

OH House Natural Resources Committee

Dear Committee Chair and members:

I write to oppose HB 170, which would promote the expensive, dangerous, and unproven carbon capture and storage technology at the expense of Ohioans' health, our economy., and landowner rights. I am particularly concerned by the legislation's provisions that would:

1. force landowners to have carbon dioxide waste stored underneath their homes and properties without their consent
2. prioritize industry interests over other stakeholders in the community through 'sole and exclusive authority' of the state
3. transfer liability to taxpayers

The technology would be especially dangerous in Ohio, which is vulnerable to leaks and explosions due to tens of thousands of abandoned oil and gas wells, and because the Ohio Department of Natural Resources has consistently demonstrated its inability to safely regulate Class II injection wells, which have contaminated groundwater and gas production wells throughout SE Ohio.

As I recently wrote in the [Athens County Independent](#): "Activists in Southeast Ohio have extensive experience with Ohio Department of Natural Resources' permissive and irresponsible "regulation" of the oil and gas industry. Now we face a new push by industry and politicians to inject massive volumes of industrially produced carbon dioxide beneath our homes and communities, using carbon capture and sequestration. CCS, an unproven technology, poses serious risks to our health and safety."

There are many serious questions about the technology's technical and economic feasibility, as Buckeye Environmental Network (BEN) and 13 other Ohio groups have documented.

The coalition letter sent to legislators notes the safety risks: "Five years ago in Satartia, Miss., families sitting down for dinner were struck with the sudden, sharp odor of rotten eggs. A green fog had crept over the highway and settled into the valley, seeping into homes and vehicles. Within minutes, people were gasping for air, dazed and trembling, with some collapsing in their homes. Vehicles blocked roads with stalled engines, unable to start their ignitions due to the lack of oxygen needed for combustion. Drivers scrambled out onto the asphalt, as first responders, hampered by a cloud of toxic gas, raced to the scene. Later it was revealed that a CO₂ pipeline over the hill had ruptured, exposing residents to a dense, odorized cloud of carbon dioxide. Within hours,

hundreds of residents were evacuated and dozens were rushed to the hospital. The county's emergency director likened it to the zombie apocalypse.”

When carbon dioxide dissolves in water it creates carbonic acid, which causes corrosion and ruptures (see documentation at Pipeline Safety Trust: pstrust.org/carbon-dioxide-pipelines-dangerous-and-under-regulated/) and automatically creates risks of acute mass poisoning and asphyxiation.

I am also concerned because the state is also seeking control from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency over the Class VI wells that would inject the CO₂ underground. Currently, no Class VI wells exist in Ohio, with only a handful nationwide. Yet for 15 years, Athens County and other Ohio communities have been exposing ODNR's mismanagement of its 250+ oil and gas waste Class II injection wells, documenting hundreds of leaks, spills, waste migration and contamination incidents, fires, and explosions. In 2023, ODNR's Division of Oil and Gas Chief Eric Vendel ordered suspension of the three K&H injection wells in Torch and of the Frost Well on St. Rt. 144. These Athens County wells had been leaking and migrating toxic radioactive oil and gas waste for years – precisely what Athens County Future Action Network (ACFAN, formerly Athens County Fracking Action Network) had argued would happen, back in 2012. ACFAN had also sued ODNR (unsuccessfully) over a K&H well permit. ODNR has proven it is not capable of safely regulating waste injection. ACFAN is now a signatory to BEN's letter to legislators.

Activists know that ODNR-regulated CO₂ has the alarming potential to be much worse. Ohio is particularly risky due to vulnerable, overburdened geological formations, with over 300,000 fossil fuel wells drilled since 1860, many now abandoned and leaking. CCS is extremely energy- and water-intensive, expensive (documentation by Ohio River Valley Institute (ohiorivervalleyinstitute.org/carbon-capture-description-history-effectiveness-cost/), and has been proven to be ineffective and noncompetitive at scale, with a 80% failure rate for projects seeking commercialization. The projects are only “economically viable” when subsidized by taxpayers; **by 2050 they could cost taxpayers \$800 billion.**

Carbon capture is a false solution that encourages continued CO₂ emissions with the false promise of their capture and “storage.” Ohioans shouldn't be guinea pigs for a dangerous and unproven boondoggle so that corporations can profit.

CCS projects would be required for the Appalachian Regional “Clean”[sic] Hydrogen Hub (ARCH₂) – a taxpayer-funded project that the Dept. of Energy and oil and gas industry are pushing on Appalachia. The projects would utilize fracked gas, among other feedstocks, to create hydrogen as a fuel to either use or sell and inject the carbon emissions underground, often involving transport in pipelines first. This sourcing of hydrogen clearly does not create clean or green hydrogen, but rather encourages more

dirty, dangerous fracking. (For more information on hydrogen and its relation to CCS, visit [Appalachia Hydrogen Facts](#)).

It is unclear what other ways CCS would be utilized other than for ARCH2. This is another way in which communities are left in the dark about dangerous plans that will likely impact them. Ohioans are urged to call their legislators and connect with [Buckeye Environmental Network](#) to learn more and get involved.

Please oppose this dangerous legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of the health, rights, and economic well-being of the people of Ohio, whose well-being and rights you are legally and ethically charged with protecting.

Heather Cantino
Athens, Ohio
Athens County's Future Action Network (ACFAN) steering committee chair