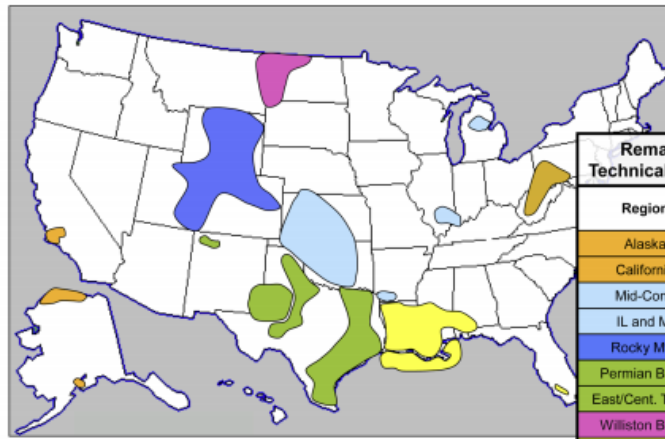
The US Department of Rick Perry, I mean Energy, estimates that CO₂ EOR could recover about 85 billion barrels of oil from existing U.S. oil fields:



Large volumes of domestic oil remain stranded after primary/secondary recovery.

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Potential Technically Recoverable Incremental Oil with "best practices" CO₂ EOR Technology



Source: ARI, February 2009

| Remaining Oil in Place and Technically Recoverable Oil (BBIs) | | |
|---|-------|-------------------------|
| Region | ROIP* | Technically Recoverable |
| Alaska | 45.0 | 12.4 |
| California | 57.3 | 6.3 |
| Mid-Cont. | 65.6 | 10.6 |
| IL and MI | 11.5 | 1.2 |
| Rocky Mts. | 22.6 | 3.9 |
| Permian Basin | 61.7 | 15.9 |
| East/Cent. Texas | 73.6 | 17.6 |
| Williston Basin | 9.4 | 2.5 |
| Gulf Coast | 27.5 | 7.0 |
| LA Offshore | 15.7 | 5.8 |
| Appalachia | 10.1 | 1.6 |
| Total | 400 | 84.8 |

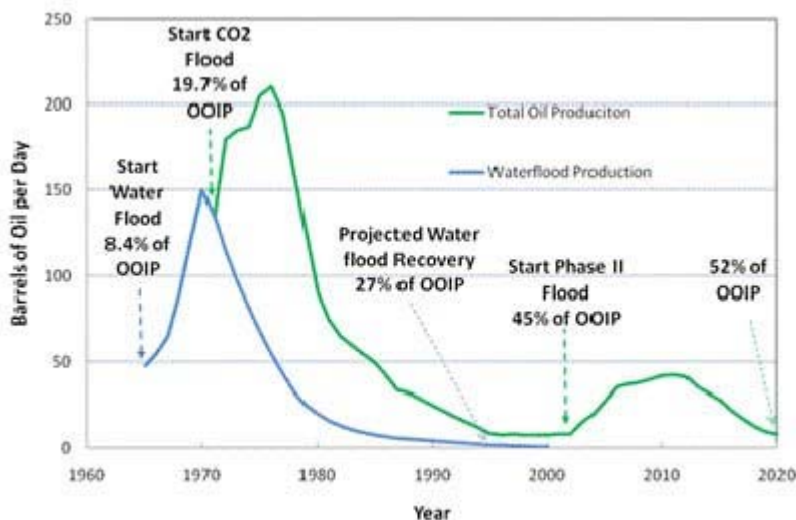
* Remaining Oil in Place

Producible if costs, oil price and risks justify investment

US DOE

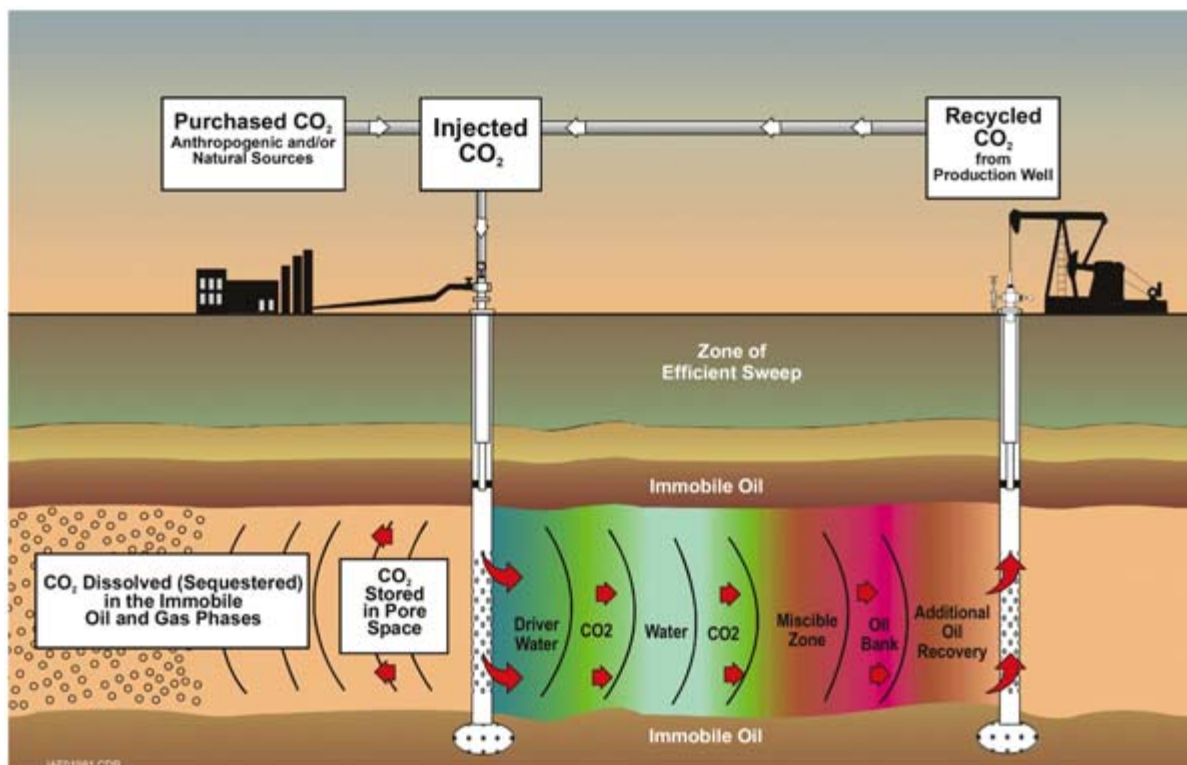
Since 1972, over 175 million metric tons of CO₂ have been injected into the SACROC reservoir; there has never been any evidence of leakage.

When the injection began, total recovery was less than 20% of the original oil in place (SACROC was discovered in 1948). The CO₂ EOR has led to nearly a 50% recovery.



The field is currently producing almost 30,000 bbl of oil and 21,000 bbl of NGL per day.

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Source: Advanced Resources International and Melzer Consulting, Optimization of CO₂ Storage in CO₂ Enhanced Oil Recovery Projects, prepared for UK Department of Energy & Climate Change, November 2010.

SACROC Safety Record

“

Is CO₂-EOR safe? CO₂ is non-flammable and nonexplosive. It is not defined as a hazardous substance, but a Class L, highly volatile, nonflammable/nontoxic material (CFRg, CFRc, Appendix B, Table 4). (WRI, 2008)

Operating for 40 years, CO₂ pipelines have an excellent safety record with no serious injuries or fatalities ever reported. Today there are over 3,900 miles of pipeline transporting CO₂ for EOR use at wells producing 281,000 (MIT 2011) barrels of oil per day. The industry has operated for decades under existing policy and regulatory oversight at the local, state and federal level.

Geologic storage of CO₂ is also regulated under existing policies and regulations. CO₂ is contained by a series of physical and chemical trapping mechanisms over time. Most formations that hold oil for thousands of years also have the ability to contain CO₂. As an example, research by the

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leakage (TBEG). Experience from this decades-old CO₂-EOR project and current commercial-scale CO₂-EOR projects today shows that CO₂-EOR can be performed in a manner that is safe for both human health and the environment.

Center for Climate and Energy Solutions

From the University of Texas Bureau of Economic Geology's Gulf Coast Carbon Center

“

Conclusions

Our field-based study of shallow (<500 ft) groundwater overlying and within an ~1,000 mi² area of SACROC shows no impacts to drinking water quality as a result of over 35 years of deep subsurface (6,000-7,000 ft) CO₂ injection. Modeling of stable carbon isotopes (δ13C) of injectate CO₂ gas, DIC in shallow and deep groundwater, carbonate mineral matrix, and soil zone CO₂ suggests that no significant injectate CO₂ has been introduced to the shallow groundwater.

Interpretation of groundwater flow regime, and concentrations of major ions and trace metals, indicate mixing of water types and water-rock interaction (i.e. dedolomitization) as major controls on groundwater geochemistry at SACROC. We think the popular assumption that carbonate parameters alone can be used as indicators of groundwater quality over a GS site is too simple, especially in complex hydrogeologic settings. We emphasize the importance of defining the regional groundwater system to (1) understand how it might react to introduction of CO₂ and (2) identify the parameters best suited for monitoring over GS sites. Research is ongoing to define and group major geochemical aquifer systems and to assess the protocol that would be appropriate for each group.

Aquifer sampling and analysis of site-specific conditions may be needed to understand how an aquifer system will react to CO₂ and the parameters best-suited for monitoring at

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For a pdf of the complete report, [please click here](#).

Since John Noël is the National Oil & Gas Program director for advocacy organization Clean Water Action, he should appreciate the fact that “no significant injectate CO₂ has been introduced to the shallow groundwater” over SACROC.

While CO₂ injection is not a hazard-free operation (no drilling operation is hazard-free)...

Operating for 40 years, CO₂ pipelines have an excellent safety record with no serious injuries or fatalities ever reported. Today there are over 3,900 miles of pipeline transporting CO₂ for EOR use at wells producing 281,000 (MIT 2011) barrels of oil per day. The industry has operated for decades under existing policy and regulatory oversight at the local, state and federal level.

Section 45Q tax credit

If the tax credit is Mr. Noël's concern, tuff schist. CO₂ EOR operations are expensive. If **the government** wants oil companies to spend more of their money on CO₂ EOR operations than would be supported by current economics, they need to provide an incentive. So... since **the government** thinks that carbon sequestration and enhanced oil recovery are good ideas, they devised a tax credit to encourage oil companies to spend more of their money on CO₂ EOR operations. Maybe Mr. Noël would be happier if **the government** ended all subsidies.

The Section 45Q tax credit was established in 2008, it was enhanced in 2018 in an unusually bipartisan fashion.

“
A bipartisan group of Senators, spearheaded by Heidi Heitkamp (D-ND), John Barrasso (R-WY), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) and Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), led the effort to enhance the 45Q credit. Their bill, S. 1535, the Furthering carbon capture, Utilization, Technology, Underground storage, and Reduced Emissions Act (FUTURE Act), was included in Senate Finance Committee Chairperson Orrin Hatch's (R-UT) larger tax extenders bill, S. 2256, before finally gaining inclusion in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018.

The Nickel Report

Mr. Noël seems to take issue with the fact that the “EPA has no record that any of the captured carbon is actually contained in “secure geologic storage,” a condition necessary to qualify for the tax credit in the first place”... If it's been pumped into an oil reservoir, it is, by definition, contained in “secure geologic storage”... Because the oil was contained in “secure geologic storage,” before oil companies drilled holes into the “secure geologic storage.”

However, the Treasury Department should get together with the EPA, DOI and DOE and issue regulations which clearly define “secure geologic storage.”

“
Section 45Q continues to require that carbon oxides be placed in “secure geological storage” to qualify for the credit. The enacted language did not include a provision, championed by Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND), to require the Secretary of Treasury to issue regulations by the end of the year to define “secure geological storage” and to define it in the case of carbon oxide used for EOR to encompass reporting under Subpart UU of the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Greenhouse Gas Reporting Rule. Since its original enactment in 2008, Section 45Q has included a requirement that the Treasury issue regulations defining the term, in consultation with EPA, the Department of Energy and the Department of Interior. Treasury issued guidance in 2009, but has never issued regulations. This has led to some confusion that needs to be eliminated.

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Mr. Noël seems to want to blame everyone not responsible for this oversight. He blames the oil companies, he blames Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND). I'm surprised he didn't blame the Trump Administration. If anyone deserves blame, it's the Obama Maladministration... Section 45Q in 2009. The requirement that the Treasury issue regulations defining the term, in consultation with EPA, the Department of Energy and the Department of Interior was ignored through the entire 8 years of the Obama Maladministration... But somehow that's the oil industry's fault or John Hoeven's fault?

“
The latest update from IRS reported that 59,767,924 metric tons of CO₂ were claimed under 45Q as of May 14, 2018.²⁰ The claimed credits are valued between \$597 million and \$1.3 billion.²¹ EPA's Greenhouse Gas Reporting Database, however, reports only 3 million metric tons of sequestered carbon.²²

John Noël, Clean Water Action/Clean Water Fund

[Note #4 to Mr. Noël:](#)

59,767,924 metric tons of CO₂ equals 16,285,538 metric tons of C. So, the EPA is only missing 13,285,538 metric tons of sequestered carbon, as opposed to the 56,767,924 metric tons you seem to be implying. Unless, of course, you were using CO₂ and C interchangeably.

The odds are that if the Section 45Q tax credit claims were bogus, the Obama Maladministration IRS would have nailed some oil companies' hides to the wall... Unless they were too busy harassing conservative political groups.

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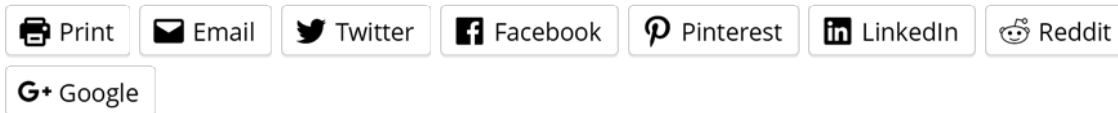
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Carbon capture and storage - the Edsel of energy policies

Guest essay by Steve Goreham Originally published in The Washington Times The war on climate change has produced many October 16, 2013 In "Carbon sequestration"



"Negative" Emissions: The Emperor's New Clothes September 6, 2018 In "Carbon sequestration"



Carbon Sequestration: Distorted Policy Results From Distorted IPCC Science April 20, 2015 In "Carbon sequestration"

August 2, 2018 in Carbon sequestration.

Related posts

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exhalations
inspires Earth-
based CO2
removal

Clothes

1

← [Peter Gleick: Severe Climate Change is Inevitable – But Its Still Not Too Late](#)

[Michael Mann: Will the USA Join the Green Energy Revolution or Fall Behind?](#) →

42 thoughts on “Greenie Opinion: “Big Oil’s carbon capture tax credit betrayal”... Mostly betrays the opinion contributor’s ignorance.”

Alan Tomalty August 2, 2018 at 11:38 am

What the ***k are we doing hiding the CO2 into the ground anyway? If the oil companies want to do it to produce more oil ; fine, but forcing everybody else to do it is nonsense. The atmosphere needs more CO2 NOT less. The EPA CO2 endangerment finding is the greatest threat to the survival of the US.

Dave Burton August 2, 2018 at 12:03 pm

It is a shame that so much of the [precious air fertilizer](#) is pumped into the ground and lost to the biosphere.

David Middleton August 2, 2018 at 1:10 pm

It’s pumped into the ground to produce more oil to generate more precious air fertilizer.

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August 2, 2018 at 1:21 pm

What's the carbon on carbon return? The greenies no doubt want it to be negative.

Paul August 2, 2018 at 11:39 am

Sock-it-too-them!

Tom Abbott August 2, 2018 at 11:58 am

John Noel needs to go to the "Middleton School of Oil and Gas Drilling" before he writes anything else about the subject. 😊

Bruce Cobb August 2, 2018 at 12:01 pm

The 45Q tax credit is an abomination. I'm surprised Republicans can't seem to see that, and haven't already done away with it.

David Middleton August 2, 2018 at 1:13 pm

Republicans generally want more oil production.
Democrats generally want carbon sequestration.

It's the perfect bipartisan compromise.

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is most voters/sheep.

EOR is a very good thing. CO2 injection is a very viable method of EOR. It makes economic sense when prices are high, and when prices are high it needs no subsidies.

Giving companies tax credits for economically successful ideas which they were going to do anyways is the absolute worst kind of corporate welfare, and is even more pathetic when the only real reason it is happening is that the recipients of the corporate welfare are going to kick back a chunk of it to the congresscritters who voted for it.

David Middleton August 2, 2018 at 4:55 pm

CO2 EOR isn't usually economically viable. The reason for the tax credit is to expand the economic viability.

That said, I'd be fine with eliminating all actual subsidies.

Crispin in Waterloo August 3, 2018 at 11:47 am

Yeah – it is funny when you don't need any subsidy on removal of CO2 from the atmosphere and people do it anyway.

tty August 2, 2018 at 12:06 pm

Oil and gas fields are about the *only* geologically safe places to sequester large quantities of CO2. They are proven to be leak-proof by the fact that the oil/gas is still there.

Something that should be intuitively obvious to casual observers... LOL!

eck August 2, 2018 at 6:41 pm

LOL here too!!

rocketscientist August 2, 2018 at 12:57 pm

IMO the best place to sequester CO2 is in flora.

Fernando L August 2, 2018 at 2:08 pm

Overpressured saline aquifers are good CO2 storage sites. The water has a lot of dissolved methane, so it's feasible to displace it and sell the natural gas.

Dr. Bob August 2, 2018 at 12:28 pm

The only good CO2 in the eyes of a Greenie is no CO2. They hate everything about CO2 is if it is Evil Personified. You shouldn't produce it, you can't store it, and even the greening of the earth due to more CO2 seems to offend the people that claim they want to Green the Earth. Go figure. These people can't come up with anything nice to say about any CO2. I wonder why they don't stop breathing, but they aren't smart enough to know that their own existence depends on CO2 and the whole carbon cycle.

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Many don't hate CO2, what they hate are the companies and the economic system that produces it. Cuban CO2 probably gets a free pass.

paul courtney August 2, 2018 at 5:16 pm

climanrecon: Excellent!

Johann Wundersamer August 3, 2018 at 8:24 am

as venezuelan CO2 gets a free pass.

as in 'long passed'.

David L. Hagen August 2, 2018 at 12:42 pm

An excellent post and overview.

Tertiary oil recovery (via CO2 Enhanced Oil Recovery into conventional fields) and Quaternary Oil Recovery (by CO2 from Residual Oil Zones (ROZ)) together have potential to about DOUBLE conventional oil recovery from Primary (pumping) and Secondary (waterflood) oil recovery. That is vitally needed to sustain our economies until we develop alternative sustainable fuel/transport energy. e.g. see [Residual Oil Zones](https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/presentation/677b/19ddf565a03c157df4740e930657a2388857.pdf) by Trentham

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/presentation/677b/19ddf565a03c157df4740e930657a2388857.pdf>

Sid Abma August 2, 2018 at 12:43 pm

We want to convert the CO2 into useful-saleable products. We want

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the economy.

Jeff in Calgary August 2, 2018 at 1:40 pm

CO2 is an extremely low energy molecule. I don't think it will be good for anything. Plants can only use it by combining it with copious amounts of solar energy.

Maybe we could do that. Build fake plants that use solar to produce coal from CO2. Kind of saves the need for batteries etc.

David L. Hagen August 2, 2018 at 6:12 pm

Jeff More CO2 is already "greening" the earth with ~ 30% higher biomass productivity. Great benefit for agriculture. Plants appear to be a thermostat for the earth – controlling the water cycle.

<https://phys.org/news/2018-04-vegetation-future.html>

GeONC August 2, 2018 at 12:51 pm

Brave words from Mr. Noel when he claims unnamed companies are violating regulations without informing us as to who they are and what regulations they have violated. Instead, we get vague references to that bete noir Exxon Mobil. C'mon John, be a standup guy and give us some specifics. Either have you some such information or you don't and you're worried about libeling someone if you do name names. I'm betting on option two.

climanrecon August 2, 2018 at 1:16 pm

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soldiers.

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Joel O'Bryan August 2, 2018 at 12:52 pm

I find it entertaining to go to the websites of green orgs like CWA and read the bios on the staff. Gives one an insight the perps at these NGOs that are advocating for destruction of our economy for no substantive purpose other than green virtue signalling and probably political ideology-driven agendas.

Here's Mr Johnny Noel's:

"John joined the organization in June 2014. He has since led campaigns on oil and gas wastewater disposal, investigated and exposed fracking and drinking water oversight failures, and researched the impacts of oil and gas industry money in politics. Prior to coming to Clean Water Action, John worked at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in the Office of Water on drinking water issues including the Underground Injection Control Program and the Permitting Guidance for Hydraulic Fracturing Activities using Diesel Fuels. John received a master's degree from American University's School of International Service in Global Environmental Policy."

source: <https://cleanwateraction.org/about/people/john-no%C3%AB>

<http://blog.cleanenergy.org/files/2018/05/IMG-0008.jpg>

Nashville resident Johnny Noel with his Tesla Model 3.

<http://blog.cleanenergy.org/files/2018/05/IMG-0009-300x225.jpg>

... and his license plate.

Further poking around Johnny's musing on the CWA website shows he was one triggered and Trump deranged puppy in the weeks and months after Trump's election and Scott Pruitt's nomination to the EPA Director job. Seems the Clean Power Plan was a big part of his advocacy during the Obama years, and his dismay obvious as it was about to put to the garbage can by the Trump Admin. It seems lost on him that the CPP would likely have never passed Supreme Court muster either, especially now with a conservative SCOTUS majority in place.

<https://www.cleanwateraction.org/author/john-no%C3%AB-oil-and-gas-campaigns-coordinator>

I'm guessing he wouldn't approve of my Arizona specialty license plate on my Chevy Silverado:

<https://s8.postimg.cc/bf3lbv611/IMG-6425.jpg>

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David Middleton August 2, 2018 at 1:09 pm

My Texas specialty plate says: DRLTDY... Because DRLNOW was already taken. And I have the Gadsden Flag plates.

Joel O'Bryan August 2, 2018 at 1:37 pm

Why not this?

<https://s8.postimg.cc/6faqhqadh>

[/Screen_Shot_2018-08-02_at_1.35.30_PM.png](#)

<http://www.txdmv.gov/motorists/license-plates/specialty-license-plates/item/2355-texas-oil-and-gas?ml=1>

David Middleton August 4, 2018 at 7:56 am

TEA Party + Drill Today = Double barrell in your face to the typical lib!

MarkW August 2, 2018 at 3:24 pm

Be careful there, the left is not only loony, they are getting violent as well:

<http://www.capecodtimes.com/news/20180731/woman-accused-of-hitting-car-in-hyannis-after-confrontation-over-trump-bumper-sticker>

Joel O'Bryan August 2, 2018 at 6:16 pm

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Bring it.

Johann Wundersamer August 3, 2018 at 9:01 am

330 reasons not to present decals on the hind side:

https://www.google.at/search?q=back+decal+truck+mine+is+feets+long&client=ms-android-samsung&prmd=isvn&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&fir=c4KOVbGjoVDsJM%253A%252C206u3GnNZB55QM%252C_%253BmQCIRs30hV917M%253A%252Cx69gcnNqpBJxpM%252C_%253B6-oP9iM4mCJeBM%253A%252CI-GvkBbjkzclpM%252C_%253BZVamgF2JnqIB_M%253A%252CqZ5cYARAS667EM%252C_%253BkziYQf2AHL7rRM%253A%252CqZ5cYARAS667EM%252C_%253B3HSMHHdgiRevHM%253A%252C7dyUQ7rCiEIKFM%252C_%253BK L9dsMAT-933wM%253A%252CqZ5cYARAS667EM%252C_%253Bfdt9a25i3VGygM%253A%252C6qmqNTkojVD15M%252C_%253BD8CjdvWSO1NjdM%253A%252CNqDg7OelCYY5bM%252C_%253BHaDs2mWaeLvtWM%253A%252C6qmqNTkojVD15M%252C_&usg=AFrqEzd8OfDMj5MYJlinAZR7PCi5hFEmDQ&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj0Yy7n9HcAhXoJJoKHYMhCX8Q7AI6BAgJEAI&biw=360&bih=560

John Garrett August 2, 2018 at 1:25 pm

The sainted Mencken labeled the U.S., "A commonwealth of morons."

Thanks to people like John Noel, I'm increasingly convinced the country has an endless supply of them.

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Johnny gets his electricity from the TVA, so he has his coal and nuclear powered Tesla to show his green virtue. And he has his second vacation home. And I'm guessing he is a private pilot.

No hypocrisy there.
/sarc

Cube August 2, 2018 at 4:19 pm

Its pretty clear that civilization is not a Darwinian survival trait. It allows for the growth of a never ending population of loonie parasitic leftists who would all starve to death if they had to survive on their own.

Jeff in Calgary August 2, 2018 at 2:19 pm

" Instead of finding ways to responsibly reduce production..."

Well, he has just given himself away as a hater of humanity. It CO2 driven global warming is an issue, all we need to do is control atmospheric CO2. But that is not what Mr. Noël wants. He want's less affordable energy production. That is already killing impoverished people in the developing world; now he wants to make it worse.

Joel O'Bryan August 2, 2018 at 3:07 pm

That line is merely more evidence of the inability to think critically and honestly by the Greens about their advocacy/positions.

It's not only in the developing world. The Sophie's choice of heat or eat is all too real for far too many in Western Europe and even in the USA.

eck August 2, 2018 at 6:47 pm

Mr. Noel is most likely a millennial or Gen-X person and thus knows squat about what a business is. We might forgive him except for....."So... Only a total fracking moron could write this phrase: "Instead of finding ways to responsibly reduce production.".....That about clinches it. A moron.

old construction worker August 3, 2018 at 9:44 am

"Tax credits recently finalized in Congress under Section 45Q will purportedly lead to an uptick in carbon capture projects that will help us bury more CO2 underground. But....." Oh Good Congress are picking winners and loser again and somehow we, as consumers , will pay for it in the end. No wonder the Republican from Florida wants a Carbon Tax. A Carbon Tax which would give the IRS and EPA even more power.

beng135 August 4, 2018 at 6:32 am

Thanks, David. Your energy posts are always informative.

Comments are closed.

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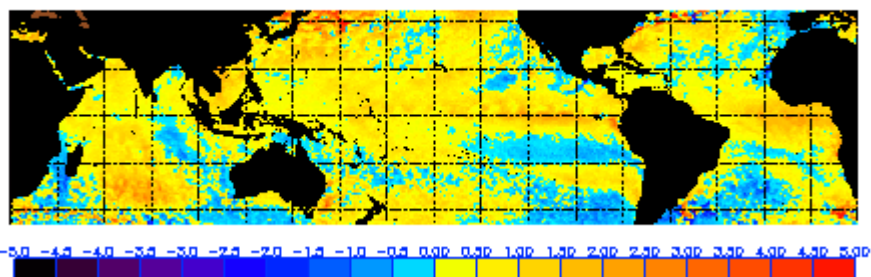
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