

Fact Sheet for the Interagency Task Force on Carbon Capture and Storage

Background

On February 3, 2010, President Obama established an Interagency Task Force on Carbon Capture and Storage, composed of 14 Executive Departments and Federal Agencies. The Task Force, co-chaired by the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was charged with proposing a comprehensive and coordinated strategy to overcome the barriers to the widespread, cost-effective deployment of carbon capture and storage (CCS) within ten years, with a goal of bringing five to ten commercial demonstration projects online by 2016.

CCS refers to a set of technologies that can greatly reduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from new and existing coal- and gas-fired power plants, industrial processes, and other stationary sources of CO₂. CCS could play an important role in achieving national and global greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals.

In developing its findings and recommendations, the Task Force relied on published literature and individual input from more than 100 experts and stakeholders, as well as public comments submitted to the Task Force. The Task Force also held a large public meeting and several targeted stakeholder briefings.

Findings

There are no insurmountable technological, legal, institutional, or other barriers that prevent CCS from playing a role in reducing GHG emissions.

Widescale cost-effective deployment of CCS will occur only when driven by a policy designed to reduce GHG emissions. Ultimately, comprehensive energy and climate legislation will provide the largest incentive for CCS deployment as an option for climate change mitigation, because it will create a stable, long-term, market-based framework to channel private investment into low-carbon technologies.

Existing Federal programs are being used to deploy at least five to ten large-scale integrated CCS projects. These projects, expected to be online by 2016, are intended to demonstrate a range of current generation CCS technologies applied to coal-fired power plants and industrial facilities.

Early CCS projects face challenges related to climate change policy uncertainty in addition to the challenges associated with cost, performance, legal and regulatory uncertainty, and early project technology risks.

Increased Federal coordination would enhance the government's ability to assist these projects by providing more efficient incentives and/or addressing barriers.

Research, development, and demonstration (RD&D) can help enable deployment of CCS by finding ways to reduce project uncertainty and improve technology cost and performance.

Developing and clarifying regulatory requirements for CCS would reduce uncertainty for early projects and help ensure safe and effective deployment. Additional Federal actions to enhance regulatory authority,

ensure that long-term liability is addressed, and strengthen stewardship frameworks could enable wider deployment.

Open-ended Federal indemnification should not be used to address long-term liabilities associated with CO₂ storage. However, four options merit further analysis: relying on existing frameworks, limits on claims, a trust fund, and transfer of liability to the Federal Government (with contingencies).

International collaboration complements domestic efforts on CCS and facilitates its global deployment.

Public awareness and support are critical to the development of new energy technologies and are widely viewed as vital for CCS projects.

Recommendations

To facilitate CCS projects, the Task Force recommended a proposed plan to:

- support technology development;
- provide legal and regulatory clarity and support; and
- develop a comprehensive outreach strategy.

The Executive Summary of the Task Force report outlines specific actions the Federal government can take in each of these areas to foster the success of early CCS projects. The recommendations include:

- establishing a roundtable to assist early CCS projects;
- increasing coordination in applying drivers and incentives to assist early projects;
- finalizing and implementing regulations to ensure safe and effective deployment of CCS;
- continuing efforts to improve long-term liability and stewardship frameworks; and
- enhancing and coordinating public outreach to raise awareness of CCS.

For More Information

This fact sheet is intended to assist the public in understanding the findings of the Interagency Task Force on Carbon Capture and Storage. It is not intended to be a substitution for the Task Force's final report. Visit EPA or DOE's website for the full report and the Presidential memorandum establishing the Task Force:

www.epa.gov/climatechange/policy/ccs_task_force.html

www.fe.doe.gov/programs/sequestration/ccs_task_force.html