



 DATA FOR *PROGRESS*

A PROGRESSIVE PLATFORM FOR CARBON REMOVAL

# Summary for Policymakers

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July 2021

Generations of inaction have left current and future policymakers with little choice but to pursue actions that rapidly accelerate emissions reductions while also removing past emissions from the atmosphere to achieve net-zero emissions and ultimately net-negative emissions. Even optimistic scenarios in global climate models now require the use of carbon removal technologies and practices (also referred to as “net-negative emissions”), which decrease greenhouse gasses already in the atmosphere, in order to meet global climate goals. Ambitious carbon removal cannot replace rapid decarbonization, however — humanity will be unable to keep global warming below 1.5°C or even 2°C unless countries like the U.S. decarbonize at a much faster pace than they are today. Policymakers must continue to push for rapid cuts to national emissions while beginning a phased roll-out of carbon removal mechanisms.

In Data for Progress’ joint reports, *A Progressive Platform for Carbon Removal: Guiding Principles* and *A Progressive Platform for Carbon Removal: Federal Action Plan*, we lay the groundwork for a national network of infrastructure that can remove past greenhouse gas emissions from the atmosphere. Responsible for one-quarter of cumulative global greenhouse gas emissions, the U.S. has a responsibility to meet at least one-quarter of global carbon removal needs by mid-century. The crux of a progressive net-negative emissions strategy should be to address the climate crisis ambitiously, and develop carbon removal infrastructure that:

1. Expands the federal innovation apparatus to include diversified, complementary approaches to achieve a net-zero and then net-negative emissions U.S. economy.
2. Reduces the cost and improves the performance of technologies and strategies so that carbon removal can be used widely and rapidly.
3. Combats historic, structural injustices including unequal access to clean environments, economic opportunity, public health, and climate resilience.
4. Lays the groundwork for a future where carbon removal becomes a public utility, and the jobs it creates are quality, unionized jobs that pay family-sustaining wages.

To meet these goals, Congress and the Executive must:

- ▶ **Decommission fossil fuel infrastructure and create jobs** by establishing a national network of carbon storage sites from decommissioned oil and gas wells. Fossil fuel workers possess unique skills and should be provided with well-paid jobs to accomplish this.
- ▶ **Invest in “technologies of the future”** like direct air capture that can be scaled up to securely remove carbon pollution at the gigaton-scale. RD&D financing should be channelled through a public agency like DFP’s proposed National Investment Authority.

- ▶ **Jumpstart innovation in carbon removal infrastructure at DOE** by replacing the Office of Fossil Energy with a new Office of Carbon Management that will be responsible for overseeing secure carbon removal.
- ▶ **Create a massive job training program for the workforce of the future**, reimagining the New Deal Civilian Conservation Corps for large-scale, well-paying, unionized, accessible, and equitable job creation.
- ▶ **Establish federal targets for carbon removal, and fund accordingly**, ensuring that carbon removal targets remain separate from but complementary to decarbonization goals. The U.S. should build capacity to remove 2.5 gigatons of carbon dioxide-equivalent by 2050, an ambitious undertaking that Congress should allocate \$20 billion to annually.
- ▶ **Lead the world by example** by taking ownership of one-quarter of global carbon removal burdens, equal to the U.S.' contribution to global cumulative greenhouse gas emissions.
- ▶ **Establish a cross-agency, stakeholder-engaged carbon removal council** to coordinate equitable, transparent, and robust nation-wide carbon removal innovation and deployment.
- ▶ **Amend the 45Q tax credit** so that it incentivizes quality carbon removals without bolstering fossil fuel projects.