

Carbon Capture and Storage is Not a Solution to the Climate Crisis, but a Dangerous Distraction

This is a joint press release by Friends of the Earth Japan and 89 other civil organisations, including Sahabat Alam Malaysia and Consumers Association of Penang

Kuala Lumpur/Tokyo - Today, 90 civil society organizations from 26 countries submitted a petition letter to the Japanese government demanding it not to export CO₂ to other countries.

The Japanese Diet is currently debating the CCS Business Bill to set a legal framework for CCS business. Meanwhile, Japanese corporations are already pushing CCS projects in the region. Since 2022, they have signed at least 15 agreements to export CO₂ to other countries in the region such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Australia, often with oil and gas giants such as ExxonMobil.

Climate experts say, CCS is an unproven technology with high risks and costs, and comes with long-term liabilities. They say relying on such a technology will only delay real climate action in Japan and in Asia.

Leaks in CCS projects – which can cause asphyxiation in huge concentrations – have already occurred with dire consequences for surrounding communities. A carbon dioxide pipeline rupture in 2020 in Mississippi, USA resulted in the evacuation of more than 200 people and the hospitalisation of at least 45 people with carbon dioxide poisoning. In early April, there was also a leak in a high-pressure carbon dioxide (CO₂) pipeline owned by Denbury Inc. and ExxonMobil in Sulfur, Louisiana.

Environmentalists say CCS projects not only exacerbate the climate crisis but are fundamentally against the principle of climate justice, particularly as they result in the dumping of CO₂ in countries in the Global South like Malaysia:

Meenakshi Raman, President of Sahabat Alam Malaysia says, “The climate crisis we are in now is the consequence of historically high carbon emissions of developed countries such as Japan. For the world to even have a remote chance of meeting the 1.5 degree Celsius target, developed countries must take the lead in rapidly phasing out fossil fuels. This push for CCS by the Japanese government is just another smokescreen for them to continue fossil fuel exploitation. To make matters worse, instead of taking in the carbon produced by Japanese industries on Japanese soil, it seeks to dump the burden of storing carbon in a developing country such as Malaysia. We demand that the Japanese put a stop to this ugly manifestation of waste colonialism through the dumping of carbon in developing countries like Malaysia, and we call upon the Government of Malaysia not to let the country be the carbon waste bin of the developed world.”

Mr. Fanny Tri Jambore, Head of Campaign Division, WALHI, Indonesia commented that “Several CCS projects have been proposed for oil and gas fields in Indonesia, where residents have suffered major environmental, livelihood, and human rights repercussions. For example, indigenous people in Tangguh LNG project area in West Papua Province were displaced from the customary land, and have been prevented from their free and traditional way of life due to limited access to hunting and fishing grounds. BP as the project operator in the Tangguh LNG project has been working on enhanced gas recovery/CCUS, hence, the Chubu Electric’s intention to export CO₂ from Japan to Tangguh will extend the life of the fossil gas project and prolong such repercussions. Where is the justice for local communities in Indonesia, who have never been informed about such CCS plans? This is nothing but carbon colonialism.”

Ayumi Fukakusa, Climate Change and Energy campaigner and Deputy Executive Director of FoE Japan says “The Japanese government’s CCS policy is totally unrealistic. Its current policy aims to store 120-240 million tons of CO₂ by 2050 which is equivalent to approximately 10-20% of Japan’s current emissions. There is no commercially viable project that exists in Japan yet Japanese companies are making agreements to export CO₂ to other countries. The Japanese government must set a stronger emission reduction target, based on the principles of equity and its historical responsibilities and must stop promoting these false solutions”.

Signatories (90 organizations from 26 countries)

Please read the petition text for more details: <https://consumer.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/8-May-2024-SAM-Signatory-in-Petition-08-May-2024-Carbon-capture-and-storage-is-not-a-solution-to-the-climate-crisis-but-a-dangerous-distraction-EN.pdf>

Joint Press Release, 8 May 2024

Notes:

- Japanese diet is debating CCS business bill at the current session. Lower house has passed the bill and now bill is debated in the Upper house. See: Briefing on Japan's CCS policy
- Sahabat Alam Malaysia and Friends of the Earth Japan submitted a joint open letter on 21st March 2024 to express our deep concern over recent developments regarding plans for the export of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions from Japan to Malaysia for CCS purposes.
- For more details on costs, risks, and dangers of CCS, please also see these researches, "Unabated The Carbon Capture and Storage 86 billion tonne carbon bomb aimed at derailing a fossil phase out (Carbon Analytics)", CCS (IEEFA),