



Climate Warriors and Flagships from Hell

by

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on

[Wrong Kind of Green](#)





There should be encampments and occupations in and near Middlesbrough and Hull. There should be. If the spirit of Earth First and actual environmentalism was with us, perhaps there would be.

The EAST COAST CLUSTER (centred around Middlesbrough and Hull) is a well-supported proposal for two industrial decarbonisation hubs connected by a pipeline to North Sea geological storage of CO₂. It is the flagship product of the 'Kickstarter' initiative launched by the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative (OGCI) in September 2019.

When the CO₂ pipeline is connected and the fossil hydrogen production begins the members of the OGCI, a collection of the world's wealthiest oil and gas CEOs, will have been installed as the gatekeepers of geological storage of CO₂. Much like the Porthos project in Rotterdam, the East Coast Cluster is one of many new decarbonisation hubs projected as flagships for late stage fossil fuel extractivism.

You may have heard the argument made before that climate justice activism has crowded out classical environmentalism with an omni-problem – the greatest and most urgent issue we face. This is indeed the case. Nobody can deny that climate warriors have always called for an end to fossil fuel extraction.

Most of the credulous masses believe that keeping-it-in-the-ground is a central objective of climate justice NGOs, indeed most of the mouthpieces and paid campaigners still believe that keeping fossil fuels in the ground is what they are fighting to achieve. But, as is always the case, the truth is more complicated and insidious than most can comprehend or imagine.

Through their hegemonic networks, philanthropists have directed the action for the bureaucratic class of climate activism and limited the incubation of grassroots groups. Through their networks and discretionary funding, they have limited the opportunities for campaigning that could pose a credible threat to fossil fuel extractivism.

They have created the conditions for the perpetuation of the biomass carbon double-counting scam. The core components of the stakeholder capitalist plans for net zero in Europe require biomass as a 'feedstock'. It will function as a key negative value on the deep decarbonisation net zero ledger. The scam is currently deployed to plump up the renewables figures when it is used to replace coal in existing power plants.

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Laurence Tubiana, CEO, European
Climate Foundation





Laurence Tubiana is CEO of the European Climate Foundation (ECF) which is a well-funded node in the ClimateWorks empire under the Design to Win plan. Tubiana says that abatement of emissions from industry is now possible, and says that "*Industry leaders are looking at totally disruptive technologies and visions*". The ECF has commissioned research into the potential role of biomass as a 'feedstock' in industrial clusters using carbon capture and storage.

In one [significant 2019 collaboration](#) that included one of the Extinction Rebellion funders, the Children's Investment Fund Foundation, it was made clear that the necessary concession positions were in place. In effect, the ECF position is that a little Bioenergy (biomass) with Carbon Capture and storage (BECCS) is okay if heavy industry could please use less fossil fuels and not too much biomass.

In effect they have displayed their concession positions that leave the door open for business as usual, but with some abatement of CO2.

'A little bit of BECCS and some 'clean' fossil fuels in exchange for a renewables revolution' is the bargain that the bureaucratic class of climate campaigners thought they had on the table as early as 2005.

Bellona Foundation and Climate Action Network Europe (CANE) represent two sides of the NGO discourse in discussions on negative emissions technologies in Europe over the last two decades. Both are associated with Design to Win funding. This is due in part to the sheer size and scope of the reganting networks fostered by John Podesta.

The process for capturing campaigning and activism is deviously simple: new campaigns are incubated and existing NGOs consolidate their positions in the messaging sphere subject to the terms on which grants are distributed. As long as you don't take aim at the concession positions of the funders, your campaign will stand a chance. Add the captive media with incomprehensible editorial positions and astonishing blind spots, and you have a self-reinforcing, narrative-driven fount of propaganda. Control of the messaging sphere via discretionary funding was made possible by the vast scale of the Design to Win philanthropies interests and influence.

Bellona are BECCS hawks. They are one of John Podesta's favourite NGOs. Their positions are aligned with the Design To Win imperative/concession position to leave space for "unavoidable fossil fuels". CANE collectively represent the climate warrior positions which have always included an end to fossil fuels, but are tempered by the pragmatics of managing a transition to renewables and energy efficiency. Everywhere in the ClimateWorks empire you see Design to Win funding for both the hawkish NGOs like Clean Air Task Force and climate warrior NGOs like Global Energy Monitor.

"From WWF's point of view, industrial CCS is the no-alternative solution for the industrial sector in terms of reducing our emissions,"

Former Head of
Climate Change and
Energy at WWF UK
and new CEO of
EnergyUK

Emma
Pinchbeck



The rapid deployment of BECCS has been a long time in the planning. The former Head of Climate Change and Energy at WWF-UK, Emma Pinchbeck attended the launch of the Teesside Collective in July 2015. At the time she articulated WWF's position in terms that should have shocked climate warriors, "industrial CCS is the no-alternative solution for the industrial sector". [\[Source\]](#) With the help of the OGCI, the Teesside Collective's ambitions have turned into the East Coast Cluster.

Pinchbeck is currently the Chief Executive of Energy UK which touts itself as "The voice of the energy industry". She still supports investment in BECCS and despite her bio stating that she specialises in 'whole economy' decarbonisation, she doesn't seem to care much about the externalities that will be created when the flagships from hell set sail. The economic and environmental impacts caused by the ongoing destruction that fossil fuel extraction and the large-scale uptake of BECCS are unquantifiable.

Antonio Guterres signalled his support for the industrial decarbonisation plans of the OGCI when he sent his special adviser (Robert Orr) to the Gramercy Hotel to meet their CEOs the night before Greta Thunberg's big speech in New York. The message delivered on behalf of the UN Secretary-General (who had invited Greta to come to New York) made it clear that the 'Kickstarter' initiative, the subject of an embargoed media release, had the green light.

"Your industry has the assets and the expertise to demonstrate the ambition we need and to lead the way. The world needs, and is demanding, an ambitious road map to reduce the carbon intensity of your industry, and to demonstrate your commitment to align with the goals of the Paris agreement."

- Robert Orr, Special Adviser to Antonio Guterres, September 22, 2019

Philanthropies incubate and fund campaign groups and NGOs to serve particular narratives. Talking points embedded with fallacious logic are easily passed on and bolstered by access to market reach and attention metrics. Greta, AOC and XR are the three most significant examples of high-reach climate warriors. All three share a blind spot that has been crucial to controlling the narratives about what climate action should look like – they all completely ignored the output of the IPCC Working Group 3 (WG3) on mitigation.

BECCS and CCS appeared in three of the four mitigation pathways (P2-4) developed for WG3, with one pathway (P1) avoiding BECCS and CCS – labelled the 'degrowth pathway'. Any meaningful investigations or public discourses into the various pathways might have unpacked some vital questions about the political will and the future plans of big oil, gas, coal and biomass.

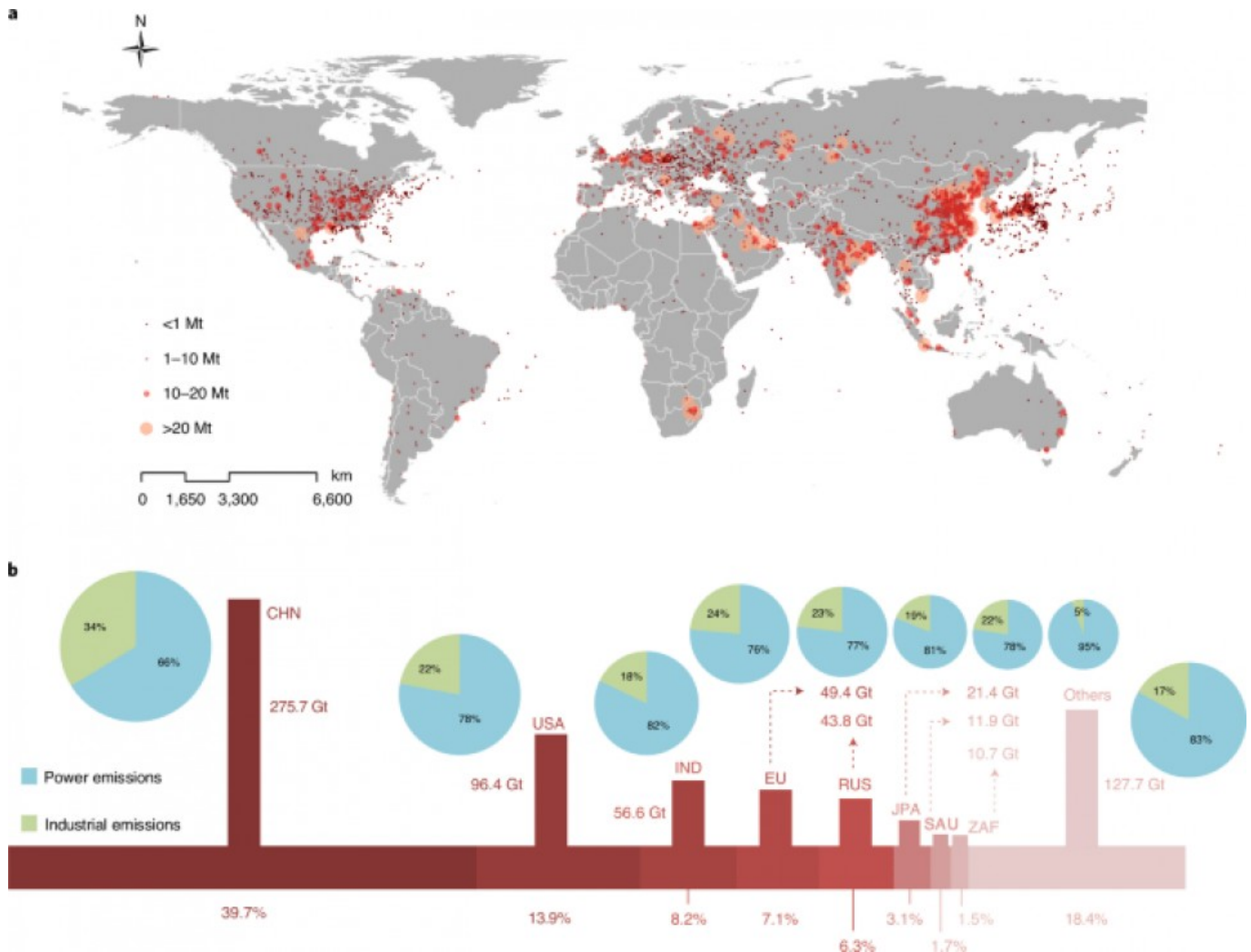
While Thelma Krug (Vice Chair of the IPCC) was happy to present the WG3 pathways to the fossil fuel sector to demonstrate future opportunities, the only mainstream attention exploring the degrowth pathway came from Jason Hickel's writing about the 'Grubler et al (2018) 'Low Energy Demand' scenario'. Sadly, the degrowth movement discovered Hickel's work too late to make a meaningful contribution to the discourse when it mattered which was between October 2018 and October 2020 during the ascendancy of Greta, AOC, and XR.

The impact of BECCS is global, but its potential for scale and implementation is currently very European. Decarbonisation hubs in Europe will be made possible by CO2 pipelines, port facilities and imported biomass. BECCS deployment in Europe will require vast quantities of wood chips and waste trimmings from forestry and agroforestry in North America.

The anticipated demand for BECCS and the application of carbon accounting trickery to woody biomass has allowed industry to once again transform waste products like the 'forest residues' from agroforestry into valuable feedstocks.

In turn the capturing of CO2 through the application of CCS transforms it into a value added product and potential feedstock for enhanced oil and gas recovery. It is the pipelines connecting the industrial areas near Middlesbrough and Hull that form the crucial infrastructure establishing each decarbonisation cluster.

Around the globe planned and already implemented decarbonisation hubs are contingent on CO2 pipelines. Proximity to storage locations is not easily achieved. The Sturgeon hub near Edmonton is a good example of the kind of projects we are likely to see after COP26 when tax credits, border adjustments and other effective subsidies become operational. The \$25 billion three train Sturgeon oil sands refinery only uses 10% of the capacity of the CO2 pipeline that forms the foundation of the Sturgeon hub.



"Results show 3,093 carbon clusters and 432 sinks in 85 countries and regions are selected to achieve 92 GtCO₂ mitigation by CCUS, 64% of which will be sequestered into sedimentary basins for aquifer storage and 36% will be used for CO₂-EOR (enhanced oil recovery). Of the identified source-sink matching, 80% are distributed within 300 km and are mainly located in China, the United States, the European Union, Russia and India. The total cost is ~0.12% of global cumulative gross domestic product. Of countries with CO₂-EOR, 75% will turn into profitable at the oil price over US\$100 per barrel." [Source: Nature]

The Alberta Carbon Trunk Line transports CO₂ from Sturgeon to depleted conventional oil fields for enhanced oil recovery. The CO₂, we are told, reintegrates into the rock matrix while the produced crude is pumped to Hardisty for export via train and pipeline.

Dozens of pipelines and hubs have been proposed in North America. Exxon have proposed the Houston Ship Channel - Innovation Zone to process gas from the gulf. The Wyoming Pipeline Corridor Initiative could become a lifeline for coal creating opportunities for coal to hydrogen production while supplying enhanced oil recovery projects.

These projects have been given importance because the effective subsidies that will make the finance work have continued to expand with little to no resistance. The 45Q tax credit is the most prominent of the measures being developed to support the building of CO₂ pipelines in the US. It will be further expanded under Sec. 136107 of the Build Back Better Act.

Grassroots campaigners have begun to rise up in the US state of Iowa against the Midwest Carbon Express pipeline intended to cross 5 states and if built would be the longest pipeline of its kind in the world. Look up the Iowa Carbon Pipeline Resistance Coalition and follow their looming fight against

eminent domain. Check out a recent [series of interviews](#) by Great Plains Action Society founder Sikowis. They are a must listen.

On October 25, 2021 the International Renewable Energy Agency published a technical paper on the synergies between CCS and renewables in "reaching zero". This is an astonishing and categorical failure by IRENA if indeed they ever held any proper ambition for wide scale implementation of renewables. The widely echoed calls for 100% renewables are fundamentally threatened by any CCS applied to fossil fuels or biomass. We should be very concerned at this time to see IRENA defy the fundamentals of its platform.

In the wash up from COP 26 we will see a deflating reality play out. Saudi Aramco will make more blue ammonia and blue hydrogen deals in Asia. Australian extractive industries will do the same. Scratch the surface of any net zero commitment and you will find partially laid out plans that suggest that fossil fuels aren't going anywhere for a good while yet, but that the appetite for CO2 abatement and storage is growing.



We should remember the words of the Saudi Aramco chief technology officer Ahmad Al Khowaiter at the Atlantic Council: Global Energy Forum 2019,

"CO2 is a valuable feedstock, we should not forget that."