

Questions for the Record

“The Case for Climate Optimism: Realistic Pathways to Achieving Net Zero Emissions”

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Natural Resources Committee
Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources

Questions from Representative Mike Levin (CA-49): You mentioned in your written testimony the potential for demonstration projects on public lands for carbon capture technologies. Can you describe in greater detail what exactly these demonstration projects might look like? What are some of the barriers right now to putting these projects on public lands? Also, how close are these technologies to being at the demonstration stage?

Demonstration is critical to bring nascent technologies to scale. In 2014, the Bureau of Land Management streamlined the permitting for renewable energy projects on public lands through the Solar Energy Zone Program, pre-approving 285,000 acres for renewable energy siting. By extending pre-approved zones to include direct air capture, the Department of Interior can encourage the co-location of direct air capture facilities with renewable energy projects — increasing the carbon benefits of these technologies while ensuring minimal harm to the environment.

Many direct air capture companies are already at demonstration stage — with a dozen small scale projects around the globe. These companies are working to bring their solutions to market, but face significant barriers in terms of cost and scale. The government can help close the valley of death by providing deployment support through mechanisms like loan guarantees, cost shares, and other forms of financing support. These investments from the federal government can drive American competitiveness and create the industries and workforce of the future.