

**TESTIMONY OF JASON ALBRITTON
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BEFORE THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC WORKS
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Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

The Nature Conservancy is a global conservation organization. We have chapters in all 50 states and our work extends around the globe into 79 countries and territories. As an organization that relies on a science-based, collaborative approach, we believe the science is clear that climate change poses a significant threat to our communities, our economy, and to nature itself. That is why we must address climate change right now, with diligence and urgency. Our best chance to limit the worst impacts of climate change is to ensure that by 2050, we have achieved “net zero” carbon emissions both in the United States and around the world. This will require significant decarbonization of our global economy in less than 30 years.

In the United States, the transition to a clean energy economy is underway, yet still we need to significantly increase the pace. We must first reduce and avoid emissions of greenhouse gases, which entails a rapid and thoughtful deployment of renewables and other zero-emitting energy to power our homes, drive our cars, and run our factories. Our farms and forests will also play an important role. [Up to a fifth of the emissions reductions](#) we need in the U.S. can be achieved using natural climate solutions—land use practices that increase the amount of carbon stored in forests, wetlands, and soils. Alongside these important climate solutions, carbon management technologies are important tools in the suite of approaches we need to rapidly deploy to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. These include carbon capture, utilization and storage (CCUS) and carbon removal technologies, like direct air capture (DAC).

Analyses by the International Energy Agency (IEA) and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) demonstrate that utilizing carbon capture technology is vital to meet climate goals. In the [IPCC's recent Working Group III \(WGIII\) report](#), six of the seven scenarios evaluated required carbon capture in order to limit temperature rises to under two degrees Celsius. The one scenario that did not require carbon capture assumed massive, ambitious reductions in energy use. Avoiding increasingly harmful climate impacts requires us to make important and timely investments in these technologies.

Carbon capture is particularly important for reducing emissions from the industrial sector where it can contribute [nearly one-fifth of reductions](#) needed to meet targets under the Paris Agreement. Industrial processes, such as the production of cement and steel, are

central to modern life but often lack other alternatives for carbon mitigation, which is why we need to invest in CCUS technologies.

Direct air capture—an emerging technology that removes carbon from the atmosphere—must also be a priority for development. Even as we rapidly reduce greenhouse gas emissions, we will likely need [large-scale removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere](#) to limit global temperature increases to safe levels. This technology, when combined with proven natural solutions, offers a way to address legacy carbon pollution that has been building in the atmosphere for over a century. While we can and should work to rapidly mitigate today's sources of greenhouse gases, that alone will not address the threat presented by the emissions already in the atmosphere. We must prioritize direct air capture, not as a substitute for deployment of clean energy technologies, but as a parallel strategy.

Congress has taken important actions to spur carbon management technologies in recent years. The USE IT Act, passed along with the EFFECT Act and other carbon capture provisions as part of the omnibus spending bill in 2020, was the first of many recent steps to advance research, development and commercialization and address barriers to widespread deployment. Last year, the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) doubled down by investing \$7.1 billion for carbon capture and removal equipment deployment, \$2.2 billion for carbon transport, \$2.9 billion for carbon storage and use, and over \$6.5 billion on natural carbon storage provided by farms and forests. This funding supports scaling up these important technologies by –

- creating direct air capture hubs where clusters of industries can leverage existing and shared infrastructure;
- providing the Environmental Protection Agency with more resources for review and approval of wells to inject carbon dioxide into deep rock formations through its Class VI permitting program;
- creating a new program for flexible financing of carbon dioxide transport infrastructure; and
- increasing research into utilization and sequestration options.

These investments lay the foundation for rapid scaling of carbon management technologies and availability of the associated infrastructure.

Additional economic incentives, such as the 45Q tax credit, will play a key role in widespread commercialization and deployment. The short-term extension of the 45Q tax credits at the end of 2020, coupled with the federal investments in large-scale pilots and demonstration projects are already driving investment. [Over seventy CCUS projects](#) have been announced since the beginning of 2021. A long-term extension of the 45Q tax credit coupled with enhancements such as increased credits for direct air capture and industrial and power applications, direct pay options, and reduced annual capture thresholds are critical for building on the current momentum. Support for the 45Q tax credit and enhancements is bipartisan, as demonstrated by the Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage Tax Credit Amendments Act, and we urge Congress to act on these policies as soon as possible.

Carbon management technologies are important to transition the United States to a net zero emissions economy, but they must be deployed in a careful and thoughtful way. There are currently about 5,000 miles of carbon dioxide transport pipelines in the United States and [some projections](#) suggest over 29,000 miles of pipelines will be needed in the coming decades. As the demand for carbon capture increases, it is essential that we prioritize protection of natural resources and ensure robust community engagement when siting these projects. Smart-from-the-start land use planning will help ensure CCUS is deployed with as little impact as possible to natural lands, cultural resources, recreation, and other conservation values. Early engagement of communities can help avoid unexpected conflicts and delays. And improved coordination among permitting authorities will support more efficient approvals. Together, these steps are critical for rapid and responsible deployment.

The concerns and potential impacts to communities that have historically experienced the worst impacts of pollution are essential considerations in siting specific projects and broader deployment of carbon management technologies. While important, these technologies are not a “silver bullet” and are not appropriate everywhere. When the Council for Environmental Quality (CEQ) issued its draft guidance to federal agencies on the deployment and responsible development of CCUS, as required by the USE IT Act, CEQ appropriately focused on societal net benefits and acknowledged those net benefits include not only atmospheric impact but also impact on local air pollutants and other considerations. CEQ highlights the importance of “significant and ongoing community consultation to ensure communities near CCUS facilities do not experience harm related to the deployment of CCUS technology.”

To be effective, federal agencies responsible for approving carbon management projects will need adequate, sustained staffing and resourcing for community engagement and permitting. For example, the recent [Princeton Net Zero America study](#) found that we will need to invest \$13 billion by 2035 for stakeholder engagement, site characterization and permitting to ensure sufficient geologic sequestration sites are available for rapid deployment of carbon capture technology.

Time is of the essence when it comes to climate action. We must act now to secure a future for our planet and the generations that will come after us, and we must do so using all the solutions at our disposal, including carbon capture, utilization and storage and direct air capture. Federal support coupled with agency coordination, thoughtful planning, and early, effective stakeholder engagement will help ensure these solutions are available at the scale and within the timeframe we need them.

We appreciate the bipartisan leadership on this issue in this committee and look forward to continuing to work with you to advance these and other important climate solutions. Thank you for your consideration of our views, and I look forward to your questions.