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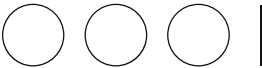
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Tomlinson: Carbon capture offers promise for Texas oil and gas companies' future



Chris Tomlinson, Staff writer

Updated: April 23, 2021 6:25 a.m.



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Linde engineer at the company's Port Arthur hydrogen refinery facility

Courtesy of Linde, Photographer / Courtesy of Linde

Big oil and gas companies recognize the reality of climate change and public perception, and the most forward-looking are not just transitioning to cleaner fuels; they are transforming into greenhouse gas managers.

Exxon Mobil's proposal to spend \$100 billion in public and private money to develop a carbon capture industry based in Houston is the latest brilliant example. No city has more experience with underground rock formations, no state has a better pipeline network, and few other places have so much room to store carbon.

“We believe the time is right for a large-scale collaboration in the United States

low-carbon business, said in a blog post. “And we think Houston is the perfect place for such a concept.”

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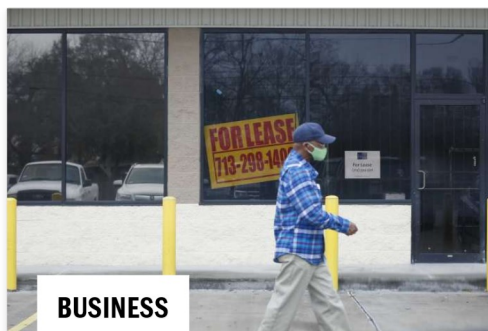
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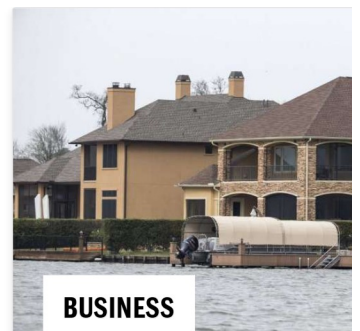
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The oil and gas industry holds the secrets to storing carbon in vast quantities, and they will do it if they can generate a profit for their shareholders. A profit motive would also make these companies and their employees allies rather than enemies in battle over climate change.

Oil wells and petrochemical facilities along the Gulf Coast have long led the nation in greenhouse gas emissions. Texas's economic dependence on the fossil fuel supply chain has made our state the epicenter for climate change denial, even among highly educated engineers and geoscientists.

Other scientists, meanwhile, have been looking at the drained wells and refineries along the Texas coast as an opportunity for a new business line: putting the carbon back where we got it. Tip Meckel, a research geologist at the Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas, alerted me to the potential seven years ago.

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reduce emissions 50 percent by 2030.

“The Gulf of Mexico is the end game for the national emissions reduction strategy from industrial sources,” he told me.

Oil companies have injected carbon dioxide into old wells to force out oil for years. Most of the gas remains underground and never resurfaces. Tax credits, and perhaps carbon taxes in the future, make it profitable to inject carbon dioxide into Texas’s old offshore wells even without producing any oil, Meckel said.

Offshore carbon storage in Texas waters has several advantages, including a single landowner—the Texas General Land Office—and detailed mapping of every available cavern. With minimal adaptation, onshore plants can divert their greenhouse gases into pipelines that lead to offshore wells for permanent storage. Industry interest is growing, Meckel said.

The General Land Office took a huge step on April 7 and issued a request for proposals to begin storing carbon in offshore caverns near Port Arthur. The deadline is May 10.

BOB LEVITUS
Contributor



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I borrowed one of each and have been testing them for several months.

JAY LEE
Tech Blogger



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For a glimpse, look at Norway and the Netherlands, which are supporting carbon storage in the North Sea. Governments are teaming up with Equinor and Royal Dutch Shell to inject carbon into old wells, even going as far as designing new ships to carry carbon dioxide from around the world to the North Sea.

twitter.com/cltomlinson

chris.tomlinson@chron.com

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BY PAUL TAKAHASHI

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