

Comment from Karen Feridun

Citizens Advisory Committee

April 9, 2024

Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to speak about blue hydrogen and the hub proposed for Pennsylvania.

My name is Karen Feridun. I am one of the co-founders of the Better Path Coalition. I began convening what is now the No False Solutions PA Coalition in 2020 when Governor Wolf announced his participation in a regional CO2 transport initiative. I represent our coalition on a national CO2 Plenary and chair its messaging subcommittee. I also represent the coalition on a national CCS-Strategy team and chair its Hydrogen Working Group.

Since June of 2021 when Secretary Jennifer Granholm first announced an initiative to bring down the price of hydrogen, she has frequently referred to a blossoming hydrogen economy, yet in that span of nearly three years, the public has been given few details and no voice in deciding if it is the right way forward.

In the weeks after the hubs were announced in Philadelphia in October, DOE held a series of regional meetings for the public. Roughly 400 questions submitted during the Pennsylvania ARCH2 and MACH2 sessions went unanswered. We submitted the questions to DOE, but our letter has never been acknowledged. Some organizations have submitted FOIA requests to get any details they can about the hubs, but the requests have been denied.

DOE is now hosting listening sessions. I hope some of you attended the ARCH2 session at the end of last month. The MACH2 session is tomorrow evening. I encourage you to attend.

People who registered to speak were asked to indicate if they are from host communities. We don't know. Unable to comment on the specifics of the hubs as they were proposed and approved, people are left to express their very valid concerns about hydrogen technology.

The fossil fuel industry has taken advantage of the lack of information and transparency to promote Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS), the technology that presumably turns gray hydrogen blue. According to a recent report, Corporate Advocacy for Carbon Capture and Storage, from Influence Map, "the research identifies three common claims that appear across corporate advocacy on CCS: that CCS allows for continued oil and gas expansion; that CCS is central to meeting global climate targets; and that CCS can support jobs and communities. These claims appear to misrepresent Science-Based Policy guidance to varying degrees. Together, they have been pushed by the fossil fuel sector at international and regional levels with the ultimate impact of capturing the global narrative on the role of CCS, misdirecting policy attention away from fossil fuel phase-out, and enabling policy and investment decisions based on 'business-as-usual' assumptions for the oil and gas sector."<sup>i</sup>

In her speech in October, Secretary Granholm painted hydrogen with a similarly broad brush when she said, “Clean hydrogen is the ‘Swiss Army Knife’ of zero-carbon solutions because it can do just about everything.”<sup>ii</sup>

It can’t. And it’s dishonest to suggest otherwise.

A tweet I ran across sums up the problem underlying the government’s hydrogen ambitions, “You can’t fossil fuel your way out of a fossil fuel created crisis.”<sup>iii</sup>

According to reporting from Canary Media, five of the seven announced hubs “plan significant investments in blue hydrogen.” Research the article cites says blue hydrogen proposals only account for 20 percent of the projects, but 95 percent of the total production capacity.<sup>iv</sup>

The reality is that blue hydrogen, if it comes, is here to stay. And because the CCS upon which blue hydrogen relies is an unproven, some even call it a disproven, technology, blue hydrogen is nothing more than really expensive, super-emitting dirty gray hydrogen.

The fossil fuel industry has worked through its playbook’s chapters on denial, debate, and delay and is now working from the chapters on dissembling and distraction, but they don’t believe they are anywhere near the last chapter. It is the government’s job to shut the book for good, not quote from it. We would do best to reject hydrogen and CCS for the false climate solutions they are and put all of our efforts into deploying the real, proven, scalable renewable energy solutions we so desperately need to keep humankind’s book from closing.

Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> InfluenceMap, *Corporate Advocacy on Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS): How the Oil and Gas Sector is Influencing the Global Agenda on CCS and Fossil Fuel Phase-out*, December 2023, <https://influencemap.org/report/CCS-and-Corporate-Policy-Engagement-24754>

<sup>ii</sup> Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Secretary Jennifer Granholm at President Biden’s Unveiling of America’s First Clean Hydrogen Hubs, DOE, October 13, 2023, <https://www.energy.gov/articles/remarks-prepared-delivery-secretary-jennifer-granholm-president-bidens-unveiling-americas>

<sup>iii</sup> Tweet from Dr. Elizabeth Sawin, August 12, 2022, [https://twitter.com/bethsawin/status/1558107420378947585?s=20&t=v4gAt7DHFslJOMli9\\_dohg](https://twitter.com/bethsawin/status/1558107420378947585?s=20&t=v4gAt7DHFslJOMli9_dohg)

<sup>iv</sup> Jeff St. John, "The case against the US government’s big ‘blue hydrogen’ bet," *Canary Media*, October 18, 2023, <https://www.canarymedia.com/articles/hydrogen/the-case-against-the-us-governments-big-blue-hydrogen-bet>